

# THE HOSPITAL Guardian

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Equal pay for work  
of  
Equal  
Value



Balancing the Paycheque





HOSPITAL  
EMPLOYEES'  
UNION LOCAL  
180

"In humble dedication to all those who toil to live."

## THE HOSPITAL Guardian

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## COMMENT

# New Labor Code needed

By  
Jack Gerow

In mid-December Labor Minister Lyall Hanson called for submissions to amend B.C. labor legislation and improve the provincial labor relations climate.

In making his announcement, Hanson said: "There must be creative ways — legislative or otherwise — to change confrontational attitudes and improve current collective bargaining practices in British Columbia."

The minister will tour the province during January to receive the submissions at public hearings.

The labor minister went on to say that the labor legislation review is part of a broader commitment the Provincial Cabinet has made to improve labor relations in B.C.

Finally, the labor minister said that submissions must be received no later than January 16, 1987.

Who doesn't want "to improve labor relations in B.C.?"

Everyone does.

That goes without saying.

Over the past number of years, British Columbians have seen one labor relations confrontation after another. The most recent and costly was the forest industry dispute.

The point is — what is the provincial government going to do about it.

The labor minister, after all the years of confrontation, decides a couple of weeks before Christmas that submissions on improving the labor relations climate must be in his office by the middle of January — one month after he calls for such submissions.

A generous interpretation of the labor minister's action is that he is in a hurry to correct the legislative mistakes of the past many years in just a few weeks.

A more pragmatic interpretation



Jack Gerow, HEU's secretary-business manager, speaks on the steps of the legislature in Victoria at a demonstration July 23, 1983 after the Social Credit government announced the gutting of the Labor Code.

is that the labor minister has drafted the legislation already and is only looking for some of his friends to agree with it in public so it looks like the provincial government is practicing "open government."

But who are the labor minister's friends — could they be someone like the "right-to-work" lobby that is so influential with the born-again Social Credit party?

I hope the answer is somewhere between these two alternatives.

We do need to improve labor relations.

Therefore, we do need new labor legislation.

And where should the provincial government start.

First, the Labor Code.

A number of areas in the Labor Code need improvement. These areas include the right to organize,

the right to free collective bargaining and the right to shorter work stoppages.

Further, the Labor Code should prohibit the use of strikebreakers — whether they are paid or are unpaid volunteers.

Also, the Labor Code should ensure pay equity.

The gap between the wages paid to women and men still exists and is not narrowing.

In fact, this gap is about the same as it was at the turn of the century. After almost 80 years, women today face the same discrimination as they faced in the early 1900s — it's well past the time for legislative initiatives to bring about the equity that women earn both in the work place and in the home.

This brings us to the Compensation Stabilization Act.

If there is any piece of legislation that must be dealt with, it is this one.

Public sector workers have not had the right to bargain collectively in an environment free from confrontational government intervention since this legislation was first announced in February of 1982 — almost five years ago.

And yes, pay equity in all its forms is essentially prohibited by this legislation.

Much more can be said about the needed changes to labor relations. But what's just as important is the need for good faith from the labor minister's call for submissions.

I know that the B.C. Federation of Labor, under its new President Ken Georgetti, will make a forthright and best effort to assist in improving the labor relations climate in B.C.

I just hope that Labor Minister Hanson's actions are as meritorious.



# ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF LABOR HISTORY

1980 Founding of the Canadian Farmworkers Union

## UNIONIZE

1942 Japanese-Canadians interned in concentration camps

1881 Chinese cannery workers strike Fraser River canneries

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

1907 Anti-Oriental riots in Vancouver

English-as-a-Second Language

1900 DANTAI the Japanese Fisherman's Benevolent Society formed

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

1981 International Ladies' Garment Union starts E.S.L. classes on the worksite.

1924 Japanese, Chinese & East Indian workers excluded from working the underground mines

1940s I.W.A. organizes Japanese, Chinese & East Indian lumber workers

1886 Head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants

1923-1947 Exclusion Act limits rights of Chinese women to enter Canada

## STOP RACISM

1914 East Indian immigrants turned away from Vancouver port, Komagata Maru Incident

1970s Domestic workers excluded from labour laws, overtime, vacation pay, Canada Pension

## HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION

1910s Western Clarion, socialist newspaper opposed to racism

## INCLUSION IN LABOUR LAWS

1980s Workers Compensation Board excludes farmworkers from Health & Safety Act

## ETHNIC CULTURE

1903 Western Federation of Miners demands equal pay for Chinese & white mineworkers, joint strike follows



IMMIG

RIGHTS!

*He built the road,  
With others of his class he built  
the road.  
Now o'er it, many a weary mile,  
he packs his load.  
Chasing a job, spurred on by  
hunger's goad.  
He walks, and walks, and walks  
and walks  
and wonders why in hell he built  
the road.*

*Industrial Workers of the World  
verse*



This verse summed up the majority of working peoples' frustration during the Dirty Thirties — an economic calamity that decimated millions of lives and left the country in tatters.

Jobs were scarce, wages were atrociously low and bread lines mushroomed throughout B.C. and across the country. As men hopped trains in search of odd-jobs, their families at home lived a hand-to-mouth existence unprecedented since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

This was part of the era documented by the Centennial Labor History Project, established by the

Bill Darnell, an instructor at the Apprenticeship Program who chaired the project, says the object of the year-long history lesson was to impart a fuller sense of the contributions made by working people.

And Darnell points out that even labor historians involved in the project were impressed anew with the fruits of labor produced over the last century.

"I was personally quite ignorant of labor history in Canada before I started this project," says Darnell, a member of the Carpenters' Union. "Now, after studying past events, the present day situation

'30s in the aftermath of WW1.

The economy in the early 1980s was a depression that rivalled the 1930s. In July, 1983, the recently re-elected provincial government introduced in the legislature 27 bills which attacked many core human rights, labor, education and social program laws.

The creation of Operation Solidarity, which co-ordinated the opposition of unions and community groups, was one of the responses to this governmental assault on basic rights and legal protections. The escalating series of public sector strikes under the Solidarity banner stopped just



Vancouver Centennial Labor Committee to record and celebrate the struggles and achievements of working people since the city's inception 100 years ago.

Over the course of 1986, the 10-member committee produced a post card series, a labor history calendar, an annual and six posters commissioned by various labor groups.

makes more sense."

In many respects, the depression that swept the world in the '30s bore a striking resemblance to the situation in B.C. in the early 1980s. During the first half of the 1980s, working people had to fight to retain negotiated benefits and legislated protection as well as continue the struggle for world peace much as people did in the

short of a general strike.

