



NEWS BULLETIN

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North Central District Representative, Alice Nycholat (right) votes on many of the many resolutions that were discussed at the Executive Board Meeting in late Dec. Among the items discussed was the frequency of Board meetings. After much debate the Executive decided on a trial basis to meet every two months instead of quarterly. The next meeting is in mid Feb. Watch the next UNA Newsbulletin for details. Others in the photo are: UNA Chief Executive Officer, Simon Renouf, (left), UNA president Margaret Ethier (center) and Office Staffer Sheila Reading who is behind Nycholat's arm.

NB Nurses: Govt. bows to strike threat

The Union of New Brunswick Nurses recently wrenched a 41 percent wage increase from the NB government while setting a trend for nurses in other Atlantic provinces.

Described as "victory for nurses, the general public and women throughout New Brunswick" the 27 month agreement provides the nurses with a 12 per cent wage increase retroactive to April 1, 1980; 12 per cent increase retroactive to Dec. 1, 1980; 8 per cent effective Aug. 1981 and a 9 per cent increase effective Feb. 1981.

The 2700-member union also managed to force the issue of nurses' input into decisions affecting patient care and understaffing. The agreement included a provision for the establishment of joint labour administrator committees in each hospital. The committees, similar to UNA's professional responsibility committees, allow the nurses direct input into decisions affecting patient care and understaffing.

Although the committee's decisions are not binding the NBNU views them as a first step.

The protracted negotiations between the NB Treasury Board came to a head in early Jan. when the nurses overwhelmingly rejected a conciliation report recommending a 24-month contract with a 34 per cent wage increase and no provision for patient care committees.

The Conciliation Board hearings and the eventual

report were fraught with ill will from the beginning.

RENOUF REFUSES

Simon Renouf, UNA Chief Executive Officer and the union's appointee to the Board refused to sign the conciliation report claiming that the Board had misinterpreted the union's demand concerning the patient care committees. As well Renouf in a letter to the province's premier contended that the nurses, the lowest paid in the country, required a 40 per cent wage increase in order to begin to catch up to other nurses across Canada.

The union, supporting Renouf's minority position, were further aggravated by the Treasury Board chairman's actions following the release of the report.

The chairman published details of the report before the union had an opportunity to review the details of the report or to vote on it.

Charging that the Treasury Board chairman was circumventing the bargaining process Bud Gallie the union's spokesperson said that "it is neither acceptable nor traditional for an employer to bargain directly with the employees."

STRIKE THREATENED

Threatening to strike the nurses' union forced the Treasury Board back to the bargaining table even though the chairman had insisted that there wasn't any more money in the provincial coffers.

The government uneasy with the prospects of a strike

and public support for the nurses did not want to participate in a showdown with the nurses' union.

Under NB labour law the nurses are covered by the Public Service Labour Relations Board which can designate nurses as essential. In this case the PSLRB designated about 60 per cent of the nurses. But even with this designation hospitals such as the Moncton hospital already suffering from understaffing would have had to close its doors for the duration of a strike.

Mary Arseneau, NBNU president said that the new contract will move New Brunswick Nurses from tenth on the national pay scale to fifth.

Stating that the nurses did not get everything that they wanted Arseneau said "A major step forward in the new contract package is the provision for nurses to have a forum for presenting their personal views on the quality of patient care.

"This we feel is an important new area that is of particular importance to the public as well as the working nurses, and the hospital administration. We view this as a positive factor in that it should be of assistance to the hospital administration in making hospitals generally more efficient.

"Nurses working on the floor have a first hand knowledge of what is needed and not needed in the way of staff and equipment. Recommendations from the floor nurses we hope will become another acceptable form of data collection for use by hospital management," Arseneau said.

Women hit by wage guidelines: Ethier

The Alberta government "doesn't believe in the collective bargaining process" United Nurses of Alberta president Margaret Ethier charged recently.

Decrying the government's recently announced wage guidelines Ethier noted that the majority of people affected by the guidelines will be women.

"The government doesn't think women are real people with real needs. They don't think women need to buy things such as cars or houses," she said.

Lou Hyndman, provincial Treasurer gave working people in Alberta an unpleasant present when he announced just two days before Christmas his government's intention to impose wage guidelines on the public sector.

Repeating last year's stand Hyndman announced that the government would be keeping wage increases for 1981 between 8 and a half and ten per cent.

Echoing Ethier's sentiments Simon Renouf, UNA Chief Executive Officer, condemned the government's announcement saying that it is merely an attempt to bypass the legally established bargaining process.

"We object in principle to pre-determined guidelines, but even if the government's wage controls are simply seen as a bargaining target UNA condemns the low range," Renouf said.

"Despite the government's claims to the contrary inflation in Alberta leads the rest of the country. Wage increases in the 8 and a half to ten per cent range would only mean a cut in real incomes for working people and a lowering of their living standards," he said.

Ethier supported Renouf adding that unions will have to oppose the government's guidelines in order to maintain the collective bargaining process.

UNA Provincial office moves

The UNA Provincial Office will be moving to a grander and more efficient building on April 1.

In Dec. the Executive Board approved the move after touring the proposed facilities and again re-evaluating the space requirements currently needed by UNA.

Perhaps one of the most enticing features of the new facilities is the Boardroom. The Board has to meet in hotels since the current boardroom at Provincial Office cannot accommodate the executive. Hopefully, with the Board being able to meet in Provincial Office some of the logistical problems such as a Xerox machine not being readily available will be eliminated.

Although it's a major move the new office is still in the vicinity of the old office.

