Wage control program a cruel hoax

Picking the pockets of public sector workers

The general opinion around the province is that the HEU/HRLA master agreement is the most significant case yet to come under the jurisdiction of the Compensation Stabilization Program.

And, although Ed Peck, commissioner of the program, has been ruling on the first guideline year, the case is far from over. Thus far, Peck has applied only CSP guidelines which are neither intended nor binding as are the more rigid CSP regulations. As reported in both the Guardian Newsletters, Peck determined that the compensation increase for guideline year one (January 1, 1982 to December 31, 1982) should be reduced from 9.9 per cent to 8.7 per cent on his decision on guideline year two (January 1, 1983 to December 31, 1983) until after hospital budgets have been finalized. And he ruled that the reduced work week, effective January 1, 1983, was outside the jurisdiction of the present Compensation Stabilization Program.

Having applied the guidelines, Peck then referred the matter back to the parties for renegotiation. If HEU and HRLA fail to reach an agreement which is within the limits set down, then, and only then, is Peck in a position to impose a settlement.

The HEU position on the D. R. Munroe award and the Compensation Stabilization Program has been clear. The union maintains that its master agreement, as awarded by Munroe, is within the guidelines set out in the CSP and therefore outside its jurisdiction.

HEU singled out

In fact, the Munroe award has been declined at 6.8 per cent for the first year and 4.48 per cent for the second, well within the limits established under the Compensation Stabilization Program. Surely, this case can be characterized as "excessive" wage increase to which Premier Bennett referred during the recent election campaign. After all, it was the Premier himself who termed the BCGEU settlement of 6.8 per cent as a "model of restraint." It would seem unfair in the extreme to single out hospital workers for harsher treatment.

And yet this is precisely what appears to be happening. Peck's ruling on the first year of the HEU master agreement should be rolled back to 5 per cent to 4.6 per cent. It is felt that the members would have to dig into their pockets to pay back some of the money already received. It means that the 2.8 per cent increase paid to 10 members since August 1, 1982 is due to the threat of rollback, as is the yet unpaid $70 per month retroactive payments for January through July, 1982.

The second year of the agreement serves as a warning to hospital workers. Peck decided his decision on the 5 per cent April 1, 1983 increase until the

1983/84 hospital budgets have been finalized in Victoria. In essence, he ruled that HRLA could not use the case of "inability to pay" because it did not know what the budgets would be. Instead, he invited both parties to make further submissions on the "ability to pay" question once the budgets are in place.

Employment not guaranteed

This raises some interesting questions. With salaries accounting for some 85 per cent of hospital budgets, what safeguards are there to prevent Victoria from freezing budgets as a method of ensuring zero per cent wage settlements on hospital workers? And how, for instance, is the commissioner to distinguish between the hospitals' so-called "inability to pay" and their "unwillingness to pay"?

Furthermore, as the Guardian was going to press, the Social Credit government was expected to announce a new restraint program which will freeze the wages of public sector workers for several years. This new program will most certainly affect the third, and possibly even the second, year of the HEU master agreement.

The extent of public sympathy for an extended public sector wage control program is questionable at best. Much of the support seems due to lack of understanding.

For instance, it is commonly held by many people that the present restraint program guarantees public sector workers increases of 6 per cent. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. The thousands of workers who have been forced to accept increases of zero, 2 or 3 per cent are obvious testimony.

So, it's necessary to look behind the rhetoric of the program and examine its true purpose. It is there primarily to reduce the wages of public sector employees and at the same time allow the government to eliminate thousands of public sector jobs.

The recent experience of HEU bears out this hypothesis. Last year, our members made a significant contribution to "restraint" by accepting a 3.4 per cent wage increase. In spite of that, some 2,000 members were still laid off. The painful truth is that accepting substandard wage increases is no guarantee of employment.

If the ministry of health fails it can run our province's hospitals with 5,000 less workers next year, it will do so, regardless of whether HEU members get zero per cent, 8 per cent, or anything in between.

Interestingly, one of the most vocal in demanding the government's public justification for the restraint program was founded on the precisely the opposite theory. It argued that public sector workers had "job security" and that the only reason private sector workers did not. Therefore, it was only fair that public sector workers bear some burden of the recession by limiting wage demands.

The reality, of course, is quite different as thousands of public sector employees face the double jeopardy of poor wages on the job and the constant threat of layoffs.

The arbitrary limits of public sector wages were also far removed from the historical relationships between workers. It is only in the past few years that public sector wages have caught up to the private sector. This parity will quickly diminish under a continued restraint program.

Of particular concern to HEU is the effect CSP has on the arbitration process. Since 1944, HEU has developed a reputation for settlement of contract disputes through negotiation and arbitration. The only strike in its 39-year history occurred in 1976 when the hospitals refused to apply the recommendations of a government appointed arbitration inquiry commission. That strike also occurred when government controls were imposed to interfere with free collective bargaining.

HRPA appeals award

Once again controls have been imposed, this time by the province. Once again another arbitration decision has been made, by D. R. Munroe, after a full hearing of both sides. Once again HRPA tries to avoid applying a "final and binding" arbitration award by appealing to government controls.

Arbitration is no longer an impartial process. CSP has created a clever loophole for employers who wish to change the terms of an arbitration award. Faced with this reality, working people will have no choice but to choose strike action should collective bargaining fail.

The continuation of the Compensation Stabilization Program will poison the climate of public service labor relations for many years.

For its part, HEU has no desire to return to the primitive system of labor relations where the parties face each other as enemies on opposite sides of an unbreakable wall.

However, the imposition of unjust settlements on HEU, or any other public sector union, is an invitation to industrial relations chaos.
"In humble dedication to all those who toil to live..."

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: GORDON MUNPHRESON, J. J. GEROW, MAURICE SMITH, BILL MACDONALD, CLARKE GARDNER.

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The Hospital Employees' Union wants to keep its membership... better informed.

So, in an effort to answer the call from members for better and faster coverage of union affairs, the HEU has restructured its membership communications program.

The first step in this process took place last December when HEU cancelled the monthly publication of the Guardian Newspaper. This was done in response to members' complaints that the publication was full of old news by the time it reached the hospitals. Members said they were frustrated with learning about union matters through the mass media, they wanted to hear it from the union first.

It was decided therefore to publish weekly Guardian Newsletters to post on hospital bulletin boards. These Newsletters can be produced at the HEU office in just a few hours and help to ensure that members are kept abreast of important developments in their union.

In addition to the Newsletters, and the already familiar Troubleshooter Reports, three other publications have been added to the HEU information network. They include:

- "The Facts" — a publication which presents timely issues in a question-and-answer format.
- "In the News" — a weekly publication which carries a selection of pertinent news articles clipped from newspapers. It helps to keep all HEU units aware of what's happening in the labor movement around the province.
- "Arbitrations" — this is a specific publication to report on the results of important arbitration awards.

None of these news bulletins, however, preclude the need for a major HEU publication. Another vehicle is required for in-depth discussions of issues, and to explore the new challenges which face the union.

For this reason, HEU will continue to produce the Guardian on a quarterly basis.

The HEU provincial executive is also considering a move to change the format of the Guardian from a tabloid newspaper to a magazine. There are a number of factors which make the magazine format a possibility. The primary one is cost. As a result of new computerized equipment in the printing industry, it is now possible to produce a magazine for HEU for about the same price as a newspaper. Special photo scanning equipment and high speed web presses have helped to substantially reduce the costs of producing a magazine.

Another consideration is readership appeal. People are much more likely to read, and then take home, a well-presented magazine. A newspaper, on the other hand, is likely to be discarded the same day it arrives. And if our goal is to deliver thought-provoking and timely information to our members, then a throw-away publication may be doing us a disservice.

As soon as a final decision is made, members will be notified. In any event, all of these proposals are designed with one thing in mind — keeping you, the membership, fully informed. We welcome your comments and suggestions.
What does “Right to Work” really mean?

The right to collective bargaining and the freedom of working people to form trade unions has been recognized and guaranteed in every province in Canada. These rights have been won over the years through the hard struggles of many ordinary Canadians and have resulted in our nation having one of the highest standards of living in the world. Yet right now, in British Columbia, a carefully-orchestrated campaign is being conducted by some employers to weaken the trade union movement, destroy collective bargaining, and lower the province’s overall standard of living. It is the people organizing this anti-union campaign who have not owned up to their real goals. In fact, it’s a tribute to the good sense of British Columbians that they find it necessary to hide their true purpose. But the campaign has begun — under the deceptive and insidious slogan of “Right to Work.”

The purpose of this article is to expose the lie behind the fanciful slogan of “Right to Work,” to present its true nature and intent, and to explain in a straightforward fashion why the trade union movement opposes this proposal.

Question: What does the term “Right to Work” really mean?
Answer: The term is deceptive because it implies the right of every worker to a job. However, “Right to Work” laws have nothing to do with guaranteeing each worker employment. Instead, their purpose is to prohibit employers and their employees from agreeing to a “union shop” clause in their collective agreements. Briefly, union shop clauses require that all workers hired by a business must join the union within a specified period of time. So-called “Right to Work” laws prohibit union shop agreements and would be more accurately called “Anti-Union” laws.

Question: “Right to Work” says it is unfair and undemocratic to compel someone to belong to a union against their will. Is that true?
Answer: No, it is not true. The first point to remember is that a union only comes about in the first place if a clear majority of employees democratically indicate that they wish to be represented by a union. It then follows, by law, that the union has the right to negotiate fairly and equally represent every worker, including those who may have initially voted against the union. Understanding this concept of majority rule does mean that some workers who oppose the union must accept union representation if the union wins a representation vote, it also means that workers who may desire union representation might have it denied to them if the union is not elected. But, it is not “undemocratic.”

Question: Why do people campaign for so-called “Right to Work” laws?
Answer: The motives behind these laws are to weaken the trade union movement and destroy collective bargaining. The reasoning is that weaker unions will be forced to accept lower wage settlements and fringe benefits, and that as a result of this situation company profits will improve in the short run.

Question: How do these laws weaken the trade union movement?
Answer: “Right to Work” creates a situation in which a pool of experienced employees exist who are prime candidates for crossing picket lines or breaking strikes. Faced with the threat that employer lock-outs might be won or that strikes might be broken by “Right to Workers,” a union’s bargaining position is substantially eroded. The result is that union members are forced to accept poorer working conditions.

In the longer run, employers can adopt policies of only hiring employees who refuse the union, which can result in destroying the union entirely, costing the time employees the benefits and security they have built up over the years.

“Right to Workers,” by refusing to join the union, are getting a free ride on the backs of those who do belong to the union. While “Right to Workers” enjoy the wages and fringe benefits won by the union members, and also have union grievance procedures available to them, they pay no union dues. They enjoy all the benefits but share none of the responsibility of funding and supporting the union.

Question: Do these laws exist anywhere at present?
Answer: Anti-union shop laws do not exist in Canada, but they do exist in some American states. On the average, employees who belong to unions with anti-union shop laws pay wages and fringe benefits that are substantially lower than the U.S. average. In addition, the overall economics and the standards of living in the anti-union shop states are also significantly lower than those in the non-anti-union shop states. Furthermore, there are examples of workers being forced to take reductions in wages and benefits in states where anti-union laws apply. New corporate profits, on the other hand, are significantly higher than the U.S. national average in the anti-union shop states.

Question: What would be the effect of introducing anti-union shop laws in British Columbia?
Answer: The results would be two-fold. First, the impeachment of anti-union shop laws would have a positive effect on the image of British Columbia as a civic and tourist destination. The tone and substance of collective bargaining are in the air. The climate of the trade union movement is one of cooperation, not confrontation. The employers and employees would find substantial restatement from their union employers. This would probably lead to confrontation, strikes and lock-outs, and lower productivity, for the community, and for the province’s economy and unemployment. Employees and employers alike.

Second, the long term effects of anti-union shop laws would create a chaotic and hostile industrial relations climate. The trade union movement has clearly stated that any attempt to impose such laws will be vigorously resisted. Employers hiring anti-union shop employees would find substantial restatement from their union employees. This would probably lead to confrontation, strikes and lock-outs, and lower productivity, for the community, and for the province’s economy and unemployment.

Question: Who is organizing the campaign for anti-union shop laws in B.C.?
Answer: It is interesting to note that the pressure for such legislation does not originate from workers seeking a “Right to Work.” Proponents of these measures are, in fact, many employers’ organizations and related groups. In this province, the main group calling for such laws is the Independent Contractors and Businessmen’s Association of British Columbia — a group of extremely right-wing employers who only wish to create a pool of cheap labor.

Reprinted with the permission of the B.C. Federation of Labor.
It was roughly half way through the provincial election campaign and still there was no word from the government on health care funding.

The place was the Revelstoke Community Centre, site of a Socred rally featuring Premier Bennett as the keynote speaker.

Outside, the now familiar Dixie Land band waited to herald Bennett's arrival with a version of "Happy Days are Here Again."

Representatives of the media, who always arrived some 10 minutes in advance of the Premier, lingered around the doorway, hoping, waiting, and anticipating some tidbit of news to file to anxious editors.

On this night, April 20, they were not disappointed.

Out of the crowd emerged Jack Gerow, secretary-business manager of HEU.

He pushed his way past the Bennett bodyguards and finally reached the Premier. The band played on.

"Mr. Premier," said Gerow, "in light of recent reports from the B.C. Medical Association about the critical conditions in our hospitals right now, are you prepared to reconsider your zero budget option for hospitals and tell the people of British Columbia exactly what you have in mind for health care funding over the next four years?"

"Well Jack," the Premier answered, "I think you'll be very pleased with the budget we hand down after May 5."

"Is that a yes or no?" asked Gerow.

Bennett simply repeated his answer and broke through the crowd to enter the community centre.

There was a somewhat stunned reaction from those who witnessed the encounter. What exactly did the Premier mean? The Vancouver Sun and BCTV reported that Bennett hinted at increased health care funding.

HEU, on the other hand, maintained that, in essence, the Premier had said vote for me now, and I'll tell you later what my policies are.

Either way, it is long past May 5 and still we wait for some word on the future of health care funding.

But, while Bennett was able to successfully muddy the waters with his reply, some observers feel the health care issue was a thorny one for the Socreds throughout the 29-day election campaigns.

In fact, HEU waged such an aggressive and high profile campaign on the health care issue that one prominent B.C. trade union leader claimed, "If it hadn't been for HEU, one would wonder whether we even had a trade union movement in British Columbia."

The "prominent" leader, who
At no time during the campaign did HEU endorse any political party. Rather, the union’s aim was to get all politicians running for office to declare publicly what they would do about the critical conditions facing B.C.’s hospitals.

And it was hoped that voters would consider these policies on voting day.

“We felt then, as we do now, that our credibility would have been severely reduced if we had become politically partisan,” said Gerow in a review of the campaign.

“Unquestionably, HEU was able to play a significant role during the campaign.”

Gerow said Social Credit aides have admitted privately that their election strategy was thrown off course three times because of growing public concern about health care funding. As a result, the government was forced to cut more than $121 million into health care during the 29-day campaign.

Unfortunately, 90 per cent of that money was for capital construction projects and represents no new commitment to reopening closed beds or retaining laid off workers.

Gerow said HEU will therefore continue its role as a vocal critic of government cutback policies. The union has asked for a meeting with the Premier to present the “Zero Budget” petitions and discuss the future of health care funding.
Unions have a roll to play

They came in wheelchairs, on bicycles, roller skates, crutches, and skateboards, wearing cowboy boots, runners, sandals, and Gucci shoes. They came as singles, couples, families, and friends. But, most of all, they came by the thousands. Vancouver streets literally throned with life April 23 when an estimated 80,000 British Columbians from every conceivable sector of society joined together to Walk for Peace.

It was the largest peace demonstration in Canadian history and its significance is still being felt and analysed across the country.

According to Frank Kennedy, president of the End the Arms Race Committee that organized the Walk for Peace, the event proved British Columbians are more concerned than ever about the escalating arms race.

Kennedy, who is also president of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, said the possibility of cruise missile testing in Canada has heightened the awareness and concern of Canadians.

"In addition to the insanity of our existing arsenals, I think that more people are beginning to see the social lunacy of billion-dollar arms budgets against a backdrop of mounting unemployment and human suffering."

The Hospital Employees' Union endorsed the Walk for Peace and flew its own banner. Although membership attendance was not overwhelming, the entire provincial executive did participate in the three mile walk.

The decision to endorse the walk was made following the thirteenth biennial convention where delegates passed several resolutions in support of nuclear disarmament and in opposition to cruise missile testing in Canada.

Kennedy believes the trade union movement has an especially important role to play in the peace movement.

"Without question, the conversion of defense spending into other forms of public spending would go a long way towards eliminating much of the unemployment problem in Canada," said Kennedy.

"Between now and 1989 the U.S. will spend $4 trillion on armaments. You can't take that kind of money out of the economy and expect to maintain full employment and social services."

In an effort to heighten the consciousness of all working people, many British Columbian trade unions have joined together to form the Trade Union Peace Committee. Kennedy will be the chairman of the committee. Among its members are the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union, the International Woodworkers of America, the Building Trades, the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees' Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and many others.

"You know, we can go on and negotiate good collective agreements for the membership," says Kennedy, "we can try and raise their standard of living, get better medical coverage for their families, and yet all of these efforts will be for naught if we end up in a nuclear holocaust."

And so, the first task of the Trade Union Peace Committee will be to expose the economic effects of the arms race.

Statistics show that the arms race is creating havoc on the economies of all countries. Defense spending does not, as is widely believed, act as an economic stimulus, in fact, war production creates far fewer jobs than equivalent expenditures on public services.

According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor, 78,000 jobs were created both directly and indirectly for each $1 billion of military spending in 1979. If it is estimated that the same $1 billion provided 159,000 jobs in health services and 197,000 jobs in education.

A recent CUPE publication of "The Facts" pointed out that in Canada, most of our military hard-ware is imported and the workers employed to build the arms are in the U.S. or abroad. Thus, the same expenditure in Canada provides significantly fewer jobs.

"If we assume that the direct and indirect job loss is 50,000 for every $1 billion in expenditures (a very modest estimate) then the $7 billion Canada spent on defence in 1985-86 will amount to a loss of almost 350,000 jobs. It is not accidental that Japan, which has the lowest military budget per capita of the major industrial nations, also has the lowest unemployment rate."

Yet the arms race continues at a faster rate than ever. New destabilizing weapons, such as the air-launched cruise missile, greatly increase the possibility of nuclear war in this century.

Canada is playing a major role in this escalation of the arms race by planning to test the cruise missile later this year.

It remains questionable, however, whether Canada's participation in the arms race has resulted in the achievement of any progress towards the intangible concept of "security." If anything, it is increasing the very real danger of nuclear war. And, from an economic point of view, the cost of participating in this international competition is excessive.

Canadians have repeatedly signed their opposition to Canada's participation in the arms race. A recent national poll found that a majority of Canadians opposed the testing of the cruise missile in Canada. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Canadians registered their opposition in municipal referendums to a continuation of the arms race.

"It must be puzzling to all democratically minded Canadians," said Kennedy, "to watch a federal government pursue policies so directly contrary to the wishes of the electorate."

So it would appear that the solution to the problem will have to come from the ballot box as more and more Canadians vote for those candidates who do support a policy aimed at bringing an end to the arms race.

It was Dwight D. Eisenhower who said, "Some day the demand for disarmament by hundreds and millions of people will become so universal and insistent that no person, no nation, can withstand it."

*Source: The Facts, published by CUPE*
The shocking reality of PORNOGRAPHY

By Michael Kisan

It’s called porno, smut, dirty mags, blue movies. But there are no acquaintance kinetics, no warm hugs, no gentle caresses — just fierce contact, studied indifference and an undercurrent of tension.

And now, a disturbing trend toward graphic depictions of violence.

Not the psychological violence, which feminists say causes women to be viewed as objects, not just the so-called sexual violence of rape but real hitting, kicking, biting, stabbing, whipping, torture and, in some cases, death.

And, as the message conveyed by pornography becomes increasingly violent, it is routinely portraying ever-younger participants — trend one sociologist and author describes as “a horrifying break in our species’ ability to nurture its young.”

Maude Barlow, president of the Canadian Association for Media and Anti-Violence, said in an interview: “There are two underlying themes in the pornographic trend towards using children as sexual partners and a trend toward increasingly horrible violence against women. There’s nothing new about violence against women. It is there all along. But it’s never been as graphically accepted as now.

Child abuse experts told an Ontario social development committee in February that about 10 per cent of the $1-billion-a-year U.S. pornography industry is dependent on the sexual exploitation of children. The experts produced statistics showing that one in four girls and one in 10 boys are victims of some form of molestation by an adult before the age of 18, although psychologists continue to argue over whether viewing violent pornography incites or inhibits sexual violence.

To some feminists, these trends are indicative of the real dynamic of pornography, which reflects an underlying physical or psychological domination rather than good, healthy eroticism.

Deep antagonism

They see violent pornography as symptomatic of a deeper malaise in society, a sickness that is robbing the vitality of our civilization by imbuing men and women with a deep antagonism for and fear of one another.

“Pornography is a socially isolating phenomenon, so it’s no coincidence that it’s rampant at a time of economic distress and high unemployment, a time of cultural breakdown,” said one analyst.

“It’s personally humiliating for a lot of women when the men in their lives use pornography. It’s very degrading at a deep personal level.”

A sampling of hard-core magazines and videocassettes displayed at a recent City Hall conference on pornography showed how deep-seated it now permeates our culture.

Many of the participants left pale and shaken after viewing scenes of bondage, rape, gang rape, incest, bestiality, withdrawal, genital mutilation.

But what was particularly shocking, Barlow said, was that most such material was hidden in plain brown paper wraps that would attract few buyers. Now it can be purchased openly at the corner gro-cery store.

Sergeant Larry Texeira, a member of the Police-Ontario Provincial Police anti-pornography squad, said in an interview that he occasionally finds hard-core pornographic magazines and footage displayed at the Penthouse on the shelves of local variety stores.

More explicit

“Violence in general is beginning to include more and more go-go girls, small films around recent in which someone is actually mutilated or killed on screen.”

Stressing that he is not a psychologist, Sgt. Texeira said that after working for a year on Project P, he now believes the reason pornography is becoming ever more explicit in its depiction of violence is that people develop a tolerance for violence that is already seen.

“The crude, cheap, violent pornography available right now, if you want to capture a snare of the market, you have to go one step beyond what everyone else is doing. It’s a competitive industry, and a very big market.”

The office from which Sgt. Texeira and three other police officers monitor the flow of smut in Ontario features a collection of videocassettes and magazines with such titles as Bondage Digest, Spanking Review, and the Encyclopaedia of Deviant Sex.

A particular problem with videocassettes is that there is no age limit on it. In theory, a 12-year-old could walk into a retail store and rent a tape that couldn’t be shown uncut in a theatre.

Having seen everything from dirty mags to torture movies, Sgt. Texeira said he agrees with feminists who claim pornography degrades women.

Barlow says: “When you think that pornography represented an opening up of sexual values, that it was the opposite to sexual repression. Now we see that porn is not the opposite of sexual oppression, it’s the completion of it. It’s what misogyny is all about. It has nothing to do with sex or love between two people.”

The Catholic Bishops, in a recent statement to the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunication Commission, said pornography is a threat to the freedom of choice in entertainment, because “nowhere in a civilization based on freedom must the right to exploit other humans be allowed.”

The statement, in response to sighted the CRTC plans to allow pay-TV operators to set voluntary standards for broadcasting sexually explicit films, said: "While pornography diminishes all human beings, its history has been one of victimizing women and children in particular, both as objects of sexual distortion and victims of force in pornography’s wake.”

Profit motive

Barlow said pornography’s recent shift toward explicit violence and sexual exploitation of children has been caused in part by the proliferation of video technology and the lure of large profits.

“We’ve never seen a way to win some people’s desire to look at this sort of thing. But when you have it in the local corner store, where kids go to buy bread and milk, it reflects an underlying despair and brutalization that is evidence of something very wrong with our society.”

Helen LaFontaine, a member of the coalition against violence, said in an interview that the traditional feminist view is that anti-feminist bias in society is a direct consequence of the political, economic and religious system that called patriarchy.

But she added that the historical trend of violence against women must be considered if society is to find a cure for this self-destructive sickness.

“Violence against women has been a consistent feature of human society for at least 5,000 years, and is sanctioned in ancient Sumerian and Babylonian legal codes. But the expression of it that we see now in the mass media is frighteningly new, as is the shamelessness exploitation of children’s sexuality.”

The Criminal Code amendments that would have banned kiddie-porn were introduced last year by Jean Chretien, then justice minister, as part of a bill that replaced rape offences with provisions for sexual assault.

The law would have made it illegal to publish or distribute sexually explicit photographs of anyone under 18 or apparently under 18. The onus was on the distributor to prove that the person in the photo was an adult.

The amendments were supported by Most Rev. Henri Legare, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, who called kiddie-porn “a repugnant assault on the dignity and integrity of the child.”

Changes stalled

But the amendments failed to receive approval from the House of Commons justice committee, and died on the order paper when they were again defeated on the floor of the House.

MP Lynn McDonald (NDP, Broadview-Greenwood) said recent research has disproved the commonly held belief that the availability of violent pornography reduces the incidence of sexual offences by providing an outlet for men’s aggressive impulses.

Earlier research, especially studies conducted in the 1970s in Scandinavian countries following the liberalization of sexually explicit materials there, dealt only with erotica and not with violent pornography. In an interview, McDonald, a sociologist, said the new research is showing that men who view films and magazines which depict violent against women are more likely to commit such acts than men shown materials that are sexually explicit but not violent.

McDonald said these based on sex, rather than on violence, our current obscenity laws are clearly inadequate.

One problem is that the attorneys-general of each of the 10 provinces apply different guidelines in prosecuting possible violations.

Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan said last month he intends "to take steps to reformulate our approach to obscenity, to capture forms of degrading expression which are fundamentally opposed to the values of our society and thereby, I hope, to cure the problems which I perceive in our existing system of censorship.

He did not specify how or when the Criminal Code would be amended.

Chretien’s proposed changes drew support from some groups — artists, magazine distributors, book publishers, writers, and others — but a thought that the child pornography provisions were far too broad.

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The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1993/7
SINKING INTO DEPRESSION

In short, there can be no doubt that the Canadian economy is sinking into a full-scale depression — a depression comparable to that of the 1930s. The recurring boom-and-bust cycle of the free enterprise economy has lapsed into its "Truman" phase again.

Government measures to control fluctuations in the business cycle, both nationally and internationally, have become less and less effective. In a very real sense, the system is out of control.

In the face of this growing depression, it is clear that action is urgently needed to turn the economy around. Yet, the policies currently being followed by federal and provincial governments are very unlikely to provide the kind of solution that Canadians need.

We're plunging into a full-scale depression

by John Calvert

Since the mid-1970s, the Canadian economy has been going downhill. Unemployment has increased dramatically. Officially, there are now more than 1.5 million workers unemployed, or force close to 5 percent.

When we add to this figure the large numbers of discouraged workers no longer "officially" counted, women who have been forced back into the home because there are no jobs, part-time workers who would prefer full-time jobs, and students unable to find employment, the real figure is closer to two million.

Not only are growing numbers of Canadians out of work, but the standard of living of those who have jobs has dropped by between 10 and 20 percent in the past year, depending on the sector of the economy in which they are employed. Moreover, the federal and provincial wage increase programs, along with their provincial counterparts, will reduce real wages by another 10 percent per year.

REAL WAGES

Average Weekly Earnings for All Paid Employees

in Canadian Dollars in the 4th Quarter of Each Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>$237.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>$229.62</td>
<td>-3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>$223.64</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>$218.15</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$214.92</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>$213.80</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada

The economic crisis has been used as an excuse for major cuts in the social wage in recent years. Government funding for hospitals, schools, universities, municipal works, day care, social agencies and other public services has been severely curtailed. Cuts in services constitute another major component of the reduction in the living standards of Canadians.

Our manufacturing industry has been devastated by the present crisis. Hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs have been lost since the mid-1970s. Layoffs and plant closures are announced virtually every day. The manufacturing industry is working at only 68 percent capacity and shows few signs of recovery.

Investment down, too

Investment, too, is down. The growing depression has dried up markets, left firms with under-utilized capacity, and, therefore, undermined the justification for new investments. Without the prospect of a market for the goods which would be produced with new machinery and plant facilities, employers are reluctant to expand capital investment. The result is the "no order" climate which has been so destructive.

The deterioration of consumer confidence has also contributed to a shortfall in consumer demand. The combination of falling consumer confidence and reduced income has resulted in soaring unemployment and rising joblessness. The lower and lower we sink, the less we all have to spend on goods and services.

The policies of depression

It is frequently asserted that federal and provincial governments are mismanaging the economy and do not have any idea of how to deal with the crisis. This is not so. They do have a clearly defined strategy. This strategy is to promote economic recovery by bolstering business confidence and stimulating private investment. It assumes that a more "favorable climate" for business will lead to new investment and the restoration of economic growth.

To implement this strategy, governments have taken a number of measures which assist investors by transferring the full costs of the current crisis to workers. Indeed, many of the economic problems faced by Canadians — rising unemployment, falling living standards, wage controls and declining public services — are actually viewed by governments as part of the "solution" to the crisis.

The reasons are clear. To promote business confidence and provide private investors with the capital for new investment, a major shift in income distribution is being pursued. According to business and government economists, working business enterprises have been heavily taxed — to sacrifice a significant part of their income so that companies can increase profits. This, in turn, will provide more cash for private sector investors, who are viewed as the key actors in future economic recovery.

Accordingly, governments have adopted regressive social and economic policies to improve profitability by lowering Canadians' living standards and job security. Corporate taxes have been reduced, and, in some cases, eliminated. Subsidies, grants, forgivable loans, and other financial support for business have been expanded. There are now more than 200 federal government corporate assistance programs. Regulations restricting the anti-social behavior of corporations, such as pollution control and consumer protection, have been relaxed.

Services being slashed

Public and social services are also being ruthlessly cut. This is part of a business-inspired program to trim the size of the public sector and thus provide more room and more resources for private sector expansion.

The savings generated from cutting old age pensions, family allowances, U.I.C. benefits, and other income support programs is necessary as government shrinks and becomes more and more able to meet the growing demands of business. Businesses now have a new stake in the survival of the corporate system, in which they are now so heavily invested.

The tax system has also been made much more regressive in recent years. Working Canadians are paying more, while affluent investors are paying significantly less. The November 1981 federal budget reduced the top marginal tax rate on the highest income earners from 62 percent to 50 percent. This provided an average tax "saving" of over $5,000 to those earning more than $100,000 a year. The June 1982 budget gave investors a major tax break by providing for full indexation of capital gains, even though half the money received from capital gains is already exempt from tax.

However, the same budget treated wage-earners very differently. Personal income tax rates were partially de-indexed. This has the result of increasing the effective rate of taxation on wage and salary earners by a substantial amount.

In short, the tax system has been drastically revamped to favour wealthy investors to reduce their taxes while simultaneously forcing those who work for a living to pay more.

The unemployed

Unemployment has also been deliberately increased to assist business in reducing labor costs and restructuring production. This has been done both by cutting government programs and by adhering to tight money and high interest rate policies. High unemployment creates insecurity among those who still have jobs. It tends to undermine the bargaining power of unions, and thus facilitates the wage cuts and take-aways which the corporations see as vital to reducing labor costs.

Finally, governments have imposed controls on labor. As an example, the government has imposed a freeze on wages in the public sector. After the rhetoric of about reducing inflation, the underlying purpose of controls, both federally and provincially, has been to assist corporations to cut labor costs and weaken unions. This was explicitly admitted by the (then) President of the Treas
Abolition of unions

This solution has a particular significance for unions. For when<br>carried to its logical extreme, the<br>thrust of this solution is to abolish<br>unions entirely. By their very exist-<br>ence, unions pose a threat to the<br>"favorable investment climate"<br>which business is to distortly weaken<br>unions, or to abolish them entirely.<br>so that there will be no impediment<br>to the reorganization of production.<br>In short, federal and provincial<br>governments have adopted the basic<br>components of Thatcherism and<br>Reaganomics.<br>While the prevailing policies will<br>undoubtedly assist investors to<br>survive the current depression, they<br>provide absolutely no guarantee that<br>they will bring about a recovery that<br>will allow producers to enjoy<br>improved living standards in the<br>future. In fact, the remedies advo-<br>cated by business to overcome the<br>crisis — lower living standards, more<br>deteriorating public services, wage<br>controls, contract concessions and<br>rising unemployment — are the very<br>same issues which workers define as<br>the problems.

The logic of the corporate solution to<br>the economic crisis is quite simple: more<br>of society's resources are given to<br>the same companies that have been<br>responsible for our growing eco-<br>nomic malaise. It is a policy which<br>has been followed now for almost a<br>decade. It is based on the premise that<br>the recovery will be promised by<br>business. Quite the contrary, it has pushed our<br>economy even closer to the brink of a<br>full-scale depression.

For the fact is that the corporate<br>solution has no mechanism for<br>ensuring that increased profits will<br>be invested in Canada. Business will<br>invest wherever the rate of return<br>appears most favorable. As com-<br>panies, like Inco, have too often<br>demonstrated, profits made in Can-<br>ada are often invested overseas at<br>the expense of Canadian industry<br>and Canadian jobs.

Sudbury, Ontario and Thompson,<br>Manitoba have been turned into<br>economic wastelands because Inco<br>has used the enormous profits of<br>its Canadian operations to open<br>new mines in Indonesia and Guatemala,<br>and to buy a battery company in the<br>United States. At the same time that<br>thousands of layoff notices have<br>been given to Canadian workers,<br>Inco is announcing that it is building a<br>new nickel refinery in Taiwan.<br>Because so many Canadian corpo-<br>rate giants are owned by "foreign"<br>interests, the corporations in Canada<br>are often just the vehicles of<br>global financial and industrial<br>monopolies. The result is that<br>thousands of jobs are lost while<br>thousands of new jobs are created<br>abroad;

Even if the extra profits were<br>reinvested in the Canadian econ-<br>omy, which is doubtful, this would<br>still provide no guarantee that the<br>distorted pattern of economic devel-<br>opment which has been created by<br>market (and monopoly) forces in<br>the Canadian economy since the<br>Second World War would be recti-<br>fied. Indeed, by avoiding the need to<br>carry out basic structural changes in<br>our economy, this approach actually<br>impedes the development of a real<br>solution.

We need Investment which will<br>create jobs. We need investment<br>which will rebuild our manufactur-<br>ing sector and enhance our position<br>in certain high technology areas. We<br>need investment designed to enable<br>us to process our resources in Can-<br>ada. And we need investment in<br>areas which will satisfy the many<br>unmet social needs of Canadians.

Reliance on private investments<br>has failed to address these problems<br>in the past and will continue to fail in<br>the future. As the record shows, private<br>investment will be channelled into<br>real estate speculation, resource<br>extraction, banking, insurance, for-<br>eign currency speculation, overseas<br>investments and other ventures which<br>provide few jobs and fail to address<br>the serious structural problems of<br>our economy. The impact of the world-wide technolog-<br>ical revolution in eliminating jobs<br>will greatly compound the adverse<br>effects of allowing private firms free<br>rein to restructure the economy.<br>Placing more resources in the<br>hands of the private investors who<br>are responsible for the current eco-<br>nomic mess provides no answer<br>whatever for the growing eco-<br>nomic problems faced by working<br>Canadians.

However advantageous the im-<br>povishment of workers may be for<br>corporate investors, it is clearly not<br>the kind of solution that is desired by<br>the vast majority of Canadians.

A new economic strategy will have<br>to be more than a series of band-aid<br>proposals designed to patch up<br>some of the most glaring abuses of<br>the present situation. The crisis is<br>too serious, and too far-reaching, to<br>be resolved by such measures. Indeed, to suggest that minor<br>adjustments in government spend-<br>ing and taxation policies will have<br>any impact on the growing depres-<br>ssion is to strain the credibility of<br>most Canadians.

What we need is a grab-bag of<br>ad hoc and temporary measures.<br>Rather, we require a carefully<br>thought-out, comprehensive plan<br>which will address the root causes of<br>our economic problems. In short, we<br>need an Alternate Economic Stra-<br>tegy.

This strategy must constitute a<br>clear break with past and present<br>economic policies. It must confront<br>the serious structural and economic<br>problems we face in an honest and<br>creative way. It must state what<br>needs to be done, even if the reme-<br>diess outlined are not popular at<br>present. And it must challenge,br>directly, the prevailing argument<br>propounded by business interests<br>that the only way to resolve the crisis<br>is to give private investors a com-<br>pletely free hand to restructure the<br>economy according to their priori-<br>ties.

The next quarterly edition of The<br>Guardian will outline a proposed<br>Ten Point Recovery program.

This article reprinted with the kind<br>permission of CUPE from its Feb.,<br>1983 edition of The Facts.<br>The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1983/9
Technological change playing havoc in the workplace

By Suzanne Fromier

Workers and their machines

Ergonomics is a computer-age word meaning the study of how human beings interact with machines in the workplace. The goal of ergonomics should be to adapt the workplace to suit the worker, but to the employers who created the computer age by simply whisking away typewriters and putting video display terminals in their place with little thought to input from workers as to their design and use — ergonomics has too often come to mean the science of forcing workers to adjust to machines.

There can be no replacement for adequate worker input into the timing and nature of technological change. Studies have demonstrated — in line with common sense — that the worker who has control over his or her job and workplace experiences fewer health problems, both psychological and physical. Yet the introduction of the video display terminal was accomplished by employers all over the world — there are more than half a million in use today in Canada alone — with little consultation with workers. There was even less consideration for the strain on workers caused not only by the forced adjustment to new technology but also by employers' widespread lack of attention to workplace design.

Workplace design

In Canada, there is no legislation to govern VDT workplace design. Private members' bills have been introduced in the Ontario and B.C. provincial legislatures (by NDP member Richard Johnston, and in B.C. by MLA Karen Sanford) but met with little success. No B.C. employer is bound by a set of industrial health and safety regulations such as those which apply to most forms of equipment in constant use in the workplace, such as lifts, scaffolds, saws and electrical tools. In Vancouver, trade unionists interested in proposing Industrial Health & Safety Regulations for VDTs were to be enforced by the Workers' Compensation Board, have begun to draft a proposed set of regulations to cover VDT workplace design.

The Occupational Environment Branch of the B.C. labor ministry, working closely with a number of unions and employers in Vancouver, workplace sites such as the Pacific Press Building, has produced a booklet on the ergonomics of VDT workplace design, which is reasonably comprehensive. But the OEB has no power to enforce regulations for a workplace design; and, in fact, the union in at least one workplace where the OEB issued a set of recommendations for improvement in VDT workplace design has found the OEB has little or no force in compelling employers to act.

Workers' Compensation Board inspectors will visit a workplace where VDTs are in use in response to a request from a union. Their recommendations customarily are confined to the maintenance of the VDTs. Inspectors from the WCB seldom deal in a satisfactory manner with workers' complaints about possible radiation-related health problems. In Scandinavian and some European jurisdictions, regulations related to ergonomic design of the VDT workplace include reference to the possible emission of ionizing and non-ionizing radiation by VDTs, requiring that the machines be regularly tested by a thorough and non-biased examiner and found to emit no detectable levels of radiation.

Ergonomic hazards

The complaints of workers about VDTs are widespread. Where a poorly-designed VDT is in use, workers report health problems. From the earliest introduction of the machines to the present, workers have reported the following health problems:

- Irritated, heavy, dry, burning eyes, characterized by redness, itching and general discomfort;
- Neck and back pain, as well as muscular aches of arms and wrists;
- Headaches, particularly above the eyes, and on other occasions non-localized pain, or tension held in the face, head and shoulders;
- Loss of the ability to focus the eyes, including double vision, seeing blurred or fuzzy-edged color-fringed images, and night blindness;
- Dizziness and nausea;
- Changes in eyeglass prescription, needing eyeglasses for the first time, an inability to wear contact lenses or bifocal lens glasses while at work;
- Stress, irritability and chronic fatigue.

Strain and fatigue

The problems experienced by VDT operators are by no means confined to those people in less-than-peak health conditions. Even workers in good health seem to experience fatigue, even after visual and postural problems have been cleared up. The VDT operators' psychological and physiological fatigue, as well as the general body fatigue experienced by any other worker, may be due to the fact most VDT operators are required to sit in a sustained position, for an entire work day, while straining to see clearly and maintain a static posture. The prolonged attention to visual detail, with little eye movement, in a relatively thin visual field, produces fatigue and severe eye strain.

The human body is designed for movement, so a fixed posture held in place over an entire work day can be more tiring than a dynamic posture. Similarly, the eyes are not functioning at an optimum level when they are staring at a small field of vision with little or no auditory stimulation or opportunity to refresh the line of sight.

This can lead to more aggravated health problems. Difficulties in seeing are commonly compensated for by faulty work postures that then give rise to muscle fatigue. And if your muscles can't hold a fixed posture for you all day, then your eyes have to do extra work, becoming even more strained.

So VDT work is inherently productive of strain and fatigue, quite aside from the VDT workplace anxieties generated by concerns about adverse health effects from radiation, lack of control over one's job, fear of redundancy caused by the machines' introduction, monitoring of work performance and supervision by machinery — all of which combine to produce stressful work. That does not mean that VDT work cannot be controlled to a greater degree by workers, through their union, to achieve a more comfortable and bearable environment. There are no measures employers should be forced to introduce which would greatly alleviate adverse effects now suffered by most VDT operators.

What studies show

There have been many studies of VDT ergonomics and workers' complaints. The U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reported after a recent case-control study: "Clerical operations show much higher rates of visual, musculo-skeletal and emotional health complaints, as well as higher job-related stress levels, than both control subjects and professionals using VDTs." One of the first and leading VDT researchers, Olav Ostberg of the University of Sweden, presented the results of a Swedish study showing that 75 per cent of VDT operators experienced eye strain, 55 per cent of back and shoulder pain, 35 per cent of headache, eye strain, 20 per cent of arm and wrist pain and 15 per cent of leg pain. The length of time spent on a VDT is crucial to the degree of fatigue, eye strain and musculo-skeletal pain. As the Labour Research Department (LRD), a British trade union-sponsored research group, reported, "After two hours' work, VDT operators become more myopic (near-sighted) for relatively distant objects and more hyperopic (farsighted) for relatively near objects. After four hours periods on VDTs with breaks included, the degree of myopia (near-sightedness) was induced and it took 10 to 15 minutes to gain good vision after the work had finished."

Many VDT-related health problems can be alleviated or considerably bettered with better lighting, improved machine design and adjustability, and better work station design. However, the importance of limited work periods and frequent rest breaks is crucial, and has been supported in virtually every thorough study. Four hours per day is the recommended time limit suggested by most researchers, who have found that efficiency falls off markedly and eye strain and fatigue increase dramatically past the four-hour daily time limit on a VDT. The British LRD also recommends limits to the hours that may be worked per week or month, a finding mirrored in many Canadian unions' collective agreements.

The recent federal Task Force on Microelectronics and Employment, headed by Dr. Margaret Fulton, has noted that workers normally work no more than 5 hours per day, as did the Ontario labor ministry's microtask force headed by Verdie G. Stipples. Frequent rest breaks are also important, as much as 15 minutes per hour; and the VDT operator should be encouraged to get up and move around to rest the eyes and muscles in those breaks.
Sitting in poorly-designed seats for long periods, without periods of rest and support, can cause fatigue of calf, thigh and back muscles. It can also cause pooling of blood in the veins of the upper leg, possibly leading to varicose veins and hemorrhoids. The situation is limited work periods on the VDT, and varied work functions.

Adjustable stations

The key to proper VDT work station design is adjustability. Unfortunately, most contemporary VDT are made of non-adjustable furniture that has not been properly designed and it is only recently that manufacturers have begun to respond to unions’ demands for worker-centered VDT workstations. Now, several manufacturers have begun to make VDTs and work stations that are completely adjustable, even to the location of the terminal itself on a swivel stand. The specifications for work stations that are ergonomically sound are provided to many unions and are becoming a top priority item in collective bargaining demands and through health and safety committees.

In the surrounding environment in a basic office space, backrests should have a lot of free movement.

Distracting patterns should be removed. Surfaces should be painted matte black or black, gray to cut down on light reflection, and no sources of light should cross the VDT operator’s vision or fall or reflect on his/her VDT screen. Temperature and humidity are also important, since VDTs can emit heat of a degree high enough to demand increased ventilation. Concentration by the VDT operator often leads to a reduction in the blink rate, and a lack of humidity will further dry out the occlusions on the surface of the eye, increasing irritation.

Static electricity, from electromagnetic radiation fields generated by the VDT can cause rashes on the operator’s face and neck, which can be partly alleviated through measures such as anti-static1 ventilating the VDT in the workplace, and maintaining a constant relative-humidity level of about 50 to 70 percent. Grounding of the VDT’s reduces some of the electromagnetic field (primarily it is the electric field that can be reduced or eliminated, since there are only relatively-trivial metal alloy shields to reduce the magnetic field). Cleaning of the VDT with anti-static solutions and anti-static floor mats can also help to alleviate the tingling and rashes caused by static electricity.

Remedies for health problems caused by poor work station design may include:

• VDTs with adjustable screens, located on a swivel stand.
• VDTs with detachable keyboards.
• Properly designed chairs that provide sufficient back support and may be adjusted to the size and preference of individual operators.
• Adjustable desks, with adequate work space, of a height to accommodate a keyboard height of 720 to 750 mm above the floor; a minimum legroom height between 650 and 860 mm; and leg clearance space between thigh and desk between 170 and 550 mm for easy access in and out of the work place.
• Document holders, adjustable and placed next to the VDT screen at a similar angle, distance and height to the screen to minimize bending and twisting of the head and neck, and to reduce eye adjustments and reflected glare.
• Foot rests, adjustable in height from 0 to 50 mm and inclination, from 10 to 15 degrees.
• Hand rests, so that wrists are in line with the forearm, as cocking the wrists up may lead to wrist problems.
• Correct posture, with arms held horizontally at a 90 degree angle from the elbow; head slightly inclined forward to follow the natural curve of the spine; spine fairly straight with the backrest supporting the lower back and pelvis; abdomen naturally buckled in with an upright spine; thighs at a 90 degree angle from the pelvis resting horizontally and feet flat on the floor, not wrapped around each other as this compresses the soft tissue of the thighs and calves, eliminating blood flow.

VDT stress

The severe stress caused by VDT work is not just physical. Headache and muscular aches and pains, can also be alleviated. Worker action through unions is the most effective way to reduce stress and to eliminate the conditions which cause it. Workers should seek these remedies to VDT-related stress:

• Control the visual and physical hazards of VDT work by altering machine design and office arrangements. Insist on improvements to office furniture and work station environment and configuration. Introduce rest breaks, and insist on adequate ventilation and humidity and an end to overcrowding. Employer-devised monitoring through machines must also be eliminated.

Practical Nurses under attack

Concern over the elimination of licensed practical nurses at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital has prompted the Nanaimo unit to form a "Save the PNs Committee."

At the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, PNs positions are being eliminated, as are nurses in other departments. The Nanaimo nurses, who are part of the B.C. Council of Practical Nurses, are also a cause for some concern. These statistics show that the number of PNs in British Columbia has been steadily declining for the past seven years. Currently, less than 15 percent of the nursing level is staffed by nurses.

Since the May 6 demonstration, PNs at Nanaimo have also taken the following steps to ensure that other health care workers and the public are made aware of the situation:

• The committee presented a brief to the hospital’s board of trustees on June 6.
• The committee is planning a press conference on June 16 to respond to the hospital’s comments in the press regarding the May 6 demonstration.
• The committee is preparing a newsletter for distribution to the public and a petition to be presented to the health ministry.
• They are making presentations with management at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital to have their job descriptions updated to reflect the skills taught to the PNs.
• They intend to lobby the provincial government to ensure the present situation is revisited.

The committee intends to continue its campaign to ensure that the training is recognized and their skills utilized to the fullest extent.

Practical Nurses under attack

The following is a position statement from the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of B.C. annual meeting in Victoria, May 4, 1983.

The appeal of demise of the LPN has been in effect since 1979, through attrition and job elimination. In order to continue the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of B.C. has been aware of this problem from the onset. The Association attempted to intervene on behalf of the LPNs, writing to Ministers and the Premier informing them of the problem. The LPNs have not been successful in their efforts.

With the new preoccupation with baccalaureate degrees for all nursing enrollees, the LPN will become obsolete and the cost of hospital care will decrease. 

Specialization will become the norm. Ideals will be the priority and the patient, for which hospital care was created, will suffer the consequences.

The training and retraining for other occupations will put stress on an already burdened education budget.

The utilization of nursing staff has been the main problem with most hospitals. LPNs and RNs are not allowed by certain nursing administration to use the skills for which they were trained. Due to this practice, hospital costs to the public rise as more people are needed to staff the unit. The LPNs should be utilized properly.
# 1982 Audited Financial Statement

## Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>301,007</td>
<td>503,148</td>
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<td>Term deposits</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dues and accrued interest receivable</td>
<td>418,202</td>
<td>441,483</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>80,810</td>
<td>71,881</td>
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<td>Due from Severance Pay Trust Fund</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,960</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,031,519</td>
<td>2,220,492</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>1981</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>474,849</td>
<td>347,123</td>
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<td>Due to Defence Fund</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>895,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due to Severance Pay Trust Fund</td>
<td>34,845</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due to Political Education Fund</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>97,754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due to Building Fund</td>
<td>425,015</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,034,510</td>
<td>1,340,627</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Retained for the continuation of the Union’s activities:</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death Benefit Fund</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severance Pay Trust Fund (Note 2)</td>
<td>218,612</td>
<td>185,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash, term deposits and accrued interest</td>
<td>34,646</td>
<td>(28,600)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due from (to) General Fund</td>
<td>253,258</td>
<td>191,270</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>352,576</td>
<td>238,430</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Investments, at cost

| Onelights Holdings Ltd, shares | 9          | 9          |
| Victoria Building Co-operative Union, shares | 20,849     | 20,849     |
| **Total**                       | 20,858     | 20,858     |

### Fixed, at cost

| Office furniture, fixtures and equipment | 172,062     | 151,160    |
| Less Accumulated depreciation           | 96,130      | 82,786     |
| **Total**                                | 75,932      | 68,374     |

| Leasehold improvements, less amortization | 23,057      | 28,595     |
| **Total**                                | 99,589      | 97,069     |

| General Fund                          | 3,151,204   | 2,651,689  |

## Auditors' Report

To the Members,
Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180

We have examined the non-consolidated balance sheets of the Hospital Employees' Union, Local 180 General Fund, Defence Fund, Political Education Fund and Building Fund as at December 31, 1982 and the non-consolidated statements of revenue and expenses and changes in financial position of the General Fund for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests and other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

TOUCHE ROSS & CO. Chartered Accountants
March 31, 1983

## General Fund

### Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the year ended December 31, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>1982 (Notes 4 &amp; 5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues and initiation fees</td>
<td>$3,892,480</td>
<td>$3,545,669</td>
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<td>Less: Rebates to units</td>
<td>380,285</td>
<td>325,029</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,512,195</td>
<td>3,220,470</td>
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<td>Interest</td>
<td>205,330</td>
<td>216,361</td>
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<td>Management fee</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,718,515</td>
<td>3,434,831</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>1,128,161</td>
<td>956,876</td>
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<td>Employee benefits</td>
<td>163,743</td>
<td>118,272</td>
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<td>Office and other expenses (Schedule 1)</td>
<td>932,875</td>
<td>787,838</td>
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<td>Regional office expenses (Schedule 2)</td>
<td>597,577</td>
<td>510,046</td>
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<td>Contractual negotiations and policy decisions</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12,331</td>
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<td>Negotiations, cancellations, and arbitrations</td>
<td>204,074</td>
<td>269,171</td>
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<td>Provincial executive</td>
<td>90,679</td>
<td>79,270</td>
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<td>Rights classification</td>
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<td>Wage policy conference</td>
<td>4,042</td>
<td>147,276</td>
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<td>Servicing and organizing</td>
<td>586,420</td>
<td>463,885</td>
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<td>Convention and Seminars:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>280,272</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars and staff meetings</td>
<td>178,528</td>
<td>234,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>458,800</td>
<td>334,467</td>
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### Excess of Revenue over Expenses (Excess over Revenue) for the Year

| Excess of revenue over expenses (Excess over revenue) for the year | ($325,947) | $ 0.00 |

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**Escalating costs unavoidable**

It is fair to say that over the past year, the Hospital Employees' Union has faced some of the most difficult challenges in its history. There have been relentless attacks on the rights, wages, and benefits of HEU members by both the employer and the provincial government. And although HEU can be proud of the many battles it has won in defending members' rights, the cost has nonetheless been high.

Legal fees incurred by HEU have doubled in the past year. The fight against bed closures and member layoffs has been costly. Extensive legal services are required to force the Health Labour Relations Association and the employers to complete classification. And in addition, the general state of the economy has prompted increased use of Free Legal Advice by our members.

The cost of rights arbitration continues to escalate due to the employer's uncompromising attitude in dealing with grievances. HEU has also had to involve the Labour Relations Board to a much greater extent in unfair labour practice charges.

All of these pressures imposed by the employer have created a need for more staff to ensure that members' rights are protected. HEU has no intention of allowing the employer to waltz away at the standard it has achieved for its members. The price may indeed be high, but the price of capitulation is even higher.
CU&C opens new health centre

Medical care in British Columbia took one small, but important, turn for the better in April when CU&C opened the doors to its first health clinic.

The new CU&C Mount Pleasant Health Centre, located at 12 East 8th Avenue in Vancouver, is a unique facility designed to provide complete health related services to individuals and families through a team of health professionals. The catch is that there will never be any extra billing at Mount Pleasant.

The clinic was established to counter the threat by many B.C. physicians to extra bill patients. Although CU&C has considered establishing a health centre for some time, the decision to build the Mount Pleasant facility was made in 1981 when it became apparent that British Columbia doctors were intent on extra billing.

According to David Schreck, general manager of CU&C, the policy of the CU&C board of directors has been to adamantly oppose the concept of extra billing.

"The Mount Pleasant clinic will always be a place where medical care is available at no extra cost," says Schreck. "And, if it's successful, we will look seriously at building a number of these facilities around B.C."

The opening of the centre is the culmination of a busy year for CU&C. It took a leading role in the fight against health care cutbacks this past year through a series of radio, newspaper, and television ads. CU&C was also instrumental in organizing the B.C. Health Coalition, an umbrella group of many representatives from the health industry that fought against the erosion of health care.

The new clinic will be staffed by a physician, Dr. Michael Guard, a nurse-administrator, Jean Hunter, and a receptionist, Wendy Ricci. Dr. Guard, originally from England, has spent the past five years as the sole physician in Stewart, B.C. Prior to that, he worked in a West Vancouver practice. The clinic is set up for family practice and is fully equipped for primary diagnostic and treatment services, massage therapy, and occupational health.

Medical ethics prevent the board of directors of CU&C from advertising the health centre, but it is hoped that patients will be attracted through word of mouth and by the availability of the occupational health facilities to unions and employers.

In other CU&C news, Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, was re-elected in May as CU&C vice-president for another one year term.

The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1983/84
LETTERS

Job sharing

Our local unit, (Williams Lake) feels very strongly that the present Union Policy regarding job sharing should be reviewed and revised. We support and respect the Union Policy to protect and retain all full-time positions.

We also believe that an employee should have the right and the option to decide if they need or want to work on a part-time basis.

For several years now RNs have successfully and to the benefit of all concerned (including the RNs employed) shared full-time positions at their request.

To our knowledge, none of these shared positions has ever been changed to part-time positions during or after the position has been shared. There are many reasons an employee may need or want to work on a part-time basis either short or long term.

Some of the reasons brought forth at our unit are as follows:

The parent (usually mother) of a new baby or young children may need full-time employment, too demanding and stressful for herself and her family, but needs some income to survive.

The employee with a chronic type of illness, who finds full-time employment draining their health, but who could cope well with a two or three day work week.

The middle age female employee whose financial situation has eased and may need only part-time wages to augment a spouse's full-time wages.

Other benefits include more people employed. Employees on 'shared jobs' tend to use less sick time and we all benefit as tax payers.

We encourage other HEU members and units to voice their opinions on this issue.

If there is an increasing need and interest in "job sharing" it is our hope and aim that the present policy regarding this issue be reviewed and revised at our next policy convention.

HEU Local 180
Williams Lake Unit

As hospital workers, we are extremely concerned about what we see as a frightening trend in the health care industry in this province. Several hospitals in the Lower Mainland have entertained proposals from outside companies to take over the management of departments such as Dietary, Laundry, Housekeeping and so on.

We are opposed to the contracting out of hospital services or the management of such services for two interrelated reasons: (a) the loss of jobs, and (b) the resultant deterioration of the level of patient care.

The companies making these proposals to the hospitals generally try to sell the proposals on their cost savings. Using their own calculations the companies develop estimates of the savings which the hospitals could expect. These estimates are the bait that the companies use to get their foot in the door of the hospitals. The second tactic the companies use is to promise the hospitals additional savings by way of savings from staff cutbacks and layoffs.

The fact that they fail to consider is the cost to the patients that a cut in staff will mean. Once the companies have a foothold in the hospitals, generally by installing a manager in one of the departments, the push is on for the hospital to use products marketed by the company. Rather than purchasing the products of their choice, the hospitals are often locked into contracts to purchase products through the company.

After 'contracting out' takes place, the prime motive in the department becomes the profit motive. This drastic change in attitude has effects throughout the hospital, not just in the department which is contracted out. When cost becomes the main factor in the decisions about the running of a hospital, then decisions will be made based on what is best for the balance sheet not on what is best for the patients.

The whole purpose of hospitals must be remembered: hospitals exist to provide health care for the people in the community, not to make a few companies rich at the expense of the patients.

Who is responsible for the hospitals seeking to contract out services? Who is responsible for the erosion of health care in this province? Who should be responsible to the public for the deterioration of the standard of health care in the province? Both the provincial government and the hospitals themselves have to shoulder the burden for the problem. Both the provincial government and the hospitals have to share the blame for the deterioration of health care. It is not enough for the government to build shiny new facilities throughout the province: they must provide sufficient funding to adequately staff these facilities. Someday, we all may have to use the facilities; let us hope that there are sufficient staff still working to properly care for our needs.

Yours truly,
Marion Barrington, Chairperson
Tony Beliso, Vice-Chairperson
Shirley Petrie, Secretary-Treasurer
H.E.U. Officers
Mt. St. Joseph's Hospital Unit
Vancouver, B.C.

The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1983/14

Editor's Note: HEU's position on job sharing was discussed at the last convention and members voted to reject the concept. The following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS employers use "job sharing" to reduce the total amount of wages paid by cutting down on hours worked, and

WHEREAS this kind of "job sharing" reduces the income of union members and causes a heavier workload, and

WHEREAS union members need a full-time income, and

WHEREAS heavier workloads reduce the ability of members to do their jobs properly and safely,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the union condemn and fully reject employer and employer-initiated job sharing proposals which result in reduced income for union members, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the union continue efforts to achieve adequate government funding of health centres to provide proper staffing levels and full employment for union members.

"What did you do with your half of the pay cheque this month?"
Bad news for HEU

As an HEU member, I can only say that our worst fears have materialized. The Social Credit Party is back in power in a majority position. I suspect that within a short period of time, the humility he (Premier Bennett) has shown during his acceptance speech will turn to smugness, arrogance, and finally vindictiveness.

I feel that it's no longer enough for us to encourage its members to support candidates and parties who will put public health care at the top levels it should be. It has become quite apparent in the last election that HEU itself should officially and actively support the candidates and the party which is to be assuming control on health care issues. In this way, a proper election machinery can be put in place as well as an educational campaign.

Tony Beliso
Vice-Chairperson
Mount St. Joseph Unit

Smoke-eaters

I also was a first time voting delegate to the thirteenth biennial HEU constitution and by-laws convention. On first reading Brother Willman's letter, (published in the last Guardian), I was most impressed. After all, from the land of the "SMOKE-EATERS," where one is literally forced to put up with used smoke, likeable or not, I found it quite humorous. Now being the considerable person that I am, I have accepted the proposed challenge.

Believe it or not, "Smoking is ADDICTIVE," so if you're one of the smarter NONS, don't knock it. As Brother Willman pointed out, he has observed the convention committee did try to accommodate the NONS by designated areas. This, unfortunately, does not always work.

Contrary to my Brother's possible belief, but alas true, many strong dedicated members belong to the smoking majority or minority. Being a considerate person myself, as I'm sure most of my smoking contemporaries are, we do try to limit our "fumes."

As our Brother surely noticed, there are many tense and frustrating moments. Due to the heavy pressure it would be very disruptive and certainly defeat our objective, if smokers were pushed into "mini breaks" throughout the sessions. For those Brothers and Sisters who don't smoke, please be a little lenient towards those of us who "NEED" our daily bread, and we will continue to be more considerate of those who do not.

"Smoker's rights versus non-smoker's rights." Who has the greater need?

Gene Goldade
Trail Unit

Letters of warning

The following letter was originally printed in a good faith, by a Machinist's local union newspaper. It is reprinted here in the same good faith, since I believe its message is timely and very serious. Please read it thoroughly.

Dear Former Brother and Sister Union Members,

I am writing you to hopefully warn you to avoid what has happened to me and my other Machinist brothers and sisters in that union.

We were once members of the International Machinist Union with the usual gripe about union dues, slow grievance procedures, seniority disputes, income, and these arguments, etc. We thought of our stewards and union officers as freeloaders with jobs but little or no respect and that the company would treat us just as well with or without them, and we were in agreement when someone said, "The lot of a stewards is to hold a lot of company."

Well, this was in 1978 and now we no longer have those old problems, for in October 1978, we voted to decertify and break away from the International Union. We are now non-union and no more union dues. We no longer have seniority disputes because we are placed by ability, which means whoever is the boss's pet.

And the same with overtime. Our grievance is no longer slow, it is non-existent. We don't have an absentee problem. If you miss one day, you must have a doctor's slip, so much absence problems were fired long ago without ever being represented. Our incentives now are: Do more work or you will be disciplined for refusal to work.

All this for less money, smaller hospitalization benefits, and no contract, yet we accepted the proposed challenge.

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"Smoker's rights versus non-smoker's rights." Who has the greater need?

Gene Goldade
Trail Unit

The following products are now on the B.C. Federation of Labour's official boycott list.

1. Proctor and Gamble soap products
   - Ivory, Joy, Dawn liquid detergents

2. Zeal, Carnay, Ivory soap

3. Tide, Cheer, Dylon, Bold

4. Kimberly-Clark products
   - Kleenex
   - Hi-Oxi towels
   - Delux bathroom tissue
   - Kotex feminine napkins

Other items on the boycott list:
   - Michelin Tire (CLC boycott)
   - Laxative (Red Coach, Danby, Big Fred, SAS, Big A, Bobby and Andrews)
   - Husky Oil (IWA boycott) . . . includes restaurants, service stations, and boucheries.

Milestones

- Brother Aden Eiley, a member of the housekeeping staff at G. F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver, retired on April 22, 1983. Brother Eiley was a dedicated union member who held many unit offices and will be particularly remembered as an outstanding shop steward. In his retirement, he intends to continue as the caretaker of an apartment building.

- Sister Roberta F. Dennett, a member of the central supply department at Richmond General Hospital, retired on March 31, 1983.

- Sister Bertha Murrell, a member of the nursing department at Lillooet District Hospital, retired on February 28, 1983. An active union member, she has served as secretary-treasurer of the Lillooet unit. Sister Murrell, who enjoys gardening, knitting, and crocheting, plans to do some travelling with her husband.

- Sister Betty Srigley, who worked for 10 years in the housekeeping department at the former S.S. Lady of Good Tidings long term care unit in Abbotsford, retired on April 11, 1983.

The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1983/15
Contracting out at Queen’s Park Hospital

The B.C. Labour Relations Board ruled on March 31 that HEU members at Queen’s Park Hospital, who refuse to handle laundry contracts, will continue to work according to the Labour Code of British Columbia.

Since its opening, Queen’s Park Hospital has continued out its laundry service to the Royal Columbia Hospital, whose employees are also members of HEU.

However, the hospital recently decided to contract out this work to H & M Laundry, a non-union firm. At this time the decision was made, HEU clearly indicated that its members would refuse to handle any laundry delivered from this firm. It was the union's contention that the hospital should continue to contract out to the Royal Columbia Hospital or Tilbury Laundry, another non-union firm.

As a result of the Labour Relations Board decision, the hospital continued contracting out to H & M Laundry. Subsequently, 17 HEU members in the laundry department at the Royal Columbia Hospital have been laid off. Jack Gerow, HEU secretary-business manager, has stated that the union will continue to oppose any management decisions which affect the employment of our membership.

Table officers meet provincial executive

Thirty table officers from HEU units in Okanagan South met with members of the provincial executive in Kelowna June 22.

Lee Whyte, HEU assistant secretary-business manager, delivered a report to the table officers on the Larson award on casualties, the resulting job action at the Lower Mainland hospitals, the Compensation Stabilization Program hearings, outstanding arbitrations, classification, the education program, and communications.

Executive members in attendance were Bill Macdonald, Alberta Dorval, and Bob Shortlander.

Of the 15 units which sent representatives to the conference were Armstrong, Cranbrook, Enderby, Kelowna, Monte Creek, Naramata, Okanagan, Penticton, Revelstoke, Salmon Arm, Oliver, Summerland, and Vernon. An officer from each unit delivered a report to the conference.

And although many issues were discussed, the primary concern voiced by the delegates was the delays in settling the master agreement and the continuing problems generated by classification.

Whyte said that the union executive is also frustrated in finding a master agreement and that the lack of progress is largely caused by the provincial government's wage control program.

The next table officers conference will be held September 28 in Victoria.

Prince Rupert sit-in

It took a two day sit-in, and a suit by the Federation of B.C. member of the main unit at Prince Rupert Regional Hospital have finally reached an agreement with the Health Labour Relations Association to bring them under the master agreement.

The 90 members of the unit had been without a contract since April 1981. They staged a sit-in on March 23 and 24 to protest HURA's refusal to bring them under the master agreement. None of these HEU members had received a wage increase since July, 1981.

Pending compliance with these recommendations, the department suggests that all electric beds be labelled conspicuously with operating instructions for hospital personnel, and that the name of the bed is not to be used in any areas where patient behavior may lead to hazardous situations. The department also urges that hospitals establish procedures to instruct patients in the proper operation of these beds.

Electric hospital beds present possible hazard

HEU has recently received a Medical Alert from the Federal Department of Health and Welfare regarding the death of a six year old boy who was strapped between the station and moving frames of an electric bed.

This is not the first accident of its kind reported in Canada and elsewhere.

And the department is recommending corrective actions to the manufacturers.

Hospital Employees’ Union continues to organize

The Hospital Employees' Union is continuing to organize the unorganized in all areas of the province.

Despite the increased employer and government pressure to discredit the trade union movement, according to Jack Gerow, the HEU secretary-treasurer.

Gerow said the union feels a responsibility to the hundreds of health care workers who remain without the protection of a union. They deserve decent wages and benefits paid by non-union facilities, he says that they often violate such basic worker rights as set out in the Employment Standards Act.

Gerow also noted there is seldom any adherence to the fundamental principles of seniority and fair treatment in non-union facilities.

HEU is organizing in both the profit and non-profit sectors of the health care industry. In North Vancouver, a vote has been ordered at the North Vancouver Private Hospital.

At the Trillium Lodge in Parksville, HEU has submitted an application for certification. Two other long-term care facilities, Pioneer Villa in Creston and Heart View Lodge in Grand Forks have just received certification of their new certification.

Since 1974, HEU's membership has increased by 10,000 largely through the union's long-standing policy of organizing the unorganized.

Concerns voiced by the delegates were:

- the delays in settling the master agreement and,
- the continuing problems generated by classification.

Whyte said that the union executive is also frustrated in finding a master agreement and that the lack of progress is largely caused by the provincial government's wage control program.

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35-hour work week rejected

The Fort Nelson General Hospital board of trustees has come out in opposition to the 35-hour work week awarded to HEU members by Arbitrator Donald Munroe. The 35-hour work week is to become effective January 1, 1984.

In a letter to Social Credit MLA Tom Brummet, the trustees claimed the reduced work week will "have the negative impact of decreasing productivity." The trustees said they would not be able to afford the increased costs associated with this.

Misuse of public facilities

Recent actions by the Prince George Regional Hospital have prompted HEU to request that the minister of health investigate the use of public facilities by private enterprise.

During the week of February 28, Northern Linen Supply had a fire and, as a result, the hospital allowed the firm to use hospital laundry facilities.

John Hurren, representative in charge of the northern regional office, said action resulted in the use of public facilities for commercial purposes.

He expressed concern that if Northern Linen Supply is charged for the use of hospital facilities then the hospital would have a taxable income which would jeopardize its license as a non-profit society.

If the hospital does not charge them, it is liable for misuse of public funds under the Financial Administration Act.

HEU intends to pursue the matter until it receives a satisfactory reply from the ministry of health.

Workers to get retraining money

HEU has recently received an arbitration award concerning an employee’s entitlement to injury-on-duty leave with pay if he/she is receiving vocational retraining for hospital employment under the auspices of the Workers’ Compensation Board.

In its decision, the arbitration board concluded that if an employee is eligible for wage loss benefits from the Workers’ Compensation Board during all or part of the period of retraining, then the employee should receive injury-on-duty leave with pay during the training period.

It was boarded with the delays Workers’ Compensation Board had noted out that the lack of benefits, which would not be further investigated by either a union representative or an officer of the Workers’ Compensation Board.

Under the WCB Industrial Health and Safety Regulations, Section 9.24, no person shall carry out or cause to be carried out any work process or operate or cause to be operated any tool, appliance or equipment when that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an immediate hazard to the health or safety of any person.

If, on the job, you encounter any situation you feel creates an unsafe or a potentially dangerous situation, it is your responsibility to report condition to your employer. And, if the employer fails to correct the problem to your satisfaction, you can then ask that the matter be further investigated by either a union representative or an officer of the Workers’ Compensation Board.

Did you know...

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The Hospital Guardian, Summer Quarter, 1983/16