

With help of HEU members

Erosion Of Health Care To Be Monitored



HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow and B.C. Nurses Union Chief Executive Officer Nora Paton listen to a question from the media at a press conference March 31 held by the Alliance to Save Health Care in B.C. The goal of the alliance is to stop cutbacks in health care for the sake of the patient and the health care worker.

HEU was the first to call for a common front of health care groups to fight proposed cutbacks in hospital spending and such an alliance was formed in February.

Report forms and questionnaires will be distributed to all 49,000 Alliance members, including the 25,000 members in HEU, to monitor the erosion of health care in B.C. hospitals and facilities.

The Alliance needs HEU members' help in documenting situations which result in substandard patient care or produce unsafe conditions for staff. The situations HEU members describe can either be specific incidents or can be ongoing problems.

Members are encouraged to take the time to provide the

alliance with the details of these situations as they arise by using the form that will be provided at your Unit.

The source of all information will be kept confidential.

Do you know about bed closures? Services reduced, or eliminated? No vacation relief? Lay-offs? Staff positions left unfilled when people leave? Do you know of situations where patient care is less than it should be? Where supplies have been cut back? Where the safety of patients, or staff, is not certain? Where some service takes too long?

Things like these mean inferior health care, and they probably result from inadequate government funding. If you have to work around this

kind of obstacle, let the Alliance know.

Your union steward/representative/chairperson will have a supply of forms.

The Alliance is a joint venture of the Hospital Employees' Union, the B.C. Nurses' Union, the Union of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of B.C., the International Union of Operating Engineers, Locals 882 and 882B, the Ambulance Employees' Union, CUPE Local 873, and the Health Sciences Association.

All of us want to do good jobs in health care. We're fighting to save the system and make it better. Help the Alliance, so we can help you and your patients.

In a joint statement released March 8, the alliance criticized Premier Bill Bennett's proposed program of restricted public spending and the effect such restrictions would have on health care.

"Our members have for years been trying to cope with a seriously underfunded system. The government's proposal is the straw that broke the camel's back," said the alliance.

"Services already strained to the limit face severe cutbacks if the government imposes its unrealistic ceiling. This cannot be allowed to happen."

The alliance's main objectives are to fight for the preservation of health care standards by warning all political parties of the dangers presented by the cutbacks and by questioning the parties about their commitment to maintaining and improving health care.

HEU Secretary Business Manager Jack Gerow called for a common front of health care employees on February 18, immediately after Bennett revealed his proposed wage and expenditure restrictions.

The alliance welcomes the participation of other organizations and interested parties.

Studies Show ETO Can Be Hazardous

Recent scientific studies show that ethylene oxide gas (ETO), used in sterilizers in many hospitals, is more hazardous to health than previously thought.

All HEU members who work near an ETO sterilizer should re-examine their work procedures in light of the fact that the gas may be 50 times as dangerous as previously thought.

Maple Ridge Unit Chairperson Jean Blyth said that a March Guardian story on the sterilizer at Maple Ridge Hospital "did a lot of good."

"The story seemed to have done a lot of good because other hospitals are calling and asking about it (the sterilizer). The hospital management here is taking it seriously too and that's good for everybody concerned," Blyth told The Guardian.

"The problem about the gas was brought out into the open through The Guardian and because the hospital management is aware of our worries, they are becoming more safety conscious regarding this ETO gas."

The sterilizer at the Maple Ridge Hospital has not been turned on since March 11 when the Workers Compensation Board came to check the machine. The WCB told the hospital they would return however since the sterilizer was not functioning March 11, said Blyth.

"The machine hasn't been working too good and the hospital has been doing a lot of work on it. They don't know when they're going to start it up again."

Health and Welfare Canada is disturbed enough about the potential ill effects of this gas that it issued a Medical Devices Alert bulletin in January to hospital administrators.

The Chief of the Environmental and Occupational Toxicology Division of Health and Welfare Canada advised HEU that, as a result of the new evidence, they are "thinking about" reducing the maximum exposure level from fifty parts per million to one part per million.

In light of these new studies, HEU is attempting to ensure that employers take every possible precaution to avoid exposing HEU members to ETO vapours.

The following HEU-researched information on ETO sterilizers should prove useful to Union members:

1. Dow Chemical (which manufactures ETO) has produced a summary of studies on the effect of ETO which includes the finding that ETO inhalation at ten, thirty-three, and one hundred p.p.m. caused increased incidence of leukaemia in rats, and at thirty-three and one hundred p.p.m., caused increased incidence of cancer of the stomach lining in rats.

2. ETO is extremely dangerous if exposed to open fire.

3. ETO causes chromosomal changes in barley, fruit flies, rats, dogs, and humans.

4. Early symptoms of ETO inhalation include irritation to the eyes, nose, throat, and a peculiar taste; delayed symptoms include headaches, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, blueness, swelling of the lungs, drowsiness, weakness, and incoordination.

5. If you can smell ETO (it has a distinctive smell — rotten cabbage was one description) you are exceeding your maximum recommended exposure.

6. In Sweden, the maximum exposure standard is twenty p.p.m.; in the Soviet Union, the maximum exposure standard is .5 p.p.m.

Voting On Offer To End April 22

HEU members began voting March 30 and continue voting through to April 22 on HLRA's offer. HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee recommended rejection of the offer to the Union's Provincial Executive at a meeting in March. The executive unanimously endorsed that recommendation and recommended that HEU members seek arbitration as the means of settling the dispute.

Results of the voting will be announced after April 22 and

will be reported in upcoming Guardians.

Health care in B.C. hospitals is "teetering on the brink of a disaster" as a result of HLRA's so-called "final" offer of March 12, according to HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow.

"I expect HEU members will be so enraged by the offer that they will stop doing those little extras that have been helping the hospitals get by in their current financial squeeze," said Gerow.

HLRA's "final" offer, reported in the Special Guardian that has been handed out to many HEU members since voting began March 30 at Unit meetings, called for a 3.49 per cent wage increase retroactive to January 1 and an additional 4.593 per cent boost April 1.

"Morale will plummet and certainly all this will effect health care," added Gerow.

Constitution And By-Laws Provisions

The following are provisions of the HEU Constitution and By-Laws that should be of interest to Union members:

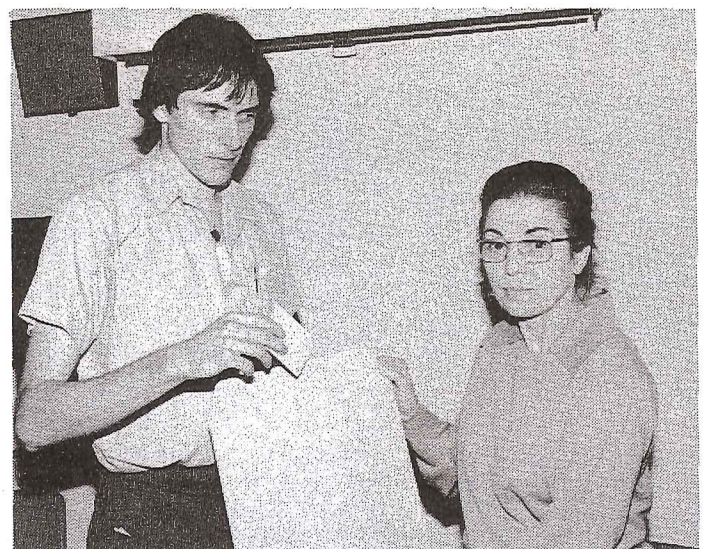
Article XI — Master Collective Agreement Negotiations

Section S
A full and comprehensive Report covering Proposed Terms of Settlement shall be given to Unit Members directly affected by the results of such negotiations. Such Reports shall only be given at properly constituted Unit or Group meetings by Provincial and Regional Office Staff Representatives assisted, where necessary, by Members of the Provincial Bargaining Committee and/or Provincial Executive Members.

Section W
Each Unit or Group shall vote separately on all recommendations with respect to settlement, strike or arbitration.

Section X
An overall 2/3's vote shall bind all Units and Groups to the prevailing Membership decision.

Section Y
There shall be no strike action without Provincial Executive sanction.



Grace Unit Chairperson Blair Thomas cast his ballot at a Unit meeting March 30. To Blair's right is Unit Secretary-Treasurer Tena Pendlebury. Counting of the ballots from the affected HEU Units to determine if Union members want arbitration as the means of settling the Master Agreement will begin April 22.

