

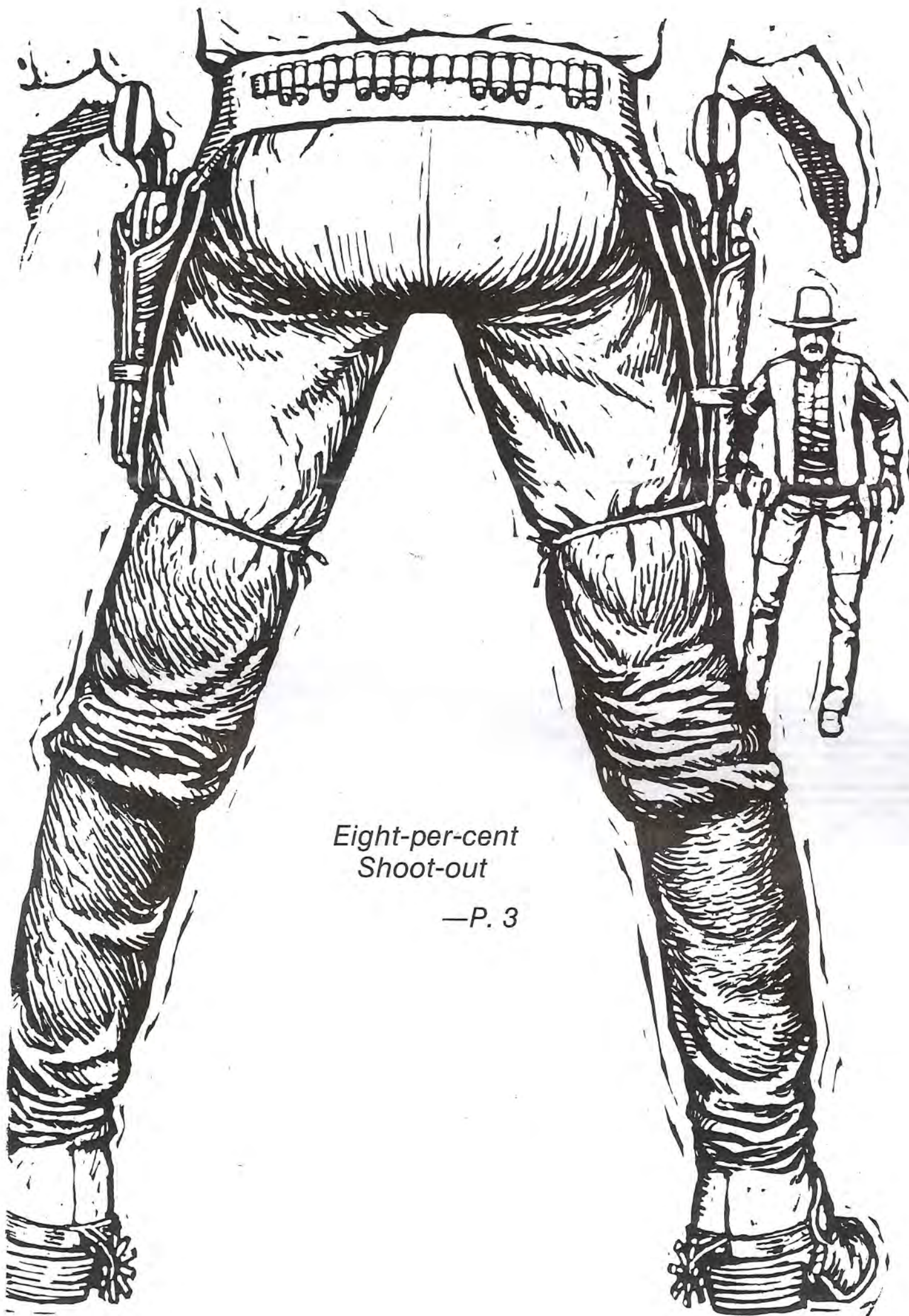
The Hospital **Guardian**

VOL. XVII No. 3



HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION LOCAL
180

JULY TO SEPTEMBER, 1980



*Eight-per-cent
Shoot-out*

—P. 3

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

The Hospital Guardian

Official Magazine of the
 HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION LOCAL
180

The Hospital Guardian is published by the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180, under the direction of an Editorial Committee whose members are:

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Opinion Page

A growing threat

F — is for the feudalism they have created.
R — is for the ruthlessness of their ways.
E — is for the economic god they worship.
E — is for the evil in their souls.
D — is for the domination that they practice.
O — is for the oppression that it brings.
M — is for the misery of their serfs.

Freedom is not a word to be taken lightly. It is a precious commodity for which we have paid a very high price. The cost can be measured in personal sacrifice, in tears, in death. The scars are deep.

When that hard-won freedom is endangered in any way it behooves all of us to speak out. Together we stand a chance of eradicating the cancer in its early stage. If we remain apathetic it will gnaw its way deeply into the foundation of our social structure. We cannot afford to let that happen.

This is not a red-bating editorial. It has nothing in common with the hysterical bleatings of those fanatics who believe there is a Communist hiding under every bed. It is, instead, a warning about one specific freedom — freedom of the press — and how that freedom is being eroded today in Canada. The situation is reported to be more severe here than in any other nation in the Western World.

This is so because of the concentration of newspaper ownership. The newspapers of this country — and the decisions that guide them — are in the hands of a powerful few. In essence, two avaricious monopolies, Thomson Newspapers Ltd. and Southam Inc., own between them all but a few of Canada's noteworthy dailies.

They are giants and they are growing. They have reached the stage when, unable to satisfy their appetites in the usual way, they are feeding off each other.

A poet or songwriter might, if urged, put it a little like this:

*Now Thomson and Southam aren't buddies
Their intellects keep them apart
While the nose one of them bloodies
The other goes right for the heart.
But once you've brought them together
To feed on a mutual need
They'll fly like birds of a feather
On the wings of ravenous greed.*

To say that the two monopolies are governed today by the profit motive rather than a quest for truth and a responsibility to the public would be putting it mildly. They are two large pirate ships opposed only by an armada of leaking canoes as they sail toward their own Treasure Island to divide the spoils.

And divide them they do. Southam gets Ottawa when Thomson folds the famous old Journal without a moment's notice to the hundreds of employees. The favor is repaid in Winnipeg where Southam dumps the 90-year-old Tribune, again without warning. There is the other deal concerning the Montreal Gazette, the Victoria Colonist and Times are merged by Thomson at a cost of 61 jobs and Southam ends up with both the Sun and Province in Vancouver.

There is far more at stake here than the financial lusting of the giants. That freedom of the press we talked about carries with it freedom of expression. Some of those resident landlords in this feudal system (local publishers) will tell you this will not be damaged. Don't you believe them. They are but dogs whimpering at the feet of the master. If and when he throws the bone they want it to land in the doggie bowl and not between the eyes.

They may have once been newspapermen, some of them. But they now put personal concern ahead of reader concern, just as the monopolies put profit before journalism.

You will now have your one newspaper towns where lack of competition will lead as it always does to poorer coverage of the news. And where there will be no diversity of editorial opinion. There is a danger here of the news being managed, of eunuch editorial writers feeding the public the kind of pap the big chains consider nourishing. It is your mind they will be playing with. You have a right to demand better.

You may wonder if the people at the top have any compassion for honest journalism, for the purity of truth, for the public. The answer may lie in part in the compassion they have shown their employees. Papers closing without warning. A merger in Victoria without warning. People learning of their fate on car radios and not from those responsible.

Add to this the fact there was no prior consultation with the newspaper unions and you may be able to answer that question about compassion.

Or perhaps it is best explained by the comment of Ken Thomson when asked about the mass layoffs. He said each person has to make his own way in life. It must have been tough for him to make his way, being born as he was to a father with a newspaper empire in the making.

Besides, said Ken Thomson, there was the severance pay. Someone should tell him you don't play lightly with people's lives, you don't destroy their dreams, ruin their careers, then expect to make up for it all with a paltry severance payment. It doesn't work that way.