In the spring of 1935, hundreds of B.C. workers left the slave-like conditions of the relief camps with their 20 cent a day wage to converge at Vancouver's rail yard — the starting point of the famous On-To-Ottawa trek. Demanding better wages and working conditions, workers were laying the groundwork that was to eventually



culminate in a national general strike in the country's capital. That plan was nixed, however, when police attacked the strikers in Regina July 1.

Present day Vancouver was built by and often at the expense of working people who, on the job, on the picket line or in the soup line have known hunger and solidarity, struggle and defeat.

Members of the Hospital Employees' Union are no strangers to fighting for trade union rights. Since its legal formation in 1944, HEU has been in the vanguard of fighting the anti-worker forces.

Even before then, the burning desire to organize health care workers started in the dark Depression days of the 1930s. Tracing their roots back to Vancouver General Hospital — which in the early '30s was the largest hospital in Canada — VGH health care workers saw their wages and benefits slashed by administration's scalpel.

That was a direct result of the Depression-era provincial government's attempt to "balance the budget" of a hospital teetering on the verge of bankruptcy because only two-thirds of its patients could afford full payment.

It's possible to understand just how bleak the situation was by looking at the wages and benefits paid to a first class orderly in 1936. For working eight hours a day, seven days a week with no rest breaks, the orderly of 1936 received the magnanimous sum of \$52 per week with three meals a day. There was no sick leave and employees were allowed one week's vacation a year. And job security was as non-existent as benefits.

The sweat-shop conditions spurred some male workers at VGH to join the Vancouver Civic Employees' Union while female workers started an in-house organization. In those early days, budding health care trade unionists could be found signing up co-workers in the hospital's corridors and in the vast labyrinth of tunnels that connected VGH's wide-spread

buildings. But it wasn't until the dramatic changes to health care and the Canadian economic and social scene brought on by World War II that saw an official formation of HEU, uniting male and female workers and laying the groundwork for expansion from

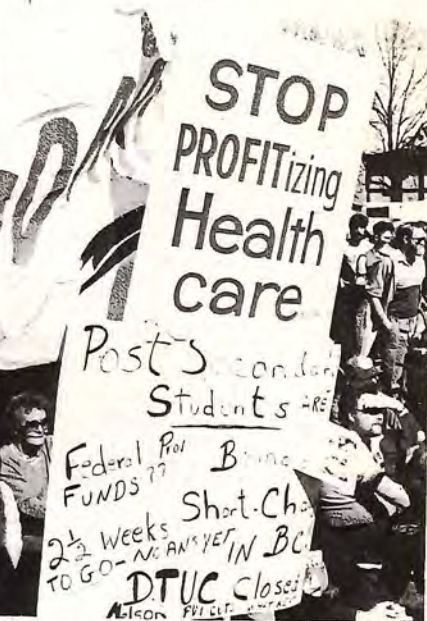
Vancouver this September. Attended by a crowd of several thousand, it gave people the opportunity to join in the solidarity and partake of the old-fashioned picnic fare at old-fashioned prices. Some old-fashioned heroics were also at work as Frank Kennedy, secre-



VGH to virtually every major health care facility in B.C.

Today, HEU is the largest single bargaining unit within the province's health care system. In that capacity, the union has led the fight for better working conditions for all health care workers. The union has consistently campaigned for safer work environments and improved accident prevention programs in hospitals. Since 1982, HEU has battled the Socred's public sector wage control program through every means possible. And equal pay for work of equal value is a cornerstone of the union's wage policy.

As HEU's history points out, labor is alive and well in B.C., despite the many governmental obstacles. Part of the Centennial project was organizing the Labor Day picnic at Trout Lake Park in



tary-treasurer of the Vancouver and District Labor Council, plunged into the lake to save the life of a drowning child.

Perhaps the most poignant event was last spring's Walking Tour that started at Carnegie Centre on East Hastings and wended its way through the streets of the downtown eastside — an area rife with labor history.

For many, the tour was a trip down memory lane, evoking memories of labor strife — and victory.

Sylvia MacFarlane, who worked in a hat factory on Cambie Street in the '30s and was the first woman truck driver in Vancouver during the war, was amazed to discover how little the downtown eastside has changed.

Now retired and living in Langley, the 70-year-old woman says the old adage about how the more



things change, the more things remain the same is apt in light of today's social conditions.

"We have the same anti-labor mentality, unacceptably high unemployment rates and the equivalency of bread lines (food bank line-ups) in the '80s as we

the '30s and '40s is that more women are willing to talk about those indignities endured on the job and lay charges — something we couldn't afford to do."

A closer look at some of the events of those tumultuous years bears out Darnell and McFarlane's

1923: Longshoremen demand pay increase for loading lumber, wheat — union broken.

1934: Female Minimum Wage Act established, wage varies with type of work.

1935: On-To-Ottawa trek begins in city at rail yards in April by a



had in the thirties," says MacFarlane.

And as for sexual harassment, not that much has changed for women unless they're lucky enough to be union members who collectively have fought to negotiate anti-sexual harassment policies into their collective agreements.

"Back when I worked in the all-woman hat factory, we would never enter the stockroom alone," she recalls. "Otherwise the owner — a very odd man — would be pawing us mercilessly.

"From what I read in the press, there haven't been much improvements in terms of what most women have to put up with to earn a living for themselves and their families," MacFarlane reflects. "One thing that has changed from

observations:

1900: Federal Act limits work of children under 16 to 66½ hours per week.

1903: CPR police kill Frank Rogers, labor leader, during railway workers' strike.

1907: Chinese domestic workers and cooks strike following race riots.

1910: First B.C. Federation of Labor founded.

1918: Labor organizer Ginger Goodwin killed by B.C. police at Cumberland.

1919: Vancouver General Strike, in support of Winnipeg strikers. The revolt was crushed by the authorities and the depression of the early 20s wiped out many of the wartime gains for workers.

1919: Printers walk out for higher wages.

contingent of relief camp workers who had left the "20 cents a day" slave-like conditions of the camps to demand work and wages. The trek ended July 1 when police attacked the trekkers in Regina.

1935: Six unemployed Chinese workers die of starvation, provoking mass outcry.

1973: B. C. Human Rights Code established, women campaign to end hiring discrimination.

1983: Operation Solidarity announces province-wide strike program in which public sector unions, including HEU, participate.

1984: Demonstration of more than 1,000 unemployed workers outside Pennyfarthing's False Creek job site after the developer fired union workers and hired anti-union scabs.



# HEU achieves collective agreement

Volatile.

That's the only way to describe the past year for health care unions, under seige from a provincial government that worked overtime to stall unions from achieving acceptable contracts.