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

The Hospital Guardian

Official Magazine of the



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180

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GORDON MacPHERSON
JACK GEROW
MAURICE SMITH
GORDON MEAGHER
GWEN PARRISH

The Members of the
Provincial Executive are:

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Okanagan

NANCY CARDY
Regional Vice-President
Vancouver Island

ERNE ELLIS
1st Provincial Executive
Alternate

The Union maintains offices at:

Provincial Office
2286 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, V6K 2N5
Telephone 734-3431

Okanagan/Kootenay Office
No. 103, 2359 Highway 97 North
Kelowna V1X 4H9
Telephone 860-5115

Vancouver Island Office
No. 214-1095 McKenzie Avenue
Victoria V8P 2L5
Telephone 727-3331

Northern Office
No. 111, 1717 Third Avenue
Prince George V2L 3G7
Telephone 564-2102

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Editorial Page



Health Care Alliance

HEU issued a call for a common front of health groups in February to deal with the provincial government's attempt to dangerously erode the level of health care being provided in the province's hospitals and facilities.

The Union's primary interest in the alliance of groups that eventually was formed is the quality of health care being delivered and the effect on health care workers who, because of government underfunding, could be forced to work under dangerously low patient-to-staff ratios causing risk to not only the patient but also to the health care worker.

The alliance is formed of the following: HEU, Ambulance Employees Union, B.C. Nurses Union, Health Sciences Association, International Union of Operating Engineers and the Union of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of B.C.

For years, British Columbians have coped with a health system that just makes the grade. Patients are affected, but health workers face the problem constantly. Coping has become a way of life for them. Most of the blame lies with the provincial government, which has ignored the problem.

Now the government wants to limit public spending for health. They think they can do it without taking the system from borderline to inadequate. Well, they better think again.

The people who deliver health care will no longer stand by quietly. HEU and the alliance will blow the whistle on the government's scheme. This alliance of health workers will monitor care and report to the public. The 49,000 members in the alliance are on the spot; they know best what's happening, and their knowledge and expertise will be used.

The alliance monitoring program consists of two parts. The first will be a province-wide survey of members to document the current state of health services. A computer will analyze the questionnaires to give a detailed, overall picture. In April, health care workers will begin documenting individual incidents and problems as they occur; and this will pinpoint specific trouble spots. Information from both parts of the program will be made public.

The object of all this is to inform British Columbians. Not many people really know what happens in health care. But when they are told, they won't allow the system to be picked apart in the name of false economy. This is the alliance's hope — and the only way to save health care in B.C.



Grace Unit member Lydia Basso voted at a Unit meeting March 30. Lydia is a cook at Grace Hospital in Vancouver.

Royal Columbian Budget To Be Slashed

New Westminster's Royal Columbian Hospital faces the loss of up to 100 beds, scrapping of all elective surgery and slashing of services to patients in an attempt to meet provincial budget guidelines.

The hospital's administration has prepared a list of dozens of proposed cutbacks after learning at a meeting that the hospital's expected operating budget for 1982-83 will be effectively reduced by at least \$4 million.

The list was presented to the hospital's board of directors but was rejected. Instead, officials are hoping to meet Health Minister Jim Nielson to discuss the problem and try to win a reprieve for the hospital.

But the administration warns in its report that it believes the government is adamant in requiring Royal Columbian to pare its budget.

"It was obvious to those present (at the earlier meeting with the ministry) that this was the final position of the government, regardless of political and public consequences of this policy ... the government is anticipating media and medical staff reaction and they are prepared to accept it as inevitable."

The report was made public by Dennis Cocke, NDP health critic and New Westminster MLA. Cocke admitted that some of the hospital's officials had urged him to keep the report private, but said he decided it was important for the public to know the impact of government budget cuts.

The report states that the cuts required by the government will probably require a complete redefinition of the hospital's role. At the moment, it serves as a community centre for the New

Westminster area as well as a regional and emergency trauma centre.

To meet the government guidelines, the administration suggests that the regional and trauma centre roles take precedence, and the community hospital role be reduced. The nearby St. Mary's Hospital and the now-under-construction Eagleridge Hospital in Port Moody could pick up the slack.

The cuts would probably mean:

- Closing of between 50 and 100 of the hospital's 580 beds.
- "Almost complete elimination of elective surgery beds.
- Limiting the number of cases for some procedures the hospital undertakes as a referral centre, such as insertion of heart pacemakers and some complex and costly diagnostic techniques.
- Elimination of all outpatient services in diet counselling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, x-ray testing and electrocardiograms.
- Elimination of all day-care psychiatry.
- Elimination of all abortions.
- No more new patients to be admitted to the renal (kidney) unit.
- Limiting the number of knee and hip replacement operations in orthopedics.

Even with these reductions, the administration is not sure the hospital could maintain its emergency role at all times. It may be necessary, it says, to implement "redirection of ambulances and even complete closure of the emergency (ward) ... because resources are not available."

(Editors Note: The article above appeared in The Province newspaper March 16.)



Grace Unit members looked over the Special Guardian and other material before casting their ballots at a Unit meeting March 30. Voting on whether the Union will seek arbitration to settle the Master agreement continues until April 22.

To push DOWN wages

HLRA and Employers Fought Hard

If HLRA had its way with job classification, HEU members, in 51 benchmark jobs would have wages lower than arbitrator Ed Peck eventually awarded on January 25.

"Many HEU clerical members are unaware that their own employer and HLRA fought tooth and nail during the arbitration process to push down HEU members' wages," explained Hans Brown, HEU's nominee to the Arbitration Board.

Because of HLRA's persistent attempts to under-value the work of HEU clerical employees, Peck agreed entirely with the employer in 8 representative categories.

In others, like the medical steno category, while Peck didn't go along totally with the

employer's position, "even his compromise wage sold the stenos short," said Brown, who explained that "HLRA didn't appreciate the complexity and diversity or the sheer speed and accuracy required to do the job." While HEU used the Arbitration hearings to point out these job qualities, HLRA continued to under-rate them and managed to convince the arbitrator.

In the payroll department, HEU members were forced to a lower rate because their employer convinced the arbitrator that there is nothing special about hospital payroll clerks.

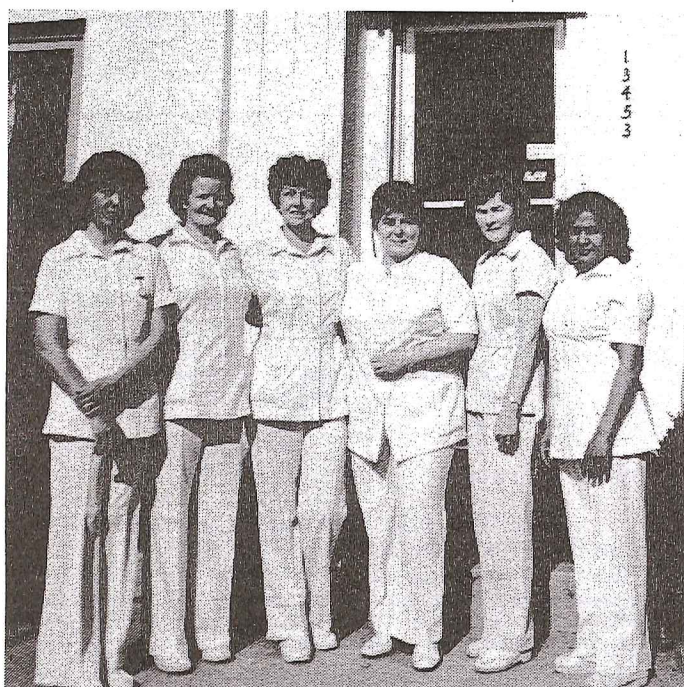
The Union argued that in hospitals payroll staff must often handle the entire payroll system, including preparing salary warrants, calculating

manual checks, dealing with WCB, UIC, and Revenue Canada.

While medical stenos and payroll clerks did fare badly in Peck's clutches, they are among a minority of representative clerical positions where Peck's award favored the employer rather than the Union. Eighteen positions were agreed to by HEU and HLRA.

"Red circled members should know," explained HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow, "that it was their own employer and HLRA, not HEU that wanted to cut their rate. Peck would not have awarded lower rates if the employer hadn't pushed hard for them." The table (below) shows the difference on 59 disputed clerical rates.