Make a note of the new address which will come into effect April 1. UNA Provincial Office, Suite 300, 10357-109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 1N3. Telephone number will remain the same.

INSIDE:

- Labour Act changes
- AHA Manpower Report
- Hardisty hearing
- and much more

EDITORIAL

Labour, not laws, protects unions

Anti-labour laws are only as strong as the labour movement allows them to be. In other words a weak labour movement with a membership unwilling to stand up for its rights paves the way for governments to move in and institute what they wish.

Sometimes in order to coat the bitter pill governments will play an intriguing game of charades calling for submissions on various laws that are being changed. But if cabinet ministers detect even the slightest weakness on the part of labour they will turn around and use it against labour.

And that is what the Lougheed government has done with the amendments to the labour act.

The Minister of Labour, Les Young, last winter called on the labour movement to submit briefs to the government on proposed changes to the labour act. In attempts to represent their members' interests and optimistically hoping for some direct input to the amendments labour respond to the Minister's call. But when push came to shove corporate interest in the province was able to use its influence to ensure that any changes to the act would promote business before labour.

In a surprise move the Minister of Labour decided that the amendments to the act had to be passed before the fall session of the legislature ended. Suddenly, without warning, the amendments were introduced into the legislature and passed within a short three weeks leaving the labour movement no time to study the changes let alone mount an effective opposition to them.

And so, labour has been dealt an act that is certainly no better than the last one. And in some respects a lot worse.

Although the changes to the act will undoubtedly have their effects, the real problem lies with the changes that weren't made and with who will administer the act. The changes that weren't made reflected the legitimate concerns of labour not ones that were pulled from thin air but concerns that have come from experience and a harsh reality.

Those who will administer the act represent a government whose anti-labour record would impress any track star. If track records for anti-labour acts and sentiments were to be set.

The power of the labour movement is in its ability to effect changes through a confident, aware, and militant membership. Labour cannot depend on laws in which it has had no say to protect its interests. Nor can labour depend on governments, particularly this government, to protect its interests. The only group which can protect and promote labour's interests and rights is labour itself. With this new act the labour movement has a big job ahead of it.

lettersletterslette

To the editor:

Leading up to and during the strike of April 1980, I experienced a very real sense of pride because nurses were finally exhibiting assertive behaviour, ignoring the invalid expectations of others and demonstrating a belief in their own worth.

When the cabinet's back to work order was ignored in such a concerted fashion, I thought the point of no return had been passed. I imagined nurses sticking together when they returned to work with their hard won contract. I saw them continuing to be assertive on their own behalf through the grievance process and on behalf of their patients through the Professional Responsibility committees.

However, nine months later, I see largely the old situation: nurses being intimidated and allowing violations of their contract, nurses contributing to poor patient care by allowing understaffing to happen without protest. Worst of all, I see nurses bad-mouthing their sisters who do protest in order to change bad situations.

Sisters, I urge you to continue the fight of 1980. Support each other's assertive behaviour. Realize that the

contract provisions are your rights and insist that your rights be recognized for they are not guaranteed unless you protest their violation.

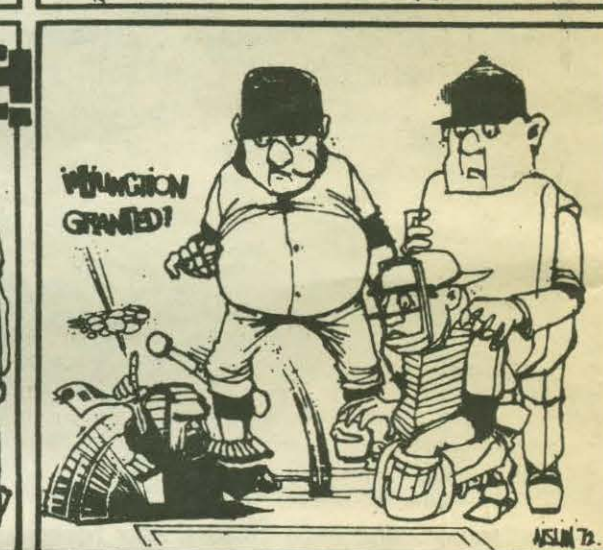
Sincerely,
Name Withheld.

To the editor:

After attending the UNA North Central District meeting January 27, 1981, I have been concerned about participation of the Locals. I believe that one representative from each Local should receive a day's wages to attend these meetings. Otherwise, we will be calling out the names of Locals and receiving no reply because no one would take time off to come. When I hear people say "you should be able to donate one day four times a year to UNA work", it starts to sound like the A.A.R.N. Perhaps a workshop could be included with each meeting so two purposes could be covered in one day.

If NCD or provincial office would fund one representative, perhaps the Local would fund an observer, therefore, creating more participation at the Local level. Let's keep the Local's enthusiasm. Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,
Thelma Lorentz
U.N.A. Local 32



CEO REPORT

by Simon Renout

Sometimes we forget that problems facing nurses as employees are not unique to Alberta, but occur right across the country. This was made clear to me late last year when I was appointed to a conciliation board investigating the dispute between the New Brunswick Nurses' Union and that province's hospitals.

The nurses, whose last collective agreement expired in March 1980, were the lowest paid in Canada earning a maximum wage of \$7.79 per hour. Naturally, monetary issues became a major component of the dispute when the provincial government offered only a 23 per wage increase over two years.

While it may be true that the cost of living and general salary levels are lower in New Brunswick than in Alberta or British Columbia, the union argued that the low wage offer also reflected a contemptuous government attitude towards nurses: that they were not really worth higher wages.