It may be that Thomson doesn't know about things like this. He may well think money is the cure for any ailment. Or, if he does know, perhaps he just doesn't care.

As his father's son he inherits the title of Lord.

A cynic today might well say the newspaper business is in the hands of the Lord. But the wrong Lord.

God save it. It deserves a better fate than this.

When the dust had settled it was a payday victory

Some 6,000 hospital employees had been cut off at the pass and it looked like there was going to be a shoot-out.

There were a few shots fired, but by the time the dust had settled the workers, members of the Hospital Employees' Union, had won.

In the end, a saddle-sore Health Labour Relations Association rode off into the sunset.

It all began when HLRA decided it wasn't prepared to pay everyone the eight per cent wage increase that was scheduled for Aug. 1 under terms of the Collective Agreement. About 6,000 of the 20,000 involved would get four per cent. The argument was that their jobs hadn't been classified.

In HLRA's eyes, the scheduled increase was complicated by a job classification system provided for in the collective agreement. The problem was that the system wasn't yet in place. And until it was it wouldn't make good sense to give some people the kind of

raise that would likely force a rollback later.

But HEU didn't see it that way; nor did the Peck Tribunal; nor — as it turns out — the Labour Relations Board.

But first, the shoot-out of sorts.

It was Aug. 15 when the employees found themselves cut off (four per cent for some) at the pass. This was the payday that produced the bitter evidence.

They responded with sit-ins of 650 HEU members in Victoria and another 400 in Vancouver. The targets were the five long-term care facilities of the Juan de Fuca Hospital Association in Victoria — Glengarry, Aberdeen, Priory, the Admission Unit, and Mount Tolmie — and Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver.

In addition, affected employees at Victoria General Hospital chose a different form of protest by showing up for work in blue jeans and T-shirts. It was a pattern established by Victoria area police, who oddly enough had settled their own dispute the same day.

Some of the members at Victoria General also went about their jobs with protest slogans pinned to the front of their T-shirts.

The sit-in form of protest keeps the employees in the hospital. There is a good reason for this, as one HEU staffer pointed out.

"In cases like this we are always there to make sure there is no danger. Our quarrel is with the employer, not with the community."

Later, senior Victoria staff representative Bill Muir said, after sitting in with some of the members: "These people are just carrying out the intent of a resolution passed at their biennial convention in June."

The resolution had anticipated the pay problem.

The sit-ins, lasting more than five hours, ended on the advice of the union's Provincial Executive. HLRA had approached the LRB for a cease-and-desist order.

The union's opposition to HLRA's wage increase stand was based on one simple point: to withhold the eight per cent

from anyone would be a breach of the collective agreement — an agreement that had come in the form of a mediated settlement under the Peck Tribunal.

By Aug. 19 Ed Peck, the chairman of that tribunal, had said the same thing. The LRB had taken no immediate action because the tribunal was scheduled to deal with the wage question.

Peck ruled that HLRA had violated the agreement. But he also felt there might have to be a rollback for some employees. In that case, the tribunal would have to decide later on a formula for recovery of the money.

HEU Secretary-Business Manager J. D. Gerow, who represented the union on the tribunal, didn't add his signature to the Peck ruling; nor did the HLRA representative.

Gerow said the union couldn't agree to the possible payback factor. HLRA disagreed with the finding that it had violated the agreement.

The dissatisfaction of employees caused other flare-ups.

On Aug. 21 there was a wildcat job action at the Red Cross Unit, a demonstration while Health Minister Rafe Mair was speaking at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops, and a threatened walkout at Quesnel.

Because of the urgency of the situation, Peck Tribunal had met again that day to deal with the question of the classification system.

But the meeting went nowhere when HEU failed to extract from HLRA a promise to complete the payment of wage increases. Since Peck has found earlier that the contract had been violated, HEU said HLRA had no alternative.

After several hours of futile discussion, the HEU bargaining committee walked out.

And with that the union applied to the LRB for an order forcing the employer to make complete payments.

On Aug. 26, LRB Chairman Don Munroe ruled that eight per cent payments must be made to all.

Changes at the top highlight of HEU convention

In 1949 a British-born stonemason went to work at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. He was joined there two years later by a plumber who had begun life in Saskatchewan.

No one may have known it then, but the hospital workers of B.C. were to benefit immeasurably in the years to come from the efforts of the two "imports."

An awful lot had happened between those early days and the Hospital Employees' Union biennial convention this June when W. D. (Bill) Black and John Darby officially retired, winding down their respective roles as HEU president and financial secretary.

The union had grown and flourished, first as a part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, then as a strong independent body that has paved the way to a better life for a membership that now tops 21,700.

"I can remember going to conventions when we had 35 delegates," mused Black, the one-time plumber. "And there were 329 accredited delegates this time."

"We may have been small in the beginning, but there were a lot of sound results at those early conventions, a lot of thought that went into the constitution that was hammered out. Many of the clauses remain as they were."

Black and Darby have one other thing in common: both have served 12 years in their final posts.

While the double departure was a somewhat traumatic experience for convention delegates (the two were remaining on the job for a while to tidy up loose ends), there appeared to be more than the usual amount of satisfaction with the replacement factor.

Gordon MacPherson, a 26-year employee of Victoria General Hospital and elder statesman of HEU's Provincial



Bill Black

Executive, swept into the presidency on the first ballot. Maurice Smith, affable 37-year-old chairperson of the Burnaby General Unit, was elected financial secretary.

Both men have a lot of respect for the veterans they are replacing.

"As I said from the floor when I was elected," recalled Smith,



Maurice Smith

"I've got an awfully big pair of shoes to fill."

The shoes belonged to John Darby, whose background was that of a stonemason when he came to B.C. from Birmingham in 1948.

"My only association with a hospital had been as a patient," said a smiling Darby, who joined the hospital industry work force at Royal Columbian a year after his arrival.

Darby served as secretary-treasurer of his unit for about 12 years before making the leap to HEU financial secretary.

Black was born in Regina and moved back and forth more than once between B.C. and Alberta in his early life, coming to the coast for the first time in 1942 as a construction pipe-fitter-plumber.

His background allowed him to land a job as a tradesman at Royal Columbian in 1951. Nine years ago he became works co-ordinator. For the past 3½ years his union presidency has been a full-time job.

Ray McCready, HEU Director of Membership Services, came to the union as a staff man at roughly the same time that Black and Darby took their top-level posts. Since he is one himself, he has little trouble recognizing the other two as old-style trade union traditionalists.

"They are the type of trade unionists who have always been too concerned about serving others to worry about being served themselves," McCready said.

Both men express the desire to see HEU re-affiliate with the Canadian Labour Congress. The marriage was broken by necessity when HEU parted company with CUPE.

Black and Darby also stipulate that the return to the trade union movement mainstream should be by direct charter and not something depending on affiliation with another union.

As Black puts it: "We're a



John Darby

bonafide self-servicing trade union. We've proven that point."

With the departure of Black, the union will have in its top elected office a man devoted to both the old and new of unionism.

The examples could be found in a Guradian profile of MacPherson earlier this year.



Gordon MacPherson

The old: "One of the few ways the worker has of achieving justice is through his or her trade union."

The new: "I think our union has got to become more involved in the management of hospitals. We've got to get more members onto the hospital boards."

MacPherson, a morgue attendant who became one of those rare hospital birds known as dieners (special assistants to pathologists) has held every elected position in the Victoria General Unit, and at the provincial level has been trustee, senior trustee, vice-president and regional vice-president, and a member of the Provincial Executive for about 12 years.

In the minds of those who have observed him, Maurice Smith is going to be a solid replacement for the scrupulous John Darby. He has proven himself capable of handling ever-increasing hospital and union responsibilities.