Benchmark Jobs	What Peck Awarded (Top Rate)	What HEU Wanted	What HLRA Wanted
MEDICAL RECORDS			
Medical Steno I (RCH)	1489	1529	1386
Senior Medical Steno (LGH)	1604	1604	1455
Medical Steno Super. (RCH)	1790	1941	1529
COMMUNICATIONS			
Postal Clerk (St. Paul's)	1455	1455	1285
Switchboard Operator (Victoria)	1455	1455	1386
Information Clerk (Victoria)	1386	1455	1386
Switchboard Operator 2 (LGH)	1529	1529	1455
PAYROLL			
Timekeeping Clerk 3 (RCH)	1386	1455	1386
Payroll Clerk 4 (RCH)	1455	1604	1455
Payroll Clerk 5 (Victoria)	1455	1790	1455
Asst. Payroll Supervisor (RCH)	1604	1790	1455
Chief Payroll Clerk (Victoria)	1790	1941	1790
ADMITTING			
Admitting Clerk 3 (Surrey)	1455	1455	1386
Admitting Clerk 4 (Special RCH)	1790	1790	1604
Assistant O.R. Booking Clerk 2 (Surrey)	1604	1790	1386
Senior Admitting (Surrey)	1790	1790	1604
Admitting Officer (Shaughnessy)	2196	2196	1604
O.R. Booking Co-Ordinator (Shaughnessy)	1941	2196	1604
BUSINESS OFFICE			
Clerk 2 Outpatients (RCH)	1386	1386	1285
Clerk 3 Accounts Pay. (Vernon)	1455	1529	1455
Cashier Clerk 3 (RCH)	1455	1455	1386
Clerk 3 Accts. Pay. (Surrey)	1455	1529	1386
Clerk 3 Accts. Rec. (Surrey)	1455	1529	1386
BUSINESS OFFICE (cont'd)			
Clerk IV, Accts Rec. (LGH)	1604	1604	1455
Clerk IV, Cashier (LGH)	1604	1604	1455
Clerk V Accounts Inpatients (Burnaby)	1790	1790	1455
Clerk 5 Stats (RCH)	1604	1790	1455
Clerk 5 Patient Rel. (LGH)	1790	2196	1455
Clerk 5 Patient Billing (LGH)	1941	2196	1455
ACCOUNTANTS			
Accountant Clerk 5 (Surrey)	1790	1941	1604
Assistant Accountant (RCH)	1941	2196	1604
Supervisor, General Accountants (Shaughnessy)	2196	2355	1790
Accountant (RIH)	2355	2556	1790
CLERKS/CLERK STENOS			
Clerk 3 Cardio. (RCH)	1455	1455	1386
Clerk 3 Sup. Lab. (Victoria)	1604	1604	1455
Clerk 3 Social Services (Surrey)	1455	1455	1386
Clerk 4 Admin. (Burnaby)	1529	1529	1455
Clerk 4 Rehab. (LGH)	1604	1604	1529
Nursing Sec. (Grace)	1529	1604	1455
Clerk 4 Lab. (LGH)	1604	1790	1455
Cytology Supervisor (Cancer)	1941	1941	1790
Staffing Co-Ord. (RIH)	2196	2355	1604
Supervisor O.P.D. (Shaughnessy)	1941	2355	1604
PRINTING			
Clerk 3 Forms (Surrey)	1682	1682	1386
PURCHASING			
Invoice Clerk (St. Paul's)	1455	1455	1386
Clerk 3 Pharmacy (Victoria)	1604	1604	1455
Purch. Clerk 4 (RCH)	1604	1604	1386
I.P.P. Super. (Nanaimo)	1790	1941	1604
Inventory Analyst (VGHI)	1941	2196	1455
MISCELLANEOUS			
Food Service Clerk 2 (Victoria)	1386	1455	1285
Clerk 4 Sponsorship (G. F. Strong)	1604	1604	1455
Personnel Clerk (Vernon)	1455	1604	1386
Housekeeping Clerk 4 (Shaughnessy)	1529	1604	1455
DATA PROCESSING			
Data Entry Operator 2 (Cancer)	1604	1696	1455
Computer Operator (Surrey)	1696	1891	1696
Data Entry Supervisor	1941	2243	1739
Operator 3 (VGHI)	2094	2243	1891
Programmer 2 (VGHI)	2196	2556	2196
Lead Programmer (VGHI)	2857	2857	2556



These six Florence Nightingale Unit members are: (from left) Luz Losanez, Maureen McKee, Francina Stone, Louise Brown, Gertrude Koop, and Vimla Prasad. Over 50 HEU members at the Surrey health care facility may be out of jobs if a planned closure of the facility is not prevented.



(From left) Matilda Doering, Joyce Herrick, Colin Struthers and Toni Richards are all members of HEU's Florence Nightingale Unit. The four members expressed their fears for the safety of the residents who may be moved from the Surrey health care facility should the owner's planned closure go through in April.

Restraint Causing More Unemployment

NDP labour critic Karen Sanford (NDP MLA Comox) is demanding that the government stop ignoring the worsening unemployment crisis in B.C. "We must have programmes to deal with the critical unemployment rate which has now reached ten percent," said Sanford in March.

"Economists consider a

nation is in a depression when unemployment reaches ten percent, yet in B.C. the Socreds refuse to act to alleviate the situation by introducing programmes which could stimulate the economy. Instead, their programmes of restraint and cutbacks are expected to create even more unemployment," she said.

Did you know . . .

"At the option of the Union, any or all unresolved bargaining demands shall be submitted to resolution and binding settlement by a Board of Arbitration within the meaning of the Labour Code of the Province of British Columbia, or its successor act, by the Union giving written notice to the Employer and the Ministry of Labour."

Article XVI, Pages 67-68.

HEU/HLRA

Master Agreement

'Stop the misery' — says HEU

Proposed Sale of Surrey Facility

The proposed sale of the 75-bed Florence Nightingale Private Hospital in Surrey is yet another example of "free enterprise running wild in health care", Hospital Employees' Union Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow said in March.

"We have urged the provincial government to stop the misery the profit motive inflicts on elderly residents who have to be moved by entrepreneurs interested in making a buck in health care," said Gerow.

"We're now seeing wholesale shuffling off of residents at the Florence Nightingale facility. Many are too frail, both emotionally and physically to be moved. Gerow said HEU is convinced that moving elderly patients accelerates their deaths. Their lives are being risked unnecessarily," he said.

Gerow explained the solution to the problem is simple and has been requested many times by HEU — "Let's take the profit out of health care."

Staff at the Surrey health care facility were given their termina-

tion notices in February. Most of the more than 50 employees at the facility are HEU members whose jobs may end in April. Elderly residents will be shifted to other facilities forcing those currently on the long term care waiting list to wait even longer.

Gerow said the Union is looking into ways of preventing the closure of the private hospital.

Hospital owner Dr. K. Ting Yue told Surrey council in a letter earlier this year that the 60 long-term patients will have to be relocated because, "At this point, I have no more funds."

Yue said he has been trying to turn the hospital into a non-profit society since 1979 but has been unable to do so.

Florence Nightingale Unit Chairperson Maureen McKee told The Guardian in an interview that the HEU members at the Surrey health care facility are worried about the safety of the residents.

"One little woman resident, a lovable soul, was crying when they took her out of here. She was saying — 'Why are you

sending me away? You said you loved me?'," said McKee.

"I'll tell you, the staff was all crying themselves when we heard her. It was too much to just stand there and watch her sobbing," she said.

McKee said residents are being moved out of the facility to other locations.

"We're also worried about our jobs if the facility closes. There are, I understand, hundreds of applications for only a limited number of jobs at the new Surrey Memorial Hospital long-term care extension and that has all of us concerned for our financial futures."

She added that a man named Jerry Neufeld is attempting to purchase Florence Nightingale Hospital. In an interview with HEU, Neufeld refused to discuss either the closure of the hospital or the future of the HEU members working there.

"There's nothing to discuss," Neufeld said during a telephone conversation with HEU.

An informal hearing of the Labour Relations Board was held April 1 with respect to the closure of the facility.

Administrators' Salaries Might Be Of Interest

The British Columbia Television Newshour broadcast Feb. 11 featured a story on the salaries of hospital administrators.

BCTV reported that the salary of the Cancer Control Agency administrator Mr. M. D. Mahony was approximately **\$102,000 per year** and that of Vancouver General Hospital administrator Mr. J. Flett was approximately **\$92,000 per year**.

At a time when there is considerable talk about the high cost of union salaries in health care, we wonder why this kind of talk is never directed towards "the big boys" in the plush, oak-panelled offices.

As for the administrators' salaries mentioned here — it's nice work if you can get it. Alas it's the same old story, the worker at the bottom of the totem pole rarely gets it, except you know where.

