



The Hospital

# Guardian

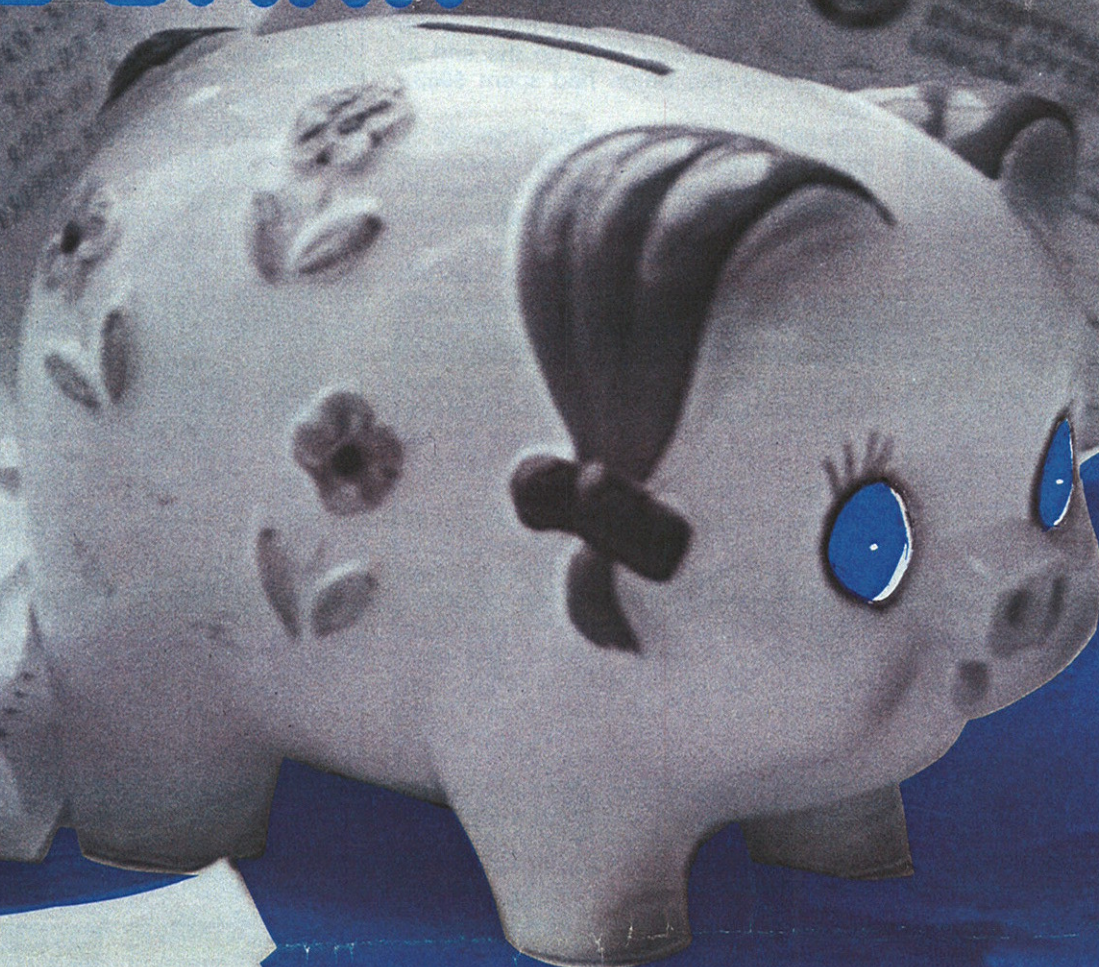
HOSPITAL  
EMPLOYEES'  
UNION LOCAL  
180

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## BREAKING THE BANK



a look at finance



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



Provincial Executive

J. D. GEROW  
Secretary-  
Business Manager

JOHN DARBY  
Financial  
Secretary

Published by



HOSPITAL  
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STEPHEN BREWER  
Editor

## INSIDE

### 4 BARGAINING

Workers at six Lower Mainland private hospitals get a first contract which sets them on the road to parity with other Union members, while the struggle for a provincial master agreement goes on . . . and on, and on, and on.

### 6 ROUNDUP

Being a compendium of fascinating trivia and facts, including — in this edition — a message for hospital administrators who want to get their hands on a copy of the ring binder containing the provincial master agreement the Union had printed.