At the same time, the government was pleased to exploit the willingness nurses had shown in the past to put the health care system ahead

of their economic self-interest.

In the end, the union, by threatening strike action if a fair settlement was not reached, managed to force an acceptable offer from the government in both wages and in improvements to their professional responsibility clause. (Details of the settlement are reported elsewhere in this issue).

UNA AND OTHERS

The similarity between the needs of UNA members and those of nurses in other parts of Canada inevitably leads to the topic of relations between UNA and other nursing unions.

For some years, UNA's CEO, staff and elected officials have attended the "counterparts" meetings which bring together representatives of the nurses' unions in each province. Although these meetings are informal with no motions or binding decisions they provide a forum for the exchange of information and views among organized nurses.

In recent years, there has been considerable discussion at these meetings about the

desirability of creating a Canada-wide organization of nursing unions. This organization would be a more structured body, which could speak with a national voice for organized nurses.

From the beginning, nursing unions in the Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan have enthusiastically pursued this idea. Manitoba has been interested, with some reservation, while Ontario and British Columbia have been in opposition. The Quebec unions along with UNA have watched the developments with interest, but have, so far, made no commitment.

CONVENTION HELD

This April, those unions favouring a national organization will be gathering in Winnipeg to hold a founding convention. At its next two Meetings, UNA's Executive Board will be considering the question of whether UNA should attend that founding convention, and, if so, as an observer or as a participant. This is a question which all UNA locals will wish to discuss, and information on this topic will soon be sent to each local from Provincial Office.

DO YOU HAVE NEWS OR VIEWS?

If you have any news or any views about the UNA Newsbulletin write a letter and fill this space.

Send letters to the Una Newsbulletin, c/o the UNA Provincial Office.

Stony Plain Hospital threatened, nurses seek meeting

Nurses at Stony Plain Hospital are in a holding pattern while the hospital board and a mediator try to resolve a dispute between the doctors and the board.

The dispute centres around the issue of emergency outpatient service. In Jan. the board passed a resolution making emergency outpatient service mandatory. But the doctors have refused to comply with the board's decision claiming that the hospital neither has the staff nor the facilities to provide emergency service.

As an alternative the doctors have agreed to extend the outpatient service hours

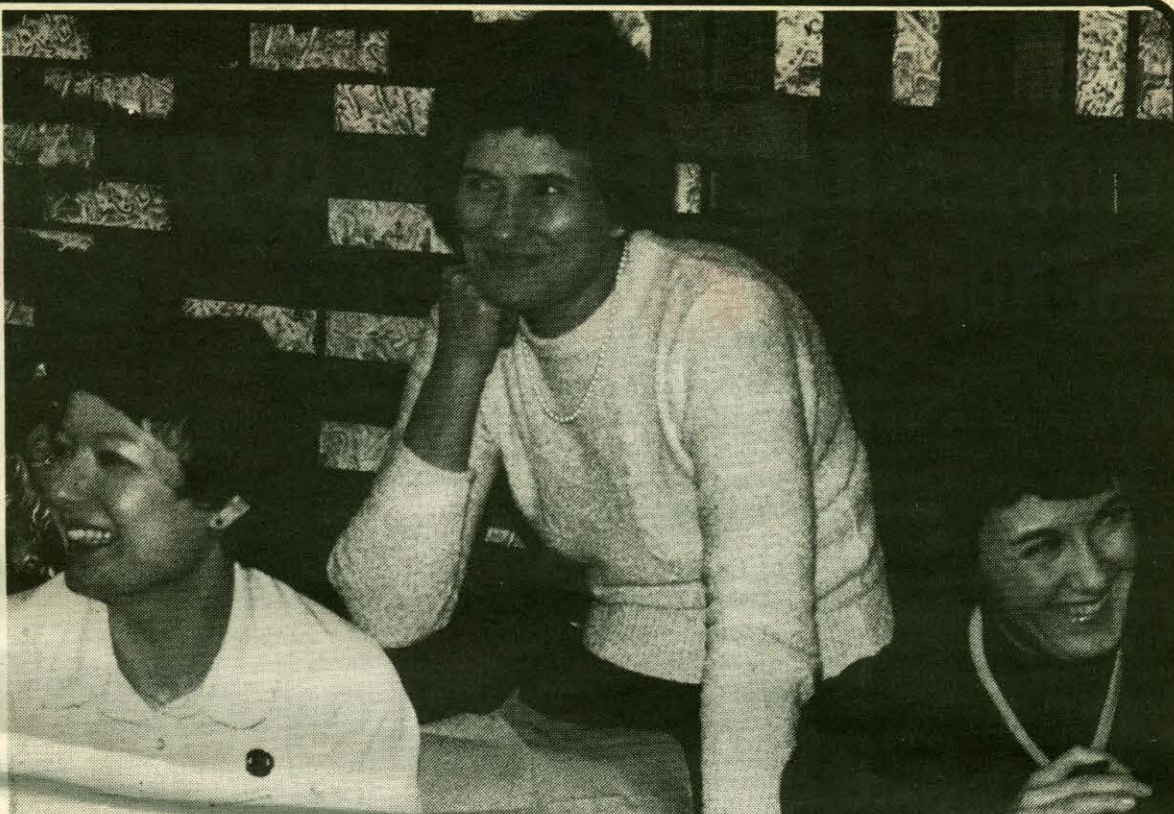
until the board is willing to at least hire a radiologist so that emergency services could be adequately provided.

But as it appeared that things were quietening down seven out of the nine doctors on staff resigned their privileges.