Guess who's paid more than \$60,000 per year as well as the administrators mentioned above? There's Mr. R. I. Ferguson at the Vernon Jubilee (\$75,367 annually) and also the following:

—Mr. J.S. Fair at Victoria General, **\$75,391**;
—Dr. D.A. Boyes at the A. Maxwell Evans Clinic, **\$102,075**;

—Mr. N.K. Barth at Burnaby General, **\$70,311**;

—Mr. J.H. Tegenfeldt at Children's, **\$67,236**;

—Mr. K.F. Noton at Cowichan District, **\$62,232**;

—Mr. C. Wilson at Fort St. John General, **\$60,416**;

—Mr. C.R. Elliott at Kelowna General, **\$65,400**;

—Mr. R. Holinaty at Langley Memorial, **\$63,708**;

—Mr. J.W. Borthwick at Lions Gate, **\$74,652**;

—Mr. G. Frith at Nanaimo Regional General **\$65,640**;

—Dr. B. Martin-Smith at Royal Columbian, **\$92,400**;

—Mr. J.D. Forrester at Royal Inland, **70,000**;

—Mr. M.A.J. Butcher at Royal Jubilee, **\$82,800**;

—Mr. G.K. Morton at Shaughnessy, **\$2,668**;

—Dr. H.D. McDonald at St. Pauls, **\$83,677**;

—Mrs M. Woodward at Surrey Memorial, **61,992**.

Part-Time Work Inquiry

Federal Minister of Labour, Charles Caccia, recently announced the appointment of Joan Wallace, of Delta as Commissioner of an Inquiry into Part-Time Work in Canada.

The Commission, established under the Canada Labour Code, will examine the overall employment position of part-time workers in Canada, and various issues such as compensation practices, supply and demand, the impact of unionization, and the shortcomings of current employment laws relating to part-time work.

The Commission, which should complete its inquiry by December, 1982, is expected to recommend legislative and policy changes which would broaden the range of employment opportunities available to part-time workers and improve their remuneration.

In announcing the Commission, Caccia stressed the growing importance of part-time work in Canada.

Windermere Not A Hospital

HEU has lost its court bid to have binding arbitration apply to contract negotiations at Windermere Central Park Lodge in Vancouver.

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Martin Taylor ruled in March that the 100 HEU members at the health care facility do not work at a hospital and therefore are not covered by the Essential Services Disputes Act, which requires arbitration.

The ruling means that HEU and the facility's owners must follow normal collective bargaining procedures, which last year led to a four-month strike at Windermere.

The court decision upheld a Labour Relations Board ruling in May, 1981 that arbitration cannot apply to the facility because it provides only personal care to its residents and not intensive medical care.

A collective agreement was reached in July of last year between HEU and Windermere's owners (Central Park Lodges of Canada Ltd.).

Cocke Blasts Increases

"The health care fee increases announced in March are clear evidence that the Socreds' restraint program is inequitable. While wages could be held to as low as 8 per cent health care charges rocket by 30-100 per cent," says NDP health critic Dennis Cocke.

"The health care system in British Columbia is being eroded by a provincial government which is not committed to support medicare," said Cocke. "Balancing the budget with health care taxes and deterrent fees is totally unacceptable."

The former provincial health minister pointed out that B.C. is one of only three provinces in Canada which impose medical premiums and other health user fees.



Federal Health Minister Monique Begin stated she hoped to wipe out extra billing by doctors at a B.C. Health Coalition seminar March 6 in Vancouver. Seated beside Begin is HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow, who is chairperson of the B.C. Health Coalition.

Some New Standards For Maternity Leave

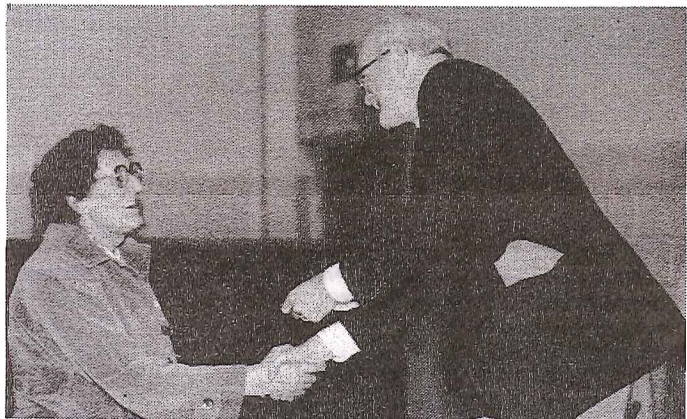
British Columbia has a new law, the Employment Standards Act (1981), which sets some new standards for HEU members who take maternity leave.

If you are pregnant, you are entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid maternity leave with reinstatement to your former position on your return to work.

Maternity leave may start up to 11 weeks prior to the estimated date of birth in the

new Employment Standards Act. In HEU contracts, maternity leave can start earlier — it's up to the employee. UIC maternity benefits kick in at a certain point. Also, one week's notice is required before returning to work regardless of whether it's before, at or after six weeks.

Under HEU agreements, there is no limit to leave extensions due to illness and sick leave credits apply.



HEU President Gordon MacPherson presented Victoria General Unit member Rena Ferguson a pin and a memento from her fellow Unit members at a recent Unit meeting. Rena is now retired from service at the Victoria General Hospital.

Unit photo



Members of the Victoria General Unit gathered for a celebration of the Unit's 20th anniversary in February. Over 100 members turned out for the celebration, according to Unit spokesperson Christine Ek.

Unit photo



Victoria General Unit member Archie Emery recently retired from active duty after 13 years of service in the hospital's housekeeping department. Archie is shown here being presented with a pin from Union President Gordon MacPherson at a recent Unit meeting.

Unit photo

Says Gerow of premium hike

"Blatant act of duplicity"

HEU Secretary-Business Manager Jack Gerow has criticized the announced hikes in medicare premiums.

"It is a blatant act of aggression and duplicity on the part of Health Minister, Jim Neilson, and his Socred cabinet colleagues. What else can you call it when the Provincial Government imposes a 12% expenditure freeze on hospital spending and then imposes at least a 42% increase on Medicare premiums," said Gerow.

"This kind of double dealing could be fatal to the health care system that B.C. taxpayers are entitled to. It could mean that quality health care will not longer be a right but a privilege for the rich. In effect, the present government appears to

be running the province's health care system like a used car dealership — charge whatever the traffic will bear regardless of the quality," added Gerow.

Gerow cited the increased cost in user fees for such services as emergency hospital treatment and daily in-patient hospital bed charges as having the effect of deterring many people from using such services.

"We know that millionaires,

like some of the cabinet ministers, won't worry about user fees but what about those who cannot afford to pay? It's obvious that we are headed to a double standard of patient care — one standard for those who can afford to pay and another for those who cannot."

Gerow also said the province should get into step with the other provinces where there is no "regressive taxation" — i.e. where no Medicare premiums are charged.

Begin Promises To Defend Medicare

Federal Health Minister Monique Begin said in March she intends to meet provincial health ministers soon to start to draw up precise "rules of the game" for medicare to prevent a recurrence of what she terms the "crisis afflicting medicare today."

Speaking at a seminar March 6 sponsored by the B.C. Health Coalition, Begin said she hopes to wipe out medicare user charges and extra billing by doctors. HEU is an active member of the B.C. Health Coalition.

Extra billing, banned last year in B.C., is commonplace in Alberta and Ontario. "As a social affairs minister interested in social justice, I see premiums as a form of regressive taxation," said Begin.

Begin said the question of federal financial contributions to medicare over the next five years is settled, with an average annual growth rate in federal contributions of 13.4 per cent.

For B.C., the increase works out to 13.9 per cent, representing a contribution of \$960 million next year or \$347 per British Columbian, she said.

(The provinces maintain that

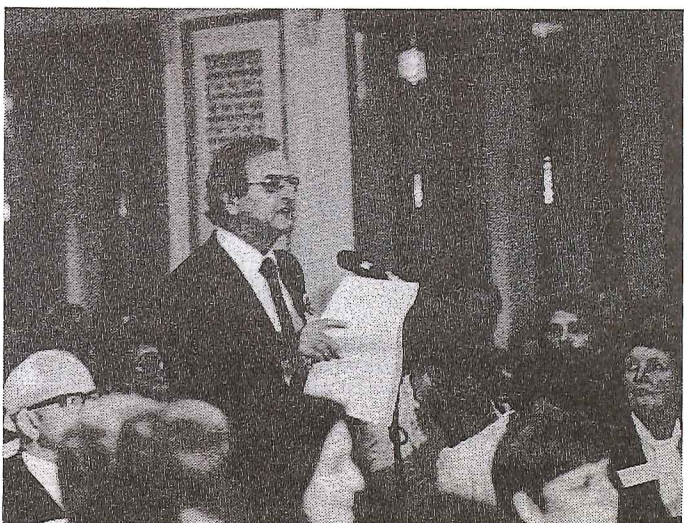
federal contributions for health and education are falling because of a budget provision ending the revenue guarantee provision, which the federal government said was not earmarked for health or education).