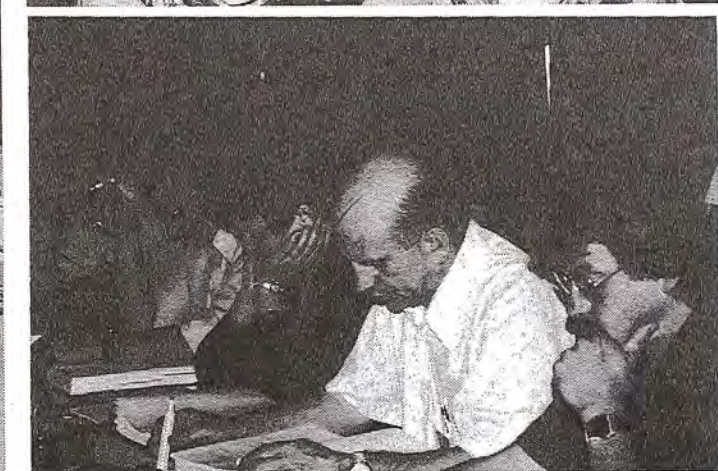
Smith went directly to Burnaby General Hospital from high school, starting as a janitor, moving to stores, then transportation, where he became supervisor responsible for the movement of all supplies. He was in inventory control for a while and late last year became the hospital's buyer.

All the while he has been actively involved with his union. He has served as both vice-chairperson and chairperson of his unit over the last 12 years and at the time of his elevation to financial secretary, was HEU's fifth vice-president.

Elected first vice-president at the June convention was one of the union's real veterans, Gordon Meagher. Meagher, who moves up from second vice-president, has been at Vancouver General Hospital 29 years and has served as chairperson of the 2,100-member unit for nine years. He has served four consecutive terms on the HEU Bargaining Committee.



A
wordless
look
at
convention



1978-81 MASTER AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE



**HOSPITAL
EMPLOYEES'
UNION** LOCAL
180

and the



**Health Labour Relations
Association of British Columbia**

ADDENDUM CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

- (1) The Employer and the Union agree to establish a mutually acceptable broadbanding Classification System.
- (2) The negotiations to develop such Classification System shall commence immediately after the signing date of this Collective Agreement.
- (3) In the event the parties do not agree upon a mutually acceptable broadbanding Classification System by May 31, 1980, the Arbitration Board comprised of Messrs. E. R. Peck, J. Fradley, and J. D. Gerow shall be properly constituted and shall have jurisdiction to proceed and to make a binding determination consistent with the principles expressed under the H.A. Hope Award of July 28, 1978 with respect to the development of such Classification System.
- (4) Classification and wage rate adjustments determined under this addendum shall be effective January 1, 1980.

Arbitration Calendar

The arbitration tribunal chaired by Mr. E. R. Peck has called fourteen separate hearings to deal with the dispute between HEU and HLRA over the Classification System.

The first hearing was held on September 12, 1980 with the last arbitration scheduled for November 20, 1980.

The arbitration calendar looks like this:

September 12, 1980
September 17 and 18, 1980
September 24, 1980
September 30, 1980
October 2, 1980
October 18, 1980
October 21, 22 and 23, 1980
October 29, 1980
November 18, 19 and 20, 1980

The purpose of the arbitration is to make a binding determination consistent with the Master Agreement principle of "comparability" of wages and benefits between HEU and BCGEU members.

The first priority before the Peck Tribunal is to establish rates of pay for clerical employees. After all rates of pay have been determined, the Peck Tribunal will then award an ongoing Classification System.

Acting as counsel for HEU at the arbitration is David Fahey of the Trade Union Research Bureau and Lee Whyte, Assistant Business Manager; Fahey and Whyte will be backed up by HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee. HEU's nominee on the Arbitration Board is Research/Service Representative Hans Brown.

Nursing service aides

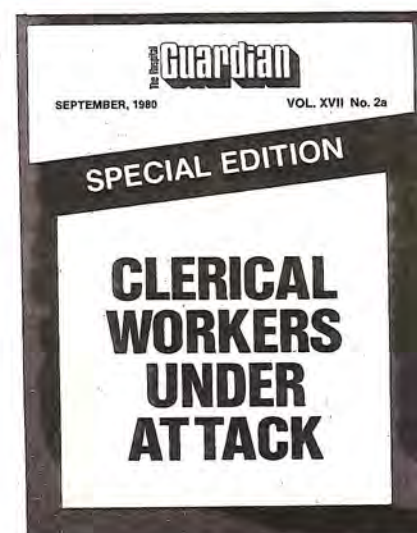
J. D. Gerow, HEU Secretary-Business Manager, on September 9, 1980, called upon the Peck Tribunal to make a binding determination on the question of whether or not HLRA has breached the Master Agreement by not paying the new Nursing Service Aide rate of pay to all Nursing Service Aides.

Gerow said the call for a binding determination is the result of an HLRA instruction to pay the new Nursing Service Aide rate of pay to Nursing Service Aides working in Nursing, CSR or Physiotherapy only. HLRA, for example, excluded Nursing Unit Clerks and Ward Clerks who were classified as Nursing Service Aides I, II or III from the new nursing service rate.

Gerow said the collective agreement is clear. All Nursing Service Aides were classified at the bargaining table and are to receive the new Nursing Service Aide rate of pay which starts at \$1,225 and rises to \$1,404 after forty-eight months of service effective August 1, 1980.

In response to the call for a binding determination, the Peck Tribunal has scheduled a hearing for October 9, 1980.

**LOOK
FOR IT**



CLASSIFICATION TEAM

Have you wondered who it is that's doing all that work that is required in order to put a Classification System into place?

Below are some of the HEU women and men working on the project.



H. Brown, H.E.U. Research/Service Representative



Lee Whyte, H.E.U. Assistant Business Manager



Sheila Cunningham, Royal Columbian Hospital,
Assistant Payroll Supervisor



Sue Guss, Royal Columbian Hospital, Admitting Clerk III



Lynne Porterfield, Surrey Memorial Hospital,
Senior Medical Stenographer



Regina Maier, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Accounting Clerk



Mary Gobillot, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Accounting Clerk



D'Anne Green, H.E.U. Research Analyst



Helen Galan, Lions Gate Hospital, Accounts Clerk III



David Fahey, Classification Consultant,
Trade Union Research Bureau



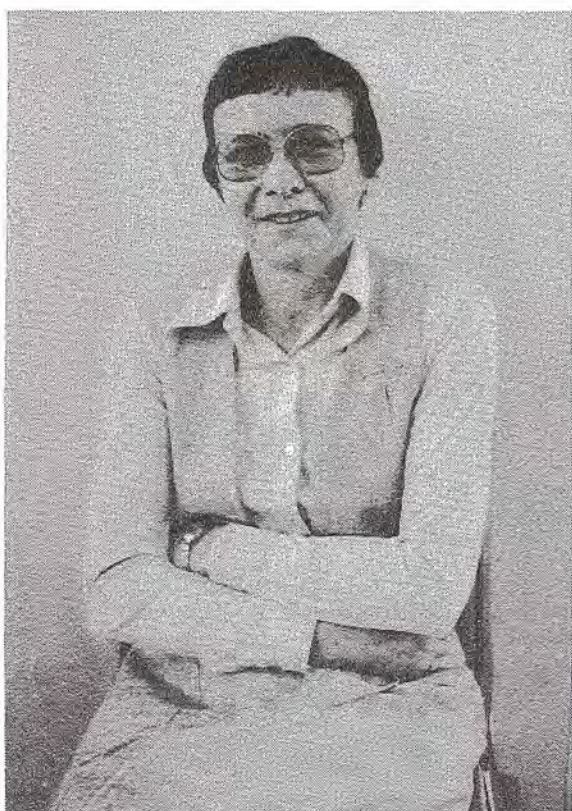
Pat Ferguson, Royal Columbian Hospital, Medical Steno I



Marilyn Donaghue, Royal Columbian Hospital, Clerk Steno I



Iris Dieno, Royal Columbian Hospital, Medical Steno II



Eileen Vandall, Surrey Memorial Hospital,
Assistant O.R. Booking Clerk



Ingrid Stephens, Lions Gate Hospital,
Clerk IV — Medical Records



Kristina Vandervoort, Lions Gate Hospital,
Clerk IV — Head Cashier

Clerical Rates

Under the Classification System, HEU, of course, is matching its jobs with BCGEU jobs and rates of pay. If you don't know what the BCGEU rates of pay are, here they are:

Classification	BCGEU	
	August 1, 1980	
Office Assistant 1	S	\$1,018
	12M	1,070
	24M	1,108
	36M	1,150
	48M	1,190
Office Assistant 2	S	1,108
	12M	1,150
	24M	1,190
	36M	1,237
	48M	1,283
Clerk 3	S	1,230
	12M	1,256
	24M	1,283
	36M	1,314
	48M	1,347
Clerk Stenographer 3	S	1,230
	12M	1,256
	24M	1,283
	36M	1,314
	48M	1,347
Clerk Stenographer 4	S	1,283
	12M	1,314
	24M	1,347
	36M	1,379
	48M	1,416
Clerk Steographer 5	S	1,347
	12M	1,379
	24M	1,416
	36M	1,454
	48M	1,485
Clerk 4	S	1,347
	12M	1,379
	24M	1,416
	36M	1,454
	48M	1,485
Clerk 5	S	1,485
	12M	1,526
	24M	1,570
	36M	1,610
	48M	1,657
Clerk 6	S	1,610
	12M	1,657
	24M	1,702
	36M	1,751
	48M	1,797

Although new rates of pay have been established in most cases, it is to be noted that HLRA is attempting to downgrade many HEU clerical jobs. For example, HLRA has downgraded some HEU Clerk 5's as low as the BCGEU Office Assistant II's. HEU is pressing to have the correct clerical grades established before the Peck Tribunal.

Lots of hard work

Some people have said that implementing the Classification System doesn't take that much time — all you have to do is match a BCGEU job with an HEU job and the rate of pay is settled.

Unfortunately, it isn't that simple. HLRA on its own did match HEU jobs with BCGEU jobs and the result was disastrous. Too many jobs were either downgraded or red-circled (overpaid).

To correct these artificial downgradings and red-circlings, HEU has put together teams of clerical advisory committees to assist HEU's Provincial Bargaining Committee. First, there was a team from Victoria General Hospital comprised of Donna Lowe, Vivian Kirk, Sandy Fleet and Delores Bell. The work performed by this first team took place before the Convention in June and has been of immeasurable assistance.

Now that the Peck Tribunal is in full swing, three additional teams were taken on staff by HEU to assist in demonstrating where the HLRA matches have gone wrong and how such matches do not recognize the jobs being performed by HEU clerical members.

The three teams spent long hard hours on the clerical matches for the "test" hospitals of Surrey Memorial Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital, and Lions Gate Hospital. (See Pages 6 and 7)

B.C. Tel's rejection of Peck Report

Frank Mitchell, NDP communications critic expressed amazement and concern over B.C. Tel's out-of-hand rejection of Conciliation Commissioner Ed Peck's report.

Federal Conciliation Commissioner Ed Peck entered the dispute between B.C. Tel and the Telecommunications Workers' Union after negotiations which began last October had broken down.

The Peck report released in early September was the result of 68 days of meetings between the two parties to the dispute. Exactly one week after its release, the company presented the union with a proposal which rejected the most important recommendations in Peck's report, including those dealing with wage and jurisdictional matters.

Mitchell suggested that an important aspect of the report was Peck's reference to the breakdown of collective bargaining at B.C. Tel. While there have been only two strikes at

B.C. Tel during the last ten years, the company and union have only been able to conclude one collective agreement without government intervention. These poor labour-management attitudes affect the employees' morale and the public suffers.

Mitchell felt that acceptance of the recommendations included in the Peck report would have been an important first step in patching up labour relations at B.C. Tel. The Peck recommendations did not meet the union's demands for parity with B.C. Hydro workers, but the union leadership nevertheless recommended acceptance of the Commissioner's report, expecting that the company's would do likewise and give a speedy ending to the year long negotiations but the company's rejection of Peck's recommendations closes the door to an early settlement. "The onus for dragging out this dispute," stated Mitchell, "rests clearly with the company."

LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD OF B.C.

H.E.U., on August 26, 1980 received the following letter from the Chairman of the Labour Relations Board, Mr. D. R. Munroe, regarding the Peck Tribunal's decision on the August 1st 8% general wage increase.

"Further to the hearing of yesterday afternoon, I have spoken to the Chairman of the Arbitration Board Mr. E.R. Peck and been able to obtain clarification and a clear statement concerning the intention of the critical paragraph of his letter dated August 19, 1980.

The Chairman of the Arbitration Board has advised me that the words used were intended to convey the following. First, the HLRA member hospital are to pay the 8 per cent increase to all employees effective August 1, 1980. Second, the totality of the collective bargaining relationship between the parties (insofar as it relates to the proceedings in question) is not

found by reference only to the provision calling for and 8 per cent increase. There is an interrelationship between that provision and the provisions dealing with the Classification System and red-circling to a minimum of 4 per cent. Third, the mechanics of the implementation of that interrelationship are to be the subject of further deliberations by the Arbitration Board at an early date. Those mechanics may include a direction about how potential reductions are to be implemented and/or a pay-back formula or formulae, and such other directions as the Arbitration Board may determine. Finally, such directions (if any) will become effective and will be implemented upon the Classification System and any consequential red-circling being decided in respect of individual employees or groups of employees; in the meantime, as I have already indicated, the HLRA member hospitals are to pay the 8 per cent increase."

Grace Unit upset

The Grace Unit of the Hospital Employees' Union, upset over the delay in the implementation of the Classification System, decided to take its complaints directly to their hospital.

On October 2, 1980, the Unit wrote the following letter to the hospital's Assistant Administrator:

Dear Mr. Hutmacher:

On behalf of the "unclassified" members of H.E.U. we are asking you to bring to the attention of H.L.R.A. the great unrest and dissatisfaction in our hospital over the delay in the "Classification System."

The morale in our hospital is reaching "SUB-ZERO" very quickly!! We have already had threats of "sit down strikes" and "slow downs". YOUR employees are very unhappy and are sitting on very short fuses...TEMPERS ARE FLARING...

We need a settlement soon — A JUST AND FAIR SETTLEMENT — before the morale is so low that employees take matters out of our hands and put them into their own. You have already seen an example of what "could" happen via Mrs. Mears and the cooks! The Caseroom Aides are about to reach this point as well. Unrest is "stirring" in clerical and other areas.

We need your help as the "employer" to put a stop to this unrest and decaying morale. Unhappy workers produce poor work...

Your help with our concerns will be greatly appreciated. Sincerely,

D. B. Kozak
Chairperson
H.E.U. Local 180
Grace Unit

T. Pendlebury
Secretary-Treasurer
A. Campbell
Vice-Chairman

With
good
wishes
(and
a kiss)
for
Mrs. Darby



At HEU convention

AN UNSELFISH CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Improve and broaden the coverage of the pension plan.

Maintain the status quo — for the time being — of compulsory retirement.

Seek job protection, fire protection, environmental protection and the type of improvements that can benefit society as a whole.

A lot of worthy causes came in for close examination and lengthy debate at the 12th Biennial Convention of HEU. Many bit the dust. Some went on the shelf. But as usual, those that found the stamp of approval demonstrated the concern of HEU members, not just for themselves, but for the world around them.

This was evident in the attack on poverty, the low-level radiation threat to people in other industries and the determination to do more for those who have retired.

In dealing with matters concerning their own union, delegates took a hard look at something that is becoming one of the top priorities with working people everywhere — superannuation.

They blended six resolutions to come up with one calling for four specific improvements to the Municipal Employees' Superannuation Plan.

As a result, HEU's representative to the plan's committee has these goals to pursue:

- Increase interest rates.
- Raise the age for which superannuation is available to an employee from 50 to 54.
- Urge the government to take steps to ensure that there is ample money in the fund to look after members when they retire.

- After 10 years of contributions, optional retirement without penalty and eligibility for pension at a minimum age of 55.

Delegates also instructed the union's provincial office to inform the membership by newsletter once a year of the plan's solvency.

While there has been concern raised about the well-being of some other funds, the Municipal Employees' Superannuation Fund is reported to be on very sound footing. The fund covers a variety of people, including those in health care, municipal workers and firefighters.