Frustrated by the untenable situation at the hospital UNA Local 92 has decided to enter the schism in order to make its views known.

After repeated attempts by Local 92 to set up a meeting the board has finally agreed to meet with them in mid Feb. after the mediator and new chief of staff Dr. H. Ross makes his report.

Local 92 simply wants the



UNA Local 92 met in early Feb to decide what action they should take concerning a dispute between the doctors and Hospitals Board at Stony Plain Hospitals.

hospital to remain open and the Board and the doctors to come to some sort of an

agreement. If this is not forthcoming the nurses may decide on other actions to

take. Watch the *UNA Newsbulletin* for further developments.

UNA charges bad faith bargaining

On Jan. 30, the board of Industrial Relations heard charges of bargaining in bad faith against Hardisty Nursing Home Ltd. The charges, filed by UNA, alleged that the company, owner of a 226 - bed nursing home in Edmonton, had violated the Alberta Labour Act. In particular,

UNA claimed that the company had refused "to make every reasonable effort to enter into a collective agreement."

At the hearing the Board of Industrial Relations heard evidence from UNA that last Nov. Hardisty had countered an attempt by the union to settle the on-going

contract dispute with a proposal that offered wage levels lower than those previously offered. According to UNA the wages offered were even lower than those in effect before the strike began.

The Board was also told that the company's Nov. proposal would have wiped

out nine months retroactivity for the nurses employed by the company.

UNA argued before the Board that the company offer was drafted in such a way as to be unacceptable.

The day long hearing included evidence from a member of the local, from UNA Chief Executive Officer, Simon Renouf, who handled the Hardisty negotiations, and from Employment Relations Officer, Joanne Monro.

Renouf testified on the bargaining history between UNA and Hardisty including evidence that negotiations with the company did not commence until Jan. 1980. The contract had expired in Dec. 1979. The company had refused to meet UNA representatives until Jan. Negotiations finally began after the

union filed an unfair labour practice complaint with the Board of Industrial Relations in late 1979.

Renouf also testified that in its Nov. offer, the company reduced the number of steps on the grid further making its offer unacceptable to the employees. Hardisty also omitted an entire classification of employees from its wage offer.

The union also introduced evidence alleging the company's attempt to pressure the union into agreeing to exclude certain people from the bargaining unit. In addition Hardisty wanted UNA to accept a return to work condition that would deny the right to return to any employee taking even temporary employment elsewhere.

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Although this happy trio may resemble the 'Three Musketeers' they're representatives from the Alberta federation of Labour and its affiliates. They were asked as part of a program to inform UNA members about the AFL to speak and answer questions at the recent North District Meeting about the AFL. From left to right: Bill Paterson, Edmonton & District Labour Council president; Bill Finn, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees PR Director; and Don Aitken, AFL Executive Secretary.

Tradition left by wayside

More than 30 members of UNA Local 1 recently scored a victory in overtime laying to rest one of management's out dated traditions.

Having worked on Oct. 26 when the clocks go through their biennial change from mountain daylight to mountain standard time, the nurses wanted to be compensated through overtime for the extra hour that they had worked.

Charging that the lack of overtime for that hour violated clause 8.01 in the provincial agreement the UNA members filed a grievance. Clause 8.01 provides for overtime for all time authorized by the employer and worked by an employee in excess of seven and three-quarter hours per day or on scheduled days of rest.

At the first step of the

grievance procedure management remained steadfast claiming that overtime had not been paid in the past and so should not have to be paid now.

But the hospital quickly conceded when it became clear that the nurses were not going to back down and that they were going to insist that their contractual rights be met.

A word to the wise, however management is not entitled to deduct one hour's pay when the clocks spring forward in April. If the hospital insists on deducting one hour's pay then that constitutes a layoff.

But the employer may insist that the staff remain on duty for one hour longer than usual. If that happens then the hospital will be adequately staffed for at least one year of the year!

In Claresholm, a member of Local 40, ran into tradition when trying to obtain vacation between Christmas and New Years.

XMAS TRADITION

Vacations were not given at this time because it was "not the practice of the hospital". Instead the nurse was offered a leave of absence.

When asked what the difference was between being on a leave of absence and being on vacation, the hospital again resorted to "tradition".

Management conceded however, when the matter was advanced to arbitration.

"That's the way it's always been" is the poorest excuse for management's actions especially if those decisions violate the contract.

UNA as strong as members

Members of our union are becoming more assertive when addressing their own needs — not only in the workplace but in the union as well. I applaud this trend.

It means we are no longer content to relinquish our power to create changes in order simply to avoid conflict.

In our locals we have learned that heated grievance discussions can result in mutual respect if both parties deal only with the issues.

At our annual meeting I was pleased to see that the debate was at times heated both in and out of the sessions. It indicated that the members are beginning to recognize the validity of their own opinions on the issues that affect them.

I believe mutual respect and support for each other can exist if we continue to "deal with the issues". Friendships can even be maintained throughout the process.

Regardless of our position in debate, one should always support the decision of the majority and thus contribute to the strength of our union.

Members will become stronger by accepting conflict as a natural part of the process of resolving problems. And our union will only be as strong as our members.

Yours in solidarity,
Margaret Ethier,
UNA President.

Unions protest, labour act railroaded by govt

The Alberta Labour movement had hoped to breathe a sigh of relief last year when the Lougheed government announced that a new Labour Act would be introduced in the legislature sometime in the next year.

But Alberta unions' collective sigh turned into a gasp when the provincial government declared that the legislation would be introduced in the legislature in late Nov. and passed before the session recessed for the winter.