When medicare began in 1968, the federal and provincial governments agreed to give every Canadian access to a comprehensive range of services operated by the provinces in a non-profit manner, even outside their own provinces.

Begin said she wants the upcoming talks, which will likely start in April, to "clarify" these conditions, "to make the rules of the game so clear that no one can hide behind vague generalities."

Except for a small problem in the Atlantic provinces, Begin said "the question of cuts and underfunding (in medicare) should be dismissed as a problem in Canada."

Those who hope that medicine will return to a market commodity arrangement are "dinosaurs," she said. "To me it is crystal clear that health care is a right for all Canadians."



Former provincial Health Minister Dennis Cocke spoke against any attempt to erode the medicare plan at the B.C. Health Coalition seminar.



These seven HEU members were among the number of Union staff and Union members who attended a seminar in March sponsored by the B.C. Health Coalition. The seven pictured here are: Andy Kozyniak, Prince George; Nancy Cardy, Royal Jubilee; Alice Jones, Maple Ridge; Gordon Meagher, Vancouver General; Gwen Parrish, Vancouver General; and Kathy Robie, Delta.

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The Way We Were

This Guardian feature highlights the reminiscences of a retired HEU member when the profiled member worked in a B.C. hospital or health care facility.

George Letkeman, 69 and Helen Letkeman, 67

M.S.A. Hospital 1955-75

George

"When we came to settle in Clearbrook in the 50's there were farms everywhere in this part of the (Fraser) Valley. In fact, when we bought this house we live in now back in 1968, there were farms all around us. Now it looks like any part of Vancouver.

"The hospital was very small in 1955, when I started as an orderly. There was something like 50 beds and five doctors. The staff was like a big, happy family. We all sat at the table during coffee and lunch breaks.

"In the later years, it all began to change. You seemed like another number instead of a person. The hospital got too big and impersonal for my liking.

"There was no union in the hospital in the 50's and I guess Victoria took advantage of the little people. For example, they said they couldn't afford a full-time orderly and maintenance man, so I was working half a day as an orderly and half in maintenance — but I used to have to wear a white uniform for half the shift and a green one for the other half. It seems funny now doing all that changing of clothes back then.

"Before the union came in, working five weeks without a day off was not unusual, as well being called in during all hours of the night. But you did what you were told because jobs were scarce then, just like they're getting now."

Helen

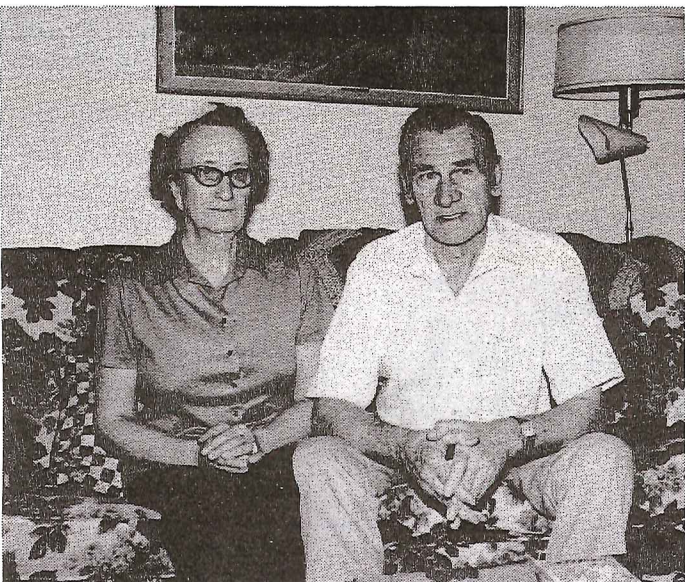
"It seems like a different world, the world George and I worked in during the 50's and early 60's. There were disadvantages then, that our young members today can't begin to realize.

"For one, missing things like funerals was very commonplace. You couldn't get off the job to attend something like a funeral, whereas today it's not as hard.

"We had to pay for our own uniforms until the Union came in and there wasn't that much extra money to throw around then. But on the other hand, the staff, maybe because we were so few in number, were closer to one another. That really made the day go by faster.

"Nowadays, our society doesn't have this caring for one another and it hurts me to think how it has changed over the years. It's the little things like caring if your shoes are clean and polished or if your uniform is clean. Nobody seems to give a damn about these things today.

"We are happy in retirement though. Our three girls are all grown up and on their own and George and I learning to get used to having more time to ourselves."



Retired HEU members George and Helen Letkeman were relaxing in their Clearbrook home when The Guardian came to visit in March. George and Helen have over 39 years of service between them at MSA Hospital in Abbotsford.

U.S. Economist Criticizes Wage Control Program

A leading United States economist has dumped criticism on the provincial government's proposed restraint program in saying it is a mistake to single out public sector workers for wage controls.

Robert Russell, former director of the Council on Wage and Price Stability under the Jimmy Carter administration, says it is "ludicrous for a province to have its own anti-inflation policy."

"I think it's a mistake to single out only public sector employees. These programs depend on public support to be effective. If they are seen to be inequitable, they will self-destruct," Russell said in a March interview with the Vancouver Sun newspaper.

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He said it was hard enough for Canada to control inflation under the shadow of the U.S. economy, let alone for one province to go it alone.

Pass Along New Addresses

HEU members who have attended HEU education seminars and have recently changed their address are asked to pass along their new addresses to HEU's Provincial Office.

Affected members are asked to mail their new addresses to 2286 W. 12th Ave., Vancouver, V6K 2N5, attention to Morag McGruer.

"Dishonest" formula

Reporter's View of HLRA Offer

Editor's Note: The following is a summarized version of a column written by Rod Mickleburgh, that appeared in The Province newspaper March 17.

Will there be a hospital strike in B.C. this year?

Maybe, but not by members of the Hospital Employees Union, despite their sandbagging at the bargaining table last Friday.

That's the speculation following the Health Labor Relations Association's final contract offer, providing wage increases that appear to be below even the minimum eight per cent annual raise allowed by the provincial government's ill-defined restraint program.

The current master agreement gives HEU the right to settle outstanding issues through arbitration. If the hospitals refuse to cooperate, the union can apply to Labor Minister Jack Heinrich for an appointment.

Implicit in this strategy is a belief that HLRA is not prepared to volunteer a penny more than its final offer. A long strike, therefore, would just save the hospitals money until the government intervened to end the dispute.

According to this argument HLRA is trying to provoke a walkout, so the wisest move is to stay on the job.

Gerow, for one, thinks the hospitals are out to spark a work stoppage. As an example he points to what he calls the "devious and despicable" news release issued by HLRA to describe its final offer.

The release makes no mention of the actual wage increases proposed by the hospitals, but claims the package represents "a 13.9-per-cent average annual increase."

The hospitals come up with this figure by an unusual costing formula that averages an income over an entire year

when calculating percentage increases, rather than the normal method of basing increases on the most recent pay rate or "end rate."

Although the hospital workers' average rate went up to \$9.11 an hour last Aug. 1, HLRA estimates the overall annual rate for 1981 at \$8.72 an hour, because the higher figure was in effect only for the last five months of the year.

This makes the hospitals' offer seem larger than it really is and, in a sense, it is unfair to hospital wage earners interested only in their current take-home pay, not what they averaged over the past year.

After examining HLRA's figures, Peter Burton, a union

representative who teaches a course on contract costing, says he had never seen a similar costing formula.

"It's somewhat dishonest," says Burton. "It seems to be an attempt to tell people that something is what it clearly is not."

HLRA president Peter McAllister defends the hospitals' formula, saying it was used during his years as a negotiator for B.C. Hydro.

McAllister ignores a suggestion the offer is less than the minimum eight-per-cent increase provided by the Social Credit government's Compensation Stabilization Program (CSP).



Recently named directors at HEU's Provincial Office are Sharon Yandle (left) and Hans Brown. The appointment of Yandle and Brown as directors was made in February.



Bill Rolfe, a former HEU staff member, has been named a director at the Union's Provincial Office in Vancouver. Rolfe began his duties in March.

Directors Appointed By HEU

Three directors were appointed at HEU's Provincial Office staff in February.

