

Guardian

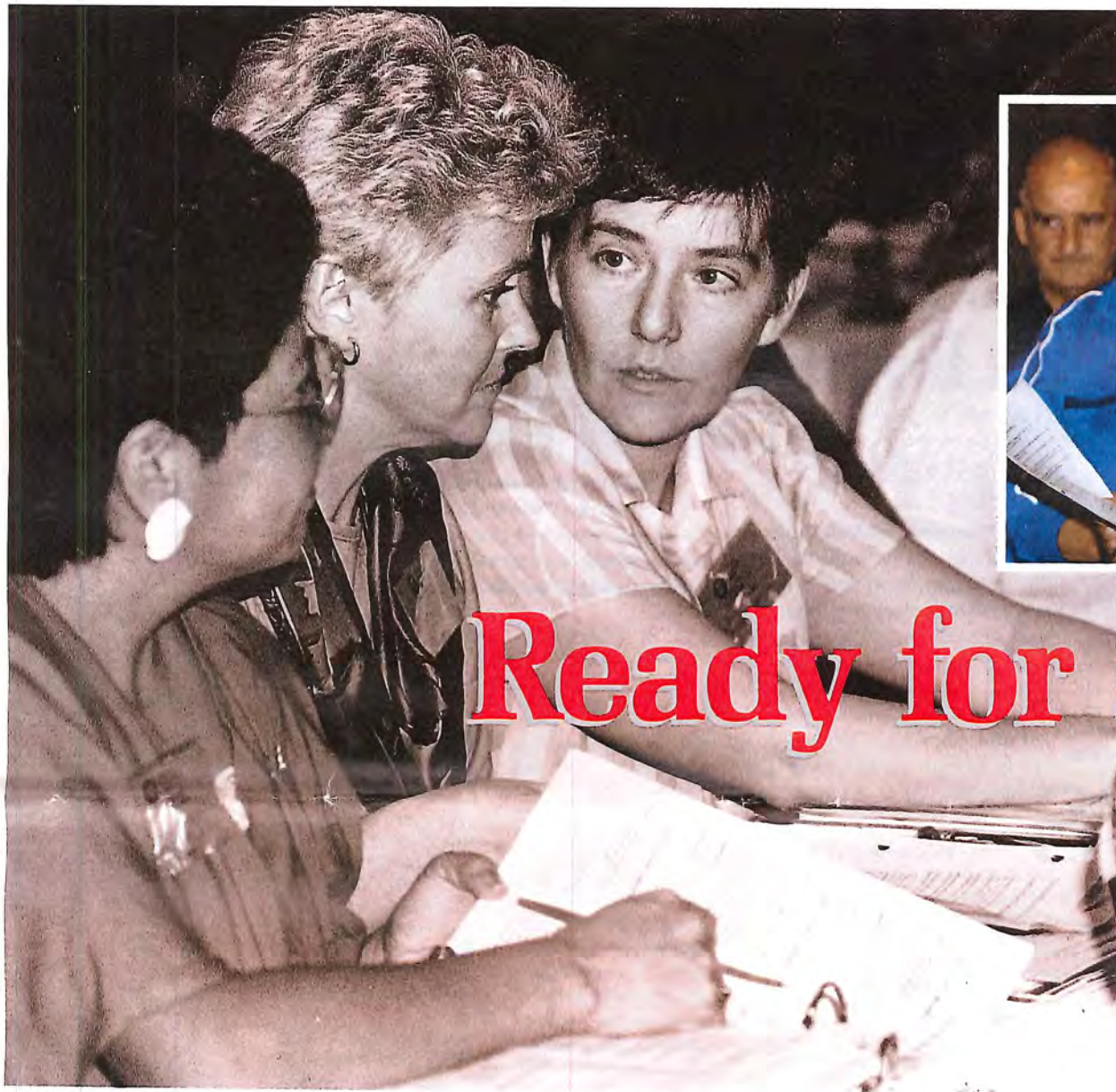


VOL 2 NO 6

THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES UNION

DECEMBER 1990

CONVENTION 90



Ready for action

Delegates to HEU's 17th Biennial Convention set the union's course for the coming decade and laid the groundwork for bargaining in 1991.

PAGE 7

Saving Royal Inland

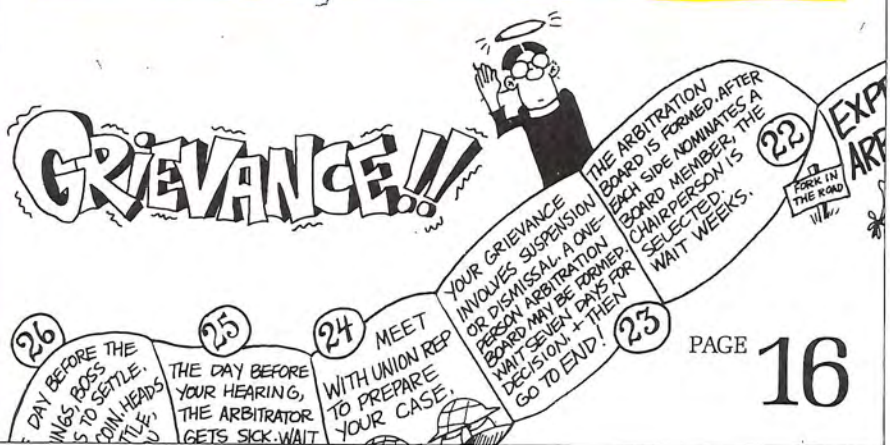
When HEU members at Royal Inland Hospital decided to fight lay-offs, they found their entire community ready to help.

PAGE 3

DEALING WITH MEXICO

A B.C. trade union delegation forges links with Mexican workers who see no benefit for their country in a new free trade agreement.

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January local meetings will set pace in '91

DEMOCRACY and accountability will be the order of the day at the January local meetings of the Hospital Employees' Union. HEU members in 247 health care facilities throughout British Columbia will elect more than 2,000 local leaders.

In any year the job of a local executive member is an important one. But in a bargaining year when we have to renegotiate our collective agreement, it's vital. All of our contracts expire in 1991, and 1991 is a major bargaining year for the Hospital Employees' Union.

The key to winning real gains in our 1991 contract lies in our strength at the local level. It cannot be stressed enough that as many HEU member as possible must participate in the January elections — whether as candidates, or to cast their ballot at the local meetings.

Our members must know and understand where their union is going. They must have a hand in setting that course. They must have a provincial and a local leadership that holds their confidence and respect.

The union recognizes the central role of local executive members and makes sure that the necessary training and support are available to them through annual table officer confer-



COMMENT

BY CARMELA ALLEVATO

ences, shop steward seminars, and other initiatives.

The Hospital Employees' Union heads into this bargaining year with a significant agenda. Our Wage Policy Conference established important priorities for our new contract. One of them is to eliminate the wage discrimination that exists in our industry on the basis that the work that our members perform has traditionally been regarded as women's work — and historically women's work has been underpaid.

The HEU bargaining committee has begun discussions with the Health Labour Relations Association on ways to eliminate this discrimination.

There are other significant tasks that face us early in this New Year. Co-or-

dination among the three health care unions remains a top priority. The Hospital Employees' Union, the B.C. nurses Union and the Health Sciences Association met in December to discuss joint strategies for 1991 bargaining.

Very early in January, we expect the B.C. Federation of Labour will convene a meeting of the three unions to discuss the federation's picketing policy and the essential services policy.

But the most important priority for us remains harnessing the strength of the membership. Our union is under no illusion about the job ahead.

Health care employers carry out the marching orders of a Provincial Government that is hostile to workers and to public health care. The 17th Biennial Convention gave the newly-elected Provincial Executive the mandate and the resources to carry out this priority.

And the January local elections are a significant factor in achieving this priority.

I am confident that this year we will see the widest membership participation ever in the January local meetings and that once again outstanding leaders will be selected.

I would like to close by extending my personal holiday greetings to all of HEU's members, local officers, shop stewards, Provincial Executive members, staff and their families and friends. Together we will make 1991 a rewarding and successful new year.

• *Allevato is the HEU's secretary-business manager.*

Guardian

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

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Letters

The Guardian welcomes letters to the editor. Please be brief. Write to 2006 W. 10th Ave., V6J 4P5 or leave your views on the HEU Guardian Hotline, 734-5311.

Media should contact HEU on Pay Equity

A recent article in the *Penticton Herald* on the issue of pay equity in hospital negotiations was extremely disappointing for its failure to contact a union representative for clarification.

First of all, the article seemed to imply that HLRA would have to come up with the money for pay equity to be implemented. This is not so. It is the government which will have to make a commitment of X number of dollars.

This will be done for BCGEU and all other public sector workers. But it is up to the government to create a fair and just policy for legislating private sector workers to implement pay equity.

It has been a fairly general opinion over the years that women were only capable of doing those jobs which were extensions of the home or care-giver type jobs — i.e. nursing, teaching young children, etc.

The First and Second World Wars proved this to be totally false. We all remember "Rosie the Riveter." An interesting fact is that the government legislated those

What exactly is job evaluation?

Well, to use technical terms, it's usually what the management can get away with!



women out of jobs so that men could go back to work. A lot of those women were widows or abandoned and needed those jobs!

One of the ways that union jobs have discriminatory pay systems is due to increment steps. Almost all female-dominated jobs have increment steps, which means that the employer is allowed to hold back the actual top rate of pay for up to four years. Yet the male-dominated jobs start at the top rate from the day they start the job, as it should be.

In 1989, three out of four women in prime child-bearing years were in the labour force. That is 56 percent of the female work force, yet they were earning 62 cents for every \$1 a man earned. That figure has fallen in the last four

years from 66 cents to 62 cents.

Women do not "select" low-paying jobs. It is reality that most female jobs are underpaid. Even a female doctor working full-time, full-year earns about \$30,000 less than a male doctor. Why? Because it has been acceptable to pay women a lower rate for years.