On a related subject, the convention called on the union to

petition the federal government to increase the old age pension to a realistic level and to tie it directly to increases in the Consumer Price Index.

Interestingly enough, delegates from two HEU units came to the convention with dead-opposite opinions on the question of retirement.

The Como Lake Unit wanted to put an end to compulsory retirement. The Creston Unit called for voluntary retirement at 55 and compulsory retirement at 60 — or at the most, the present limit of 65.

Both resolutions got short-circuited. In the end, the matter was left as it stands.

The on-going problem of the Licensed Practical Nurses also commanded action on the part of delegates. They called on the union to:

- Insist on strict observance of the contract to put an end to the improper use of practical nurses to do the work of Registered Nurses and Nurses Aides.

- Vigorously oppose the practice of eliminating the LPN positions by gradually replacing them with other job categories.

The convention saw a move toward the industrial democracy concept, although there was an effort to thwart it.

Delegates supported a resolution pressing the province for a program leading to full labour-management participation in hospital administration. This would mean allowing the election of employees to the various hospital boards.

Low level radiation, a growing but neglected concern of society, was the subject of one of the most thoughtful and detailed resolutions to come before the union's 12th biennial convention.

Submitted by the Kamloops Unit, the resolution won delegate support for its proposed attack on the problem and its demand for immediate action on the part of Ottawa.

The urgency, according to the unit, hinges on the fact there has been no comprehensive study of the effects of low level radiation on health and the environment.

A motion to have the resolution referred was defeated.

"The people who wanted referral were really acting on a misconception," one delegate said afterward. "They were opposed to union members being on the same team as management in connection with something that is being run by the government."

"What they didn't take into account is the fact that the hospitals are owned by the people, including the same people who work in them. And they should have a say in what goes on."

Also dealt with by the convention:

Rent controls: The union will ask the provincial government to establish rent controls allowing increases of no more than seven per cent a year on any type of unit.

To protect old age pensioners and others on fixed incomes who have been at the mercy of landlords hiking rents 30 to 40 per cent, the union will press for a strengthening of the B.C. Rentalsman's investigative powers.

Legal advice: The union has been instructed to extend its free legal advice system to retired members with 10 years of service and whose HEU membership was in good standing. Such service is also to apply to the spouses.

The need for this has been emphasized by rising living costs and a survey concerning the problems of retirement.

Poverty: With Canadian cities

and towns plagued with severe poverty, and crime rates escalating because of want, delegates agreed the federal and provincial governments should be asked to work toward:

- A guaranteed annual income.
- Elimination of slum areas with consultation of the people living in those areas.
- Teaching within the educational system of responsibility toward society.

Multi-nationals: The union is to seek federal legislation that would limit expansion of multinational corporations. It would also make it necessary to leave all profits, with the exception of the initial investment, in Canada — or to re-invest them in Canada.

Delegates agreed the multi-nationals do not serve the needs of Canadians, but operate on a philosophy of exploitation.

Fire drills: Fears that have been raised over a distinct lack of fire safety in many extended care facilities prompted a call for proper co-ordinated fire drills.

Boycott: There was endorsement of a boycott on all Nestle Products, including Nescafe, Encore, Taster's Choice, Nestea, Nestle's Quik, Libby's McNeill and Libby's Souptime, Maggi Soups, Crosse and Blackwell, Wispride, Cherry Hill Cheese, Swiss Knight Cheese and Old Fort Cheese.

Nestle has been accused of unethical advertising in Third World countries, something that has been blamed for the

death each year of thousands of babies. The company's accusers include the Infant Formula Action Coalition, the World Council of Churches and the World Health Organization.

Radiation: Delegates called for an immediate study of the effects of low level radiation. (The detailed report of this resolution is in an accompanying story.)

Environmental protection: The provincial government will be asked to protect, as a recreational zone, the water, air and land of Howe Sound, and to use stringent laws to prevent any further pollution of the area.

Delegates agreed there was a particular need for such protection in the Lower Mainland if there was to be an adequate quality of life for future generations.

Affiliation: There was agreement again that re-affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress is a worthwhile goal, as long as such re-affiliation is by way of a direct charter and not through relationship with some other union.

The reason for seeking direct membership is that HEU has proven itself to be a completely capable, self-servicing union while standing alone during its 10 years outside the mainstream of the trade union movement.

One resolution that was shot down quickly called for the use of only the two official languages — English and French — in the hospitals.

Put forward by the G. F. Strong Unit, it proposed:

- The hiring for hospital work of only those with an adequate knowledge of either language.

- That no other language be used unless dealing with a patient unable to speak either English or French.

- That disciplinary action be taken against anyone using a third language in the hospital when the need for such had not arisen.

If there was an intention to prove that too many unfamiliar languages can spell trouble, the message didn't really come across. To some, it was strictly racist in nature.

The attack on the resolution was heavy and immediate. In the end, it wasn't even defended by those who proposed it.

Action demanded on radiation menace

The type of study the unit wants Ottawa to get started on right away would include:

- Establishment of a central computer data bank.
- Monitoring of all people working in the various sectors of the nuclear industry, as well as anyone living within a radius of 20 kilometres of such industry.

The resolution's definition of the nuclear industry includes nuclear reactors, uranium mining and the milling and industrial process.

It proposes that records be stored, including:

- Length of service in the nuclear industry.
- Age when first employed in the industry, or residency within the given radius.
- Diseases, birth defects, death and its cause.

Other essential needs, according to the resolution, are:

- An annual physical examination conducted by an independent doctor.
- That the nuclear industry pay 60 per cent of the costs of the study.
- That the results be made public.

The provincial government called a probe into fire safety at B.C.'s 600 nursing homes in August, claiming the action was spurred by a survey that showed inadequate fire drill standards at some establishments.

Oddly enough, the announcement came on the heels of initial reports from HEU's own task force on long-term care facilities — reports that painted a frightening picture of old people with little or no protection against the always present threat of fire.

There is a sort of tragic irony to the timing of B.C.'s concern. Earlier in the summer, 23 residents died as the result of a fire that tore through a nursing home in Mississauga, Ont.

After a look at the safety factor in this province, HEU president Gordon MacPherson told an inquiring reporter the Mississauga incident could easily be repeated here — even possibly on a larger scale.

MacPherson declined to go into more detail until a study had been completed.

Interestingly enough, the fear of fire has emerged as a constant theme in a wide range of problems turned up so far by the union task force.

"A lot of people (employees) we have talked to have voiced the same concern — they are afraid of fires," says Jean Swanson, HEU's research analyst for the long-term care program.

The attorney-general's ministry, in talking about the government probe, refers mainly to a lack of uniformity in fire drills at the nursing homes. But, if those conducting the government study do their job, they will obviously find more to worry about than that.

The real source of information lies with those who seem most concerned with the plight of the patients — the people who staff the long-term care homes. And the task force, picked from among their number, has come up with some startling discoveries.

Some establishments seldom hold fire drills and worse still, their employees have no idea of what to do in the event of a fire.

The presence of fire extinguishers may be of little comfort, for according to Swanson, too many of the employees wouldn't know how to use them.

"And those employees we have talked to don't think that two people on duty at night would be enough to get the residents out in time if a fire broke out," Swanson says.

The fact that there are only two employees on duty during the night at many facilities emphasizes another serious problem — that of under-staffing.

Lack of training and insufficient staff might seem like a bad enough combination, but for some long-term care homes there is a third frightening factor: if they are located in out-of-the-way places, they have no nearby fire brigades on which to call.

Provincial Fire Commissioner Gordon Anderson has acknowledged that there are problems. Swanson says he has told her that nursing home

A many-headed menace hangs over unprotected long-term care homes

staffs without knowledge of fire safety could go to their local fire departments (where there are such departments) and ask for training.

"If this doesn't work out, he says they can apply to him for help," she says.

She says she has discovered that fire regulations apply only to buildings in general without specific terms for such facilities as long-term care homes.

However, other regulations covered by community care licensing legislation, stipulate that fire drills must be held once a month, notes Swanson.