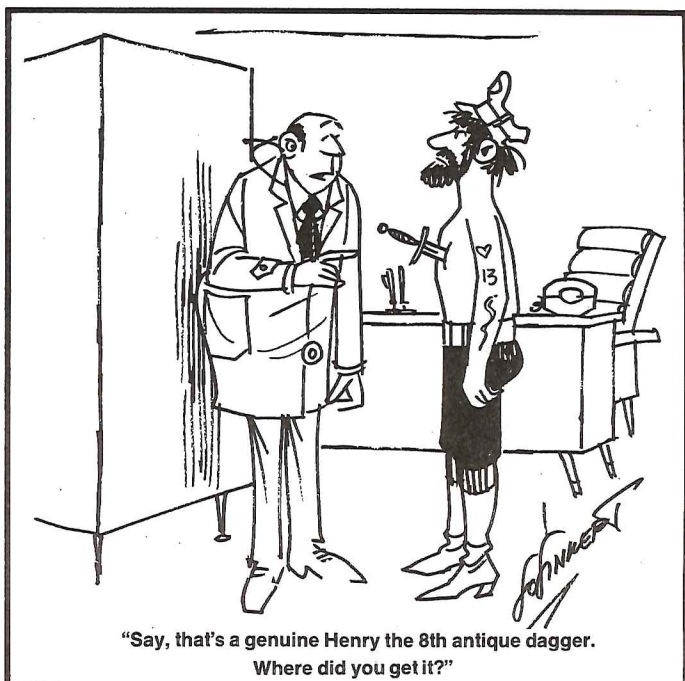
Hans Brown, HEU's nominee on the Peck Arbitration Board, will direct the implementation of the E.R. Peck Award.

Brown has worked at HEU for the past eight years.

Sharon Yandle, who has worked at the Union's Vancouver office for seven years, is a familiar face to many HEU members because of her involvement with HEU's Windermere Unit during the strike and the subsequent collective agreement that was signed last year. Yandle's duties will include the directing of organizing as well non-HLRA collective bargaining.

Bill Rolfe, a former HEU Director of Technical Services, worked on the Union staff from 1969 to 1973. Rolfe was then employed by the B.C. Health Association, the Essential Services Advisory Agency and the Greater Vancouver Regional District before commencing his duties as a director at HEU's Provincial Office in March.

Rolfe will direct "Mini-Master" collective bargaining and VS Services bargaining as well as rights arbitrations.



More Unit Executive Election Results

The Port McNeill Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Janette Serafini, Chairperson; Marie Whyte, Secretary-Treasurer.

The Olive Devaud Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Norman Dyble, Chairperson; Barbara Beaton, Vice-Chairperson; Ione Dobler, Secretary-Treasurer; Kathy Reid, Trustee; Jane Nelson, Trustee; Gurpal Basi, Trustee; Joyce Butler, Conductor; Joan Osmond, Warden.

The Powell River Unit elected officers for 1982 are: John Johnston, Chairperson; Pearl Williams, Vice-Chairperson; Anna Johnston, Secretary-Treasurer; Lina McNab, Trustee; Mabel Burge, Trustee; Tina Coulter, Trustee; Olga Menzies, Conductor; Faith Ploffe, Warden.

The Prince George Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Andy Kozyniak, Chairperson; Denise Primrose, Vice-Chairperson; Jim Brammer, Secretary-Treasurer; Mary-Pat Wiley, Assistant-Secretary; Diane Veitch, Trustee; Alex Kish, Trustee.

The Simon Fraser Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Marie Sevigny, Chairperson; Elaine Seymour, Vice-Chairperson; Delia Kindred, Secretary-Treasurer; Linda Parkinson, Trustee; Marjorie Stoller, Trustee; Anne Colban, Trustee; Gail Wells, Conductor; Yvonne Hunter, Warden.

The Acropolis Manor Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Bonnie Flann, Chairperson; Michelle Pouliot, Vice-Chairperson; Debbie Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer; Cindy Chapman, Trustee; LaVae Swanson, Trustee; Brenda Bergen, Trustee; Tracy Sandvar, Conductor; Jackie Gallant, Warden.

The Quesnel Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Rose Poiras, Chairperson; Laurie Jackson, Vice-Chairperson; Pauline Iverson, Secretary; Sylvia Spelrum, Treasurer; Sheila Kinder, Trustee; Georgina Boudias, Trustee; Joyce Forkin, Trustee; Jo-Anne Thomson, Conductor; Marlene Helset, Warden.

The Revelstoke Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Una McInnes, Chairperson; Jean Madlung, Vice-Chairperson; Lily Tuba, Secretary-Treasurer; Marion Scott, Trustee; Joyce Rasmussen, Trustee; Grace Mooreland, Trustee; Margaret Watson, Conductor; Antoinette White, Warden.

The Richmond Lions Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Marjorie Teed, Chairperson; Carla Borck, Vice-Chairperson; Shirley Slater, Secretary; Libby Johnson, Treasurer; Lori McLean, Trustee; Nancy Sonner, Trustee; Ann Sterrit, Trustee; Peggy Bennett, Conductor; Wendy Gunn, Warden.

The Sechelt Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Dorothy Goesen, Chairperson; Shirley Mills, Vice-Chairperson; Vicki Paul, Secretary-Treasurer; Jeanine Caron, Assistant-Secretary; Karen Dohman, Trustee; Jean Eldred, Trustee; Joyce Farewell, Trustee; JoAnne Paul, Conductor and Warden.

The Sparwood Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Val Dymtrieu, Chairperson; Mary Stenson, Vice-Chairperson; Terry Doratty, Secretary-Treasurer; Millie Plessis, Trustee; Roselle Newham, Trustee; Keith Josay, Trustee.

The Summerland Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Margaret Grohs, Chairperson; Ronald Ackles, Vice-Chairperson; Eva Austen, Secretary-Treasurer; Allie McKilligan, Trustee; Betty Clayton, Trustee; Doris Howe, Trustee; Harold Nicholson, Conductor and Warden.

The Surrey Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Mary Gobillot, Chairperson; Julie Amendt, Vice-Chairperson; Sherry Simon, Secretary-Treasurer; Pat Sparks, Assistant-Secretary; Bernice Lewis, Trustee; Pat Arnold, Trustee; Regina Maier, Trustee; Magie Egresits, Conductor; Ann Elliott, Warden.

The Columbia View Lodge Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Rena Folvik, Chairperson; Lynn Pachkowsky, Vice-Chairperson; Brenda Brent, Secretary-Treasurer; Christine Wilson, Trustee; Remedios Ganuelas, Trustee.

The Trail Unit elected officers for 1982 are: June Bradbury, Chairperson; Sid Desireau, Vice-Chairperson; Joan McCumber, Secretary-Treasurer; Rose Esposito, Trustee; Edna Wolfe, Trustee; Jack Nugent, Trustee; Gen Goldade, Warden.

The CARS Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Patricia McKay, Chairperson; Gabrielle Gruelich, Vice-Chairperson; Linda Gulbransen, Secretary-Treasurer; Deanna Johns, Assistant-Secretary; Kay Kuntz, Trustee; Karen Fisk, Trustee; Carolyn Chang, Trustee.

The Red Cross Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Mike Basek, Chairperson; Lois Herman, Vice-Chairperson; Terri Spear, Secretary-Treasurer; Rita Simpkin, Assistant-Secretary; Elizabeth Fitzsimonds, Trustee; Ingrid Jabren, Trustee; Irene Matson, Trustee; Margaret Barrett, Conductor; Lindy Thompson, Warden.

The Cancer Control Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Jeanne Norlin, Chairperson; Wynn Long, Vice-Chairperson; Helen MacArthur, Secretary-Treasurer; Lia Travis, Assistant-Secretary; Ian Mernone, Trustee; Marion Alexander, Trustee; Norma Pegg, Trustee; Simone Halterlein, Conductor; Lynn Drake, Warden.

The Dogwood Lodge Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Cheryl Young, Chairperson; Eileen Snary, Vice-Chairperson; Gwen Carson, Secretary-Treasurer; Jim Crockett, Trustee; Irma Loeschmann, Trustee; Arena Kloots, Trustee.

The G. F. Strong Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Enid Shackles, Chairperson; Lois Godfrey, Vice-Chairperson; Dennis Mouw, Secretary-Treasurer; Ron Maloney, Assistant-Secretary; Rose Bryan, Trustee; Aden Eely, Trustee; Dorothy Beheshti, Trustee; Aden Eely Conductor; Mary Fletcher, Warden.