The excitement generated around a new labour act stemmed from the labour movement's desire to change the act in order to reflect both the needs and wants of unions. Although the labour movement knew the government would not accept all their proposals they had hoped that some would be included in the act especially since the government had sought proposals from various unions in the province.

UNA like other unions responded by presenting briefs following the Labour Minister's notice in Dec. 1979 that he had intended to amend the act.

Last March the UNA

Legislative Committee submitted a brief outlining UNA's concerns with the current act and recommending changes to the Legislation.

After receiving a copy of the Minister's proposed changes in late Aug. UNA Chief Executive officer, Simon Renouf along with the Steering Committee met with the Minister in order to restate UNA's recommendations.

From the time the government introduced the amendments in the Legislature until the bill was passed the Alberta Federation of Labour met with the Labour Minister Les Young three times in order to persuade the government to incorporate the labour movement's recommendation.

Although some changes from labour were accepted Alberta's unions have been left with a labour act that is little better than the original.

The quick succession of events also left little time for unions to mount an informed opposition to the act even though the AFL attempted to delay it.

The new act expected

to be proclaimed this spring replaces only the labour relations portions of The Alberta Labour Act 1973, while other sections of the Act have been replaced by The Employment Standards Act.

One of the more palatable changes in the Labour Relations Act is renaming the Board of Industrial Relations. It will now be called the Labour Relations Board.

Other significant changes and some of their anticipated effects are as follows:

Previously, Board members who were not designated as Chairman or Vice-Chairman held offices that were fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, under the new act there is no time limit on an individual's term of office. Consequently, current board members could be with us for as long as the cabinet wishes.

In the new act the Board's powers have been dramatically increased. Currently, it is permitted to both hear and make major decisions without consulting anyone about cease and desist orders or about the legality of strikes or lockouts.

Another area where the Board's powers have been expanded is the revocation of a union's certification. The Board can now revoke a bargaining agent's certification if that agent has not objected within 30 days of being informed by person or registered mail of the impending revocation.

In other words if the Board feels that the bargaining agent has not been an active union it has the right to take away that certification no matter the reasons for the union's inactivity.

In addition the time limit for re-applying for certification has been restricted. Under the old act when a union's application for certification was refused by the Board the union could re-apply after three months from the date of its original application. Under the new act, the re-application may only be made, after 90 days from the date of the Board's decision.

Perhaps one of the most important changes in the act is in the area of collective bargaining.

As soon as notice indicating the desire of either party to bargain has been served, the

parties must meet within 15 days of notification rather than within 20 days.

Under the new act conciliation has also been eliminated, and replaced by a process of mediation.

Although mediation could speed up bargaining it is doubtful since there are no time limits specified in the act outlining the duration of the process. There is no way to determine how long mediation could last or how long it may take the Minister of Labour to respond to a request for mediation.

However, mediation cannot delay the right to strike, which arises on the expiry of the previous collective agreement unless a Disputes Inquiry Board is appointed.

The government has also managed to fiddle with another time limit, the delay between strike notice and strike action.

Under the old act a union could strike 48 hours after serving its strike notice. Now, unionists must wait 72 hours after serving the strike notice before they can strike, thereby giving the employer more time to prepare for the strike.

Perhaps the most significant change with in the area of collective bargaining and one that is taken from the annals of history is the provision for a Disputes Inquiry Board.

Reminiscent of the late William Lyon MacKenzie King's solution to labour relations the Disputes Inquiry Board may be established by the Minister of Labour before or during a strike or lockout. The Board is appointed solely by the Minister.

In other words labour is not involved in appointing any member to the board in order to ensure its interests are represented. Unfortunately, unions will have to depend on the not so dependable Minister of Labour to look out for its interests when appointing the Board.

The Disputes Inquiry Board is empowered to investigate the dispute and to attempt to bring about a settlement between the parties within 20 days or longer. The

parties or the Minister can extend the 20 day limit.

Although the Minister is empowered to notify the parties of the Board's recommendations there are no specified time limits within which notification must occur. And to further drag out the bargaining process neither strikes or lockouts can occur until ten days after notification of the recommendations has been served. This section of the act not only gives the Minister immense powers but also undermines the effectiveness of strike action as a tool to force an adequate settlement.

The provincial Cabinet has also retained its awesome powers to order workers back to work without the possible moderating effect of a debate within the Legislature.

In other words this provision if used could effectively eliminate the right to strike for all workers in Alberta whether they are public employees or not.

The Minister of Labour continued to ignore both UNA's and the AFL's suggestion for automatic certification in the event that an employer was found guilty of unfair labour practice during an union organizing campaign.

In addition, the employer can now change

Other unionists demonstrate at the Legislature.



the conditions of employment without the consent of the bargaining agent if those changes are in accordance with established custom or practice. Under the old act the employer could not make any changes in the working conditions without the consent of the bargaining agent.

ations to the working conditions were made in accordance with established custom or practice. A pretty difficult item to prove since the knowledge of custom or practice is in the hands of the employer.

For the most part the new act is just as bad as if not worse than its predecessor.

However, its not all doom and gloom. There are some positive changes that have been made. One of those is the provision regarding

penalties that may be imposed upon the employer if the Labour Relations Board finds him to be guilty of an unfair labour practice. The Board can direct an employer to pay any interest accrued by the employee in the event that the employee had to borrow money to support his/her family during the time he/she was suspended or discharged. The employer must continue to pay compensation for unfair dismissal or suspension as well.

Strike ban rejected

OTTAWA (CPA) - To most editorialists the solution is easy: ban all strikes in the public sector.