### 6 INTERVIEW

With Len Guy, the hard-hitting head of the British Columbia Federation of Labour, a man also known — from time to time, and depending on who's doing the describing — as the meanest son-of-a-bitch in the trade union movement today.

### 7 OTHER UNIONS

A look at the contract the Registered Nurses' Association of British Columbia just signed with the Health Labour Relations Association, those fun-loving people with whom HEU has been known, on occasion, to have dealings.

### 8 SUPERANNUATION

Answers to some of the questions most frequently asked about the Municipal Superannuation Plan, the people who get the money you see deducted from your paycheck once a month. Where does that money go — and why?

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## MONEY

# BREAKING THE BANK

In a restaurant not far from the Union's Vancouver provincial offices, a small sign hanging on the cash register asks "Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?"

It's a sentiment near and dear to Financial Secretary John Darby's heart.

Darby doesn't like to say HEU is in financial trouble; he prefers to use phrases like "the Union's finances are severely strained."

It boils down to the same thing: in the first nine months of 1976 (to the end of September), the Union had spent \$963,127.

In the same period, it had received as income only \$766,719, which means — as a little simple arithmetic will show — that the bank account was overdrawn to the tune of \$196,408.

A large part of that overdraft was the result of the strike against the Health Labour Relations Association last spring (*Guardian*, May-June, July-August, September-October, 1976) which had cost HEU \$182,263 by September 30, 1976. (That wasn't the final cost figure for the strike, only the bills which had come in and been paid.)

"Even if the strike had not taken place," Darby said, "the Union dues increase of June, 1970 [the last dues increase voted by the membership before last October's Tenth Biennial Convention (*Guardian*, September-October, 1976)] would have been eroded, by the serious inflationary trend of the past few years, to the point where it would no longer have met HEU's expenses for calendar 1976."

That, he added, was why some Units had asked others — through their Delegates to the Tenth Biennial Convention — to alter the dues structure, scrapping the \$5 a month formula adopted in 1970 and substituting for it a formula which, when it went into effect January 1, 1977, began debiting members for one per cent of their gross monthly pay for Union dues.

The Delegates, of course, went along with the request and the new dues structure became reality (it is worth noting that most trade unions in British Columbia still charge their members much, much more than HEU for monthly dues; some unions take as much as 20 per cent of gross monthly salary for dues).

Why was the increase necessary? Where was the money going? Why was it possible for HEU to have a surplus of

\$68,084 in 1975 and to be more than twice that amount in the hole by the end of the ninth month of the next year?

As the chart below shows, the biggest single expenditure the Union makes is

paying the salaries of the 25 people it employs in its three offices (provincial headquarters in Vancouver and regional offices in Victoria and Kelowna), and the salaries of the people HEU employs on

### Where the money went

The graph below shows, in percentage terms, where HEU's money went in 1975 and during the first nine months of 1976. For every dollar received in 1975, for example, 13.1 cents was spent in rebates to individual Units. The Union ended 1975 in good shape, financially, with a surplus of \$68,084. 1976 was a different story: by the end of September, the Union had spent \$196,408 more than it had.



\* Superannuation, Unemployment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, medical and dental plan premiums, life insurance, for Union employees.



an irregular basis to attend to Union business which the permanent staff cannot handle.

"This latter group," Darby said, "is composed mostly of the Union members 'hired' from time to time in the capacity of convention and/or wage policy conference delegates, delegates at seminars, members of bargaining committees, arbitration hearing witnesses or organizers.

"While the members are 'employed' by the Union in these capacities, their salaries are paid by the Union, which pays them the rate they would be getting if they had not taken leave of absence from their hospital jobs to work for the Union.

"Of course, we have been fairly successful, in years past, in increasing the salaries of our members, which means the Union has to pay them more when they come to work for us."

Salaries for permanent staff have also increased, usually at about the same rate as those of the membership.

"This isn't the only way in which our costs have gone up, of course," Darby said.

"The Union also deals with a variety of businesses in the community, including printers, lawyers and car dealers, and the prices of their commodities and services have increased unbelievably in the last couple of years."

What all these increased costs have meant, Darby said, is more money going out all the time, with no real corresponding increase in revenue.