The Grace Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Blair Thomas, Chairperson; Dianne Kozak, Vice-Chairperson; Tena Pendlebury, Secretary-Treasurer; Ometa Gittens, Trustee; Helen Blagovich, Trustee; Elizabeth Cook, Trustee; Rosalie Fook, Conductor and Warden.

The Grandview Towers Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Marilu Malakoff, Chairperson; Ofelia Malelang, Vice-Chairperson; Sarah Lindsay, Secre-

tary-Treasurer; Maria Camarada, Assistant-Secretary; Irene Goodburn, Trustee; Vivian Bahena, Trustee; Carol McLean, Trustee; Elda Gatti, Conductor; Linda Fazio, Warden.

The Holy Family Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Pat Colter, Chairperson; Theresa Hamilton, Vice-Chairperson; Jean Elsassner, Secretary-Treasurer; Theresa Hamilton, Trustee; Anna Lakatos, Trustee; Jeanne McConnell, Trustee; Joe Leoci, Conductor; Doug Bramley, Warden.

The Louis Brier Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Socorro de Guzman, Chairperson; Lourdes Diza, Vice-Chairperson; Evangeline David, Secretary-Treasurer; Benedicta Dominga, Trustee; Filomena Banzou, Trustee; Puspha Naidu, Trustee; Benigna Natavio, Conductor; Chandra Sharma, Warden.

The McDonald Lodge Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Susan Roop, Chairperson; Sheela Bans, Secretary-Treasurer.

The Mt. St. Joseph Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Irene Dumas, Chairperson; Marion Barrington, Vice-Chairperson; Eunice McNamara, Secretary-Treasurer; Gerda Delaney, Trustee; Windsor Shirley, Trustee; Nan McFadden, Trustee; Gerda Geppert, Conductor; Graham Simpson, Warden.

The St. Paul's Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Robert Standell, Chairperson; Gail Dodson, Vice-Chairperson; Peter Stokes, Secretary-Treasurer; Tom Knowled, Assistant-Secretary; Paula Stooshnov, Trustee; Nick Albanese, Trustee; Betsy Lockwood, Trustee; Fred Muzin, Conductor; Eva Redmond, Warden.

The St. Vincent's Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Sheila Wilkinson, Chairperson; Patrick Wall, Vice-Chairperson; Barbara Moore, Secretary-Treasurer; Donna Mohammed, Trustee; Betty Shamley, Trustee; Claria Werner, Trustee; Cliff Reid, Conductor and Warden.

The Arbutus Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Ursula Munn, Chairperson; Bernadette Downie, Vice-Chairperson; Mary Williams, Secretary-Treasurer; Mavis Ryane, Trustee; Margaret Cohen, Trustee; Libeta Arquelles, Trustee; Mary Thiessen, Conductor; Mara Lourrini, Warden.

The Sunny Hill Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Isabel O'Brien, Chairperson; Armanda Armas, Vice-Chairperson; Violet Hudson, Secretary-Treasurer; Doris Belford, Trustee; Gizella Kiss, Trustee; Mercedes Martin, Trustee; Mercedes Martin, Conductor.

The VGH Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Gordon Meagher, Chairperson; Larry Richards, Vice-Chairperson; Gwen Parrish, Secretary-Treasurer; Zorica Bosancic, Assistant-Secretary; Bob Mason, Trustee; Herb Scholz, Trustee; Peter Grunau, Trustee; John Frew, Conductor; Sylvestro Spangnuolo, Warden.

The Vernon Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Henk Valker, Chairperson; Paul MacKiewich, Vice-Chairperson; Elaine Neill, Secretary; Steve Pawliuk, Treasurer; Tony Wildeman, Trustee; Laura Mackiewicz, Trustee; Irene McSorley,

Trustee; Norm Wood, Conductor; Irwin Shaw, Warden.

The Aberdeen Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Carole Campbell, Chairperson; Jean Evernden, Vice-Chairperson; Marilyn Ek, Secretary-Treasurer; Heather McFadden, Assistant-Secretary; Kathy McMaster, Trustee; Bertha Graham, Trustee; Lilian Buursink, Trustee; Kathy McMaster, Conductor and Warden.

The Glengarry Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Maureen Bradley, Chairperson; Jim Bates, Vice-Chairperson; Jean Brailsford, Secretary-Treasurer; Nancy Hutchinson, Assistant-Secretary; Betty White, Trustee; Norma Mann, Trustee; Peggy Wunderlich, Trustee and Conductor; Brian Crosby, Warden.

The Gorge Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Vida Waltz, Chairperson; Doug McHugh, Vice-Chairperson; Pat Rivard, Secretary-Treasurer; Barb Hiller, Assistant-Secretary; Hattie Williams, Trustee; Ken McLoughlin, Trustee; Helga Rahn, Trustee; Bob Lockyer, Conductor; Dave Nightingale, Warden.

The Luther Court Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Karen Kingston, Chairperson; Gaye Mossey, Vice-Chairperson; Betty Watt, Secretary-Treasurer.

The Priory Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Doreen Young, Chairperson; Clarice McCormick, Vice-Chairperson; Kate Cardin, Secretary-Treasurer; Joan Harvey, Trustee; Doreen Cooper, Trustee; Arlene Handspiker, Trustee; Jean Whitbread, Conductor; Elva McCarthy, Warden.

The Royal Jubilee Unit elec-

ted officers for 1982 are: Wolf Balcke, Chairperson; Phyllis Shiplack, Vice-Chairperson; Joyce Brubacher, Secretary-Treasurer; Gordon Simpson, Assistant-Secretary; Wayne Neilson, Trustee; Nancy Cardy, Trustee; Angie Vander Byl, Trustee; Beverly Watson, Conductor; Vera McGaghey, Warden.

The Victoria General Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Donna Lowe, Chairperson; Sandra Fleet, Vice-Chairperson; Vivian Kirk, Secretary-Treasurer; Dolores Bell, Assistant-Secretary; Christine Ek, Trustee; Richard Haurahan, Trustee; Ray Thomas, Trustee; Anne Newell, Conductor; Mary Ward, Warden.

The White Rock Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Elton Short, Chairperson; Doris Holloway, Vice-Chairperson; Jack Berry, Secretary-Treasurer; Richard Blue, Trustee; Donald Severied, Trustee; Dorothy Henderson, Trustee; Jeanine Emmerson, Conductor; Sammey Peers, Warden.

The Cariboo Lodge Unit elected officers for 1982 are: Jan Posechnick, Chairperson; Marion Herring, Vice-Chairperson; Linda Connolly, Secretary-Treasurer; Sylvia Davies, Trustee; Rea Van Summeran, Trustee; Joan Boomer, Trustee; Sylvia Davies, Conductor; Brenda LeRoy, Warden.

The Williams Lake Unit elected officers for 1982 are: K. Babcock, Chairperson; A. Southy, Vice-Chairperson; Linda Graham, Secretary-Treasurer; D. Ewart, Assistant-Secretary; Jean McIver, Trustee; N. Johanson, Trustee; Gina Congalves, Conductor; Jean McIver, Warden.



HEU Financial Secretary Maurice Smith (left) and HEU staff representative Steve Polak confer during a meeting of public sector groups in March in Surrey. The unions and concerned groups met to discuss Premier Bill Bennett's wage control program.



These two Vancouver General Hospital retirees were among the 50 or so who gathered in February for the annual retirees' dinner. Many HEU members who used to work at the hospital attended the affair.

At St. Paul's Hospital

Milda Works As A Uniform Attendant

This feature appears regularly in The Guardian and is designed to profile an HEU member, in most cases a rank-and-file Union member. The article focuses on the member's job and the duties that member performs while at work. The monthly feature also deals, in part, with the HEU member's personal views on a number of varying subjects. The purpose of the Guardian profile is to give recognition to the work performed by HEU members and the members who perform the work.

Milda Ganczewski, a uniform attendant at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, has repaired a lot of linen and other things during her 21 years of service.

"The time has passed by awfully fast and here I am 21 years later," Milda told The Guardian in an April interview.

"I used to be the sewing room supervisor and uniform attendant for about 12 years until they reorganized things just a couple of days ago. I'm basically doing the same thing but now a lot of the linen is going out to Tilbury Laundry (in Delta)."

Ganczewski has repaired a lot of different things with her trusty sewing machine and therma press over the years — everything from restraining belts to old sheets.

"Actually, we do a lot of recycling too. We've turned old sheets into diaper bags as well as making specialty items like orthopedic belts."

Milda first began work at St. Paul's at the age of 29 as a single mother with two children. "It wasn't that easy then when I had to rely on my paycheque but somehow I got through it. I certainly can relate to single mothers today that find themselves in the same position."