HEU finally reached a Master Collective Agreement after more than eight months of continuous bargaining. It took about the same time for the Health Sciences Association, which was also forced to set up picket lines and take job action to prod the employer bargaining group to come clean. But by far the longest set of negotiations — about 18 months — was between the B.C. Nurses' Union and the Health Labor Relations Association.

HEU's three-year agreement, which also covers all members under the Long-Term Care Standard Agreement, was the result of a protracted and often acrimonious bout of bargaining. Spurred on by a massive list of employer concession demands, members constituted an impressive force by standing their ground at unit after unit throughout the province.

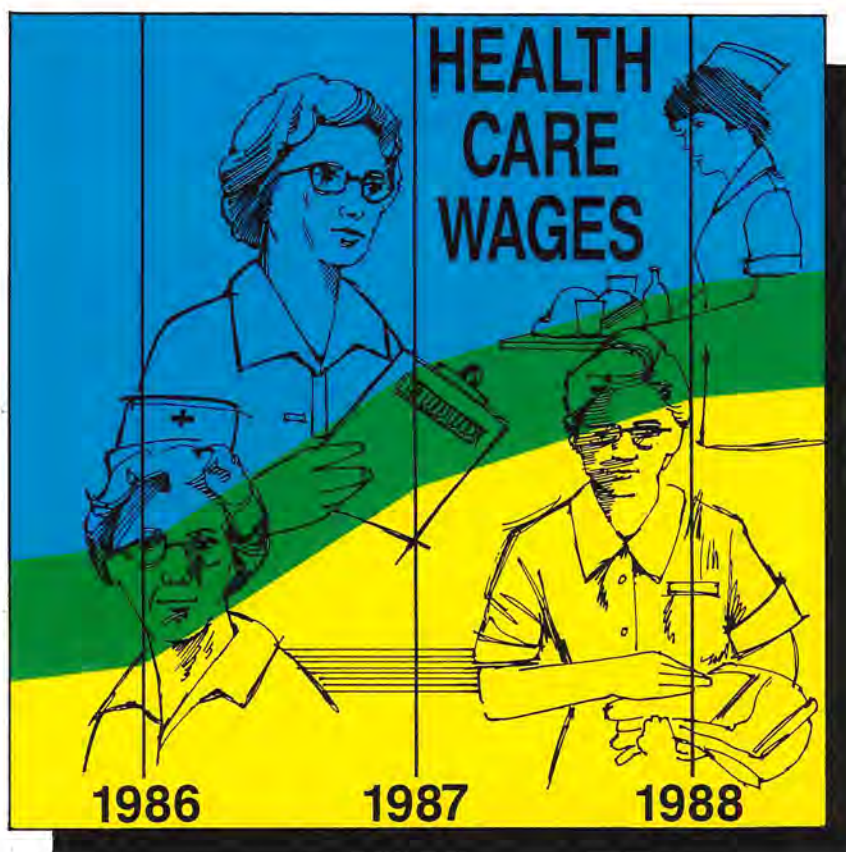
A clear gauge of members' intent to achieve a fair settlement was the high strike votes — 88 percent — chalked up at various facilities across the province. And their willingness to pitch in and join their sisters and brothers on the HSA picket line was just another indication of HEU members frustration with years of health care cutbacks, wage freezes and rollbacks.

As Lynn Carlile, a dietary aide at St. Paul's Hospital says: "The



Brother Doug Enns of the Kamloops Unit and friend joins other HEU members on the picket line at the Royal Inland in support of HSA members.





high strike vote showed more than anything the membership's determination to get a fair settlement and its willingness to back that up.

"As for the HSA picket lines, HEU members wholeheartedly supported the job action as an example of trade union solidarity against concessions," added Carile, who is also the unit's vice-chairperson.

Despite the lengthy process — punctuated by the resignation of the premier and a Social Credit election campaign stressing conciliation with labor — HEU members efforts paid off remarkably well. In fact, in terms of private sector disputes, the three health care unions did relatively well thanks to assertive media campaigns and a deluge of horror stories chronicling the acute condition of hospital waiting lists.

Based on recommendations by Industrial Inquiry Commissioner

Don Munroe after the Provincial Bargaining Committee worked hundreds of hours negotiating a contract, the Master Collective Agreement proposed two retroactive increases: a \$30 a month retroactive increase effective Nov. 1, 1985 to settle an outstanding wage reopener clause and a \$40 a month across-the-board increase retroactive to April 1, 1986, \$20 a month effective Nov. 1, 1986, 2.7 per cent effective June 1, 1987 and three per cent effective April 1, 1988. The member-ratified contract also stipulates that \$20 million be spent to resolve all outstanding classification issues by no later than March 31, 1986.

As reported in bargaining bulletins, many important gains were made in the area of working conditions and benefits. These include positions on contracting out, health and safety, limiting the use of volunteers, anti-sexual harassment and compassionate leave.

As Jack Gerow, HEU's secretary business manager points out, achieving a good collective agreement doesn't mean the union will cease from continuing the struggle to achieve better health care funding.

"Without more provincial funds, hospital waiting lists will soar, health care workers will be laid off and the stress of excessive workloads will continue unchecked," said Gerow. "These kinds of cut-backs and wage controls have deservedly marked the provincial government as an object of condemnation from the International Labor Organization — the world's largest labor body.

"We have to keep debating and fighting to drive the message home that a more just, equitable society is not only desirable, but necessary for everyone's health."

Those points are also evident among BCNU and HSA members, who see the continued underfunding of health care as the major stumbling block in the delivery of high quality health care.

BCNU members won a 7.8 per cent increase over three years with an additional five per cent based on labor market shortages. HSA was awarded a 5.6 per cent increase over two years plus a five per cent increase, also based on labor market shortages.

Both unions based their negotiation arguments on verifiable market shortages in a bid to achieve parity with their colleagues in other provinces.

One innovative approach in ensuring that health care workers see speedier resolutions of future contracts lies with the establishment of a joint council of health care unions.

According to HEU's provincial executive, this timely idea would upset the employer's bid to play off one union against another. Just as importantly, it would promote more effective coordinated collective bargaining and help prevent the repeated disruption of health care services to patients.



## LETTERS

### Cut backs "not healthy" for patients and staff

The "ground breaking" ceremonies took place on September 11th for the new George Derby Hospital in East Burnaby. This facility will be located on 16th Avenue at Cumberland, just north of New Westminster. About 300 veterans will be housed there, mainly age 60 or older.

There were, at the ceremonies, the expected praises of the buildings that are to be erected. These structures will replace the present George Derby Centre that was constructed on an adjacent site in 1947.

The forthcoming construction is not praiseworthy in my view. The plans for these buildings are, to me, a betrayal. These plans have failed to meet the serious health needs of veterans now and in the future.