This has meant several important programs the Union has wanted to undertake have had to be put off, delayed until more money was available.



His wife isn't here . . . he just comes in for the cigars.



"However, with the advent of the new dues structure, we can begin reviewing the implementation of many of these programs," Darby said.

Among the programs to which he referred:

- Creation of a \$1 million defense fund, which would be used to pay the costs of defending individual units or members who get into difficulty, or to help defray the cost of any future strike.

- The opening of a third regional office

## PRESS

### 'New look' Guardian saves money

*The Hospital Guardian*, HEU's official magazine, is sporting a new look with this issue, the first for the 1977 calendar year.

Some of the changes will be obvious, such as the new design for the magazine's masthead (the name which appears on the cover), which has been redesigned to incorporate both the Union seal and the words "Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180" into the design.

The number of pages in this edition, too, has been reduced, from the usual 12 to eight, a move — like most of the changes — designed to save the Union money, a commodity in short supply these days (see story, page 2).

Another move to save money: full-color photography has been eliminated, a move which — when combined with the fewer number of pages — will save HEU over \$1,500 in production costs for each issue of the magazine published.

Some of the changes, effective with this issue, aren't as obvious as the ones already outlined:

There is, for example, a new distribution system for *The Guardian*, one which will not only save money but which will (hopefully) get each edition into the hands of the Unit secretaries much, much faster . . . and from their hands into the hands of the membership quicker than has been the practice in the past.

And, of course, there are some changes to the magazine which aren't really new with this issue, but which are a change — many of these have been gradually phased in over the last several issues.

In the November-December issue, a table of contents was added on page 2.

New features and columns have been added: Interviews, Parting Shot, the Superannuation column, to name but a few.

Type styles, for headlines and for stories, have been changed.

Layout and design have taken on a new look.

But, probably as important as the things which have changed are the things which haven't:

*The Guardian* remains the official voice of HEU and its members, and will continue to offer its readers reports of what's happening in their Union and in the trade union movement in Canada, in British Columbia, in the world.

In this most important respect, the old axiom remains true: the more things change, the more they stay the same.





JOHN DARBY

in the North of the province, most probably in Prince George.

- Establishment of a full-time education department at HEU's provincial office, a department which could be responsible for creation and distribution of training programs and other educational affairs.

- Expansion of the Union's technical services department, allowing for more research in preparation for negotiations, arbitrations and the day-to-day handling of Union affairs.

- Creation of a building fund, to be used to replace the present provincial office building — now woefully inadequate to the needs of the expanding membership — with a new structure.

Most of the programs were ratified by Delegates to the Tenth Biennial Convention, Darby noted, but all have been stalled for lack of money.

And, while HEU has been cutting expenses whenever and wherever it can, the programs would have remained stalled if not for the new dues structure.

Not only would the new programs — so essential to the orderly growth of HEU — have remained stalled, Darby said, existing programs would have had to have been cut back or eliminated.

If the Union is to remain strong, something which is essential if its members are to continue to improve their working lives, it couldn't happen that way . . . that's why the dues formula was changed.

## 'STEP TO PARITY' TAKEN

About 350 Lower Mainland private hospital employees have been awarded a first contract which Servicing Representative Sharon Yandle described as "a major breakthrough" in HEU's continuing fight to upgrade working conditions for workers in the province's private hospitals.

The contract — handed down by a three-member arbitration board in late December — does not bring employees up to the standard of the Union's provincial master agreement with the Health Labour Relations Association, but it does give the workers earning the base rate at the six hospitals affected a substantial pay raise, in addition to other benefits.

"At that, it's not as exciting a raise as we had hoped for," Yandle said, "since it ups the base rate from the provincial minimum wage of \$3 an hour to \$4.31 an hour."

"But it is a big step in the right direction."

Yandle — and the employees — had good reason for concern over the award, before it was handed down.

The three-man arbitration board, headed by Vancouver lawyer Bruce McColl and including Servicing Representative Hans Brown as the Union representative and lawyer Peter Archibald as the employers' representative, was to have handed down its award before October 31, but said then it had been unable to reach consensus on what should be included in the new agreement (*Guardian*, November-December, 1976).

And past experience — limited to the award handed down for employees at five other private hospitals in early 1976 (*Guardian*, January-February, 1976) by Joe Weiler — seemed to indicate that arbitrators were likely to be very sympathetic to the employers' pleas of poverty.