Pay equity is here and it's time that those sitting high up on the government and corporate chairs made a commitment to every citizen that it be implemented as quickly and fairly as possible.

Women are an integral part of the Canadian work force. Let's start paying them in the just manner they deserve.

BARB WILKINSON,
HEU Penticton local,
Penticton

Lead, follow or get out of the way

• Following is a letter sent to Kamloops papers in support of the Friends of Royal Inland Hospital campaign launched by HEU, BCNU and HSA.

I have never before written a letter to the editor. However, after witnessing the recent events at Royal Inland Hospital, I feel now is the time to do so.

As a tax-paying citizen of Kamloops for over 60 years, I am appalled at how the board is running our hospital.

The government may be in fact — and probably is — underfunding the hospital, but it is up to the board and senior administration to get the information needed and set the record straight.

Mrs. Horne, the rest of the board and the senior administration should have realized that they were in way over their heads long ago.

They should have asked the experts for help. They should have resigned. But instead, they linger on, pretending to be responsible and efficient managers, when what they are doing is compromising and eroding the health care in our hospital.

I am just one man, but I know I speak for many in this community who

share similar sentiments. What this hospital needs — for a change — is strong, effective leadership.

We need people who can run this hospital like the multi-million dollar business it is. We need to give back to Royal Inland Hospital the pride and positive image that it once had.

For these reasons, I welcome an external review at Royal Inland.

I can only hope that once the review is completed and the dust settles, our board and administration will take heed from an old saying: Lead, follow, or get the hell out of the way.

L. SAKAL,
Kamloops



What we're up to

People and events around the HEU. If you have news for us — a retirement, an election, a rally, a vote or whatever — please, let us know.

Evergreen raises \$1,500 for Alzheimer Society activities

HEU's Evergreen local can be proud of the results of its Third Annual Garage and Bake Sale. After the Sept. 8 event, the local was able to present the Alzheimer's Association of B.C. \$1,500 for research.

Chairperson Kathy Dinning reports that four members of the Good and Welfare Committee spent an evening baking 85 pies for the event.

"On the day of the sale, a senior shopper set aside her cane while she examined her merchandise," Dinning says, "only to discover that her cane had been mistakenly sold to another customer. Her cane was later retrieved by the Evergreen staff, as the purchaser volunteered to return the cane. She was fully refunded her 25 cent purchase cost."

At the local's Sept. 18 meeting, Ian Ross, executive director of the Alzheimer's Assoc. accepted the cheque from Sharon Pape, chairperson of the Good and Welfare Committee. Other committee members are Sandra Dowling, Diane Geissinger, Marilyn Fidler, Gloria Berkely and Isobel Walker.

New location for Okanagan HEU office

Effective Dec. 12, the HEU's Okanagan office moved to Suite 100, 160 Dougall Road, Kelowna. The new telephone number is 765-8838 and the fax number is 765-0181.



SIGNING UP: HEU members organized a highly successful seminar on the role of licensed practical nurses at Prince George Regional Hospital in September. Helping one nurse to sign in were (left) Sabrina Letondre and (right) Lulu Sondermann.

Shaughnessy local pays tribute to Maud, Remilard

HEU's Shaughnessy local made a special presentation Oct. 24 to Bella Maud and Claire Remilard, two past executive members who made an exceptional contribution to the union. "We presented them with a special plaque," writes local secretary-treasurer Patricia Harewood. "Again, our many thanks."

Maud has taken up full-time work as an HEU staff rep.

CCERA, Pricare challenged on pay equity

HEU has called on both CCERA and the B.C. Pricare Association to begin immediate discussions on pay equity. A similar challenge to HLRA earlier this fall has produced agreement to exchange information on the issue and further meetings are to be scheduled.

Now HEU is challenging other health care employers to do the right thing. In letters Oct. 25 to Joanne Arnold, director of CCERA, and Kevin McCue, director of labour relations for Pricare, secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato demands an early meeting "to be discussions on pay equity."

Trail HEU members speak out at Royal Commission

When Trail HEU local spokesperson Carrie LaJeunesse told the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs about the effects of hospital underfunding, the hospital administration was taken aback. In her October presentation, LaJeunesse detailed the impact of combining the coronary and pediatric wards, the problems with an ancient incinerator and the failure in the drainage system which backed up sewage into the hospital kitchen.

cont. on p. 4

Ponderosa fails in bid to muzzle HEU activist

Attempts by a Kamloops long-term care employer to muzzle and intimidate an HEU member who spoke out before the Royal Commission on Health Care have backfired.

The Nov. 23 suspension of activity worker Teresa MacIsaac by Ponderosa Lodge was reversed days later at the request of the Royal Commission on Health Care and costs and after HEU requested a trouble-shooter investigation.

MacIsaac, an activity worker at Ponderosa

Lodge, was suspended by the lodge for failing to answer questions about her testimony.

But MacIsaac was unbowed. She took her story to the floor of the B.C. Federation of Labour convention in Vancouver, where she told delegates that she'd been suspended for telling the commission about violence toward health-care workers, staff shortages and lack of supplies.

The province-wide media coverage her speech generated drew even more attention to problems at Ponderosa.

The Ponderosa Lodge has informed the HEU

that MacIsaac's file will be cleared of all references to the matter, in response to a Royal Commission request that the suspension be lifted. MacIsaac received a standing ovation from federation delegates after she thanked them for support in getting the suspension lifted.

The HEU had warned the commission about the threat of employer intimidation after earlier incidents during hearings in Terrace and Prince Rupert.

(By coincidence, MacIsaac is featured in our On The Job profile on page 6.)



FRIENDS OF ROYAL INLAND: A full-page ad in Kamloops papers endorsed by a wide range of community organizations was one high point of the campaign to restore full funding to Royal Inland. Showing the ad to RIH workers are the HEU's Bernadette Harrison (right), Donisa Bernardo (third from right), Louise Curtin (fifth from right) and HSA's Shirley Dorais (fourth from right).

Kamloops unites to fight Royal Inland cutbacks

KAMLOOPS — When health care workers at Royal Inland Hospital found their jobs threatened by budget cuts and bed closures, they turned to the community for support.

The result was one of the biggest health care campaigns this city has seen. Not only was the hospital workers' message — "no more cuts, no more layoffs" — endorsed by numerous community leaders, it also forced action from Socred MLA Claude Richmond.

Kamloops residents have ample reason to be concerned. Health care providers have cautioned that the plan to close 32 beds and lay off some 25 staff members will be a harsh blow to a health system still reeling from the closure of a 40-bed ward in 1989.

When HEU members heard the news, they were attending the union's biennial convention in Richmond. A quick strategy session with local leadership produced a three-part plan.

First, the union demanded a review of the cuts and a freeze on lay-offs until the review was complete. Secondly, HEU joined forces with HSA and the BCNU to demand a meeting with local MLAs. Third, the three unions adopted an aggressive public relations campaign to build support.

Momentum for the union battle against the cuts was spurred at the HEU convention. Some 470 delegates enthusiastically responded to passionate appeals by Royal Inland worker Paul Bailey and local chairperson Kathy Jessome. An emergency resolution vowing to restore the beds and save the jobs passed unanimously.

The three health care unions, who agreed October 26 to form a common front to oppose the bed closures, jointly organized an information campaign geared to winning broad based community support. Within 10 days, more than a thousand Friends of Royal Inland supporters were sporting union produced SAVE ROYAL INLAND buttons.

A STOP THE CUTS leaflet, endorsed by a dozen community organization under The Friends of Royal Inland banner, was delivered by some 90 hospital workers to 20,000

homes in a city-wide drop.

Union representatives won front page news coverage for helping to convince local MLA Claude Richmond to ask for additional funding for Royal Inland. "MLAs try to soothe unions over RIH cuts," observed the Kamloops Daily News in a November 5 story. The paper failed to note that MLA Bud Smith didn't support the funding request.

The government quickly ordered a Royal Inland funding review to determine whether the hospital is receiving adequate funding for a regional referral centre.

As this Guardian went to press, however, the lay-offs were proceeding.

Health Minister John Jansen hasn't responded to the clear message from every sector of the community that the health care service cuts be reversed. "The minister has turned a deaf ear to Kamloops, notes HEU Secretary-Business Manager Carmela Allevato. "It simply isn't logical to cut services in the midst of a hospital review."

The continuing Royal Inland budget crises brought out the largest crowd the Royal Commission on Health Care has seen to date at November hearings in Kamloops. Some 30 to 40 supporters of the hospital marched with signs and chanted "Stop the cuts! Save Royal Inland!" Another 150 Royal Inland supporters filled the hearing hall. Numerous Kamloops residents demanded a stop to cuts in submissions to the commission while NDP leader Mike Harcourt told marchers at the outside rally that the Socred government has confused spending priorities.

What we're up to

cont. from page 3

Administrator Gary Kjolberg made a second appearance to discuss the charges and complained that his grants were totally inadequate. Kjolberg in effect confirmed the HEU statements and pointed the finger at inadequate funding for the entire Central Kootenay Regional District.

Beware of HLRA Information Meetings on Long-term Disability

HEU staff reps and local executives have been warned to monitor meetings held in HLRA member facilities on Long Term Disability. Secretary Business Manager Carmela Allevato advised staff reps in October that the intent of the meetings may be to induce HEU members on LTD to enter rehabilitation, seek new jobs or enter support groups while foregoing their LTD rights. She urged union locals to attend and monitor the meetings to ensure members' rights are safeguarded.

HEU members speak out on pesticide issue

HEU's Sechelt local has added its voice to those of many Sunshine Coast trade unions, community groups and concerned citizens who oppose the use of pesticides and herbicides in the forest industry. A major public hearing early in October heard from more than 300 residents who disagree with the use of Vision and other pesticides.

"We wrote on behalf of our 130 workers and their families," says Sechelt chairperson Linda Moseley, "expressing our concern. It would be healthier and create jobs to go to manual cutting."