"Some places have them, but

others don't," she says. "Like the Kiwanis Home, which hadn't had a fire drill in 3½ years."

The threat of fire and the inability of many homes to deal with it is, of course, just one of many shortcomings turned up to date by a task force set up to look at the whole picture of patient care in the long-term care field.

The union decided to conduct its own intensive study after failing to convince the ministry of health that there should be HEU representation on the government Steering Committee established to guide

a probe into the long-term care program.

"Our members have concerns about patient care which we fear will not be addressed by the government study," HEU Secretary-Business Manager J. D. Gerow said June 11 in announcing the union's parallel study.

Since the union's task force was made up of those in the long-term care field, it didn't take long to start highlighting some of the real problems.

Right at the outset HEU had this to report:

—Patients being drugged to

reduce the need for the staff to spend time with them.

—"Activation programs" which consist of wheeling the patient in front of a TV set to sit for hours.

—Patients lined up in wheelchairs waiting for a turn in the washroom, but being forced to urinate before that turn comes.

—Dirty patients covered with bedsores.

—Using union funds or personal money to buy craft supplies or holiday treats for patients because no other funds were available.

While the union acknowledged that many long-term care facilities were providing adequate care and struggling to do a good job, it nevertheless found specific cases of appalling conditions.

Early in July, HEU members at Crestwood Guest Lodge in Maple Ridge were reported on the verge of job action as a means of forcing the adoption of adequate care.

The 16 Licensed Practical Nurses, nurse aides, housekeeping and kitchen staff said care had steadily deteriorated in the privately owned, profit-making home.

Crestwood is a home for those needing personal care and several levels of intermediate care, including the psychogeriatric level.

Things began to come to a head when staff shortages became acute and the ailing Registered Nurse Administrator was not replaced. As a result, overworked employees had this sad picture to offer:

—Residents in need of exercise remained in bed because no one was available to help them move about.

—Baths were given only once a week.

—Nursing staff had to reduce resident care to do administrative work.

—Housekeeping staff had to fill in on nursing duties, leaving carpets dirty and halls smelling of urine.

—Residents were deprived of quick access to needed drugs because RNs, otherwise occupied, were the only employees qualified to place phone orders for the drugs.

—Psychogeriatric patients and alcoholics received inadequate supervision.

—An inadequate hot water system left only cold water for the laundry.

When he announced in June that the union was conducting its own investigation of the long-term care situation throughout the province, Gerow said it would be a thorough job and that, as a result, it would probably be four to six months before its report was ready for submission to government. It is not a submission that was invited, but one that HEU intends to carry out.

The union has every reason to believe its probe will unearth vital information overlooked by the government review. It says it is important that all the facts be brought to the government's attention if anything is to be done to right some very wrong situations.

... and here's how it all unfolded

Here are the step-by-step developments behind the separate approaches of the provincial government and Hospital Employees' Union to the problems facing long-term health care in B.C.:

March 20 — Health Minister Rafe Mair announces terms of reference for a task force review of the quality of care for almost 15,000 people in the government's Long-Term Care Program.

Mair says the probe will touch on every aspect of care, but he expresses particular concern with staffing patterns — the ratio of staff to patients.

April 17 — HEU Secretary-Business Manager J. D. Gerow follows up phone call with a letter to Isabel Kelly, Assistant Deputy Health Minister, confirming the union's interest in participating in the task force review. He expresses interest in the Steering Committee level, noting that Mair indicated a committee composed of representatives of the ministry, the B.C. Health Association, the B.C. Non-Profit Care Facilities Association and others with demonstrated interests in the area would provide general directions.

April 25 — A letter from Mair informs Gerow he has received a copy of his letter to Kelly and that he is sure Gerow will soon hear from her.

April 30 — A letter from Kelly tells Gerow: "While we appreciate your interest in this matter, we have received similar enquiries from several other organizations. We feel that in order to keep the Steering

Committee at a workable size we would prefer to make specific requests to the Hospital Employees' Union as the need arises."

May 27 — Mair announces the makeup of the review team — Paul Hanbury of Kamloops, a lay representative and businessman; Anne Rasmussen, a nurse and facility administrator, and James Thibaudeau, a nutritionist seconded from the ministry's Selkirk Health District office in Nelson.

Says Mair: "The overall purpose of this team is to look at how well Long Term Care facilities are meeting the needs of clients. I have asked for particular emphasis on staffing standards and the quality of care provided. The team will examine both profit and non-profit residential facilities within the province."

June 11 — Gerow announces that HEU is embarking on its own study of working conditions and patient care in the long-term care field.

He says the union's request to participate was denied by Kelly and ignored by Mair in spite of the fact the Steering Committee was ostensibly designed to include groups with "demonstrated interests in the long-term care program."

It is at this point that Gerow reveals such early findings as the drugging of patients to cope with staff shortages and the various discomforts and indignities to which the patients are exposed.

June 23 — Mair writes Gerow saying he and his staff have reviewed the question of HEU

involvement in the government study and, like Kelly, says the Steering Committee must be held to a workable size. He says he recognizes the union's experience and concern and offers assurance that it will be able to "provide suggestions and ideas to the review process."

June 25 — Gerow says in a news release that the provincial government has invited HEU to submit a brief to the review team, but that this is "too little, too late."

The union will continue its own study with the intention of completing a report in four to six months, Gerow says.

"HEU members are determined that concerns about patient care should be articulated to the public and the government," says Gerow. "We don't want to prepare a brief that gets filed away in some back room to gather dust."

July 4 — In another press release, HEU discloses some more somewhat shocking early findings — this time the Crestwood Guest Lodge situation with staff shortages and resultant hardship and lack of proper care for patients.

July 7 — Gerow writes Paul Hanbury, review team chairman, pointing out that the union is conducting its own study and that it will seek a meeting with Mair once its report is completed. The union wants to present its findings and to make recommendations for improvement at the same time, Gerow says.

Enlightened membership target of union's education program

What about the provisions for union security in our contract? How did they come about? How have they grown since their humble beginning?

Just one small area to be dealt with in HEU's ongoing education program, this time with the help of a special education manual that should have about 300 pages once the final

touches have been added by Director of Membership Services Ray McCready.

"It's going to be a permanent manual," says McCready. "Each time the contract changes it will be updated."

If all goes well, the manual will come into play during the fall months as Group A (288 members) moves into the

second phase of its learning program — contract analysis.

This group has already completed the procedures course which included examination of grievance procedures, advocacy techniques, assertiveness training, basic parliamentary procedure, and study of unit business functions.

The ambitious education program which got under way earlier this year with the training of staff is aimed chiefly at shop stewards and unit officers. It

will be operated on a continuing basis to enable more and more people to become knowledgeable about both the history and mechanism of unionism, and to develop the skills necessary for leadership.

McCready operates on the basis that "knowledge is power."

"We want to ensure that we have an enlightened membership," he says.

As Group A moves through

the course dealing with contracts, Group B (150 to 200 officers and stewards) will be tackling the program already completed by the first group.

The education manual should win a quick nod of approval from those who have found contract language a bit painful — something that applies to most of us.

The manual will be laid out with contract language on one page and interpretation of that language on the opposite page.



It was a little like camping in. Top left Shelly McIntyre and HEU Rep Emil Shumey sit it out in hallway. Right, Ethel Hollies, Alice Boudreau, Bertha Cade bed down for the long wait. Bottom; others whiled away the hours knitting, playing cards, discussing problems.



The day the pressure cooker blew at Pouce Coupe

Conditions had become unbearable for the staff of Pouce Coupe Hospital.

To begin with, unionism was fairly new to the somewhat remote northern hospital. It was only the year before that the staff had come under the protective umbrella of the Hospital Employees' Union.

If anything, attitudes hardened. Complaints about working conditions were many and covered a wide-ranging field. Grievance piled up on grievance. For the most part, they brought no reaction.

Under such conditions the inevitable happened. The pres-

sure cooker finally blew. Twenty-five members of the hospital staff staged a sit-in all day May 30 and overnight.

It was a perfectly understandable reaction to a bad situation. But, since there was a contract in place, it was also illegal.

A Labour Relations Board ruling sent the employees back to work — on the understanding that the problems would be examined.

Some of the outstanding complaints were resolved. Others were not.

However, there could be a happy ending to this sad chap-

ter in the lives of this small group of HEU members.

There had been a belief working conditions would improve with the retirement of Administrator F. J. McIntyre. McIntyre is gone and Nick Kostjuk has replaced him.

The initial reaction is good. Employees say Kostjuk has proved a willing listener. There could be some obstacles beyond his control, but in the early months of his administration the general improvement has been quite noticeable, employees say.

They are keeping their fingers crossed.

A sit-in produces many things, including words of thanks

The members of the fledgling Pouce Coupe Unit will not quickly forget the help that came to them from far afield during their sit-in, as this letter from Chairperson Fran Arndt attests:

The members of Local 180, Hospital Employees' Union, Pouce Coupe, B.C., would like to extend a sincere thank-you to all those who supported us through our sit-in.

The sit-in began at 10 a.m., Friday, May 30, in the hospital cafeteria and involved 25 members. The departments taking part were kitchen, housekeeping, nursing aides,

practical nurses, patient service aides. We sat all day Friday and throughout the night until 6 a.m. Saturday.

Coffee and sandwiches were brought in by Mrs. Otilie Stanke, Chairperson of the Dawson Creek Unit, and Mary Reilman, Shop Steward. Friday evening a delicious chicken

supper was provided by the Dawson Creek Unit and paid for from their unit money. Their advice and encouragement and their very presence with us gave courage and strength to continue.

Our Northern Representative, Mr. Emil Shumey, stayed with us continually. Emil spent a long sleepless night going over the issues and getting his report ready for the next day. Emil was a pillar of strength and encouragement and we put our trust in him and the HEU for the first time in 18 months. We felt that we belonged and HEU did not let us down.

We have met many kind and sincere people during the past several weeks. Rory McDonald, the HEU lawyer who guided us through the hearings with Labour Relations and HLRA on Saturday, May 31. And Emil Shumey, always there with us. After a long trying day the members finally voted yes we would go back to work Sunday, June 1. With the condition that our issues would be heard by the Labour Relations Board the following week.

On Wednesday, June 4, Hans Brown, the HEU Representative, presented our 27 issues to Labour Relations and HLRA with management present. On Wednesday, June 11, Emil Shumey and five unit committee members met again with Labour Relations and HLRA and management. Only five of the 27 issues were solved but Mr. Shumey was firm, and after more negotiations Labour Relations and HLRA conceded and said that they saw the problems and would make every effort to try and solve them.

Finally, on June 12, after many long months of stressful working conditions and concern for patient care, we saw a ray of light and some conditions are starting to improve.

It is sad that our problem had to be solved by all the good people almost a thousand miles

away when our own hospital board, consisting of members in the community, would not meet with us.

As a result of our sit-in our unit has become strong and the few members who turned their backs on us will in time find the strength and trust that we have. For we are truly sisters now.

Throughout the many negotiations the members and committee were always consulted and made aware of all decisions. We were never left on the outside.

Several of the girls who sat in with us were past employees of the hospital who came to support us.

I first came to Pouce Coupe in 1954 as a practical nurse and have continued my employment there part time ever since. I joined HEU in 1978 when I first met Bernice Gehring who organized us and got us started. Bernice became a dear friend and because we trusted her and what she stood for we joined HEU. I will never regret joining and will always carry my union card with pride.

We thank you all sincerely — Mr. Jack Gerow, whom we have never met but feel we have known forever.

Mr. John Darby who should be praised for being so conservative with our money because it's there when needed.

Mr. Ray McCready, who after attending a seminar at Dawson Creek, in April, by observing his confidence and sincerity, gave the Pouce Coupe Unit its first show of strength.

Mr. Rory McDonald, a lawyer we could understand, and was kind and concerned.

Hans Brown, a friendly genuine person with a great concern for the working people.

Mr. Emil Shumey, who had to leave his wife and water bed to sleep with 25 women.

We thank you all, brothers and sisters of HEU.

Chairperson
Frances Arndt

At last, portable severance

Portability and severance pay.

What exactly does it mean? An extremely important question, considering the number of people it is going to affect over the years.

And, as it turns out, one with a very satisfying answer from the union's point of view.

An arbitration board has ruled that severance pay is to be calculated on your total years of service in the industry — not just on the time you worked at the last of any number of hospitals within the HEU jurisdiction.

The answer was really there in the collective agreement all the time, but required a final official interpretation. There is really only one stipulation in the agreement for someone changing hospitals: to qualify for continuous service, he or she must make the jump from one job to the other within a year.

Three cases were put before the arbitration board as a grievance. They were:

- Lyla Hargreaves, employed at St. Paul's Hospital Jan. 1, 1960 to July 31, 1968, then at Peace Arch Hospital Oct. 1, 1968 to retirement, July 31, 1979.

- Florence Eli, who actually started and finished at Dawson Creek Hospital. She worked at that hospital from Sept. 1, 1959 to Feb. 28, 1963, switching to Prince George Hospital March 15, 1963 and working there until June 26 the same year. She

returned to Dawson Creek Hospital July 2, 1963, and continued there until retirement Dec. 15, 1977.

- Willi Goldbeck, employed at Vancouver General Hospital May 19, 1960 to Feb. 9, 1973, then at Menno Hospital Feb. 12, 1973 until retirement, May 22, 1979.

In each case, the grievor claimed severance pay for the entire period of employment in the industry. In each case the employer (through the Health Labour Relations Association), refused to consider the entire period, arguing that severance should be based only on the last place of employment.

Contract language uses the words "initial date of employment" and says that regular full-time and regular part-time employees shall be deemed to have "continuous service" if the move from one hospital to another is made within 365 days. It applies to employees who voluntarily terminate their service, or those whose jobs are terminated by the employer. The exception is dismissal for just cause.

The HLRA argument included the contention that rights are not deemed retroactive unless the collective agreement states that they are. This would eliminate portability of severance allowance.

To place a different interpretation on the question, says HLRA, would be to impose a financial burden on one hospi-

tal for services rendered at another.

The union's position was based on the phrase "initial date of employment."

The board reviewed the "stormy and complicated" history of the severance pay question, including the part it played in a work stoppage at Kelowna General Hospital and the appointment of D. R. Blair (twice) to examine the subject.

Prior to the legislated settlement of a 1976-77 contract, both parties had agreed to remove the word "hospital" wherever possible because a number of non-hospitals were now included in the collective agreement. This meant the severance pay language was to lose the phrase "in the first hospital of employment." Thus the debate over interpretation.

However, the arbitration board concluded that the parties did not intend to change the meaning of the original wording.

The board also ruled that portability was the intention from the beginning, adding: "Nothing has happened since then which has destroyed this right. This grievance must, therefore, be upheld."

Chairing the board was J. C. Smith. Members were Gordon Austin for HLRA and John Baigent for the union. Hans Brown conducted HEU's case, with Frank Powell playing the same role for HLRA.

Heavy on the Light side

By McLEOD

To know your province well it is necessary to sing about it. Like a few rousing bars of that old favorite: Of Thee I Sing Pouce Coupe.

Or the national anthem of the Haida: God Save the Queen (Charlottes).

I have in my possession a few titles the aspiring song writer may want to consider. I have done all the hard work in composing the titles. All he (or she) has to do now is come up with appropriate music and lyrics. And maybe lay on an orchestra or two.