The emphasis is on cheap custodial care. And that, I have said all along, is not good enough. All residents of Canada are supposed to receive adequate health care. In addition, war veterans are a special population with additional entitlements.

The buildings are being funded by the federal and provincial governments. Officials at both levels have refused to provide facilities for physical medicine in the new structures. The gym and indoor pool that were created in 1947 will not be replaced.

The patients will be occupied primarily by sedentary activities. There will be a huge crafts room. Staffing for that will come from the Red Cross. The patients will be allowed to have their own TV sets, mainly in private rooms. No staffing will be required for that activity.

The question of staff costs was, no doubt, the main consideration in the planning of these buildings. The treatment needs of patients were secondary. I have seen no

evidence that there is any interest in the "enlightened" treatment of either arthritis or alcohol abuse, two of the most common disorders among older men.

It will be mainly "pills for everything." There is very little provision for physical training, group therapy and health education. Emergency services will be minimal.

There will be a small chapel. And there will be three flag poles! Memorial services and a lowering of flags will be regular activities for these old soldiers. There will be a lot of deaths!

I have circulated petitions, written letters, made phone calls, appeared on TV and retained lawyers. All of these efforts have been insufficient. The iron hand of "restraint" has won the day. I do, however, question about whether there will be any true economic advantages in the long run. Neglect now may be expensive later.

My only satisfaction is that I have done all that I could do to try to bring about facilities that would be more adequate and more kindly. I have been seriously disabled for about 10 years. I could only do so much in these circumstances.

Several persons have been helpful along the way. Some journalists were willing to publicize my views. Several labour leaders had some degree of involvement. There are very serious implications for hospital employees.

When the buildings have been completed in about 20 months, it will be possible to move 150 veterans from Vancouver to East Burnaby. That is a declared part of the plan.

There will be no gains in the number of treatment beds available to veterans. The trend has been to reduce the number of beds in recent years. The capacity

at George Derby has been lowered during 1985-86 from 200 to 150. Pavilions 1 and 8 have been closed.

All patients have been removed from the Jean Matheson Pavilion at Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver. That building is now entirely offices, a pharmacy and a motel. Other areas have been closed to in-patients, especially B4 with a capacity of 50.

It is the contention of hospital administrators that the number of veterans requiring treatment is "dwindling". Anyone with any sense knows that the truth of the matter is the exact opposite! The masses of World War II men are now beginning to experience the drastic consequences of aging. Many of the typical disorders are worsening.

The heart attacks and strokes are happening now. The lung problems and liver problems are creating serious disabilities now. The "wear and tear" in the various joints is creating more suffering now. It is now, and in the next 20 years, that Canada will have its major challenges in geriatric care and rehabilitation.

Administrators and physicians at Shaughnessy are, however, moving in the direction of younger people. The west section of A3, formerly for geriatric rehabilitation, has been closed in recent years. On the Spinal Cord Injury Unit, almost all patients are under 30 years of age.

As I said, the plan for the future of disabled veterans is mainly cheap, custodial care in East Burnaby. The location is remote and out of the public view. I suppose that relatives and friends from Vancouver will be riding "Sky Train" to New Westminster although they will still have several miles to travel from the terminal.



## LETTERS

The shuttle buses that ran regularly between Derby and Shaughnessy for 38 years were discontinued in 1985. Patients now travel mainly by taxi for appointments at Shaughnessy. Transportation has been "privatized."

I have not heard any concrete plans, as yet, for the transportation of patients when the new buildings have been completed. We were informed, at one meeting, that the city bus will stop "at the door." This is, of course, no consolation for the increasing number of patients who are spending their lives in wheelchairs.

The ceremonies on September 11 were, in truth, a sad occasion for old soldiers. There will be some excitement for a few weeks. Eventually the harshness of the realities will be felt. By then, it will be rather late to express objections.

I am reminded, once more, of Canadian "complacency." Edgar Friedenbergl published a book in 1980 on "deference to authority." Docility, he said, is deliberately cultivated in Canada.

I have seen with my own eyes the pressures toward conformity and docility that exist at Shaughnessy and at George Derby. Many

patients are worried these days, about being "kicked out." Most hospital workers are in a continual state of anxiety about losing their jobs.

This is not a healthy situation for patients or for staff. It is not the kind of thing that should exist among democratic, caring people.

How long will it be until there are "better days" in British Columbia.

Alfred Kuenzli

(The author was a patient at George Derby and Shaughnessy for 21 months during 1984-86.)



Members of the Hospital Employees' Union have joined seniors and other concerned citizens across Canada in expressing their condemnation of the controversial federal legislation to amend the Patent Act.

Members of HEU's Provincial Executive warned that the bill — given approval in principle in Ottawa Dec. 8 — will cause drug costs to soar and result in the loss of thousands of jobs.

And Jean Swanson, spokesperson of the End Legislated Poverty coalition, pointed out that B.C.'s underfunded health care system will be further jeopardized by the bill which surveys have shown could force prescription drug prices up 200 per cent or more.

"It's clear that the Tory government's fascination with free enterprise has prompted it to yield to the U.S.-based multinationals who always put profits above people," said Swanson. "By changing the drug Patent Act, the big losers

are going to be lower income people and seniors."

Swanson added that although seniors are entitled to free prescription drugs under provincial health insurance plans, the higher costs would be passed on to consumers in the form of higher taxes. And she said the brunt of the amended bill will be borne by B.C. health care workers, thousands of whom have already been laid off because of cutbacks.

# User Beware New Drug Plan Could Be Hazardous

That's because more money will have to be diverted to cover drug costs at hospitals and pharmacare for pensioners. The bill, staunchly opposed by both the New Democrats and Liberals, provides for 10 years of freedom from competition for most of the brand name drugs patented in years to come. The existing legislation allows generic manufacturers in Canada to copy brand-name drugs almost as soon as they are developed by paying a licence fee.



# HEU delegates attend

Nearly 1,000 delegates from 83 affiliates with 750 locals stood up and let their voices be heard at the B.C. Federation of Labor's 31st annual convention.

Held Dec. 1 to Dec. 5, the convention started under the shadow of the forest dispute and strike by members of the International Woodworkers of America. And delegate after delegate rose in militant support of the striking wood workers and vowed to defy any Sacred back-to-work laws. As Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, put it: "I hope it means the B.C. Federation is going to go the wall, even if it means the wall they have in jails."

(On the last day of the convention came the announcement of a tentative agreement. Days later, IWA members gave the nod to a new contract in overwhelming numbers, ending the bitter 4½



Jack Gerow, HEU's secretary-business manager

month dispute. The contentious issue of contracting-out and shift scheduling will go to a royal commission).