That particular licence application was denied, but Moseley reports that



BARGAINING PREPARATIONS: Within days of HEU's biennial convention, the Bargaining Committee went into session to work the Wage Policy Conference resolutions into final shape. The sessions featured a special seminar on Pay Equity by Maureen Kilgour (right), former Health Care Pay Equity Co-ordinator for Manitoba and Irene Harris (centre), equal opportunities rep for CUPE Ontario.

more applications have turned up on the government's pesticide licensing merry-go-round.

Guardian now all on recycled paper

With this issue, The Guardian is printed entirely on recycled paper. Until now, recycled stock was not available for the cover, but with its arrival at our printers, we have converted completely.

Invermere workers making progress in contract talks

As HEU convention delegates hammered away at policy resolutions on Nov. 2, HEU members at Invermere's Mount Nelson Place were hammering away at the bargaining table.

As a result of the local's successful Friends of Mount Nelson Place campaign in their Kootenays community, the Windermere District Social Services Society had returned to the bargaining table.

Although the talks adjourned Nov. 2 with a media blackout in place, local chairperson Fern Hall said substantial progress had been made toward the union's goal of parity with unionized health care workers doing similar work under CCERA and Pricare agreements.

Both sides have agreed to continue talks.

May Bennett members take strike ballot to back bargainers

Twenty HEU members at Kelowna's May Bennett Home for seniors chalked up an 85 percent strike mandate Nov. 26 in the latest round of their long struggle for a first agreement.

The long-term care workers joined HEU in June and have been seeking HEU contract conditions ever since. Their employer, Central Okanagan Health Care Society, at first delayed talks, then unleashed a massive re-organization of the workplace.

Among the changes was virtual deletion of the jobs of union activists.

The May Bennett workers went public with their concerns, taking out an ad in the local daily paper charging that their employer seemed determined to provoke a confrontation just before Christmas.

Although a strike is their last resort, the strong vote had an impression on management, which found time for a meeting Dec. 5 with the HEU and mediator Vince Ready. Further talks were scheduled for Dec. 15 and 16.

Union presses HLRA to implement CSD awards

The HEU moved on two fronts last month to ensure that union members receive the full benefit of recent reclassification awards and are not obstructed in their efforts to dispute job descriptions.

In a letter Nov. 14 to the Health Labour Relations Association, union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato condemned the refusal of hospital employers to implement last summer's upgrading of CSD aides.

The failure of several hospitals to implement the award led to job actions and protests at several Lower Mainland facilities during the fall.

To force compliance, the union has launched a policy grievance, seeking a declaration that any reclassification decision will automatically apply to all workers in substantially the same job on the same date of an award.

Allevato rejected the employers' view that the decision applies only to workers who had already filed a job review request.

In the union's view, once a position has been upgraded then all employees in the position "ought to

be reclassified as of that same date.

"To hold otherwise would lead to a discriminatory and grossly unfair result," Allevato said.

The union is advising any members affected by the award to file individual grievances if they have not already been upgraded.

At the same time, HEU is seeking quick action by the HLRA to avert long delays in resolution of disputes involving job descriptions. In the past, such disputes have been solved at arbitration.

But in a recent decision, arbitrator Don Munroe has ruled that such disputes must be decided by a Classification Referee under the contract's Maintenance Agreement.

The decision means that grievances arising from job descriptions cannot go to arbitration. They would be forced to go to the single available Classification Referee, who already is backlogged.

The union is seeking agreement from HLRA to appoint additional Classification Referees to ensure existing cases are handled as quickly as possible and no backlog develops.

HEU ready to meet with HLRA on pay equity issue

The HEU will meet hospital employers "anywhere, anytime to discuss giving our members pay equity," union secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told reporters Nov. 29.

Allevato was responding to an announcement by Gordon Austin, president of the Health Labour Relations Association, that his 180 member facilities were ready to bargain pay equity "away from the bargaining table."

The HEU will discuss the issue anywhere, Allevato replied, but the union will decide what goes on the bargaining table and what comes off.

"If HLRA wants to take it off the bargaining table then they'll have to make a deal. They'll have to give us the bucks. It's not a convoluted, mystical process."

The union challenged HLRA, CCERA and Pricare employers to

bargain pay equity earlier this fall after the Social Credit government announced it would implement pay equity for government employees. The provincial government is relying on a job evaluation process to determine pay equity improvements.

Allevato rejected Austin's suggestion that pay equity is so complicated that it has to be resolved in some "rational, reasonable forum" away from the bargaining table.

Wherever it is discussed, she said, pay equity remains HEU's top bargaining priority. Job evaluation processes used in other areas are not adequate to bring pay equity to health care workers, because most work done in health care is undervalued.

Bargaining for a new master agreement between HLRA and HEU will begin early in 1991. The existing agreement expires March 31, 1991.

Mt. St. Joseph cuts enrage multicultural groups

Joint action by the four health care unions at Vancouver's Mount St. Joseph Hospital in late November sparked a province-wide lobby against cuts in health care services at the hospital.

A \$500,000 Mount St. Joseph debt prompted the hospital to lay off B.C.'s only multicultural health co-ordinator. Surgery schedules were cut and working hours of other staff members reduced.

The 320-bed facility was forced to cut 23 beds in early December, eliminating up to 40 HEU members' jobs.

HEU local leaders quickly joined forces with HSA and BCNU mem-

bers at the hospital to organize to restore full funding.

A stop-the-cuts leaflet endorsed by a union-organized 16-member coalition including the largest multicultural group in B.C., was distributed at a Nov. 22 ceremony marking a \$10-million hospital expansion project. A copy of the leaflet and a letter opposing the cuts was given to Sacred MLA Grace McCarthy and health minister John Jansen.

Mount St. Joseph executive director Bruce Harber has requested additional provincial government funding, but his request has been denied.



VETERANS' RE-UNION: Choruses of Solidarity Forever rang through the hall Nov. 15 at a retirement party for Lions Gate Hospital HEU activist Lois Reimer. The party re-united the local's 1976 executive, which guided the local through its first strike. Joining in the celebration were (left to right) Kathy Anderson, Clarke Gardner, Reimer, Kristina Vandervoort, Pat Helps and Bill Third. Reimer worked at Lions Gate for 25 years, her most recent position being Linen Services Clerk 4.

Labour

B.C. Fed to review 'slate system' of election

Some 1,000 B.C. Federation of Labour convention delegates endorsed the federation's unity slate of officers at the annual convention in Vancouver Nov. 29, but concerns about the federation's slate system prompted the promise of an executive review.

Under the so-called slate system, the incumbent officers and execu-

tive council agree on who will be supported for officers' and executive positions at the convention. Since "breaking the slate" without prior endorsement is very difficult, some unions feel the system needs review.

The Hospital Employees' Union supported a controversial Health Sciences Association resolution

calling for a review of the election process.

(In Saskatchewan, the labour federation has eliminated its old Slate System.)

Debate on the resolution was long and heated. The resolution was ruled defeated in a close vote but procedural protests prompted re-elected federation president Ken

Georgetti to announce later that a review would be undertaken and included in next year's executive report.

In the subsequent elections, HEU secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato was returned as a federation vice-president and HEU president Bill Macdonald was re-elected an executive council member.



PROUD AND ANGRY: South African hospital workers, some carrying placards reading "Money for Medicine, Not Guns," march in Durban during their successful and historic spring strike. AFRAPIX/IMPACT PHOTOS.

B.C. Fed focuses on women's issues

A spirited delegation of some 150 HEU delegates helped push health care and women's issues to the top of the agenda at last month's B.C. Federation of Labour annual convention in Vancouver.

"There's been a big change in the federation," noted HEU president Bill Macdonald, pleased that the HEU delegation had positively influenced the five-day event. "It was a quiet convention but a lot of our issues were dealt with." The HEU rejoined the federation in 1985.

Passionate debate provoked by the federation's women's rights committee report surfaced as a convention highlight. The report, describing a disturbing range of assaults against women over the last year including the Montreal killings, sparked an extended discussion of violence against women.

Carmela Allevato, HEU secretary-business manager told delegates that violence against women has increased during the last 10 years and must be stopped. She said existing wage and economic discrimination suffered by women workers must also be viewed as expressions of violence.

The women's report said the cutting of \$1.6 million from the Secretary of State's women's program "cut the lifeline which supports women's centres and publications and connects social activists across the country."

Delegates supported an emergency resolution calling upon governments to establish Dec. 6 as a national day of mourning. "It's important that we set aside a day to remember this issue," said John Shields of the B.C. Government Employees Union.

Other issues raised by delegates of particular HEU interest included calls for increased government health care funding, pay equity and the wider use of the team nursing strategy. Adele Tomaszewicz, an HEU St. Paul's Hospital LPN and a first time delegate, told the convention that health facilities are laying off LPNs despite the shortage of registered nurses.

Militant South African hospital workers score breakthrough in tough strike

It didn't make the news in Canada, but when 11,000 black South African hospital workers walked out on strike last spring, they struck a major blow against the apartheid regime.

The members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union struck 17 major hospitals for 10 days in the first job action by

black workers against the South African government health service.

They won an end to so-called temporary work status which robbed 30-year veterans of any rights and security. Their contract protects the right of pregnant women to keep their jobs and more.

The victory came after a 30-minute phone call from Nelson

Mandela, of the African National Congress, to government officials responsible for health care.

Members of Local 1199, the New York hospital workers union which is affiliated to the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, is raising funds for their South African brothers and sisters.

— 1199 News

WHAT WAS SAID

"Mothers are finding a way to beat the jail house blues and contribute to the economy and the environment at the same time by returning industry to the home.

As some first time mothers can readily testify, a newborn child who sleeps 18 to 20 hours per day, although worrisome, does not require constant attention, thereby resulting in a few hours in the day that cannot be adequately filled by vacuuming the carpet twenty times in the space of an afternoon.

In order to alleviate some of the boredom and provide a secondary income to the family coffers, women are establishing single cottage industries in their homes ranging from the production to the distribution of homemade and environmentally safe products."