Here, then, free for the asking (or even without it) are my contributions to the cultural cause:

- *Dancing Cheek to Cheek at Fanny Bay*
- *When It's Closing Time at Boston Bar We'll Take Our Scotch to Soda Creek.*
- *The Day They Fertilized Old Horsefly.*
- *I'm Yearnin' for a Gal Who's Burnin' in Vernon — The Charperson of My Life.*
- *A Nanaimo by Any Other Na-name Ain't Never the Sa-same.*
- *I Was at The End of My Rope The Day They Put My Ne-neck in a Nanoose.*
- *Many Are Colwood But Few Are Metchosin.*
- *He Was Such A Tightwad, Mama, You Could Hear His Cache Creek.*
- *We All Had Faith in Hope, But Then She Moved Away.*
- *If Burns Lake Is Too Hot, Honey, You Might Find Bella Coola.*
- *He Who Gets Squeamish at Squamish Is Liable to Throw up a Tent.*
- *Playing Footsie at Vanderhoof... Oh, Stop That Horsing Around.*
- *I Lost My Love on a 70-Mile Sofa at 100-Mile House.*
- *If She'd Swat A Horsefly Do You Think She'd Burnaby?*

As an act of mercy, the author will not expose the poor reader to any more of this hard corn, except to remind him (or her) that once these wonderful songs of B.C. have run their course there are a few books that may be worth some attention.

For instance, there's that delightful new story: **Port Alice in Wonderland** — (Vancouver Island seen through a drinking glass).

Or the latest in that educational series: **The Port Hardy Boys Go to Yale.**

For those of you who may prefer to study your province in the form of nursery rhyme, there's this choice tidbit from the author of **Once A-Pun A Time**:

*I've never seen a purple cow,
But I've seen a Salmon Arm;
Without a leg I tell you now,
The thing ain't got no charm.*

Those golden days of \$150 a month

Ever wonder how things have changed for your union in the last quarter of a century?

The answer, in a word, is... drastically.

Interesting evidence of this is contained in a full-page article that appeared in the April, 1954 issue of The Trades and Labour Congress Journal — a publication serving the forerunner to today's Canadian Labour Congress.

Appropriately enough, the report was written by Bill (W.M.) Black, who was business manager of the union, which at that time was operating as the Hospital Employees' Federal Union.

There was a lot to boast about then. The union covered employees at 22 hospitals (it's about 120 now) and Black's report indicated that working conditions and wages were probably better in B.C. than elsewhere. The aim was for standardization across the province, but there were still some differences. In most places, employees were already on a 40-hour week. Some still worked 44 hours.

But it's the wage structure that really makes you sit up and take notice.

For instance, the Burnaby General Hospital had just been organized, and the union was able to bargain these wage rates for 1955, the second year of a two-year agreement:

	PER MONTH
Maids	\$162.20
Laundry workers	\$169.75
Pressers	\$174.75
Orderlies	\$252.35
Oxygen therapist	\$285.00
Practical nurse	\$183.85
Nurse aide	\$175.10

In 1954 the average salaries in the Okanagan hospitals put the maids at the bottom at \$150 a month and cooks at the top with exactly \$100 more. The practical nurse at \$170 still ran well behind the orderly at \$235.

Things were a little better in the Lower Mainland where the maids averaged \$164.59 and the electrician topped the list with a whopping \$371.73... again, on the per month basis.

Variations still showed up in important areas. Unlike the others, employees at Vancouver General Hospital had made a pension breakthrough, something that cost the hospital in the neighborhood of \$200,000 a year. It paid eight per cent of the salary rate into the fund.

You may laugh or groan at the old wage rates today. But you wouldn't have then. As W.M. put it in his report:

"I have often used the expression that hospital employees were often called 'menial or low-paid employees' — that is far from the truth today. From being away behind, we are now in front."

On the Personal side

When British Columbia distinguished itself recently by winning the Toastmasters International esteemed district award for 1980, it was an HEU member who went to Wisconsin to receive it.

Graham Garman, who works in stores at Victoria General Hospital, is an immediate past district governor and was in Milwaukee attending the Toastmasters 49th annual world convention. His district (B.C.) surpassed all goals set by Toastmasters, according to a spokesman.

Felix Healy, popular stores manager at G. R. Baker Memorial Hospital, Quesnel, has reached that plateau in life where he can take his eye off the clock and do some of the things he wants to do when he wants to do them.



Felix Healy

Felix has joined the ranks of the retired.

A member of HEU since 1960, he began work at G. R. Baker in 1965.

Those who worked with Felix say he was known as a cheerful person who had that special ability to handle "all our complaints with a smile."

His plans call for a little travelling in B.C. and the U.S.

The fish who dwell in some of the province's waterways are also going to get some of his attention. You might say he'll be dropping them a line now and then — a line with a hook on it.

Also retiring this summer after 15 years at Surrey Memorial Hospital was MARRIANE GLEGHORN.

Sure, people know the Pink Panther better. But no one is going to downgrade HEU's Pink Pussycat. At least, not around Children's Hospital.



Some panther

Delegates to the union's June convention kicked in for the big tabby, which was donated to the hospital. The gesture brought this letter from the hospital:

HEU Convention Delegates
c/o Mrs. Barbara Spurr
Medical Records Department
Children's Hospital
250 West 59th Ave.
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Friends:

Mrs. Barbara Spurr, Secretary/Treasurer of Hospital Employees' Union (local unit) dropped by last week with a pink, stuffed pussy cat which the HEU convention delegates kindly donated to the hospital.

The cat has now found a home in the Care by Parent Unit and I am sure all the patients will enjoy his company.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Vivian M. Tepoorten
Director, Public Relations

LETTERS



This union, like any other responsible body, welcomes constructive criticism as well as applause.

For the sake of honesty, however, we must admit that we enjoy the praise a little more than the other. So we fairly tingle with joy when we find the current batch of letters fits completely in the friendly category.

Having said that, we'll probably open the mail tomorrow and find a few wraps on the wrist. Meanwhile, however, we are happy to be able to present the following:

Dear Sirs:

We are most grateful for your generous gifts for the Hospital Employees' Union Bursaries and the Edward James Ashmore Memorial Bursary.

Owing to financial constraints, the University is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain and improve its traditional role in teaching and research, and the generosity of donors becomes ever more essential and welcome.

We are hopeful that our good friends will continue their support and encouragement of our endeavors.

Yours sincerely,

Alan M. Eyre
Honorary Secretary and
Member of the Board (UBC)

Dear Sirs:

We would like to express our thanks to the Provincial Executive Bargaining Committee for negotiating such an excellent contract for the HEU members. We all appreciate the increase in vacation and remuneration.

Yours sincerely,
Clerical Staff
H.P. Radiology
(Vancouver General Hospital)

Dear People:

Just a few words of gratitude for the time and work you good people put into getting this, our new contract.

The extra days off at holiday time is, in my estimation, "terrific." Also, all that back pay for over the years and the retroactive pay from January was really a Godsend.

Once again, on behalf of myself and, I am certain, all of my fellow hospital employees, a

very big thank-you for a job well done. It is certainly appreciated.

John G. Gamache
Porter, Dietary Dept.
Lions Gate Hospital

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I wish to express my thanks to everyone at the recent Biennial Convention held in Vancouver.

As a first-time delegate I would have been totally lost if it had not been for the friendly, helpful comradeship of everyone I met.

I feel I have learned much, but what impressed me the most was the realization that our union is not just concerned with its members' welfare at all levels, but with the good and the welfare of the people and environment of the world as a whole.

I am proud to be a member of the Hospital Employees' Union.

Yours gratefully,
Sister Dora Wilcox
Rose Manor Unit (Victoria)

Sacking at Sunset Lodge violated Labour Code

The sacking of maintenance worker Larry Warde May 13, five days after HEU was certified as bargaining agent at the Salvation Army's Sunset Lodge in Victoria, was upset in late August by the Labour Relations Board.

In a unanimous decision, LRB panel chairman Jack Moore and members Clare Alcott and Arnold Smith ruled that the lodge had violated the Labour Code in dismissing Warde, who played a major role in organizing employees at the long-term care facility.

They ruled that Warde be re-instated and reimbursed for

money lost as a result of the firing.

Capt. Alex Swan, administrator at Sunset, testified at the two-day July hearing that Warde was fired because he was unsuitable and arrogant. The order for the dismissal came after he discovered Warde had made three unauthorized long distance calls.

The panel drew attention to testimony by a nurse that Swan, upon establishing that Warde had made the calls, said: "Hallelujah — I've got him at last."

Evidence also disclosed that Warde made it known he was making the calls.