For the first time in HEU's history, the union has two members on the B.C. Fed executive council — HEU President Bill Macdonald and Jack Gerow. The 180 HEU delegates in attendance made a spirited showing, speaking on nearly every resolution and report on the agenda. And they managed to cut to the essence of the topics raised to get their points across.

Specifically attacked in resolutions were: the Workers' Compensation Board for what labor calls



Linda Mortenson (Williams Lake Unit), Judi Verbruggen and Pat Pearce (Fort St. John Unit)



HEU president Bill Macdonald



# B.C. Fed Convention

its ineffectual appeal processes, the Labor Relations Board for its employer bias, the Compensation Stabilization Program as a wage control agency that stymies free collective bargaining, the Forget Commission recommendations for cutbacks in unemployment insurance and recent federal legislation ending the longshore lock-out and legislating contract terms on a union that has been negotiating for a year with no strikes.

Joyce Dawson of the Prince George Unit summed it up while

speaking on the resolution to boycott the LRB: "Boycott resolutions have become like mom and apple pie ... Let's do something about them!"

Topics of particular concern to HEU members such as health care cutbacks, technological change and contracting-out were debated across the floor. Also high on the list were the calls for public ownership of resources, women's rights and the anti-labor tactics of the WCB and the CSP.

Janet Fairbanks of the Comox Unit, who spoke on several topics to strong rounds of applause, said she found the convention "inspiring and educational." And she said it was evident that HEU members made an impression on other delegates with their strong stands and knowledge of labor and social issues.

Meeting other delegates was one of the convention's highlights for Phyllis Shiplack of the Royal Jubilee Unit, who observed the differences between the Fed convention and that of HEU. "It's important to broaden our knowledge of how other unions operate and what we can all contribute to the labor movement."

Speaker after speaker emphasized that there is a concerted effort by employers to hammer the trade union movement out of existence. And the militancy of the convention delegates was a reaction to a very real threat to working people, pointed out Jack Nichol, president of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union.



Jay Naidoo, secretary-general of the South African Congress of Trade Unions



Maureen Paminger (Cowichan Lodge Unit)



HEU delegates converge on the convention floor



Trish Beaugrand (Langley Unit)



"What we saw this week is extremely genuine — it's not a euphoria of the convention."

The theme of the convention before it was overshadowed by the IWA dispute was deregulation, contracting out, free trade and privatization, dubbed the "four horsemen of the apocalypse" by outgoing B.C. Fed President Art Kube. That's because of the common threat to job security, public and worker safety, social programs and political and cultural sovereignty.

Canadians are threatened on all fronts in the free trade talks by U.S. encroachment on Canadian fisheries and water and demands for the review of medicare and unemployment insurance "subsidies," Canadian Labor Congress vice-president Richard Mercier told the convention.

Angela Schira, president of the B.C. Council of Machinists, said there is no basis for the government assumption that deregulation will not be equally as devastating in Canada as in the U.S., where lower rates for shippers, unemployment, and health and safety infractions have followed introduction of such policies.

"A lot of jobs have been lost, 300,000 jobs in the U.S. are lost in

the trucking industry alone because of deregulation," said Schera. "In the airline industry, 40,000 jobs are lost."

New B.C. Fed resolutions opposing apartheid followed an address

by the general secretary of the 700,000-member South African Congress of Trade Unions, Jay Naidoo.

Naidoo said the attitude of Premier Vander Zalm's government to the struggle of his people amounts to collusion in genocide. (Naidoo



Heather Suggitt (Kootenay Lake Unit)



Shelly Scott (Victoria General Unit)



Convention delegates from Prince George Unit



was referring to the premier's November meeting with South African Ambassador Glen Babb — which was protested by HEU in a telegram to Vander Zalm — and B.C.'s consideration of trade with South Africa).

And he added that the struggle for basic democratic and human rights by Canadian unions such as the IWA and Gainers workers in Alberta is a shared one.

"I want you to imagine these struggles, multiplied a thousand times and you will know the reality we as workers in South Africa face back home," said Naidoo. "The message I bring to you from South Africa is not only for you and Canadian workers, it is for people like your premier, the Vander Zalms of Canada who choose to keep bottles of bloodied wines on the shelves, who feel that they can

export pre-fabricated houses to them.

"We say to them that this is not the solution to our problems, that what we do need and what we are fighting for in South Africa is the right to elect a democratic government that represents the will of the majority."

Chief Joe Mathias, B. C. Regional Vice-Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, made an eloquent plea for understanding of the land claims of native people.

Delegates listened for more than an hour to the history of North American Indians and land claims as Mathias explained the common struggle and pledged support to labor from the aboriginal people. He was voicing a solidarity expressed when Indians on Vancouver Island helped the IWA by picketing logs being transported to Port Alberni through their reserve.

The election by acclamation of the federation's two officers and 12 vice-presidents were also rallying points of the convention.

Ken Georgetti of the United Steelworkers of America Local 480 in Trail was elected president and successor of Kube, while Cliff Andstein was re-elected to his second term as secretary-treasurer.



HEU members listen to speakers from the floor



Ken Georgetti, new president of the B.C. Federation of Labor



HEU's 1st Vice-President Alberta Dorval, Financial Secretary Mary LaPlante, 5th Vice-President Nancy Macdonald and Senior Trustee Julia Amendt.



## FRONTLINES

### BOYCOTT'S BOYCOTT'S

Union members around the province are being asked by the B.C. Federation of Labor to boycott the following products and companies until labor disputes at these firms are settled. In all cases, the Federation has called a boycott at the request of the unions who represent the workers at those companies in the hopes of pressuring management to settle long outstanding disputes.

- South African products**
- Chilean goods** B.C. Federation of Labor. Look for label on the following products: grapes, peaches, plums, pears, raisins, nectarines,

lobster, onions, wine

- Lettuce** CLC. Donny, Red Coach, Big Fred, SAS, Big A, Bobby & Andrews
- Procter & Gamble** USWA. Soap products/detergents
- Louisiana Pacific Corporation (Forest Products)** Carpenters/IWA. Construction Material, Waferwood Construction Panels, Pabco Xonolite Insulation, Weatherseal Windows and Doors
- Victoria Plywood** Any items identified by the logo "Vicply"
- California table grapes** United Farmworkers of America
- Continental Airlines** AFL-CIO

#### HOT EDICTS

- Calwood Industries, Surrey** (company manufactures and installs millwork and interior fixtures for large projects primarily in the Lower Mainland) — Carpenters' Union, Local 1928

- Hyundai-Kerkhoff** B.C. & Yukon Territories Building & Construction Trades Council
- Royal Canadian Legion branches in the Fraser Valley #4 Chilliwack, #15 Abbotsford, #265 Aldergrove** Hotel, Restaurant, Culinary & Bartenders' Union, Local 40
- Slade & Stewart Ltd., Vancouver, Kamloops, Terrace** Retail Wholesale Union, Local 580
- Okanagan H.R.I. Supply Ltd. (All products and services)** Retail Wholesale Union, Local 580
- Purolator Courier (B.C. operations)** Retail Wholesale Union, Local 580
- Stevenson Construction, Pennyfarthing Site** B.C. & Yukon Territories Building and Construction Trades Council
- Entex Doors Systems Ltd., Port Coquitlam (all products)** Carpenters' Shop, Local 1928

## Bitter labor battle over at Gainers

The bitter, sometimes violent labor battle at the Gainers meat packing plant in Edmonton is over.