That simplistic answer to a very complex question gets short shrift in a new book by the former chairman of the British Columbia Labour Relations Board.

Paul Weiler says that a strike ban strips a union of its main countervailing force in negotiating with an employer that may not be willing to bargain in good faith. And anything that replaces the strike - whether it's compulsory arbitration or final offer selection - simply isn't as effective in promoting serious negotiations which promote hard bargaining.

The book, *Reconcilable Differences: New Directions in Canadian Labour Law*, gives three solid reasons why strikes should be allowed in most areas of the public sector. First, it notes that many private sector companies (Bell, CPR) are also in monopoly positions, yet still have to deal with strike or lockout threats negotiations. Second, the public is far from being the innocent bystander it claims to be in public sector disputes.

Weiler argues that the public is the employer. It is the public's interests that are being advanced across the bargaining table, both as consumer of government services and as taxpayer. It is the public that elects the officials responsible for settling the disputes. And therefore, it is the public that must be made to feel the hardship of losing government services it might use. Only in this way, Weiler argues, will it put enough pressure on politicians to be more accommodating.

Finally, Weiler says that the balance of power at the bargaining table has really swung toward the government. Unlike the case in the private sector, a lengthy public sector strike means the employees' wage bill is being paid while revenues are still coming.

Moreover, heightened public attention on any sharp increase in taxes, mill rates and the like have made most governments very touchy negotiators.

Reconcilable Differences: New Directions in Canadian Labour Law, by Paul Weiler. Published by Carswell Legal Publications, Toronto, \$25.30.



Labour standards changed

Striking while the iron was hot the Minister of Labour, Les Young, in Nov. also introduced another bill into the legislature affecting Alberta's working people.

Along with the Labour Relations Act, the Minister introduced Bill 79 - the Labour Standards Act.

Hitting the labour movement with a double whammy, Young also rushed Bill 79 through the Legislature despite criticisms of the act.

For the first time in recent Alberta history the Labour Relations Act and Labour Standards have been

separated into two acts.

Labour standards covers basic minimum working conditions for all working people in Alberta who are not unionized. It also substitutes for any area where a collective agreement does not cover a particular condition of work.

In many ways the Labour Standards Act is more significant for Alberta's workers since only about 29 per cent of the work force is unionized.

Items included in Labour Standards are hours of work; vacations; statutory holidays; and minimum wage rates.

Among the changes in this act is legalizing less than minimum wage rates for the disabled. This particular section of the act has been attacked by both organized labour and disabled groups as being discriminatory and hypocritical. While the United Nations has declared 1981 as the Year of Disabled the provincial government here has enshrined in the law substandard wages for that very same group of people.

These sections along with others will be examined in the next issue of the UNA Newsbulletin.



Last spring UNA members and supporters demonstrated outside the Legislature to protest the provincial government's back-to-work order. The nurses were on strike for better pay and other items including Professional Responsibility Committees.

Texas nurses cite job conditions, shortage grows

"What is your understanding of the nursing shortage? Do you believe there is a shortage? How is the shortage affecting you?"

Although these questions may have a familiar ring ironically they are not from the Alberta Hospital Association's recent Nursing Manpower Study. But were part of a survey conducted in Texas about the current nursing shortage in that state.

The survey was designed to discover why about 18,000 registered nurses in Texas and many others in the rest of the USA are currently not working in their chosen career.

According to an article in the American Journal of Nursing the Centre for Research at the University of Texas "set out to identify factors associated with nurse unemployment and to suggest ways to attract non-working nurses into the work force."

Unlike the AHA's study the Centre not only surveyed nurses

but also engaged them and the public in discussions which led to identifying solutions to the problem.

Initially 3,500 nurses responded to a questionnaire in order to pinpoint the source of the shortage. Then, as a complement to the survey about 30 nurses in six small group interviews outlined reasons for working and not working. As well they noted items that would encourage nurses to return to work. Finally, consumers, nurses, educators, administrators and legislators met in a day long conference in order to come up with "innovative suggestions for attracting nurses back to work."

The data collected through the survey and discussions clearly indicated that "nurses leave nursing and remain outside the work force because of conditions in the job setting that interfere with the practice of nursing."

The top five job conditions

identified by practicing nurses as creating the greatest dissatisfaction are:

- The availability of adequate salaries
- The amount of paperwork
- Support given by the administration of the facility
- Opportunity for continuing education.
- Adequacy of laws regulating the practice of nursing in Texas.

In addition unemployed nurses cited other reasons for not working in their field. They include:

- Family responsibilities
- Unavailability of desired work schedules
- Environment that does not provide a sense of worth as a member of the health care team
- No emphasis placed on individualized patient care.

It is interesting to note that the Texas study advocated a greater role for nurses in the decision making process within the hospital as a means

to encourage nurses to return to work.

It seems from both the Texas survey and the AHA's report that no matter where nurses reside they have chosen not to work for very similar reasons. Not surprisingly, the identification of working conditions especially in the realm of salaries, patient care, and effectiveness were cited by nurses in both Alberta and Texas as reasons why they have left their chosen career.

Increased responsibility for

nurses included self-scheduling by nurses; a staff nurse on all committees setting policy about patient care and personnel matters, utilization of short shifts of four to six hours. In addition the study suggests that nurses could be working only to provide special patient care needs such as pre-op teaching on a four hour shift.

The major recommendation for part-timers was to offer all in-service training to part-time as well as to full-time nurses.