But the McColl award, when it finally came, delighted Yandle and the four-member bargaining committee which had fought for so long to win it.

[The committee, and the hospitals they represented: **Greta Fogstrom**, Como Lake Hospital (Coquitlam); **Pat Boyer**, Kensington Private Hospital (Vancouver) and Willingdon Private Hospital (Burnaby); **Lesley Honscharow**, Ladner Private Hospital (Delta); and **Barbara Nicholson**, Altamont Private Hospital and Inglewood Hospital and Lodge (both in West Vancouver).]

The first contract, which is retroactive for 18 months at two of the hospitals and for one year at the remaining four, provides for:

- Pay increases of up to \$1.31 an hour for those earning the base rate.

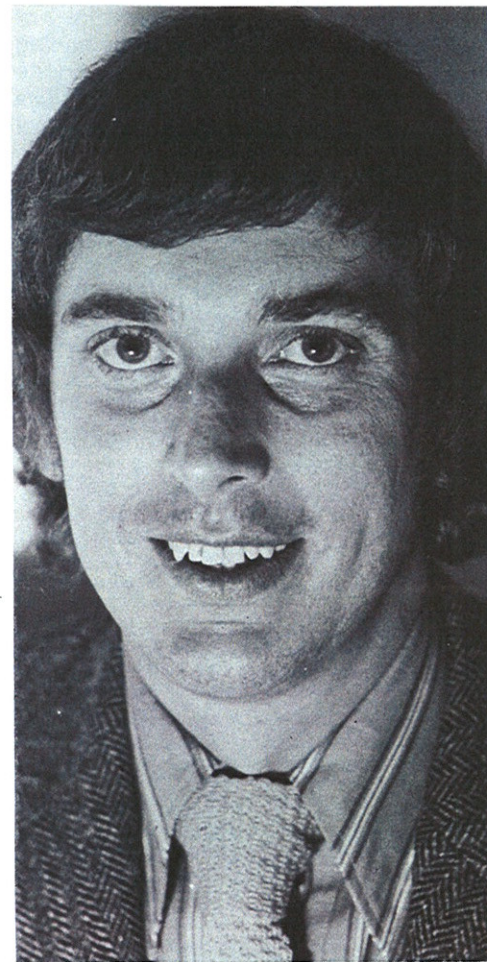
- Two additional statutory holidays, bringing the total number to 11 per year.

- Compassionate leave (HEU was unable to have its special leave clause added to the contract; but the provision for compassionate leave gives the employees this most basic form of leave of absence with pay for the first time).

- Improvements in annual vacations, providing for two weeks after one year (the provincial minimum and the only vacation given any employee before the contract), three weeks after three years and four weeks after 10 years.

- Sick leave, to be earned at the rate of 1.5 days for each month worked, to a maximum of 60 days off with pay. Before the contract, employees were not paid when they were too sick to come to work.

- A medical plan, with shared payment of premiums, again something the employees did not have prior to the first contract award.



HANS BROWN



- Reduction of the hours of work from 40 hours a week to 37.5 hours.

- Five additional minutes added to the existing 10-minute coffee breaks.

- Severance pay (not paid before) for employees with more than 10 years' service, to be earned at the rate of one week's pay for every year worked, upon termination for any reason (this clause actually has better language than the provincial master agreement, which provides for one week's pay for every two years' service, to a maximum of 20 weeks' pay).

- Prohibitions against contracting work out to firms or hospitals other than those covered by the agreement.

- Paid leaves of absence.

"What has happened is that the arbitration board has recognized the principle of equal pay for equal work," Yandle said, "and has started these workers — who are traditionally among the most op-

pressed in the province — on the road to full equality with their brothers and sisters in the public sector.

"This obviously isn't the best contract in the world — but it is the best contract ever won for private hospital employees: better than the Weiler award last year and certainly much, much better than the International Union of Operating Engineers — which is certified at a handful of B.C. private hospitals — has gotten for their people.

"We are very satisfied that the arbitration board has put our people on the road to parity with the public hospitals, but we are viewing this award as a sure sign that we must re-double our efforts to bring private hospital workers to full parity with other British Columbia hospital employees.