THE RICHMOND TIMES

Published on Nov. 6, 1989, to introduce a Bill Vander Zalm column, in which he sang the praises of small at-home businesses which reduce demands for daycare.

Carr slams Tories for UI changes

The Tory government has provoked a crisis in the fishing communities of both coasts, says CLC president Shirley Carr, by its determination to force through Bill C21 to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act.

When the Senate refused to pass the bill, which would reduce UI benefits by \$2 billion a year and grab \$5 billion in premiums from workers, the Tories refused to amend the variable entry requirement. The result was that thousands of workers faced denial of benefits.



CONVENTION NEWCOMERS

First-time
convention
delegates
say it
was a busy
week.

11



TRIBUTE TO ALBERTA DORVAL

A union
veteran is
honoured on
her retire-
ment.

8



CONVENTION '90 • BREAKING NEW GROUND

Ready for action!

From the opening gavel Oct. 29, to the final chorus of Solidarity Forever, the 17th Biennial Convention of the Hospital Employees Union was all business.

The first item on the agenda was a full review and assessment of the union's finances.

Delegates devoted almost an entire day to a series of changes to the union's dues structure designed to prepare the way for effective bargaining in 1991.

Then it was on to debate bargaining demands for the coming round of contract talks.

HEU's financial house in order, LaPlante tells delegates

THERE WAS NO DOUBT what the top priority was for HEU convention delegates Nov. 29 as the union's annual convention began.

They wanted to talk about money — how much the union has, how it utilizes its resources and

FINANCIAL REPORT

how to ensure that HEU is ready to meet any eventuality in collective bargaining.

Delegates underlined that concern by amending the agenda to make the financial report, prepared by financial secretary Mary LaPlante, the first order of business.

Her line by line analysis of the union's audited statements came down to a simple conclusion. "We do indeed have a cash flow shortage," LaPlante told delegates.

By the end of the morning, delegates had agreed, endorsing a dues increase which will increase general revenues and build a strike fund. (Details next page.)

Although HEU has added 16 locals and several thousand members since the 1988 convention, the demands for services have grown even faster. "We're looking at the price of success," LaPlante said. "With greater size comes more work and



LAPLANTE

greater responsibilities

"Since our last convention we've been through a tough strike and a federal election. We've participated in many campaigns, both in the health care sector and with the labour movement in defence of our rights. In a sense, we've come of age."

(LaPlante's full report and the union's audited statements were distributed to delegates. Full details are available from HEU local delegates and from the HEU's Provincial Office.)

"Two years ago at this convention I spoke against a dues increase," LaPlante said. "That will not happen at this convention."

"Should the delegates decide they want the union to continue to provide the servicing at the level we now need, then the decision must be made to provide the solid financial footing needed to break new ground and continue to defend the members."

"It's up to you to decide."

Members are taking charge

HEU came through the 1989 strike with a renewed commitment to unity and co-operation among health care unions, secretary-business manager Carmela Allevato told union convention delegates Oct. 30.

But that commitment must be matched by political action, education and increased membership involvement if the union is to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

In a wide-ranging report on behalf of the provincial executive, Allevato declared that the union "is at a crossroads."

"For the first time we have an opportunity to prepare for bargaining knowing that our issues can be, if we want them to be, front and centre in the next provincial election."

Defeat of the Social Credit government must be a key goal, Allevato said, because a breakthrough in that area will open the door to decent



ALLEVATO

wage increases, better working conditions and pay equity.

To achieve these goals, she said, the union must pursue a strategy that puts the members in charge.

"It bears repeating that the Hospital Employees' Union is a union that belongs to the members," she said, "totally, completely, absolutely. The role of all officers of the union, at all levels, is to see to it that the union is administered in accordance with the wishes and direction of the membership."

SECRETARY-BUSINESS

MANAGER'S REPORT

For that reason, she said, the executive is committed to increased membership education. Communications will be improved through increased publication of *The Guardian*. Efforts are continuing to reduce still further the backlog of grievances and arbitrations.

At the same time, the executive is stepping up organizational efforts and implementing the conclusions of the Strike Review Committee.

Allevato's report was adopted and her appointment unanimously ratified by the convention.

AFTER THE SHIFT

Hospital job ticket to an artists' life

Alfred Muma's hospital job supports his work

For Alfred Muma, chairperson of the HEU's Queen Charlotte City local, hospital work is a means to an end. Ask Muma what he does and he answers "I'm an artist." Ask him how he does it and he'll tell you "I work at the hospital."

As a member of the house-keeping staff at the 21-bed facility, Muma does all the usual cleaning tasks and handles grievances for members. After the shift, you'll find him in his studio.

Muma's art reflects his life and the world around him. Visitors to HEU's provincial office may have seen a series of watercolours he produced and gave to the union at the height of the struggle against Bill 19 in 1987.

Muma was attending an officers meeting in Prince George when secretary-business manager Jack Gerow received the news that HEU and other public sector unions were facing a writ enjoining them from launching a "seditious conspiracy" to take strike action against the legislation. (HEU succeeded in having the writ quashed.)

"I asked myself what I could do," he says. "I thought, 'I'm an artist. I've written letters but I'm an artist.'" The result was



CUMSHEWA HEAD: Alfred Muma, an artist and chairperson of the Queen Charlotte City local, displays his large canvas of Cumsheewa Head, a point of land sacred to the Haida.

the Democracy Series, which evoked the struggle for labour rights in that period.

Muma's current paintings reflect his concern about the environment. A group show which included his work at the Queen Charlotte Islands museum last summer was dominated by his huge canvas of Cumsheewa Head, a point of land on the Charlottes regarded as sacred ground by the Haida.

"The exhibition was a result of our failure to stop logging on Cumsheewa," Muma says. Working with three other local artists including a sculptor (who flies a helicopter to make a living), a photographer (part-time teacher) and a composer, Muma helped to assemble an exhibition which gives a strong feeling for Cumsheewa and its resources.

"There are only certain stands of good timber in the area and MacMillan Bloedel is doing a multi-use proposal," Muma says. "Cumsheewa is still an enclosed eco-system and

we want to make an issue of this."

Muma came to the Queen Charlottes when his wife Jennifer, a nurse, got a job at the hospital. He had worked full-time as an artist for a number of years, mounting his first one-man show in 1975.

But good reviews did not bring good income. When a job in the Charlottes turned up, he and his wife packed their bags and moved from Ontario to the Islands on five weeks' notice. Muma soon landed a job at the hospital as well.

He finds the shift work at the hospital gives him the time he needs to paint. New one-man and group shows are in the works, but union responsibilities keep him involved in contract enforcement and health and safety issues.

Is he an artist or a hospital worker? Muma laughs: "Because I'm an artist, I work in the hospital."

ON THE JOB

From hockey to heavy lifting

An activity aide's work is never the same

KAMLOOPS — A day on the job for Ponderosa Lodge employee Teresa (Terry) MacIsaac can include everything from swatting a hockey puck to maneuvering a resident in a wheelchair into a tiny public washroom.

As the job title implies, activity aide MacIsaac's work day is physically challenging. MacIsaac, who worked as a nursing assistant for 12 years at Ponderosa before becoming an activity aide, says both jobs involve heavy lifting.

Her activity aide duties include planning and participating in in-house activities such as fitness programs, car-



MacISAAC

pet bowling and hockey for the facility's 192 residents. "We're usually the refs but sometimes we play too. They get right into it, sometimes a bit too much."

MacIsaac also accompanies residents on shopping and recreational outings where both resident and staff must cope with facilities not designed for persons who are handicapped.

There has been progress in developing accessible walkways and washrooms but there

is a ways to go, says MacIsaac.

Increased job hazards caused by reduced staff levels and a higher percentage of residents unable to help themselves has forced MacIsaac and other members of the local's safety committee to wage high profile workers' safety campaigns. "There are too many back, neck and shoulder injuries."

But MacIsaac's union activities have left the single mother of three children feeling personally vulnerable on the issue of her own job security. "I used to be known as quiet Terry. But now that my kids have grown up, I guess I felt it was time I got involved. They don't like you much when you speak up."

Despite the hardships, MacIsaac finds satisfaction in her work with Ponderosa residents. "Especially if they've been sitting in a chair all day and something you do manages to get a smile out of them. Making someone laugh makes my day."

editor's notebook



By BRAD TEETER



THE PROVINCIAL government's neglect of Royal Inland Hospital is very much the talk of the town in Kamloops these days thanks largely to the women and men who work at the hospital.

Ken Preiss, the efficient secretary-treasurer of the Kamloops HEU local, perhaps best reflects the defiant attitude demonstrated by representatives of the three health care unions since October's bad news of layoffs and bed closures.

Over coffee in Kamloops soon after Royal Inland had announced more lay-offs and cutbacks, Preiss confided that he has had reservations about union involvement, especially in Kamloops where he says many people are skeptical about unions.

He said his union activities worry his family.

Yet, Preiss has taken a front line role in the exhaustive union campaign to stop the cuts.

He was there to distribute union buttons throughout the hospital, and, on his day off, escorted a provincial office union representative on a hospital tour despite the close scrutiny of his hospital bosses.

But Preiss' continuing effort is only one example of wider participation.

HEU vice-chair Bernadette Harrison and shop steward Donisa Bernardo, left holding the fort in Kamloops during the HEU convention, held up under an enormous workload, processing a raft of grievances generated by the layoffs.

Local chair Kathy Jessome provided confidence and leadership, insisting that the community should not tolerate the seemingly never ending series of cutbacks and lay-offs.

The HSA's Fanny Monk and Shirley Dorais, with help from others, recruited a small army of union members to distribute leaflets promoting the cause to thousands of households throughout the city.

And BCNU's Joan Cummings, Lois Costello and Ivory Warner rounded out the impressive demonstration of worker solidarity.

Friends of Royal Inland, the community stop-the-cuts initiative spurred by the HSA's Dawn Benwell and HEU's Heather Pockett with help from other union members, was temporarily chaired by Aleta Wallace of HEU until a representative of People in Motion took on the task.