In fact one of her children, Tom Knowles, works near her right in St. Paul's Hospital. "Yes, Tom works not too far from me as a precision instrument technician. He's an HEU member — he seems to be following in my footsteps now that he's been elected on the Unit executive."

Milda served for 12 years as Secretary-Treasurer of the Unit and as Trustee for a couple of years before that. So Union involvement is something she is used to.

"I guess you could say I indoctrinated Tom into the Union. When you've been involved in the Union as many years as I was, you're bound to learn something and I hope I can pass along some knowledge whenever I can."

She got involved in the first place because of a desire to see her peers treated fairly.

"In those days, not unlike today actually, we had a lot of members who could not speak English well so I wanted to make sure they weren't taken advantage of. Even though I couldn't speak the different languages, somehow I could understand what they were trying to say."

What did she learn after all those years of involvement? "Mainly, that there are three types of members — the radical ones who want to fight and strike for what they want. Generally these people are usually ones with two incomes in the family or single persons with no dependents. They are important to a Union but they sometimes forget there are those who are in different shoes than them."

"Then there is another element of member, the one who is a single parent or heavily in debt. I can feel for those kind

especially at a time like this when a strike would really hurt. The best alternative for someone in that position is exactly what the Union is proposing right now and that is arbitration. That way they will continue to get their regular paycheque and then get whatever raise the arbitrator hands down."

"The third element is the most frustrating to me. They are the ones who never get involved in Union affairs but always are the first in line to receive the benefits in the contract. I realize there will always be persons like that no matter how hard you try to educate them, but they are frustrating to deal with nonetheless."

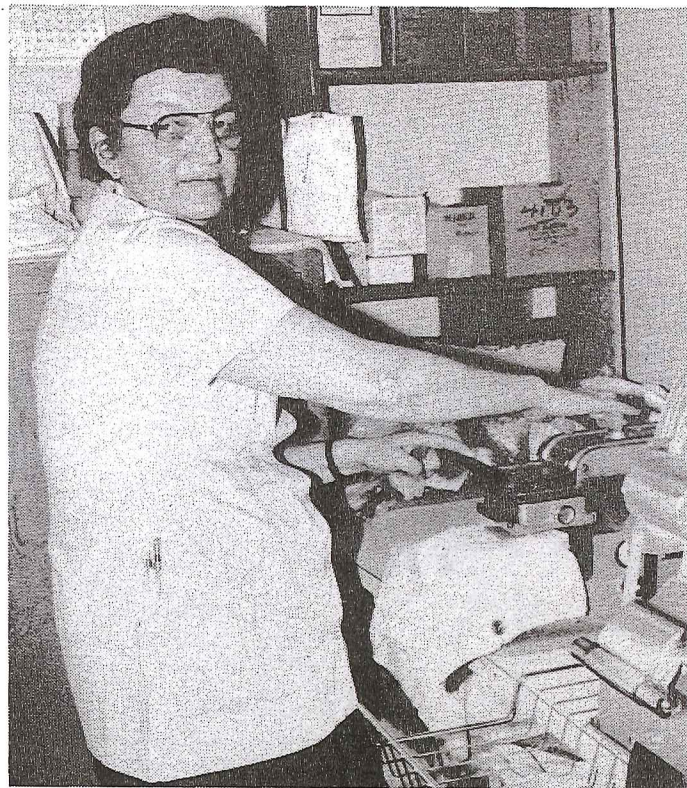
Milda agrees with the course of action recommended by the Provincial Bargaining Committee and the Provincial Executive

during Master Agreement negotiations.

"I don't feel we gain anything by going on strike at the present time. Actually, I could afford to go on strike more than others but for the majority of the membership, arbitration is the best route to go this time — but that's just my personal opinion for what it's worth."

Even though for medical reasons she resigned from the Unit executive two years ago, Milda is still sought out from time to time by executive members like present Secretary-Treasurer Peter Stokes.

"She knows so much and when I have a question I go to her. Milda is very approachable and friendly and for that reason I think a lot of people ask her advice about things, including her son Tom who is on the executive," said Stokes.



Milda Ganczewski uses a therma press (pictured here) to put labels on uniforms during the course of her duties as a uniform attendant at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. Milda has been employed at the hospital since July of 1961.

LETTERS

Medical Stenos 'Skilled' — Says Doctor

Dear Sir:

Mrs. Sharon Horn, the Supervisor of the Medical Stenography Department and Mrs. Hazel Bezeau one of the medical stenographers, of the same Department, at the Royal Columbian, spoke to me about their concerns with regard to the change in their classification and a possible roll-back in their pay.

I understand that this decision was made on the Peck Report.

From what I am told, this man compared a medical stenographer with a court clerk stenographer and hence categorized them similarly to receive approximately the same pay.

I think perhaps Mr. Peck may not have observed the type of work that stenographers do in an actual hospital setting.

I think a lot of skill is required to type these reports accurately and certainly these ladies take a course in medical terminology which is quite extensive.

Sometimes when I'm in the

Steno Pool I am asked "to translate" what other doctors have dictated into the dicta belts and I often find when I am out of my own speciality (Cardiology), I find that the reports are hard even for me to understand.

A lot of this dictation is going on in a very busy hospital setting where the doctors are dictating and then they answer a phone, one of their colleagues comes in and there is further discussion, a bell boy goes off etc. and it makes typing more difficult in this regard as well.

Also, I think the physicians generally dictate very rapidly and it's probably one thing to get to know your own particular "boss" in an outside office and know his terminology and idiosyncrasies. I think it is quite another thing to work in a hospital in which there are probably 25 sub-specialties in the practice of medicine, each of which has its own terminology.

Sincerely yours,
T. F. Godwin, M.D.

Fauquier Seniors Endorse HEU Position

Dear Mr. J. D. Gérow:

The members of Fauquier Senior Citizens Branch #125 would like to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and the booklet "The Hospital Guardian", issued for November, 1981.

Our members have read your letter and booklet and are very interested in the "Long Term Care" situation. We highly endorse the propositions put forth in the booklet to upgrade the care of "Long Term Care"

patients and we would like to put a special emphasis on the statement written on the bottom of page #23, "that the government convert profitcare facilities to non-profit satellites of acute hospitals."

Thank you for contacting us and we look forward to real progress in this matter through your efforts.

Yours truly,
Mrs. Alice Young
(Secretary)
Fauquier, B.C.

Thanks From Houston

Dear Sir:

Although our Northern community has no Long Term Care facilities, and precious little hospital or medical care even for short term illness, we understand the issues and support the Hospital Employees' Union in its efforts to upgrade the

service.

We thank them for taking a stand on behalf of B.C.'s frail and elderly, specifically our Long Term Care residents.

Nancy Gould
Secretary,
Houston Senior Citizens' Association, Branch #97,

Lack Of Fire Safety

Dear Sir,

I am writing to inform you of the lack of fire safety in the Vancouver General Hospital.

A while ago my grandfather spent several weeks there and was unable to sleep for fear he would awake in a room of fire. There were three other patients in the room, all smokers (I thought it very unhealthy that non-smoking patients would be subject to such conditions, even restaurants have non-smoking sections.) Not only did the other patients smoke in bed but they smoked at all hours of the night.

I can't see how my grandfather was expected to recover from major hip surgery under these conditions. Have the nurses lost their power to enforce regulations? Have they become complacent or are there no regulations regarding these events? I know in Langley Memorial Hospital and many others I have visited, patients who wish to smoke must confine their smoking to the lounge on each floor.

I find it ironic that this should happen when the Hospital Employees Union is campaigning for patient safety through regular fire drills. If conditions were improved and laws enforced there would be less threat to patient safety. I also can't see how it would be feasible to evacuate a hospital the size of the General in the event of a fire. My grandfather and I also

noticed that there are no smoke detectors in the rooms.

Joel Kingston

Down Memory Lane

Dear Sir,

I would like to commend The Guardian for the great job it does in informing the HEU membership.

However, after attending the Provincial Wage Policy Conference in Vernon last year, I felt there was more we had to do to inform our younger members.

A large number of our membership don't know where we came from and how.

A feature, on a monthly basis, outlining what conditions were like in the past at a given unit and how things are currently might be a good way to educate ourselves.

Oldies, like myself, could shudder and walk down memory lane. Youngsters would find out what HEU has meant in our overall lives.

Thank you.

Isabel Anderson-O'Brien
Sunny Hill Unit

[Editor's Note: Because of similar requests from other long-time HEU members as well as retirees, The Guardian, in the March issue, commenced a regular feature called "The Way We Were". The regular feature will be the reminiscences of a long-time or presently retired HEU member.]