"Justice demands that parity . . . and, for perhaps the first time, it appears that justice is within our grasp."

## At \$10.80 a minute, this talk is costing...

Private hospital workers may well look with envy upon Bruce McColl, the Vancouver lawyer who arbitrated their first contract negotiations.

While the award he handed down represents a significant increase in the workers' standard of living, it comes nowhere near bringing them up to his own level.

McColl was paid about \$64.84 an hour for each of the 131.1 hours he put in during the course of the arbitration (a total of \$8,500).

Total bill for the arbitration was \$10,160.40 (which includes secretarial services, bills for meeting rooms and the like), for which the Union was liable for half.



SHARON YANDLE

## AN AWARD (OF SORTS) FOR 1977

It wasn't much of a Christmas present.

On December 22, Hugh G. Ladner, the sole arbitrator named by Labour Minister Allan Williams to resolve the issues of wages, cost-of-living adjustments and job evaluation for 1977, handed down a decision which provides for a 6 per cent pay increase for Union members, effective January 1, 1977.

Ladner, named after HEU was forced to seek an arbitrator by the Health Labour Relations Association's refusal to negotiate the terms of the 1977 agreement (*Guardian*, November-December, 1976), also ruled that was all the Union was going to get — he ruled out any cost-of-living adjustments for calendar 1977.

What there was to be of a wage increase was to have been paid to Union members beginning in January.

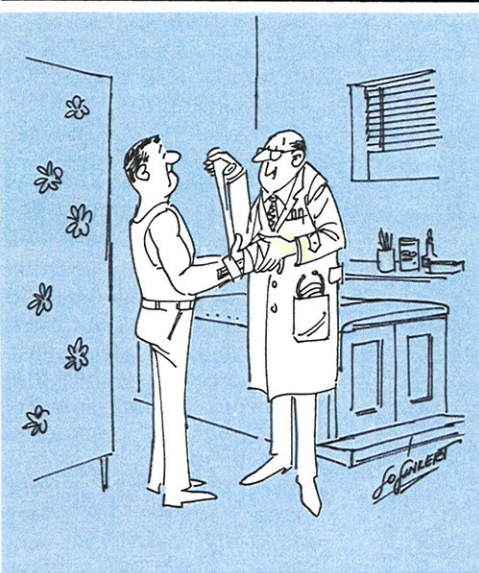
But even there, problems arose.

Ladner's decision called for a wage increase "equal to 6 per cent of the maximum compensation allowable in 1976."

Straightforward enough, or so it would seem: the federal Anti-Inflation Board had ruled the Union was to receive a total compensation package equal to an 8 per cent raise in 1976.

The 1977 salary increase, therefore, would be 6 per cent of that total package.

Not so, said the HLRA, which instructed its members to pay employees an increase equal to 6 per cent of the wages allowed under the 1976 contract (which,



. . . and next time your karate lesson calls for breaking boards, bring them along — we can always use them for splints.

under AIB rollback provisions, amounted to about a 6.13 per cent hike over 1975 pay rates).

The hospitals did begin paying the 6 per cent of 6.13 per cent, so employees at least got something, though not all they were entitled to.

And another battle with the Association was begun, even while other battles still raged.

Not least among those battles was the one over the 1976 collective agreement, and what benefits were to be left intact in it.

Hearings on that issue, before special mediator Judge D. E. McTaggart, were concluded in December, when the judge announced he was reserving his final decision until the Union's appeal of the AIB rollback was decided.

If HEU's appeal is successful, Ladner's decision provides for reopening of negotiations for 1977 pay rates, which would take the Union and HLRA back to square one in that area, while creating new uncertainty about last year's contract.

In a word, the question of how much Union members are going to get paid — for the work they have already performed in 1976, and for the work they will perform in 1977 — is: uncertain.

The only thing which seems to be certain, in fact, is that HEU will continue, as it always has, to fight for the best possible contract for its members.



## ROUNDUP



Back when the HEU first came up with the idea of printing copies of the master agreement in loose leaf, binder form (*Guardian*, September-October, 1976), it approached the **Health Labour Relations Association** and asked it if it felt like sharing the cost of the printing.

The Association — which is bound by the agreement to pay half the cost of printing the smaller, bound copies of the contract — declined, saying it didn't feel

the idea was such a good one.