No, the cutbacks have not been reversed. But by working together, this hospital care team is helping their community understand that the Socred government is responsible for the punishing consequences of health care neglect. Their Save Royal Inland message has been echoed by doctors, regional health district authorities and politicians. It's about time.

The Socred government has been consistent in affording shabby treatment to the health care system. Through the work of dedicated health care providers like the crew in Kamloops, the health care neglect will not go unnoticed come provincial election day.



CONVENTION '90 • BREAKING NEW GROUND



NOTE BOOK

HER LAST CONVENTION

Convention delegates gave a warm send-off to Gwen Parrish, an activist for many years in the Vancouver General Hospital local who has served several terms on the union's provincial executive and on the bargaining committee. Parrish is retiring from the industry.

POLICY CHANGE ON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

HEU's policy on participation in Employee Assistance Programs was amended by convention delegates after an intense and sometimes emotional debate. Past policy opposed participation in EAPs unless union control was assured and confidentiality guaranteed. The new policy allows participation where the local involved and the Provincial Office are convinced that the union's concerns are satisfied and confidentiality assured.



FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS

The battle with management continues even during convention, as Royal Inland delegates found when they faced lay-offs. A quick strategy meeting included (left to right) Paul Bailey, Henry Theobald, Brad Teeter (standing), Ken Preiss, Louise Curtin, Carmela Allevato and Kathy Jessome.

An emergency resolution adopted by the convention authorized full support to the Royal Inland local.

LABOUR BACKING HEU BARGAINING

Convention delegates gave B.C. Federation of Labour president Ken Georgetti a standing ovation for his pledge to ensure the federation's full support in enforcing picket policy. Georgetti welcomed the HEU's preparations for bargaining and warned employers that the entire labour movement stands behind affiliates when they go to the table. As far as the federation is concerned, he said, the HEU strike fund is already full.

UNSEEN SUPPORTERS

Crucial to the success of the convention were HEU clerical workers who established a special convention office to handle special resolutions, convention finances, communications and other support work. The convention gave a vote of thanks to all staff involved in convention preparations and support work.



A decade of great change

The 1980s were a decade of profound change for the HEU, union president Bill Macdonald told convention delegates Oct. 29, in which the organization confronted tremendous challenges and emerged stronger.

In 1980, the union had 160 locals, 22,000 members and a convention of 322 delegates. At

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

the 1990 convention, the union included 230 locals totalling 30,000 members, who elected 459 convention delegates.

Proof of even more fundamental change, Macdonald said, was the fact that only 34 delegates to the 1980 convention were delegates in 1990. (Of those, nine served on the 1988-1990 Provincial Executive.)

"It's obvious that the union is in a state of constant renewal," Macdonald said, in a speech which traced the development of the union's democratic structure.

"Since our last convention, the union has faced some of the most difficult and challenging times in its history. I think it acquitted itself well

and really came of age."

In the past two years, he recalled, the executive had grappled with the problems of building a new leadership team in the Provincial Office staff, as well as the turmoil of the 1989 strike.

But the union's links with the labour movement and the NDP, both of which were strengthened during the past 10 years, stood HEU in good stead.

As long as the union remains based on "a committed, skilled and knowledgeable membership that has as many educational opportunities as resources allow," Macdonald said, HEU will continue to grow.

Much has already been accomplished to overcome the problems identified in the strike review process, he concluded.



MACDONALD

New delegates find convention a challenge

Attending an HEU convention for the first time can be a daunting experience, say four union members who represented their locals at this year's gathering.

All four were impressed by progressive debates on social issues and the union's willingness to fight for workplace advances, but some admitted they felt intimidated by intense political lobbying.

A highlight for all for was a pay equity speech by Saskatchewan Federation of Labour President Barb Byers.

"Barb Byers was great," says Louise Hutchinson, one of five Children's Hospital delegates. "She challenged peoples' attitudes and the way we look at our own jobs."

Brenda Corcoran, a Canada Way Care Centre nurses' aide, was happy about the progress being made on women's issues but felt women should have participated more in the debates.

"More women should have spoken up," said Corcoran, a single parent. "Maybe that's partly my fault. I didn't speak but I sure had a lot on my mind."

(At a special seminar for new delegates the evening before the convention, union president Bill Macdonald outlined the rules of order and let delegates in on some of the best ways to participate in the debate.)

Dan Hingley, a care aide from the Pouce Coupe local near Dawson Creek, welcomed the debates on pay equity. Pressing pay equity issues is "the best thing the union could do," he said.

"Women have been suppressed for too long. In this industry, men will benefit too because they work in jobs traditionally performed by women."

All the new delegates found the convention a gruelling experience. Debby Gillis, a housekeep-



HUTCHINSON



GILLIS

er at May Bennett Home in Kelowna, said delegates were friendly "but there was a lot of politics. I'm going to tell our members to be loud and very clear in the future."

"The convention was incredibly exhausting," said Hutchinson. "It's not a picnic here." But Hutchinson, who serves as vice-president of the federal NDP Quadra constituency, said convention politics are no different "from the real world of politics."

Groups of people band together in putting forth candidates for election. "It just takes time for a newcomer to understand the alliances. It can be a bit overwhelming."

Several of the new delegates said the debate convinced them they could defend the dues increase. "It's hard to swallow but my local expects a strike, so the strike fund will be needed," said Hingley.

Corcoran said written reports given to delegates explaining the increase will help convince her local that the increase is necessary. "Without this background information they would have given me a hard time."

The first time delegates were proud of the union's interest in issues such as native rights.

"It shows we stand behind not just ourselves but others who need to be protected," said Gillis.

Corcoran said she was surprised HEU was involved in such issues, "but I think it's great. When I get back to my local I'm going to speak about this. It's (the oppression of natives) a lot like the prejudice we have to put up with at work."



HEU ELECTS NEW PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE



Bill Macdonald
President



Mary LaPlante
Financial
Secretary



Carmela Allevato
Secretary-
Business
Manager



Fred Muzin
1st Vice-
President



Nancy
Macdonald
2nd Vice-
President



Irma Mohammed
3rd Vice-
President



Cindy Russell
4th Vice-
President



Maurice Smith
5th Vice-
President

CONVENTION '90 • BREAKING NEW GROUND

INVERMERE AWARDED CONVENTION GAVEL

It is an HEU tradition to award the convention gavel to the local whose activities in the past two years best epitomized the militance, determination and sense of justice that inspire the union. The executive this year decided, after long deliberations, to give the gavel to the Mount Nelson Place local in Invermere, which was bargaining a first agreement during the convention. Anne Hamilton accepted the gavel on behalf of her local from HEU president Bill Macdonald.



NOTE BOOK



BOUQUETS TO A TOUGH TEAM

Few convention committees in any union must perform the miracles demanded of the Constitutional Amendments Committee at an HEU gathering. Not only do delegates submit hundreds of resolutions, they think nothing of referring them back to the committee for repeated changes. This year's committee, including chairperson Laura Fleming and members Joan Wilkinson, Karen McDiarmid, Kathy Jessome, Kim Horbach and Joan Sandy, received roses for their efforts.



THE JOHNSTONS RETIRE

In more than two decades in the HEU, Anna and John Johnston have never missed a convention. Due to their retirement, the 1990 gathering will be their last. Delegates gave the Powell River local veterans a warm send-off.

ROSE AFFIRMS CUPE'S SOLIDARITY

Jeff Rose, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, opened the HEU convention with a pledge to strengthen the ties between CUPE and HEU. CUPE is committed to working with the growing national movement against the GST, he said, to stop the Tory government's drive to implement the policies of the corporate sector.

HEU is affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress through CUPE which represents hospital workers in several provinces across the country.



KEEPING TRACK: With more than 600 pages in each convention kit, delegates had to concentrate to keep on top of the debate. The convention binders got a real workout.

HEU builds strike fund

Let the employers and B.C. government beware! The Hospital Employees Union is willing and financially able to strike, thanks to a dues increase approved by convention delegates.

An exhaustive three-hour debate on the second day of the convention led to the approval of an increase that will see dues rise to 2.5 per cent of gross pay from 1.5 per cent effective Dec. 2, 1990.

Half of the dues increase will be used to create a multi-million dollar strike fund and the other half will be used to overhaul the union's structure and services. The operating deficit, a legacy of the union's many campaigns, arbitration battles and organizational efforts in past years, will be eliminated.

It took delegates several hours of debate to work through all aspects of the dues increase, which many locals had opposed. By the end of the debate, however, many delegates declared they were convinced of the necessity for an increase and satisfied that the funds would be properly allocated.

"We will have to conduct a massive campaign to defend our jobs," warned Vancouver General delegate Ed Cortez. "We need financial stability to sustain us and to protect our jobs."

Financial secretary Mary LaPlante also spoke in favour of the dues increase, reminding delegates that the union "is challenged all the time. We have to be strong enough to take on those challenges."

Union president Bill Macdonald reminded delegates of the many new services and benefits authorized by the last convention, which did not approve a dues increase.

"If this union gets a dues increase," he said, "in two or three years' time with \$10 to \$15 million in the bank the employer will have a signal that HEU is serious about bargaining."

Ultimately, the convention adopted a broad

range of new measures to restructure and improve the union's finances, especially in the event of a strike.

The convention created a new Strike Fund which may only be used for strike activity. The old Defence Fund has been wound up and all monies, including interest, currently in the old fund or owed to it shall be paid to the new strike fund.

The convention directed that the rest of the money be used to prepare the union for collective bargaining through an educational program, membership communications and a special campaign to win public support. Membership services, including occupational health and safety programs, will be overhauled and improved and summer school will be held annually.

"We're serious about job action if it's required," said union president Bill Macdonald. "It's important that we have the resources to ease as much as possible the financial hardships suffered by HEU members during a strike."

In the event of a strike, strike pay of \$150 a week plus \$25 a week per dependent will be payable from the first day of the strike.

LaPlante said the dues increase will prepare the union for the work ahead. "We need to make the government aware we are ready to fight every step of the way. We are being challenged all the time and we must be strong enough to take on these fights."