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union voted 60.8 in favor of accepting an agreement that had been worked out between their leadership and multi-millionaire owner Peter Pocklington in mid-December.

The Gainers' strike became the rallying point for the besieged labor movement in Alberta, where the government has passed labor laws that deem collective agreements to expire 24 hours after a strike occurs. And unions across the country (including HEU) donated money to the strike fund and waged a successful boycott of Gainers' products.

Under the proposed agreement, Gainers reversed its position and agreed that all striking workers

would be rehired ahead of scabs. The company also agreed to maintain the employees' pension fund — although Gainers will be allowed

to remove a surplus of between \$6-million and \$10-million.

"It's not a perfect agreement," said John Ventura, president of



HEU's Provincial Executive members join striking Gainers workers on the picket line in Edmonton



## FRONTLINES

UFCW local 280-P. "But it's one personally I can live with."

During the strike, heavily shielded buses carrying scabs into the plant frequently had to run the gauntlet of strikers and supporters armed with rocks and bats. And Edmonton police, backed by a riot squad in its first public appearance, wrestled protestors to the

ground. More than 600 arrests clogged courts for weeks and caused the police force to spend its annual overtime budget in a few days.

In the new contract, workers' pay will be frozen for the first two years, followed by a raise of three per cent in each of the next two years. Employees were seeking an

increase of up to \$1.03 an hour over the first two years — about five per cent over one year — a deal that would have given them parity with other Canadian packing-plant employees.

About 1,080 employees went on strike and were then locked out when their contract expired on June 1.

## Surrey unit members "cleared"

The December inquest on the death of an elderly patient at Surrey Memorial Hospital was told that there was no evidence she drank a liquid disinfectant. Nor was there any evidence the extended care patient died of poisoning, said her doctor, who diagnosed the cause of death as pneumonia.

HEU member Brian O'Reilly told a coroner's inquest unlabelled bottles of juice have gone out to various departments several times in the past due to the lack of handling policies before being served to patients.

The controversial case made headlines this summer as hospital administrators sought to blame health care workers for the tragic mix-up in which five patients were served the cleaning fluid.

Two HEU members were disciplined, with one suspended without pay for three days. HEU, in turn, was outraged, condemning the hospital decision as a "witch hunt" attacking those least culpable. The union has also launched two grievances on unjust discipline and the hospital's labelling policy.

HEU members were also shocked after management cancelled a scheduled health and safety committee meeting the week after the tumultuous events. This despite the fact the union and hospital are legally required to hold the meetings once a month. And the kicker was that the hospital

took the time the following day to hold a social committee meeting to plan an upcoming party.

There has still been no joint meeting between union members and management to try to resolve the problem of transferring and labelling toxic substances.

In other news at the hospital, members were not informed of an outbreak of scabies on the Extended Care Ward 2 last fall. It was the second outbreak of the contagious disease in three months.

As one HEU member pointed out, scabies are caused by parasitic mites that breed in dirt. And ironically, the outbreak coincided with the hospital's announcement that it was dramatically cutting

back on housekeeping staff.

Twenty positions in the housekeeping department were eliminated in October and replaced by 10 part-time positions.

The hospital, which recently contracted the private firm of Versa Services to oversee housekeeping duties, is merely putting profits in Versa's pockets at the expense of members, said Jack Gerow, HEU's secretary-business manager.

"This trend to have less staff to do more work is an intolerable hardship on our members and anyone unfortunate enough to end up in hospital," said Gerow. "It's quite obvious that inadequate funding has created a critical condition at B.C. hospitals."



Nearly every union member leaves a B.C. Fed Convention with a few mementoes such as buttons and stickers.

Not HEU member Lulu Sonderson, a convention delegate who had the incredible luck to win a \$10,000 mink coat. She won the fur at the Vancouver Centre shopping mall after depositing her name in the draw seconds before the contest closed. The coat will come in handy helping Sonderson — a member from the Prince George Unit — brave many a winter to come.



## LETTERS

### Fight for equal rights now

"Equal pay for work of equal value" is such a basic concept that, in 1987, it should not even require discussion and should most certainly not reflect discrimination. The hard, cold facts, however, are that it is another "equality" still to be gained by women.

Women, all through history, have had to fight for equality. Who doesn't know of the suffragettes? Compared with the struggle faced by women today, the suffragettes had it easy.

The "right to vote" was tangible. Once won, once passed into law, it was a right women could, and did, exercise. "Equal pay" is something of a "will of the wisp."

Governments talk of, and may even adopt "equal pay" legislation. That will be the first small step in the elimination of women as second-class citizens in the workplace.

Don't be misled by the government hyperbole and employer hype. Agreement in principle to "equal pay" is the easy nut to crack. Agreement in fact to "work of equal value" is a totally different matter.

Over the coming months and years, promises and studies, plans and investigations will be a dime a dozen — and expensive even at that price. The implementation of "equal pay" legislation will take more courage, more determination and perservance, more hard work and, most important, more unity than any previous "rights" struggle.

Let's recognize that now. Let's marshal our forces now. Let's begin our fight now — not tomorrow or next week. Let's put HEU in the forefront of this battle.

Leo Bibo  
Vancouver General Unit

### Burnaby unit commends members

The table officers at Burnaby Hospital would like to commend our members for the support they showed to the HSA picket line. We are very proud of the way our membership conducted themselves. To all of them we would like

to say "Walk tall and be proud of the way you conducted yourselves."

Sister McCurrach  
Brother O'Brien  
Brother Gentile

### CUPE's Jeff Rose sends congratulations

I've just learned the very good news that the recently negotiated HEU settlement has been ratified by the membership. Jean Claude Laniel joins me in congratulating you and all the members of the

executive and negotiating committee on a job well done. Thank you, continued success, warm regards.

Jeff Rose  
CUPE National President



Budding young softball players get ready for the upcoming season in Prince George. The group is sponsored by HEU's Northern Region.



# CCERA

## negotiations continue

After more than seven months of negotiations, 1,200 HEU members in long-term care units are still without a collective agreement.