AHA report underscores UNA's stand

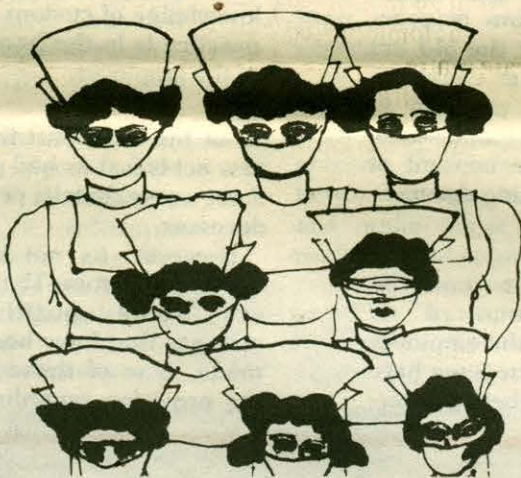
The recent AHA report on Nursing Manpower underscore UNA negotiating committee statements issued during the protracted negotiations and strike of last year.

UNA had advised its members to ignore the questionnaire which gathered the data for the report because the survey circumvented the negotiating process by not involving the union.

Nevertheless, the report substantiates all of UNA's positions. Unless immediate action is taken, the report predicts a worsening of the nursing shortage from 690 vacancies in 1980 to 1,590 in

1981 and to 4,346 in 1996. These figures are even more alarming when coupled with the 34.4 per cent decline since 1975 in applications for the RN programs. In its con-

clusions the AHA further supports UNA's claim that the



Two day week works wonders

One hospital in Texas has decided to take the nursing shortage in hand, throwing to the wind conventional solutions to the problem.

In an innovative move the Baylor University Medical Centre has launched a two day work week called the Two Day Alternative. The unusual work program employs nurses for 12-hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday while paying them full salary and benefits.

The two day plan nurses have the rest of the week off while other nurses work Monday to Friday.

The hospital had been suffering from a critical nursing shortage that wasn't getting any better. There were about 40 nursing vacancies per shift and as many as 20 new vacancies a month were opening up as nurses left for more flexible and better paying jobs elsewhere.

Carole Ellerbe, nurse recruiter, said that nurses were overjoyed with the new plans. "I think we are going to have some nurses more happy in their careers and we are close to filling our vacancies."

Within five days of implementing the program the hospital interviewed 200 nurses and hired 100.

Under the new plan nurses working 12-hour day shifts are paid for a 33 hour week while those working 12-hour night shifts are compensated for a 40 hour week.

shortage is due to RN's unwillingness to work under the current conditions.

Undoubtedly, the nursing shortage will become even more acute by 1986 unless action is taken immediately to rectify the situation.

Although it seems that UNA has been right all along in stating what nurses want, it still remains to be seen whether the AHA will take the

recommendations to heart. Another question that must be addressed is whether the AHA will have the ear of government so that the recommendations will be backed with money and not with just empty words.

In any case action must be taken immediately or else both nurses and patients will continue to bear the brunt of the nursing shortage.

AHA RECOMMENDATIONS

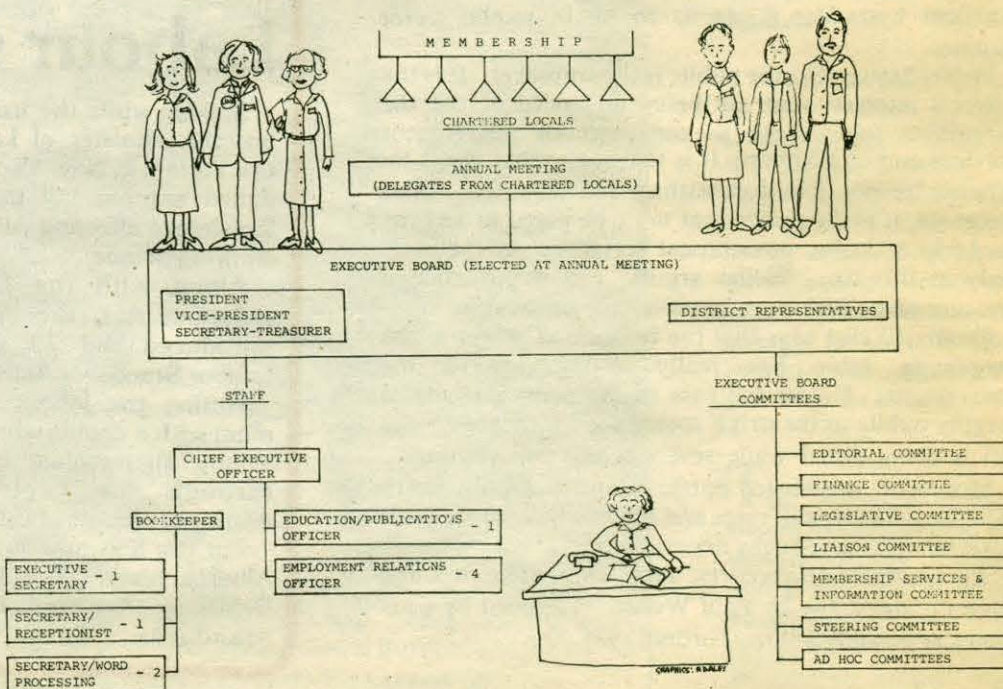
- increase staff to patient ratios,
- improve hours, shifts, and rotations,
- decrease routine non-patient care activities,
- decrease paper work,
- establish mechanisms for increased staff nurse participation in decisions regarding patient care,
- improve lines of communications with staff nurses,
- increase quality of supervision and recognition given to staff nurses,
- improve quality and objectivity of performance appraisals,
- provide opportunities for personal and professional growth,
- re-examine salaries and benefits packages,
- provide adequate orientation for part-time staff nurses,
- examine practicality of day care for children of staff nurses.