Convention also authorized the executive to increase dues up to 20 percent of gross salary on all non-striking workers in the event of a strike.

To implement this change, the Constitution was amended to replace the old assessments with this temporary dues increase. Money raised from such dues levies will be placed directly into the strike fund and the increase shall be discontinued at the conclusion of strike action.



Julia Amendt
Senior Trustee



Colleen
Fitzpatrick
Senior Trustee
Elect



Thomas Knowles
Trustee



Melanie Iverson
Member at
Large #1



Ruby Hardwick
Member at
Large #2



Margie Wayne
Regional
Vice-President
Fraser Valley



Della McLeod
Regional
Vice-President
Kootenay Region



Joe Fraser
Regional
Vice-President
Lower
Mainland #1



Rey Umlas
Regional
Vice-President
Lower
Mainland #2



Julie Crozier
Regional
Vice-President
Northern Region



Helen Burnell
Regional
Vice-President
Okanagan
Region



Sheryl Rankin
Regional
Vice-President
Vancouver
Island

CONVENTION '90 • BREAKING NEW GROUND

Debate on Oka stirs emotions

An emergency resolution calling on the federal government to "recognize the aboriginal rights of the Mohawk peoples" and to negotiate a resolution of the Oka dispute sparked a stormy debate at the HEU's biennial convention.

Delegates had already unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on the provincial government to recognize aboriginal title.

But the emergency resolution, which touched on the highly-charged incidents of stone-throwing and military action, set off a long debate.



NATIVE MEMBER:
Ruth Adams, of the Delta local, told delegates how the events at Oka touched her family.

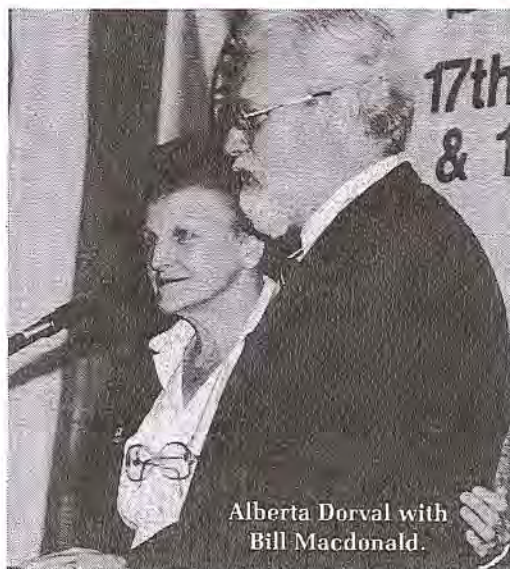
The resolution was one-sided, argued Kelowna delegate Donna Brayshaw, and appeared to criticize the role of the armed forces while minimizing the death of a policeman.

Vancouver General delegate Mike Barker disagreed, condemning the use of the armed forces to deny the rights of the Mohawks to their land.

Perhaps the strongest applause went to Delta local delegate Ruth Adams, a native person who told the convention that "every day during Oka I felt it could be me and my children out there."

"It could happen to us if we don't look at land claims. Justice isn't the same for natives, it just isn't. Please, please back us up. We're not getting backed up and that's why blockades are going up."

Delegates then voted by a narrow margin to refer the resolution for revision. The amended version, which was debated the next day and found overwhelming support, called for a complete investigation of all criminal charges and a negotiated settlement of the dispute.



Alberta Dorval with Bill Macdonald.

Convention honours work of Alberta Dorval

Northern activist Alberta (Berta) Dorval has helped keep the fast-growing Hospital Employees' Union mindful of its roots.

During her 12 years on the HEU provincial executive, the Fort St. John Hospital housekeeper has worked to defend the interests of the thousands of HEU members, who, like herself, work in basic jobs in interior and/or remote regions of the province.

Delegates at the HEU's 17 Biennial Convention honoured her work with a special presentation of a gold ring as a token of their appreciation. Dorval is retiring this year.

Though described as "one of a kind" by HEU president Bill Macdonald, Dorval humbly insists she is no different than other union members.

"Hell, if I can do it, anyone can," said Dorval in an interview at the B.C. Federation of Labour Convention.

Dorval says workers intimidated by other union representatives relax upon learning that they are talking with a fellow hospital worker. "I found it helped people to know they were dealing with a housekeeper. They knew that I'd understand where they were coming from. It's been a confidence building thing, a learning thing for myself as well as those I was trying to serve."

Dorval, the mother of eight children, knows from personal experience that union work can involve extraordinary sacrifices both in the home and in the workplace. Her late husband's involvement in the mid-60s with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers left her housebound and alone night after night with a household full of children.

"I hated unions back then. I resented the fact that Len's union involvement took up so much time."

But Dorval somehow managed the household and upon re-entering the outside workforce in 1970 found she needed help from the Hospital Employees' Union.

With her youngest child off to school, Dorval landed a job in the Fort St. John General Hospital housekeeping department and it didn't take her long to identify unfair management practices.

"There was no appreciation of the special hardships encountered in the north and workers were often forced several days in a row without a break. I'd come home complaining

about things but Len didn't want to hear about it. He'd say, 'You can't fix things by yourself and I can't do it for you. Get in there (the union) and get involved.'"

Two years and numerous union meetings later, Dorval was coaxed by her peers to run for northern region vice-president. Noted HEU President Macdonald at convention, "Berta and I were among eight new executive members elected in 1978 and the provincial executive was never the same again."

Dorval brought a wealth of experience to the provincial executive. From her munitions factory job during the war era, Dorval learned how women workers were used to do jobs traditionally performed by men, then discarded when no longer needed. "Pay equity has been a battle forever it seems."

Two years after her 1978 election to the position of northern region vice-president, Dorval became 5th vice-president. She served as 3rd vice-president in 1982, and, in 1984 was elected 1st vice-president. She was re-elected 1st vice-president in 1986 and 1988.

During her years on the provincial executive, Dorval has witnessed many changes in the union.

She sees "good and bad" in the growth of the union by some 10,000 members. "It adds political clout and, it's nice to be a part of that strength but I'm not sure that there's the same level of friendliness."

She's pleased with the union's commitment to education. "When I came on board, I thought education should be a priority and I'm glad others had the same view." Dorval describes the union's upfront political action program as another change for the better.

"We used to hide our political interests. No more. We're politically aggressive, politically active and politically proud. We're a force to be reckoned with and I think we're a terrific influence in the house of labour."

Though Dorval is retiring this year, her involvement with the HEU won't end. A union constitutional change now enables retired members to stay active.

Dorval has no regrets about her union work. "You're never strong enough and you never say everything you should but I'm proud to have had the opportunity to be where I was as long as I was."



FAIR ELECTIONS:
The HEU constitution spells out detailed procedures to ensure the secrecy and accuracy of balloting for all union positions. A rank-and-file tabulation committee made up of convention delegates collects ballots, counts them in a locked room and double-checks results before announcing them to the convention floor. At left, Tony Lee of Port Alberni counts votes.



MUDDY DITCH is the barrier that thousands of Mexicans attempt to cross each week in an effort to find work in the United States. Existing free trade zones have worsened the lot of the poor and Mexican unionists believe full free trade will compound the problem. **JIM SINCLAIR PHOTO.**

The Mexican Connection

Canadian and Mexican trade unionists forge common front against free trade

By **JIM SINCLAIR**

TIJUANA, MEXICO — For all of us, what we witnessed as we climbed up the cement embankment in Tijuana and peered out over the border with the United States, was shocking.

It was dusk and a daily ritual which pitted the hungry of Mexico against the border patrols of the United States was about to begin.

On the U.S. side the patrol cars moved into position under spotlights we normally associated with baseball stadiums.

We were a delegation of trade unionists, visiting Mexico to determine first-hand what impacts Canadian workers might face from a new free trade agreement linking Mexico and Canada with the United States.

From our viewpoint, we could see across a quarter mile wide concrete valley — split in half by a small river polluted by chemicals and sewage. Beside us was a family of four, a baby stretched on the mother's lap, heads staring down, waited for the right time.

Suddenly, we hear a yell and a group of more than 20 start across, heading up and through a hole in the fence. Within minutes the border patrol is there and half retreat back to the shadows of the lights to try again later.

Two young Mexicans, Juan and Arturo, stand with their arms crossed. They have chosen to make the run farther down where there are no lights. The downside of this strategy is the bandits, who hide ready to rob the Mexicans of their savings.

Juan and Arturo wait for two days for the right moment to escape into

California where they will work for \$20 a day in the fields. In Mexico, the same work would fetch only \$3.25 a day.

For the six Canadians, here to discuss free trade, it was hard to imagine a country so desperate that one million people a year would risk their lives to leave.

"It reminded me of war and concentration camps where one fence can change your whole life. If you try to cross it, they can kill you," said Monique Simard, first vice-president of the 200,000 strong Confederation of National Trade Unions in Quebec. "I also have a teenage son and it is mostly young men trying to cross so I felt if my son had been born in Mexico, he might be one of the young men trying to cross."

This desperation comes as no surprise to our host, Jose Luis Canchola, a member of the Centre for Information and Migration Studies and one of Mexico's leading experts on human rights and border issues.

He sees the refugees as the inevitable result of an economic strategy which has free trade as its next step.

As we returned to our cars, Canchola said the crisis at the border is a direct result of the crisis in the economy which has destroyed the living standards of more than 40 million Mexicans over the past five years. Seventeen million Mexicans live in extreme poverty.

In the eyes of the British-based *Economist* magazine described, the economic transformation of Mexico is a "mini-miracle."

Although the pro-business magazine is clearly a proponent of the

sweeping changes taking place, including the massive sale of public corporations and the opening of borders to foreign investment, it was also candid about the consequences of the so-called miracle.

Real wages have fallen for eight consecutive years; they are barely half of what they were in 1982.

LABOUR FOR SALE: Mexican women perform dangerous work in maquiladora factories for only pennies an hour.