This despite a 72 per cent strike vote in late October from members at 29 facilities throughout the province. At the same time, the Continuing Care Employee Relations Association announced that it voted in favor of locking out HEU members.

The union is expected to meet with the labor minister in January to outline the futility of bargaining with CCERA, which has consistently refused to budge on many of their concession demands.

But perhaps the most galling factor to members is the employer's refusal to honor a previous agreement recognizing the rights of long-term care workers to equal wages, benefits and working conditions with their acute care colleagues.

It is, as one HEU member says, "nothing short of blatant discrimination."

The comparability issue is contentious because that joint HEU/CCERA agreement came only after long term care members spent more than six long weeks on the picket line in the spring of 1985. They also achieved that contract after more than three years of negotiations.

As HEU has been quick to point out, the latest attempt to bargain is only the second round of negotiations the union has had with the fledgling CCERA. On both occasions HEU has been compelled to take strike votes.



Members at Nelson Jubilee Manor Unit preparing to take strike votes.

That doesn't sit well with health care workers in long-term care facilities who earn, on average, 20 to 30 per cent less than other hospital workers doing the same job.

Although going on strike is always the last resort, the union has informed CCERA that it may have no choice. HEU has also made it clear that the first choice is to get back to the bargaining table and hammer out a collective agreement based on the prevailing standard of collective agreements in health care in B.C.

So far, CCERA has disregarded these messages and has remained steadfast in its determination to wrest concessions from members. The last meeting between HEU/CCERA broke off October 3, at which time the union asked Mediator Jack Chapelas to book out of the dispute.

As of press time, no further negotiations have been scheduled. The union, however, will continue its bid to achieve a fair and long overdue settlement for its members in the upcoming weeks.





# Equal pay for work of Equal Value

In 1968, a male chef retired from Lion's Gate Hospital. Lucy Boychuk took over her former colleague's job in the dietary department, assuming the same responsibilities and duties. The only difference was the rate of pay and her job classification. For exactly the same work, Lucy was paid \$300 less a month.

The HEU unit members took up the cause with a vengeance, insisting that Lucy should be paid the same as the chef. Management, however, remained inflexible and maintained that because her classification was cook (only men were eligible for the title of chef) she was not entitled to the same wage allotted to her male co-workers.

HEU waged a long and bitter struggle to eliminate this gross discrimination. But the union finally won the battle after threatening to set up picket lines at the hospital to convince the employer to back down on this discriminatory policy.

This anecdote serves to show that while wage and promotion discrimination is not new, neither is HEU's or other unions' attempt to end the disparity between working women and men's salaries and job classifications. And the fight continues in the 1980s. Last November, for example, CUPE held a national meeting in Montreal to deal with the issue of equal pay — attended by HEU's Financial Secretary Mary LaPlante and 1st Vice-President Alberta Dorval.

HEU was at the forefront in the late '60s and early 1970s to achieve parity. Following on the heels of a 1973 Wage Policy Conference resolution to put into action the desire to work towards social goals, HEU filed 600 complaints with the Human Rights Commission in Victoria on the issue of pay equity.

The fight to bring women out of the job ghettos has been a long and arduous one. Although some headway was made when the NDP formed the government between 1973 and 1975, those gains were effectively stalemated by the

infamous restraint program in 1982 and the stick-handling of the Compensation Stabilization Program through the legislature.

As Jack Gerow, secretary-business manager points out, the anti-labor CSP not only decimates the free collective bargaining process, but ensures that the status quo on maintaining and widening the wage gap continues.

And some CSP critics insist the paramount reason why the former Bennett regime pushed the legislation through is because of the gains made by a few unions in negotiating discrimination out of their contracts for some member categories in the early '80s.

As Gene Errington, a representative/researcher with CUPE puts it: "Wage controls stops us dead in our tracks in terms of pay equity. The whole concept of equal pay is that we don't take money from male workers to give to women. That's totally contrary to the whole philosophy of equality in every aspect of our working lives."





# COMPARABLE WORTH?



EXECUTIVE  
\$84,000



SECRETARY  
\$18,000



MOTHER OF THREE  
\$1,137



EXECUTIVE  
\$35,000



DOMESTIC  
\$9,611



# FAIR PAY FOR ALL OUR LABOUR





Errington, who was among those CUPE staff and members instrumental in spearheading the pay equity campaign in B.C., says the increment scenario has also stonewalled the bid to achieve pay equity.

"In our union, it's mostly women in increment stages. And they get shortchanged because Peck (CSP commissioner) costs the increments in the wage increase. Women, therefore, don't get the same increases that our male members do."

Just before last fall's provincial election, HEU strongly welcomed the NDP's program to implement pay equity. Gerow, noting that more than 85 per cent of HEU's 26,000-members are women, emphasized that the union would continue the fight towards reversing the Social Credit government's "shameful" treatment of women.

After the Socred election win, Gerow reiterated the stand HEU will continue to take no matter what government is in power — to

lobby for pay equity legislation, affirmative action programs, better training and educational opportunities.

"We in the labor movement also have to push for expanded child care programs and mandatory employment benefits for part-time workers, the majority of whom are women," said Gerow. "And of course the call for a restoration of health care funding remains a top priority for the union." For HEU members, wage discrimination based on gender is still a fact of life, much as it is for the majority of working women in B.C. According to the most recent HEU analysis, the wage differential between men and women HEU members averages about \$99 a month.

According to Statistics Canada's most recent figures, the male-female wage gap narrowed slightly in 1984 with women working full time earning 65.5 per cent as much as men or 35 percent less. That's up from 64 per cent in 1982 and 58 per cent in 1967. By province, the figures ranged from a low of 61 per cent in Nova Scotia to a high of 81 per cent in Prince Edward Island. In B.C., the figure was below the national average at 64.7 per cent. At \$3.75 an hour, B.C. also has the lowest minimum wage in the country — a nominal sum that is earned by mostly young people and women. (The government recently announced it was increasing the minimum wage to \$4 an hour — the second lowest in Canada).

An important statistic to note is that of part-timers, the majority of whom are women. In the entire workforce, with full and part-time workers lumped together, women

earned only 57 per cent as much as men.

"This is one of our concerns," says Marjorie Cohen, an economist and vice-president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. "The full-time figures look good, even though 35 per cent is still an enormous difference, but more women are working part-time now than ever before — and not because they want to."

## Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value: How it works

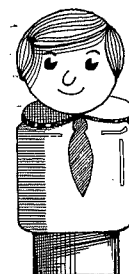
All governments in Canada have some form of equal pay legislation. It generally prohibits employers from paying dissimilar wages to employees doing the same or similar jobs. Since men and women usually do not perform the same or similar jobs — the main source of the problem — this legislation has had little impact.