The Union went ahead with the printing anyway, paying the full cost itself, because it felt the binder editions of the agreement would be useful things for Unit officers to have.

At the same time, it was decided to make the binder agreement available to members who wanted one, at the price the Union paid for the plastic binder alone (\$3.25) . . . the member, in other words, would get the contract and other pages for free.

It seems it would have been a good idea if the HLRA had opted to share the printing costs for the loose leaf edition . . . the provincial office has received numerous calls from hospital administrators (and from at least one HLRA staff member) asking if they could buy binder versions of the agreement.

Well guys, we're not in the business of "hustling" binder agreements, but — out of the goodness of our hearts — we *will* sell you one.

Since you don't pay Union dues, though, we're going to have to charge you for the contents as well as the plastic binder.

Talk to the Staff Representative who services your hospital . . . and have your \$10 handy.

No stamps, please.

★ ★ ★

From the world of medical research comes the report that ulcers — contrary to long-standing popular belief — are indeed contagious

You can get them from your supervisor.

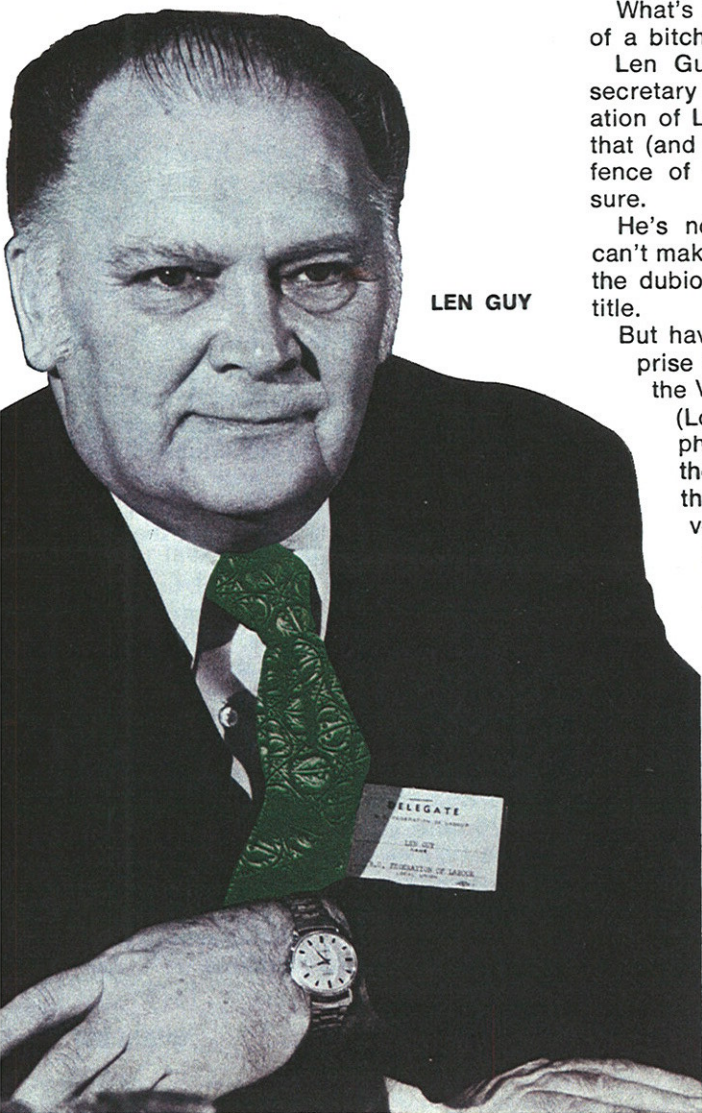
★ ★ ★

Now, about that cover on the November-December edition of *The Guardian* (you remember, the one with the picture of **Santa Claus**).

Seems many members had become so accustomed to covers depicting one form of strife or another that they just couldn't believe it was a simple, straightforward Christmas cover.

## INTERVIEW

### UNIONS CAN'T IMPROVE IMAGE



LEN GUY

What's it like to be the "meanest son of a bitch in the province"?

Len Guy, the acid-tongued general secretary of the British Columbia Federation of Labour — who has been called that (and worse) for his enthusiastic defence of workers' rights — isn't really sure.

He's not sure because he somehow can't make himself believe he has earned the dubious distinction conferred by the title.

But having the title doesn't really surprise the 53-year-old ex-president of the Vancouver Typographical Union (Local 226, International Typographical Union). Whoever occupies the general secretary's chair at the Federation offices in Vancouver is going to be the target for a lot of hate mail, he feels.

"We can't really improve our public image," Guy told *The Guardian*, "not if we spent millions of dollars trying to tell the public that organized labour isn't the boogeyman it's painted to be in the media."

"We can't improve our image because, for every ad, every story, we got printed about the positive improvements organized labour has won for the workers of this country —

organized and unorganized alike — there would be six stories on the front page about the 'damned plumbers' union holding up their bosses for another pay raise."

"Money, those people who have lots of it, controls the presses in British Columbia, and in Canada.

"Money, those people who have it, is the thing workers are forced to strike against to win for themselves and their families a decent standard of living.

"So it's in the interest of those who control the media to exploit the strikes and to ignore the 96 per cent of contract negotiations which end without a strike, with amicable agreement between labour and management to raise the standard of living for workers within a given industry.

"We can't win a public relations 'war', so there's not really much point in even trying . . . all we can do is keep trying to improve the lot of the working people of this province, the same battle we've been fighting since unions were first organized.

"In that area, we've won a lot, things which would never have happened had the union movement not fought so hard for so long to get them.

"That includes things like the old age pension — which makes it ironic that old age pensioners' organizations are often among the first to scream about how 'irresponsible' unions are being — vacations with pay, medical plans . . . the list goes on and on."

There are, Guy said, battles organized



A group of employees at North Vancouver's **Lion's Gate Hospital** was so convinced the cover had some "hidden meaning," in fact, that they called and asked what it was.

There wasn't any . . . for the record, the picture of Santa on the cover is over 120 years old, having been drawn for the **New York Herald-Examiner** by political cartoonist **Thomas Nast**.

It was the first-ever representation of the "Father of Christmas" as a full-grown adult, wearing a red suit with a black belt and carrying a pack, replete with flowing white beard and twinkling eyes, ever published anywhere.

(Nast — whose bitter cartoons brought the word "nasty" into the English language — is also credited with having created the character of Uncle Sam and with having been the first to represent the American Republican party as an elephant, the Democrats as donkeys.)

Before Nast, Santa was variously represented as a dwarf, an elf, a tall, thin

man or an angel, and wore anything from flowing white robes to lederhosen.



The cartoon was just our way of saying "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

★ ★ ★

Servicing Representative **Bernice Gehring** is "coming along very nicely, thank you," after suffering fractured vertebrae in a car accident near Quesnel late last year.

Gehring, whose car skidded out of control on an icy road during a snowstorm, was knocked out of action for more than a month by the accident.

She was on her way to the province's North — on a routine servicing trip — when the accident occurred, and was hospitalized at **G. R. Baker Memorial Hospital** for about a week immediately afterwards.

She was treated there for numerous bruises, sprains, shock and exposure (she was trapped inside her car, which had landed in a slough filled with near-freezing water, for more than half an hour after the vehicle rolled down an embankment at the roadside).

labour must be prepared to fight, though, among them fights with all levels of government when those governments attempt to mount attacks on workers.

One such fight, which seems to be looming on the horizon, could well be the imposition of a program of wage controls on public service workers after the federal government's current program of wage control ends.

There have been hints, starting late last fall and building in intensity ever since, that Prime Minister Trudeau and his cabinet are at least considering such a program for public service workers — one cabinet minister has said the public service controls could last for "10 to 15 years after the present program ends."

"I don't really believe that will happen," Guy said; "not even politicians can be that stupid."

"But, if they are, they will find that all trade unions—public sector, private sector, it won't matter — will join in the fight against them."

"It wouldn't make sense to allow any one group of workers to be singled out for discriminatory treatment . . . and that's exactly what a program of controls for public service workers alone would be: discriminatory."

"The government, no one, can be allowed to say to one group of workers: 'Because you happen to work for a government, you can't enjoy the same standard of living as the rest of the working people of this country.'"

"That would be sheer idiocy."

## OTHER UNIONS

### Nurses, hospitals sign new pact



British Columbia registered nurses employed in 107 of the province's public hospitals have gotten a pay raise, retroactive to January 1, 1976, as well as improved language in their master agreement with the Health Labour Relations Association.

The nurses, who voted to ratify the proposed agreement late last year, got a seven per cent across-the-board pay increase and another one per cent increase in benefits, including better on-call premiums, improved statutory holiday pay and a dental plan.

The contract, which expires at the end of December, 1977, calls for pay increases in 1977 "equal to the maximum allowed by federal or provincial legislation . . . [less] the cost of the dental plan benefit, which amounts to roughly one per cent," according to an article in a recent edition of the **RNABC News**, official magazine of the **Registered Nurses' Association of British Columbia**.

The contract allowed for negotiations on the question of wages — with a binding arbitration clause if no agreement could be reached — had there been no wage control program in force on January 1, 1977.

Other benefits and language improvements won by the nurses' association include provisions allowing nurses to accumulate time off for any overtime they work and to refuse "unreasonable amounts of overtime"; provisions allowing nurses to select holiday periods either on a seniority basis or by rotation (and prohibiting the employer from restricting vacation schedules to certain periods of the calendar year); and increases in northern differential rates from \$20 to \$21.60.

The dental plan the nurses received, effective January 1, 1977, calls for the employer to meet the costs of premiums, and pays for dental work in the same proportions as the dental plan HEU secured for its members in 1976.

The new agreement, by arrangement between the HLRA and the nurses' association, was implemented immediately upon ratification; as this issue of **The Guardian** went to press, a decision on the contract by the federal Anti-inflation Board was being awaited.



## PARTING SHOT



The "three squares" a day I was referring to are crackers.

## NEW FACES

### Clerk by day . . .

Candy Billick, HEU's new junior clerk, doesn't spend all her working time behind a desk outside Financial Secretary John Darby's office, adding figures and worrying about pink membership cards.

Candy, in fact, leads a sort of double life, toiling by day as an accounting clerk only to be transformed, nights and weekends, to a professional singer of rhythm and blues, rock and country-rock songs, some of which she has composed and written herself.

She performed at concerts in the Lower Mainland and at some Vancouver-area night clubs before starting to work at the Union's provincial offices in Vancouver in mid-October (before then, she worked for about a month and a half as a temporary employee).

Born in Victoria, she moved to Vancouver, where she graduated from the B.C. Vocational School, in 1970, after spending six years in the Prince George area and two years "bumming around the western United States."

She began her singing career (professionally) after moving to Vancouver, auditioning for the CBC ("I didn't make it") soon after her arrival.

Her career at HEU started when she was assigned what has to be ranked as one of the most thankless jobs performed in the provincial office in recent memory: assuming responsibility for getting the new pink membership cards signed and turned in.

She now assists accounting clerk Peggy Young, who — of course — helps Darby look after the financial affairs of the Union.



CANDY BILICK

## SUPERANNUATION

### Some common questions-answered

#### SECOND IN A SERIES

The Municipal Superannuation Plan began on April 1, 1921, with the passage by the provincial legislature of the British Columbia Superannuation Act, which included not only municipal but provincial employees.

In 1938, with the passage of the Municipal Superannuation Act, the two groups of public service employees were split, with provincial government employees remaining under the protection of the provincial superannuation plan and all other municipal, school district, hospital, regional district and other public employees coming under the new municipal plan.

Employees are enrolled as contributors to the plan upon their appointment to the permanent staff of, in our case, a hospital, or upon completion of one year's employment, whichever comes first.

The basic employee contribution, when combined with the Canada Pension Plan contribution, is approximately six per cent of the employee's monthly wages, salary or earnings, excluding overtime.

The employer contributes a varying percentage of his employees' salaries to the plan on their behalf. The percentage ranges between 3.6 per cent and 11.6 per cent, depending on the age and classification of each employee.

Additional voluntary employee contributions may be made, at any time, by arrangement with the payroll officer at the hospital.

These voluntary contributions earn interest until retirement, then form the basis for an increased pension for the employee who has made them.

When do the benefits start?

Employees covered by the plan **must** retire at age 65 and **may** retire after completing 20 years of pensionable service, if they are at least 60 when they reach their twentieth work anniversary, or after 10 years' service (regardless of age) for a reduced pension.

Employees who are totally and permanently disabled may retire after 10 years' pensionable service.