Corporate taxes have dropped to 35 percent from 56 percent and the top rate of income tax has dropped to 35 percent from 50 percent.

In a country where there is no such thing as medicare or unemployment insurance, public spending has been slashed dramatically and more than 600 public services and companies have been sold. Traditional restrictions on the importation of foreign goods have been removed and free trade almost exists now with most nations.

While the government of President Carlos Salinas has been hailed as the key force behind this eco-

nomie reform, the pressure for it comes clearly from the outside.

For it is the national debt of more than \$50 billion dollars and it's gruelling \$8 billion annual payments, which has left the International Monetary Fund with a strong guiding hand in Mexican affairs.

The IMF policy is simple: cut spending, privatize services, sell off crown corporations, and remove restrictions on the flow of money and goods in and out of the country.

The next stage in the policy will be free trade with the U.S. and Canada. But free trade with Mexico has little to do with the flow of goods, but rather is attracting foreign investment to Mexico.

The centerpiece of the open-door policy directed at foreign companies is the now infamous "maquiladora" free trade zones where cheap labour and no export taxes on imported goods have created 450,000 jobs in the past two decades.

These free trade zones have convinced Mexican workers that a free trade agreement offers them little.

More than 800 U.S. companies and an increasing number of Japanese and Canadian companies have shifted production to Mexico where wages are \$3.25 a day, lower than South Korea or the Philippines. Unions are non-existent and government regulations are minimal. Wages have dropped from the \$8 a day paid to workers 10 years ago.

The result has been the loss of 175,000 jobs in the United States and a growing number of Canadian jobs to these free trade areas of Mexico.

Nowhere has this policy had more impact than the city of Tijuana.

Surrounding the century old city

— young by Mexican standards — are hundreds of modern factories which would blend in nicely with any North American industrial park. Even those who have trouble ordering beer in Spanish have no trouble reading the names on the front of the buildings; Hitachi, Sony, General Electric, Panasonic, the list goes on.

The Martinez Mexican Manufacturing Company is typical. Its chief business is selling cheap labour. The company produces nothing. From an office in California, the owner seeks contracts to assemble other companies' products.

Just outside his Tijuana plant

Coffee Break



Sleep Undisturbed By Gunfire

Police in Salerno, Italy, have come up empty-handed in their search for witnesses to the grisly gangland execution of hospital patient and gang leader Guiseppe Oliveri. Superintendent Enrico Gatti, of the Salerno police, told reporters that "as soon as we heard about the incident, my men were in action. But after firing 20 bullets into Guiseppe, the intruders made a remarkable escape down the main corridor, across the foyer and into the carpark."

"Later, I interviewed the three patients who were in the beds next to, and opposite, the victim. But two of them were sound asleep at the time and the third, Senator Berdado Doratti, turned out to be suffering from a serious eye infection."

Not Another Lawyer Joke

Lawyers who represent injured workers can end up making more money from the case than their clients.

Lawyers representing workers in compensation appeals in Nova Scotia were paid a total of \$1.7 million in 1989. The workers themselves received \$1.2 million in successful appeals of compensation board decisions.

The 1989 Nova Scotia Public Accounts also reveal that of 18 law firms listed, seven received more than \$100,000 each; two were paid more than \$300,000.

Saddam's Deadly Anti-Canuck Warhead Ready

Joke discovered in a CUPE publication: It appears the Canadian Navy is very worried because they've heard that Saddam Hussein has a new secret weapon aimed specifically at the Canadian Navy and it's guaranteed to be absolutely devastating.

What is it? A rust-seeking missile.

When Job Loss Means Heart Trouble

The threat of unemployment can increase the risk of a heart attack, according to Swedish researchers. They studied 215 male shipyard workers when times were good and again, six years later, when the yard was under threat of closing.

They found increases in blood pressure, cholesterol and disturbed sleep patterns. Unemployment and sleeping problems have previously been linked to greater heart disease.



Hospital Boards Just Your Average Old Guys

Who sits on hospital boards in B.C.?

According to a survey done for the B.C. Health Association, the lobby group for B.C. hospitals, the average hospital trustee is male, 51 to 60 years old, has lived in the community for 16 years, has sat on the board for 4.5 years, and serves on other boards of directors.

When these figures were presented to the B.C. Royal Commission on Health Care, commis-

sioner William Webber wondered aloud how males in their 50s were representative of whole communities.

Another defender of the current closed selection system for hospital boards also tried to skate around one of its glaring defects when he appeared before the commission.

Henry Thalheimer told the commission in Kelowna that the system works well in spite of controversial attempts by anti-abortionists to stack hospital society meetings and hospital boards to deny women their right to choose on abortion.

Thalheimer, it turns out, is a former president of the Kelowna Right to Life Society.

MB Fears Feminists In The Forest

A B.C. logging company has come up with a new equation to help it win the hearts and minds of environmentalists and the public.

It goes like this: "Forest = Masculine; Preservation = Feminine."

According to the *Vancouver Sun*, that formula is set out in a consultant's analysis for MacMillan Bloedel.

"Let's characterize ourselves as parents caring for sick trees instead of soldiers going to war against pests," says the consultant. "Perhaps we can be the doctors of the forests instead of the managers."



All Together Now: We Are All Happy in Beautiful B.C.

Our neighbours to the south are bemused by B.C. News, the B.C. Government's tabloid paper which cost taxpayers \$800,000 this year. As the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* sees it, the Vander Zalm government's propaganda sheet is reminiscent of Soviet party-line newspapers before glasnost.

"The B.C. government's paper depicts a happy, unblemished society," writes the *Seattle* journalist. "Officials hold up plaques... and Pre-

mier Vander Zalm mugs for the cameras.

"The newspaper's images are often fantasy. The Indians pictured in B.C. News labour happily at government self-help programs. In real life, Native bands have blockaded roads across the province to demand settlement of land claims which the government refused to acknowledge."

"Even Washington, D.C., image-making pales by comparison to the propaganda barrage mounted by Vander Zalm and his minions."

● COMPILED FROM CALM, PRIVATE EYE, HSA REPORTS



● **DIRTY LAUNDRY:** HEU Vernon Jubilee member Tony Wildeman brought this picture to the Royal Commission on Health Care to underline crisis conditions in his hospital's laundry. The Royal Commission has been forced to extend hearings to hear public concerns.

HEU locals keep heat on Royal Commission

By CHRIS GAINOR

The Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs is hearing so much about the crisis in B.C. health care that it is adding a new commissioner to its roster and two months of hearings to its schedule.

Members of the HEU are front and centre at the hearings, hammering away at the problems of underfunding, the decline in the nursing team and privatization.

The commission had planned to wind up public hearings in January, but now it will continue to hear from the public through February and March. And Dr. William Webber, former dean of the University of B.C. medical school, has been added to the commission to help the other five commissioners handle the load.

The commission, which is due to issue its report next September, has rejected HEU's call to issue an interim report to deal with underfunding.

But even though the commission will not be dealing quickly with the issue, HEU locals have painted graphic pictures of how underfunding affects their facilities.

On a swing through the Kootenays, the commission heard submissions from the Trail local and from the Mount Nelson Place and Pioneer Villa locals in Cranbrook.

The Trail brief contained such detailed information on the effects

of underfunding from the poor sanitary conditions in the kitchen to strained patient care at Trail Regional Hospital that the administrator was called back to the hearing to explain these problems.

In Vernon, HEU shop steward Anthony Wildeman brought photographic evidence of the massive heaps of laundry that are washed daily at Vernon Jubilee Hospital. Despite major growth in the use of the laundry, the crew of laundry workers has not been enlarged.

Arriving in Kamloops at the height of controversy over more cutbacks at Royal Inland Hospital, the commission heard from the Ponderosa local, Overlander local, Mount Paul local and the Kamloops local.

(Details of the Ponderosa submission, which led to management attempts to suspend local spokesperson Teresa MacIsaac, are on page 3.)

While the commission does not appear to be greatly concerned about funding problems, particularly federal cutbacks in transfer payments for health care, HEU's call to restore the Nursing Team in B.C. hospitals has struck a responsive chord.

Commissioners have asked many questions about layoffs of licensed practical nurses, orderlies and patient care aides, and HEU has responded to the commission's call for more information on this matter.

Ontario hospital workers win two-year agreement

More than 18,500 Ontario hospital workers, members of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions of CUPE, will receive pay increases of eight percent and seven percent in a new two-year agreement.

The increases are part of a package of decisions handed down in September by an arbitration board.

Other improvements call for vacation time for part-time workers, a minimum call-back of four hours at

time and a half, extended seniority rights and other improvements.

The agreement was the culmination of a long campaign against hospital cutbacks which began during the summer and peaked during the election. An NDP government was elected.

On Sept. 4, a province-wide day of action, CUPE members donned buttons demanding an end to the hospital cuts.

GRIEVANCE!! The fine print!

Here are the contract rules you'll need
to play our Grievance game on page 16 for real

● Following are the detailed rules of Grievance and Arbitration from the HLRA Master Agreement. CCERA and Pricare contracts break Step 3 into two parts to create a Step 4.

Article 8 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

8.01 Union Representation

No Shop Steward, Union Committee member, or employee shall leave his/her work without obtaining the permission of his/her immediate supervisor. Employee-Shop Steward or Union Committee member discussions shall take place where patient care is not affected.

Shop Stewards or Union Committee members shall be permitted to represent an employee's interest without loss of pay when such meetings are scheduled during the Shop Steward's or Union Committee member's hours of work.

8.02 Grievance Investigations

Where an employee has asked or is obliged to be represented by the Union in relation to the presentation of a grievance and a Shop Steward or Union Committee member wishes to discuss the grievance with that employee, the employee and the Shop Steward or Union Committee member shall, where operational requirements permit, be given reasonable time off without loss of pay for this purpose when the discussion takes place at the Employer's place of business.