Manitoba is the first province in the country to legislate equal pay for work of equal value. Since then, Ontario and Quebec have fallen suit with proposed legislation.

Under Manitoba's new legislation, pay equity will be mandatory in the Manitoba Civil Service. The process began Oct. 1, 1985 and the government and employer representatives agreed on a means to implement the legislation by June 30, 1986. Crown corporations like Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Telephone System, and external agencies like universities and health facilities, were required to







begin the process by Oct. 1, 1986. They have one year from that date to reach agreement with the unions involved.

Unlike earlier equal pay legislation which restricts comparisons to identical or nearly identical jobs, equal value legislation allows for comparisons between different jobs. This is an important gain for women. More wage disparity occurs because women are forced into job ghettos, than because of wage discrimination against women doing the same job as men.

Affirmative action, designed to correct this problem, is a painfully slow process and largely confined to well-educated women just entering the work force. For women in the job ghettos equal value legislation marks a major step forward. Yet there are problems and limitations to the legislation which cannot be ignored.

The Manitoba law restricts equalization adjustment to one per cent of public sector employers' total wage bill each year for four years. At best, the distributional impact is the equivalent to raising the minimum wage from say \$4 an hour to \$5 over a four-year period. While this momentarily closes the gap between the lowest paid and the average paid workers, unless the lower rate is continuously boosted the gap is quickly re-established.

## The Ontario Experience

In Ontario, the government there is now grappling with how to turn recent equal pay legislation

affecting one million women into reality. Unlike Manitoba and Quebec, Ontario's historic pay equity law applies to both public and private sector jobs, covering businesses, hospitals, Crown agencies school boards and colleges.

Union leaders say they are generally pleased that the government was moving ahead with the legislation, but that the bill still has many problems that need to be worked out.

The law does not detail where the money is supposed to come from to adjust the wages of women in such public-sector organizations as hospitals, school boards or Children's Aid Societies, whose budgets have been cut back in recent years, some union leaders complain.

"The law also seems to be an invitation to employers to contract out union work," says Frank Rooney of the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union.

Margot Trevelyan of the Canadian Union of Public Employees called the bill a "bold initiative" but says that it gives employers too much time to start making higher payments to women.

The proposed law would require companies with more than 100 employees to post plans showing how they propose to compare jobs within their establishment and how much women's wages will be adjusted. Employers would be required to spend up to one per cent of the previous year's payroll on pay-equity adjustments.

The law also stipulates that no workers are to suffer wage cuts in order for the employer to follow the law. Employers would be allowed to make some exceptions for salary differentials in cases of seniority,

merit pay, temporary training assignments and skills shortages. Employers who do not comply with the law would be subject to fines of between \$2,000 and \$25,000.

Already, the act has elicited a backlash from the business community which has condemned the government for introducing what they consider to be "intrusive" legislation. And they have solemnly intoned that some employers will stop hiring women in an attempt to get around the law.

"Any disgruntled female could call in the pay-equity cops with this bill. The threat of getting ensnared in a pay-equity fight is going to make them avoid hiring women," said John Bulloch, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, in a recent interview with *The Globe and Mail*.

The proposed legislation's exemption for small businesses has also drawn fire from women's groups and opposition politicians, who complained that it would not cover thousands of low-paid women such as workers in long-term care facilities, library workers or day care staff. They have also attacked the legislation for giving employers as long as six years to start raising pay.

The bill, believed to be the first in North America to apply to jobs in both sectors, was acknowledged by Ontario's Attorney-General Ian Scott as a step in the right direction. In a speech to the legislature, Scott pointed out that women have been subsidizing the economy with their lower wages for too long, and their work has been undervalued by virtue of the fact that they are women.



## SPEAKING OUT

# Sanctions Now!!

**By Peter Mahlangu**  
*Coordinator for Canada*  
*South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)*

On behalf of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), I firstly want to express our appreciation to the Hospital Employees' Union for your principled support for our struggle against apartheid racism and exploitation in South Africa.

The white minority regime in my country now confronts an unprecedented political and economic crisis. The black majority, representing 85 per cent of the total population, and a growing number of democratic-minded whites have rejected all the so-called "reforms" of the Botha regime. In doing so, they have also demonstrated to the international community that they are prepared to die, if necessary, to achieve their liberation from the tyranny of apartheid. The regime clearly has no solutions to our problems, no legitimate responses to our just demands for basic human, political and trade union rights. All that Botha and his generals have left is their superior firepower which can only kill and maim, but that can only delay, not prevent, our march to create a truly non-racial, democratic society in a future South Africa.

The State of Emergency introduced on June 12 effectively prevents any truthful media coverage of our everyday struggle to the outside world. At the same time, the regime uses the profits created from our cheap labor to assist the racist friends of apartheid to visit South Africa and to return to countries like Canada to sow confusion in the minds of people like your-

selves. The regime also parades around the world its Bantustan puppets, like Gatscha Buthelezi, to misrepresent the situation at home and to weaken the call by our people for total sanctions against South Africa. Working people in Canada must realize that Buthelezi no more represents our interests than the Fraser Institute and National Citizens Coalition (who sponsored his recent tour) represent your interests as working people.

We know all these strategies and tactics from decades of struggle against the racist regime and its collaborators abroad. But we want you, as Canadian workers and trade unionists, to not be confused by these ploys of apartheid because your solidarity is crucial to our ultimate victory inside South Africa.

You must keep in mind that more than 20,000 South Africans have been detained since June 12 under the Emergency powers. Thousands of children under the age of 18 are among those detainees. Thousands of black workers, including hundreds of above-ground trade union leaders, are also among those still incarcerated in the prisons of apartheid — unable to carry out their union functions or have any contact with their families.

The present State of Emergency is, in many respects, directed primarily at the strength and militancy of the trade union movement. In December, 1985, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) emerged as a united, above-ground federation. One year later, it represents 700,000 workers and is committed to non-racial principles and involvement in the larger political struggle. COSATU operates



openly, SACTU operates clandestinely, and both levels of trade union activity are essential to the defeat of apartheid.

Both SACTU and COSATU have called for comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against South Africa. Through the work of SACTU in the Canadian labor movement, many private and public sector unions alike have initiated campaigns to make their workplaces free of apartheid commodities and connections.

In the health sector, CUPE, SEIU, OPSEU, SGEU and many other labor organizations have demanded of the employers in hospitals and other health care institutions that no South African fresh or canned fruit be allowed to enter their workplaces. SACTU commends your union, HEU, for also adopting this position at your 1986 Convention.

As Coordinator of the SACTU Canadian Office since arriving in Canada four months ago, I have been most impressed at the collective concern and solidarity expressed by the Canadian working class with our struggle against apartheid. As SACTU has said since its formation in 1955: "AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL."