To discuss bargaining demands

First Meeting Held With Mediator Long

HEU and HLRA had their first meeting with the government mediator Fred Long on November 9. Ministry of Labour mediator Long was appointed October 27 to assist in the stalled contract talks between HEU and the Health Labour Relations Association.

HEU, who applied for the mediator on October 21, expects the appointment of Long will assist to expedite the resolution of outstanding differences between HEU and HLRA.

"HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee has made it clear to HLRA that it is not realistic to expect that the 1982 negotiations will be completed without the settlement of outstanding Classification matches," said HEU Secretary-Treasurer Janice Buttle.

"The Bargaining Committee is operating under an unsubstantiated 18 Provincial Wage Policy Conference resolution that requires settlement of outstanding Classification matches before the settlement of the 1982 Master Agreement," said Buttle.

Long held three bargaining sessions with HEU on October 15. The demands were:

1. Agreement date be set aside for the purpose of settling outstanding Classification matches under the Current, Classifying System.

2. HEU and HLRA instruct the E. R. Pack Tribunal to issue an interim award establishing departmental minimum wage rates (pending finalization of outstanding Classification matches) so that wage rate increases will be paid by the partial implementation of the Classification System.

3. HLRA agree that employers will not recover any overpayments resulting from the implementation of the Classification System.

"HEU has taken the position that other contract demands will not be tabled until an "acceptable settlement" is reached on these three demands."

Regarding HEU inquiry:

Union Writes to Minister

HEU has written to Minister of Labour Jack Heinrich and asked that he give serious consideration to assisting HEU with the Union's inquiry into occupational health and safety in the health care field.

"We have asked the Ministry of Labour to provide a reasonable level of funding for the project and also that his Ministry instruct the Workers' Compensation Board to fully cooperate with HEU on the inquiry," said HEU Secretary-Treasurer Janice Buttle.

A letter delivered to HEU October 13 from E. R. Pack, Chairman of the Peck Tribunal, further emphasized why it is virtually impossible to spend an arbitration once it is under way.

"Once an arbitration is in deliberation, as the Peck Board is now deliberating, on the classical classification system, there is not much a union can do except receive intermittent reports from the Board Chairperson."

PEK was written to HEU Oct. 12 (it was documented later in an October HEU newsletter) to advise that at the moment he could foresee no date when an award will be handed down.

"Obviously, there is no time left before we can make an Award that will be meaningful to a lot of people. There is not nearly much that we can usefully add without offering false encouragement," wrote Peck in his letter.

"However we thought you would like to know that certain critical job matching decisions have been made, that more are being made every week and that this represents a concrete achievement after all the years of delay and frustration that have attended the promised job evaluation," added Peck in his letter.

There has been no decision made to date on an HEU recommendation that an interim Award be handed down, said Peck.

Meanwhile, the waiting game continues on an award to each and every unclassified HEU member. It is an anxious time to be sure but HEU has to abide by the rules of the arbitration game.

More Bancroft Contributions

HEU has won a certification vote at employees at Simon Fraser Private Hospital in Prince George.

Employees at the health care facility voted 90 per cent in favor of HEU in October in favor of becoming members of HEU and leaving the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), their former bargaining agent.

Although HEU won the government-supervised election and was granted the certification by the B.C. Labour Relations Board, CUPE complained of violations during the ballot.

CUPE officials complained to the LRB that it was not invited by the returning officer to appoint a scrutineer and that their representative did not receive proper notice of the time ofballoting.

In a decision released October 7, the LRB dismissed the CUPE complaint and ruled that HEU had won the election. In September 11 informing them of the result of the election.

HEU staff representative Mark Atkinson organized the Unit for HEU.

The employees knew the CUPE rep had been notified. In fact, the CUPE rep didn't even bother showing up during the balloting until it nearly over. He personally thought they didn't need the certification, at least that's what the attitude he conveyed to the employees," said Atkinson.

No Decision Yet On Interim Award

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Certification Granted At Simon Fraser

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Patient Security

It is with regret that we hear from the Health Labour Relations Association that our contract bargaining demand regarding patient security is "radical". What HEU is attempting to include in its new Master Agreement is a clause that will guarantee the best care for patients and residents in HLRA health care facilities.

Is it "radical" to ask that a monthly fire drill be conducted for the protection of patients and residents?

Is it being too extreme to ask that staff-to-patient ratios be high enough to ensure good quality care?

Is it really outrageous to ask that the managements of health care facilities comply fully with all government acts, regulations and policy on quality of care?

Certainly not.

If all Employers were already ensuring that a high standard of care was being provided at all health care facilities, there would be no need for HEU to adopt this bargaining demand. But since the voices of our members at too many facilities have been ignored time and time again, it is time that Employers be legally bound by collective agreement to deliver what at least morally they should be providing.

Don't common sense tell us that drugs should only be handled by properly trained employees and that appropriate supplies and equipment should be available at all times, in sufficient quantity and be in good repair?

We think so.

At our Eighth Provincial Wage Policy Conference in October, the delegates overwhelmingly voted in favour of seeing a patient security clause in our next Master Agreement with HLRA.

It appears that in calling this demand "radical" HLRA is more concerned with management rights than with patient rights.

If it is indeed "radical" to demand that every health care facility must have a decent standard of care for the patients in B.C. hospitals and health care facilities, then yes we plead guilty.

It is a sad fact of life that our efforts to raise the quality of life for the persons who need it most is being blocked out because HLRA thinks the Union is trying to interfere with management rights. Well, that is precisely what HEU is attempting to do. HEU wants enforceable controls under its Master Agreement to correct any deficiencies in the management of health care by HLRA members even if this means a modification of certain sacred cow management rights.
For non-Provincial bargaining

Wage Policy Conference Nov. 4-5 In Vancouver

From left: Pati Hirvi, Florentia Manor, Sarah Lindsay, Grandview; Carmen de los Santos, Central Park (Windermer).

Georgette Martineau, of the Greenswoods Unit, during debate on a resolution.

Marjorie Smith of the Malaspina Unit and Pam Gosal of Crofton Manor.

From left: Cindy Austin, New Vista; Eva Wolfenburg, New Vista; and Linda Greene, Omnica.

Heather Fisher (left) of the V/S Sunset Lodge Unit and Hugh Cullen of Sunset Lodge.

From left: Shirley Tse, F. W. Green; Ruby Handrick, Kimberley Special Care; Nancy McArthur, Kimberley Special Care; Dora Wilcox, Rose Manor.

Cliff Crawford of V/S Luther Court and Ken Kingston of Luther Court.

From left: Joan Kubik, Ladner; Maureen McKee, Florence Nightingale; Beverley Catts, Parkridge.

Tina Bundin of Parkview Place and Dish Dooneshet of Wilrosehaven.

Mary Giauxbou (left) and Solma Adame, Both women are members of the Raspberry Lodge Unit.

From left: Marjorie Teed, Richmond Lions; Ruth Townsend, Park; Edna Frost, Ingewood.

Joan Haller, Chairperson of the Noric House Unit, was a member of the credentials committee.

Eva Wolfenburg of the New Vista Unit makes a point on a sexual harassment resolution.

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A behind-the-scenes look

Summary of Classification Report

Editor's Note: The following is a summary of a paper given to delegates at the Eighth Provincial Wage Policy Conference, October 1-2 by Brother David Fairley, a classification consultant with the Trade Union Research Bureau.

I was approached by your Union in March 1980 to give advice and assistance toward implementation of the terms of settlement with respect to establishing a classification system based on comparability with Provincial Government Employees' Negotiations Committee (PCRA) for the purpose of drawing up detailed terms of reference for development of the classification system. However, in spite of mediation attempts by Ed Peck, the parties were unable to agree on how the classification agreement would be implemented. They then agreed that the whole matter should be arbitrated.

Starting in late June and continuing through July and early August of 1980, HRRA embarked upon a massive program of rapid comparison of hospital job descriptions to provincial government classifications for the purpose of preparing what they considered to be job matches for the purpose of establishing comparability.

As the Hospital Employees' Union began reviewing these so-called job matches from HRRA, it became patently obvious to us that what HRRA was embarking upon in this exercise was an attempt to use HRRA's standard pay, lower than a basic comparable rate as was dictated by the Hope Award. It was our perception throughout this exercise that through the matching process, HRRA was attempting to obtain the classification system what they were not able to obtain through the Hope Award.

The Hope Award were clearly established that there should be comparable wages and working conditions for Hospital Employees in comparison to provincial government employees.

In the arbitration proceeding that followed, we discovered that HRRA had in there matching exercises, some 1,200 hospital job descriptions with what they considered to be comparable provincial government classifications in less than six weeks.

We discovered through the arbitration proceeding that they spent between 30 to 60 minutes comparing every hospital job. We were convinced from that evidence that the comparisons done by Health Labour Relations Association were totally inadequate for the purpose of establishing fair comparison with provincial government employees. It was then incumbent upon the Hospital Employees' Union to counter the evidence and argument of the Health Labour Relations Association in the arbitration proceeding on the basis of the best evidence possible, in order to establish a proper basis of comparison.

You'll appreciate that we were faced with a very critical proposition done by HRRA, which was totally unacceptable. A massive comparison job done by HRRA, which would have caused massive downgrading of rates for senior clerical classific-a-

cations. We were faced with a job situation where we had to do a complete answer, the best answer possible, in order to ensure that the classification system that the arbitration proceeding would be on the basis of providing the correct data, and early payment in wages and working conditions, that the Hope Award had guaranteed Hospital Employees.

Faced with the problem of how to get around our order of 1,800 to 2,000 clerical jobs in the priority area of clerical classifications, it was recommended to the Hospital Employees' Union that the arbitration proceed in such a way to deal with this horrendous problem was to present to the arbitration board a benchmark marking comparison system that, that is, a significant number of benchmark hospital job descriptions were identified as being typical of the full range of clerical classifications that need to be compared and were identified. The Union would then present detailed evidence on each and every one of these benchmark job descriptions to establish clarity and without ambiguity the full nature and scope of each one of their duties and responsibilities.

I advised the Hospital Employees' Union that in my view at least the important cases, we required to have, we required to have the benchmark rates distributed, we required to put to the arbitration board as much information as possible on the those selected number of benchmark jobs so that it could establish an industry wide standard for the classifications and wages rate of clerical workers in the hospital industry.

We viewed this as the only effective way that we were going to meet the substantial commitment of HRRA, which I've mentioned would have caused massive downgrading and inequities and had they been left unchallenged.

Your Provincial Bargaining Committee gave authorization to me and the staff that were working for me, my own staff and the staff of the Industrial Employees' Union, Sharon Levine, Susan Rodo- nic, and others, who had been given free reign, without any limit on the expenses that may be incurred to prepare the best possible case in the presentation of a benchmark that the bench to the Peck Arbitration Board.

We then embarked in early August upon the presentation of extensive evidence, witnesses and material evidence, to demonstrate the nature and scope of each and every one of our approximately 80 benchmark jobs.

I must say at this time, that I was very proud and happy to work with the Hospital Employees' Union on the presentation of this case. The witnesses that came forward to represent the benchmark job descriptions with the most evidence possible, were by far the best witnesses that I have ever heard. They were good witnesses. They deserve a lot of recognition for the fact that they represented and gave evidence as to best of their ability on their jobs, to the extent that they represented typical jobs in the benchmark.

The length of the arbitration process was necessarily long and arduous because we were lucky if we were seeing three or four witnesses testify on each job, at least over 100 jobs each day. Unfortunately, we were confronted by late starts in the arbitration process delays in the arbitration process, and early starts largely due to the activities of the representatives of the Health Labour Relations Association. However, we continued to press our case, day after day, to bring our witnesses to give them every opportunity through questioning to present their duties and responsibilities to clarify job descriptions and to clarify what was contained in their questionnaires. We had them introduce material, letters, and other correspondence, any manner of material which demonstrated the nature of their work, the decisions that they made and the kinds of day that they were dealing with.

We felt that this was the only way in which the arbitrator would appreciate the full scope of each of the jobs that was under review. We felt that hospital clerical workers deserved at least two to three hours per job to explain their duties and responsibilities. We also organized and encouraged the participation of the clerical committees from many of the hospitals. We encouraged the participation of observers to witness the process and be a part of the presentation of the process that we were going through. We also used the process to give advice and direction to the kinds of questions that should be asked of the hospital clerical worker witnesses.

And the result, our presentation took many days, several months and of course of necessity was the arbitration process to this date to be a very long one. This approach to the dispute was necessary, I felt, because of the complexities of the hospital industry, because of the uniqueness of each of your jobs, and because of the lack of understanding of many of the jobs through the official job description. In my view this has been the most significant evaluation of an arbitration, particularly in view of the fact that it was an arbitration case. It has in my experience been the longest arbitration case of its kind, and it has been the most difficult process. In my opinion the Union had no alternative but to present a case of which it has presented.

To present any other case, than the one which we did, would have meant the glossing over of hundreds of job classifications and giving them very little time in the presentation of evidence. Giving only a few minutes to each and every job in the presentation of our case we could not then justifiably argue that we had presented the best possible case. We had to give each one of our benchmark jobs its best fair presentation which would necessary to clearly portray the full nature and scope of the job to the best of our ability. We stand here and say to you that we have represented clerical jobs to the best of our ability.

Simon Fraser University members Elaine Seymour and Julia Grozier display the results of a vote held in October at Simon Fraser Private Hospital in Prince George. Employees at the health care facility voted over 90 per cent in favour of joining HEU and leaving the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Andy Kozyniak photo

A retirement dinner was held recently for Princeton Unit member Jack Muffin (shown here standing with his wife Louise). Picture here talking to Jack and Louise are Princeton Unit members Wendy Spencer (left) and Gloris Gibson.

Unit photo

The Namcoms Unit held their annual picnic at Rathbrae Beach in Parksville back in August. Shown here are Unit members Ewe Teedt (left) and Helen Stromen. "We all had fun and I'm sorry we sent the pictures so late," Secretary-Treasurer Sylvia Laliberte told The Guardian.

Unit photo

The Hospital Guardian, November, 1981/Page 4
Is CUPE Gasping Its Last Breath?

Editor's Note: The foregoing is a summary of an article that appeared in the Toronto Star after CUPE's national convention in Winnipeg last month.

The huge Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canada's biggest union, shows the world a facade of health and vigor. But behind that veneer is a slowly straining, a victim of self-inflicted paralyzation.

For public relations purposes CUPE bills itself as a 267,000-member powerhouse, but in truth the behemoth has few bones, muscles or tissues. Instead, it's a loose federation of 17,700 independent locals and unions, overlaid with a dizzying array of council, committees and divisions that suck up the hours and energy of hundreds of volunteer union activists with little noticeable result.

At this week's gathering of 1,200 CUPE delegates at the Winnipeg convention centre, a few dared give voice to the obvious — that CUPE is a "paper tiger" — but they didn't follow through and examine the poor beast's frail anatomy.

Instead, as they always do, they rose time and again to demand tougher national policies and tougher leadership for tougher action — and when they'll be back in 1983 to ask once more why the big cat didn't roar or bite.

Many delegates, in private, were both dismayed and cynical about the panoply of schemes and personality politics of the union. They ignored years of evidence that proved no other form of politics is possible within CUPE's present structures.

As Dennis McDermott said in 1979 after CUPE's convention called for his renomination as president of the Canadian Labor Congress, "It may be the largest union in Canada but it's certainly not the most respected."

CUPE's underlying flimsiness is now being tested by harsh political and economic winds. Many of its local unions are big and strong enough to weather the storm, but many others will be looking for the reinforcement that the solid co-operation of 267,000 workers should offer.

So far they're still looking to the CUPE national office for leadership, but if the behemoth can't shape up for a fight — and there is no sign it will — more CUPE locals will have to wonder if there isn't some better use for the union dues they're sending to Ottawa by 1983.

It's not a new thought, since as long as 10 years ago, 10,000 British Columbia hospital workers gave up on the convoluted grant and formed their own independent union.

Vernon Unit Scholarship

Several resolutions pertaining to long term care facilities were passed at the annual NDP convention held in Vernon in October.

One resolution passed by convention delegates said that an NDP government would require that all licensing and quality of care standards in Long Term Care be reviewed and upgraded where necessary and be enforced.

The resolution further resolved that "the standards be uniform for all facilities offering the same level of care" and that "all licensed facilities be non-profit."

A resolution from the Vernon- Columbia Little Mountain riding dealt with the equal pay for work of equal value issue.

WHEREAS women workers earn, on the average, only 59% of what men earn, and WHEREAS much of this inequity occurs because women work in jobs which are traditionally performed by women and, as a consequence, undervalued by their employers, and WHEREAS if women were paid rates which reflected the real value of their jobs, thousands of women dependent on social assistance could afford to work.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the B.C. NDP endorse the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an NDP government would set an example for other employers by implementing a concept of equal pay for work of equal value in government funded jobs.

Wages Are Falling Behind To Inflation

After four years of relative tranquility, labor negotiations in Canada are heating up. With the country's consumer price index soaring to an annual rate of 12.4% last month, the 40% of Canada's 2.1 million union members whose contracts expire this year are demanding large wage improvements. Experts predict that first-year wage increases in 1981 will average about 12% up from 10% in 1980, and management resistance to this is already producing an upturn in strikes.

The first sign of this trend has appeared in Canada's westernmost province, British Columbia.

Workers are reacting to inflation, "Wages have fallen behind by any way you measure it," says Ken G. Rose, chairman of the building trades group that broke away from the Canadian Labor Congress in April. The Conference of Canadian estimates that real wages have declined by 3% since 1978 and are likely to fall again this year.

Few employers were prepared for labor's tactics in British Columbia. After British Columbia Telephone Co. rejected a mediator's recommendation for a 4% wage increase, union members locked out executives out of all company offices for five days. The company capitulated after Kinnaid called the first province-wide strike in British Columbia history.

Editor's Note: The above story is a summary of an article that appeared in Business Week Magazine in May. HEU was mentioned on a list of crucial bargaining talkes that are taking place or took place in Canada in 1981.

Cariboo Lodge Members' Ode To Unionism

The Union is for your own good, So don't abuse it, if you would, It brings you better wages, So you can get out of your cages.

The Union fights for you in each way, It makes your loads easier to carry each day. If the Union isn't your thing, You won't get the benefits it brings.

Be proud of what the Union has done, Cause it can be a lot of fun. Just remember it does take you please, Gives you smiles and sunshine faces.

Editor's Note: The above poem was written by Cariboo Lodge Unit Members Linda Connolly, Brenda Le Roy and Joan Boomar. Cariboo Lodge is in Williams Lake.

HEU Clerical Staff attended a two-day seminar October 29-30 in Vancouver as part of the ongoing HEU staff development program.

HEU clerical staff attended a seminar October 29 and 30 in Vancouver as part of HEU's ongoing staff development program. The 13 HEU staff members who attended the two-day seminar listened to presentations on the topics of Time Management, Filing and Office Communication Skills (Assessment Training). The HEU staff who attended the seminars were: Cynthia Alexander, Carolyn Chapman, Elaine Doyle, Marilyn Grossetti, Irene Hartlin, Marian Lade-route, Doreen LeCompte, Margie McGiver, Susan Pavkow, Kit Stevens, Christina Vander voort, Kim Vickers, and Diane Forbes.

These Como-Lake Unit members were all smiles at party in October held to celebrate the arrival of their retroactive cheques as a result of an arbitration award handed down in September. From left: Sue Bullock, Kaye Jacobson and Raiza Vitanen.

Pentiction Retirement Service Unit members had a lot of fund taking part in "Nestage Day" October 30. The members, as evident in this photo, hammed it up with costumes for the day at the Pentiction and District Retirement Service health care facility. —Shelby Spencer photo

Kevin Poleakeou, son of Vernon HEU member Lawrence Poleakeou, is the winner of the Vernon Unit Scholarship.

Health Care Resolutions

The Vernon Unit has given its annual $300 scholarship this year to Kevin Poleakeou, son of Vernon Unit member Law rence Poleakeou. Unit Secretary-Treasurer Elaine Neill says the scholarship is donated each year to a student who is the son, daughter or granddaughter of a member at Vernon Jubilee Hospital.

"We're proud to be able to help young students in this way," Neil told the Guardian, Kevin, who presently attends Pacific Vocational Institute in Burnaby, hopes to eventually work as an architectural draftsman. Kevin's father Lawrence has worked at Vernon Jubilee Hospital for 25 years.
The members at work

Vernon Jubilee Hospital and Noric House

Maureen Henderson is a housekeeping aide at the Vernon hospital.

Elaine Nell is a clerk in the a.x. booking department.

Albert Sonntag is a cook in the dietary department.

Greg Merrick (left) and Gordon Lenoue work in the laundry department.

Kathy Sand is a clerk in the medical records department.

Helen Davies is an admitting department clerk.

Lawrence Polehoukis works in the maintenance department.

Sharon Hill is a housekeeping aide at Noric House.

Ginny Thistle is a clerk in the lab.

Jan Funeye (left) and Elsie Campbell work in the kitchen at Noric House.

Helen Hyvonen is a cook at the Noric House health care facility.

Millie Roberts is a care aide at the Noric House health care facility.

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Photos of Unit members

Quesnel, Fort Nelson, Williams Lake, MacKenzie

Quesnel Unit member Pauline Iverson in the kitchen at G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital.

Fort Nelson Unit Chairperson Jim Cobbett does some repair work on faulty wiring at the Fort Nelson General Hospital.

Quesnel Unit member Irna Koop slicing cold cuts for lunch at G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital.

The photographs on this page were taken by Northern Regional Office staff representative Mark Atkinson during regular servicing visits.

Fort Nelson Unit member Alice Bradley is a clerical employee at Fort Nelson General Hospital.

Quesnel Unit member Judy Tushkowshi at work preparing a meal at G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital.

Lily Doan is a housekeeping aide at Fort Nelson General Hospital and a proud HEU member.

Williams Lake Unit members at a recent Unit meeting. From left: Linda Graham, Rhonda Jacobs, Sharon Polezak, Pat Coates and Mary Jane Edstrom.

These five MacKenzie Unit members posed for this picture. From left: Marcie Stenseth, Edna Anderson, Marg Coleman (Chairperson), Barb Klin and Chuck Moore (Secretary-Treasurer).

Fort Nelson Unit members after a Unit meeting. Pictured here are: Myra Redford, Rita Skadan, Doreen MacDonald, Ellen Gock, Joanne Shallow, Lillian Redford, Jim Cobbett (Chairperson), Linda Smith, Trish Cox and Alice Bradley (Secretary-Treasurer).
Glenda Patterson knows first-hand the importance of coping with personal tragedy with the help of her community. Glenda was employed as a clerk at Trail Regional Hospital in 1979 and had developed a strong bond with the patients and staff at the hospital.

Glenda had her declared legally blind, and after the assessment, CNIB Director Duncan McClure took Glenda to Kelowna to observe a system that he thought could be put back to work again. The system was called ViewIt, a computer system that magnifies written data and projects it onto a television screen.

Although declared legally blind, Glenda could see the magnification well enough to work. With the help of Ministry of Health funding, the hospital then went out and purchased the $5,000 ViewIt and opened the door for Glenda’s return to work in June of this year.

"It was nearly two years off the job and I had some misgivings about how I would be treated by the staff upon return but they have all been great to me."

She particularly gave mention to two other members who visited her during her period on long-term disability, Jack Robertson and JoAnn Morrish, who would come and pick her up for dinner or just come to visit her. Wong said it would have been much worse if she was at home all that time.

Glenda keeps in shape by walking to work, which is a 15-minute walk from where she lives in Trail.

Glenda can read with the assistance of large glasses however she says she can only do this for a short time before her eyes begin to get tired. She does read the Guardian regularly but is promised to make sure she resists this issue in its entirety, which has been brought to her attention.

"I will put it under the ViewIt like I did for Leda Carling’s poem on Terry Fox (October Guardian),” she said.

Glenda Patterson sits in front of her ViewIt at the Trail Regional Hospital. With the help of the ViewIt, Glenda performs her clerical duties in the outpatients department despite her sight handicap.

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OLD AND DEFENCELESS ARE BEING VICTIMIZED

DEAR SIR,

There are middle-aged and older people living in our province today who in addition to the stress of retirement, the stigma of welfare, NOW face the additional burden of a cut in income at a time when the cost of living is rising, as well as unemployment, is on the increase.

The Minister of Human Resources tells us that the new government income assistance cuts ($55 from food money) are introduced in an “attempt to provide the employable of our province with independence and a better way of life.” The 6,500 men and women, in B.C. between the ages of 45 and 69 in receipt of income assistance, represent a difficult time accepting this fact. These people are on social assistance by necessity, not by choice, and to humiliate them by insisting that they are receiving a pay up each month with proof that they have no employment because they are old, or they are too old, or lack skills — is cruel.

These people can be divided into three categories — first the women who have spent their adult life raising their families; society has been the beneficiary of their unpaid labour, and now as a result of being widowed, divorced, abandoned, ill or because they are married to older men who can no longer work and support the family find that they need our assistance. Secondly, the single women of limited education who have worked all of their lives in the home as a part-time or full-time worker — waitressing, clerking, domestic work etc. — now with perhaps a bad back or varicose veins, are no longer able to work, they have applied for assistance until they become eligible for OAP. And finally there are the older men who have spent all of their lives in hard outside, back breaking work — now with back troubles, arthritis, tired and worn out, they are no longer able to maintain those jobs. Because of their age and limited education, they cannot find work in this period of high unemployment and so are forced to apply for assistance. These are the pioneers of this province — they built the Yellowhead route — opened up the north, washed their own small town, raised their families under the most difficult conditions — these are our aunts, our uncles, our neighbours, our countrymen.

Now the government and the Minister of Human Resources are telling these people that they must live on less — their monthly $375 cheque is going to be reduced to $200, of this the ministry has earmarked $170 for rent and utilities, leaving them $150 to cover the cost of food, transportation, telephone and clothing. The Ministry of Health nutritionist tells us that in May of this year it cost a single person living alone a minimum of $12 per food per month. How can these people meet all their other expenses on $387 in fact how did they manage on $937?

Whenever we are tempted to congratulate the government for this policy let us remember that it is the old and the defenceless who are being victimized by it. A government which would take from these people in order to finance mega-projects deserves to be roundly condemned for its lack of compassion.

Rosemary Brown M.L.A.
Burnaby-Edmonds

LETTERS

Letter to Nielsen

Dear Mr. Nielsen,

We, the members of HEU Local 100, Williams Lake Unit, would like to express our frustration with the progress of the classification procedure. We have been extremely patient and have waited long enough. Something must be done now. We are no longer prepared to wait and feel that you should be aware of this and take action.

Yours truly,

Glenda Patterson
Williams Lake Unit

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Old Service Awards at Holy Family

Long service awards went to 13 Holy Family Unit members during a ceremony on October 28 at the Vancouver hospital.

Plaques commemorating more than 20 years service went to: Annette Lake, Housekeeping; Elsie Cairns, Dietary; Benita Aas, Programming; Leslie Steel, Nursing; Henriette Fletcher, Occupational Therapy.

Plaques recognizing 15 years or more of service were presented to: Maria Locic, Housekeeping; Patricia Critter, Laundry; Frances McKinnon, Physiotherapy; Pat Adams, Nursing; Henriette Fletcher, Occupational Therapy.

Recipients of the congratulatory cup and saucer for 10 or more years of service were: Karen Hamilton, Dietary; Katharina Lechthaler, Housekeeping; Janet Baker, Nursing; Jean Elaesser, Medical Records.

The awards were presented by Sister Catherine Doherty, Hospital Administrator and R.

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Provincial Conference Delegates

Penticton Retirement Service Unit member Shirley Schwartz was a delegate at the Eighth Provincial Wage Policy Conference October 1 and 2 in Vernon. Those in attendance included in the original list of elected delegates distributed before the conference and therefore did not appear on the delegate list mailed to members in the October Guardian.

The delegate for the Nelson Unit at the conference was Brenda Bente and the delegate for the Columbia Valley Unit (Trail) at the conference was Brenda Bent.