8.03 Right to Grieve Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action grievable by the employee shall include written censures, letters of reprimand, and adverse reports or performance evaluation. An employee shall be given a copy of any such document placed on the employee's file which might be the basis of disciplinary action. Should an employee dispute any such entry in his/her file, he/she shall be entitled to recourse through the grievance procedure and the eventual resolution thereof shall become part of his/her personnel record. Any such document other than official evaluation reports shall be removed from the employee's file after the expiration of eighteen (18) months from the date it was issued provided there has not been a further infraction. The Employer agrees not to introduce as evidence in any hearing any document from the file of an employee, the existence of which the employee was not aware at the time of filing or within a reasonable period thereafter.

8.04 Grievance Procedure

If an employee has a grievance, his/her grievance shall be settled as follows:

Step One:

The employee, with or without a Shop Steward or Union Committee member (at the employee's option), shall first discuss the grievance with his/her immediate supervisor or department head within seven (7) calendar days of the occurrence of the grievance. If the grievance is not settled at this step, then:

Step Two:

The grievance shall be reduced to writing, signed by the employee and a Shop Steward or Union Committee member and shall be presented to the immediate supervisor or the department head by a Shop Steward or a Union Committee member, who shall discuss the grievance. Within Seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the written grievance, the supervisor or the department head shall give his/her written reply. If the grievance is not settled at this step, then:

Step Three:

The Union Committee and the Committee on Labour Relations, or its delegate, shall meet within twenty-one (21) days or other mutually agreed to time to discuss the grievance. At this step of the grievance procedure, each party shall provide to the other a statement of facts and copies of all relevant documents. The findings or decision of the Committee on Labour Relations shall be presented to the Union in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the meeting. If the grievance is not settled at this step, either party may refer the grievance to arbitration under Article 9 within thirty (30) days.

8.05 Dismissal/Suspension for Alleged Cause

Employees dismissed or suspended for alleged cause shall have the right within seven (7) calendar days after the date of dismissal or suspension to initiate a grievance at Step Three of the grievance procedure.

8.06 Reinstatement of Employees

If, prior to the constitution of an Arbitration Board pursuant to Article 9, it is found that an employee was laid off, disciplined, or dismissed without just and reasonable cause, that employee shall be reinstated

by the Employer without loss of pay with all of his/her rights, benefits and privileges which he/she would have enjoyed if the lay-off, discipline or discharge had not taken place.

8.07 Industry Troubleshooter

Where a difference arises between the parties relating to the dismissal, discipline, or suspension of an employee, or to the interpretation, application, operation, or alleged violation of this Agreement, including any question as to whether a matter is arbitrable, during the term of the Collective Agreement, Mr. Dalton L. Larson, or a substitute agreed to by the parties, shall at the request of either party:

- investigate the difference
- define the issue in the difference, and
- make written recommendations to resolve the difference

within five (5) days of the date of receipt of the request, and for those five (5) days from that date, time does not run in respect of the grievance procedure.

In the event the parties are unable to agree on an Industry Troubleshooter within a period of thirty (30) days from the date this Collective Agreement is awarded, either party may apply to the Minister of Labour for the Province of British Columbia to appoint such person.

8.08 Expedited Arbitrations

- A representative of HLRA and the Secretary-Business Manager of the Union, or his designate, shall meet each month, or as often as is required, to review outstanding grievances to determine, by mutual agreement, those grievances suitable for expedited arbitration.
- Those grievances agreed to be suitable for expedited arbitration shall be scheduled to be heard on the next available expedited arbitration date. Expedited arbitration dates shall be agreed to by the parties and shall be scheduled monthly or as otherwise mutually agreed to by the parties.
- The location of the hearing is to be agreed to by the parties but will be at a location central to the geographic area in which the dispute arose.
- As the process is intended to be non-legal, lawyers will not be used to represent either party.
- All presentations are to be short and concise and are to include a comprehensive opening statement. The parties agree to make limited use of authorities during their presentations.
- Prior to rendering a decision, the arbitrator may assist the parties in mediating a resolution to the grievance. If this occurs, the cost will be borne in accordance with Section 112 of the Industrial Relations Act.
- Where mediation fails, or is not appropriate, a decision shall be rendered as contemplated herein.
- The decision of the arbitrator is to be completed on the agreed to form and mailed to the parties within three (3) working days or the hearing.
- All decisions of the arbitrators are to be limited in application to that particular dispute and are without prejudice. These decisions shall have no precedential value and shall not be referred to by either party in any subsequent proceeding.
- All settlements of proposed expedited arbitration cases made prior to hearing shall be without prejudice.
- The parties shall equally share the costs of the fees and expenses of the arbitrator.
- The expedited arbitrators, who shall act as sole arbitrators, shall be D.R. Munroe, V. Ready, S.F.D. Kelleher, N. Morrison, and H.A. Hope.
- The expedited arbitrator shall have the same powers and authority as an arbitration board established under the provisions of Article 9 excepting Article 9.03.
- It is understood that it is not the intention of either party to appeal a decision of an expedited arbitration proceeding.
- Any suspension for alleged cause that is not dealt with under this Section shall be referred immediately to Section 8.05 for resolution.

Article 9 ARBITRATION

9.01 (a) Composition of Board

Should the Committee on Labour Relations, the Union Committee, and the Secretary-Business Manager of the Union fail to settle any difference, grievance, or dispute whatsoever, arising between the Employer and the Union, or the employees concerned, such difference, grievance or dispute, including any question as to whether any matter is arbitrable, but excluding renegotiation of the Agreement shall, at the

instance of either party, be referred to the arbitration, determination and award of an Arbitration Board of three (3) members. Such Board shall be deemed to be a Board of Arbitration within the meaning of the Labour Code of British Columbia.

One member is to be appointed by the Committee on Labour Relations, one by the Union, and the third, who shall be the Chairperson of Arbitration Board, by the two thus appointed or, failing such appointment within two (2) weeks after either party has given notice to the other requiring that such appointment be made, by appointment from the following list of arbitrators:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. D.R. Munroe, Q.C. | 7. D.C. McPhillips |
| 2. S.F.D. Kelleher | 8. J.E. Dorsey |
| 3. N. Morrison | 9. B. Bluman |
| 4. H.A. Hope, Q.C. | 10. R. Longpre |
| 5. Bruce M. Greyell | 11. R.M. Brown |
| 6. J. Weiler | 12. Angus MacDonald |

The parties, by mutual agreement, may amend the list of arbitrators at any time.

It is understood that the arbitrators shall be appointed on a rotating basis commencing with the first arbitrator named above.

The decision of the said arbitrators, or any two of them, made in writing in regard to any difference or differences, shall be final and binding upon the Employer, the Union, and the employees concerned.

9.01 (b) Dismissal/Suspension

If the dismissal or suspension of an employee for alleged cause is not settled at Step Three of the grievance procedure, such grievance shall be referred to the arbitration, determination and award of an Arbitration Board of one (1) member.

The Arbitrator shall be appointed on a rotating basis commencing with the first arbitrator named below:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. D.C. McPhillips | 4. R.M. Brown |
| 2. J.E. Dorsey | 5. Angus MacDonald |
| 3. B. Bluman | |

The arbitrator shall schedule a hearing within seven (7) calendar days of his/her appointment.

The arbitrator shall hear and determine the dispute and issue a verbal or a written decision within seven (7) calendar days of the conclusion of the hearing.

The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding upon the parties. Upon receipt of the decision, either party may request written reasons for the decision.

The parties agree that the time limits for appeal under the Labour Code of B.C. shall commence with the issuance of written reasons for the decision.

The arbitrator shall have the same powers and authority as an Arbitration Board established under the provisions of Article 9 excepting Article 9.03

9.02 Authority of Arbitration Board

The Arbitration Board shall have the power to settle the terms of the question to be arbitrated.

9.03 Time Limit for Decision of Arbitration Board

A Board of Arbitration established under this article of the Collective Agreement shall have twenty (20) days to render a decision with respect to the question to be arbitrated unless this time limit is extended by mutual agreement between the parties.

9.04 Employee Called as a Witness

The Employer shall grant leave without loss of pay to an employee called as a witness by an Arbitration Board and, where operational requirements permit, leave without loss of pay to an employee called as a witness by the Union, provided the dispute involves the Employer.

9.05 Arbitration Board Hearings

Where operational requirements permit, the Employer shall grant leave without loss of pay to a reasonable number of employees representing the Union before an Arbitration Board, provided the dispute involves the Employer.

9.06 Expenses of Arbitration Board

Each party shall bear the expenses of the arbitrator appointed by such party, and shall pay half of the expenses of the Chairman and of the stenographic and other expenses of the Board, unless paid by the Labour Relations Board of the Province of British Columbia.

9.07 Reinstatement of Employees

If the Arbitration Board finds that an employee has been unjustly laid off, suspended or discharged, that employee shall be reinstated by the Employer and the Board may order that his/her reinstatement be without loss of pay, and with all his/her rights, benefits and privileges which he/she would have enjoyed if the layoff, suspension or discharge had not taken place.

Provided, however, if it is shown to the Board that the employee has been in receipt of wages during the period between lay-off, suspension or discharge and reinstatement, the amount so received shall be deducted from wages which may be payable by the Employer pursuant to this clause, less any expenses which the employee has incurred in order to earn the wages so deducted.

EVER WONDERED HOW THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE WORKS? IT'S ALL UNDER ARTICLES 8 AND 9 OF YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT. (THERE ARE SOME DIFFERENCES UNDER CCERA AND PRICARE AGREEMENTS) THIS EXCITING NEW BOARD GAME IS CALLED **GRIEVANCE!**

SPECIAL NOTE:

A TROUBLESHOOTER MAY BE ESTABLISHED AT ANY STAGE. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT BINDING BUT THE GRIEVANCE MAY PROCEED TO ARBITRATION. SEE ARTICLE 8.07. IF YOU HIT TROUBLESHOOTER, FLIP A COIN, HEADS YOU WIN, TAILS YOU GO TO STEP THREE!

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: UNLIMITED!
LENGTH OF GAME: BETWEEN ONE
DAY AND TWO YEARS!!