The United Nurses of Alberta established in 1977 has gone through many changes as the needs of the membership have grown.

Last year the union decided among other things that it needed its own education program and someone to produce the UNA Newsletter on a regular basis. UNA decided to hire an Education/Publications Officer. Other changes in the staff structure include the opening of the UNA Calgary Office (see UNA Newsletter, Dec. 1980) and the hiring of part-time support staff for that office- Mildred Miller.

The following chart briefly outlines the UNA structure from the membership to the secretarial staff.

U.N.A. ORGANIZATION CHART - EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1981





The face behind the news

Last Sept. UNA hired an Education/Publications Officer, Marilyn Burnett, to produce the *UNA Newsbulletin* on a regular basis, and any other UNA publications. Her other duties include developing UNA's educational program.

Burnett's work history includes working as editor for *Co-operative Press Associates*, Canada's only labour news service; editor of a community-based newspaper *The Toronto Clarion*; and as an organizer for the Ontario Federation of Students. Her other activities have included conducting workshops and working with strike support committees in Ottawa and Toronto.

In a common pose Burnett is seen here at her typewriter, hopefully, writing copy for this *Newsbulletin*.

Daycare committee moves forward

The inter-union daycare committee is entering the final stages of preparation for the establishment of a pilot project child care centre.

In early Jan. the pilot project steering committee presented its report to the Alberta Hospital Association and to a joint committee of hospital unions. Members of the steering committee include employees from the Norwood Extended Care Centre, Dr. Angus McGuggan Nursing Home, Glenrose Provincial General Hospital and the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton.

The following recommenda-

tions are among 16 included in the child care steering committee's report:

- We establish a centre for up to 60 children in the vicinity of the Royal Alexandra and Glenrose Hospitals and Norwood Extended Care Centre and Dr. Angus McGuggan Nursing Home.

- A Satellite system of 15 family day homes be established to meet the needs for care of:

- Infants 0 - 18 months
- Mixed age family groups
- Night-time care

- Weekend care if insufficient to require centre use

- Irregular care needs (casual and some part-time)

- The centre is open from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., seven days a week.

- Children from 18 months to school age be accommodated in a child care centre.

- We provide care for infants as a first priority in family day homes.

- Because of the high expression of need for part-time care, we provide care for part-time users providing that:

- They are on a regular schedule to ensure that the same group of children stay together, even if their hours of care change. (i.e. from days to evenings or for only part of a week).

- The number of part-time children cared for should be arranged to ensure maximum utilization of child care spaces, and care must be taken not to exceed maximum occupancy at any time.

- Casual and irregular part-time child care needs be met by providing care in a family day home setting.

- A private non-profit child care society be established to run the pilot centre. As well the criteria for use of the centre be established by the members of the society who work in a hospital setting.

(Members of the ad hoc pilot project committee come from four institutions and are both union and non-union.)

- At least 50% of the members of the board should be parent-users. Non-parent members of the child care society could have affiliated memberships and would be eligible to sit on the board.

- The child care society establish a liaison with the hospitals in the areas of food services, building maintenance and social work services in which services might be purchased at cost by the child care society.

WOMEN'S WORLD

Women celebrate gains

International Women's Day held March 8 is a traditional time for women to get together not only to celebrate the gains they have achieved but also to press for more reforms.

It is often thought that IWD was the invention of the United Nations when it declared that 1975 was to be International Women's Year. But contrary to popular myth IWD has a long and sometimes turbulent history.

On March 8, 1908 more than 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York City carrying banners demanding equal pay, child care centres, the right to vote and the end to gruesome sweatshop conditions.

Organized by the garment workers who were on strike for better wages, working conditions and union recognition International Women's Day has continued to be celebrated by women around the world.

"These obscure and anxious women of the poor (in New York) with their shawls and kerchiefs over their heads, with worn clothes and shabby shoes, did not know they were making history ... this day became known around the world," wrote labour organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

Two years after the garment workers and their supporters had taken to the streets Clara Zetkin, a German socialist leader, called on the Second International Congress in Copenhagen to establish March 8 as International Working Women's Day. Although March 19 was chosen IWD reverted to March 8 soon afterwards. Other demands at the congress included the right to vote, equality with men in the workplace and opposition to the impending World War I.

A year later more than 30,000 women in Germany and Austria demonstrated in the streets of their cities, towns and villages. When police confronted the marchers to try to take banners away they remained steadfast. Fortunately socialist members of parliament intervened managing to avert a bloody battle.

IWD 1917

Perhaps one of the greatest sparks set off by an IWD march was in Russia in 1917. Textile workers in St. Petersburg went on strike demanding bread, an end to Tsarist Russia and an end to the war. At the time such demands were considered to be nothing less than revolutionary by the Russian authorities.

In order to garner support the striking textile workers called on the metal workers' union to march with them. By the end of the day 90,000 people were demonstrating in the streets despite the threat of jail or worse, death at the hands of the army and police.

On March 8, 1981 women around the world will once again be marching in parades to highlight their concerns and their demands for better daycare, for equal pay for work of equal value, and for recognition of their work as contributing members to society.

There's one advertisement that tells us: "you've come a long way, baby."

Well, we may have come a long way from the days of our great grandmothers but we still have a long way to go. Daycare is still needed; equal pay is needed; no discrimination based on sex is still needed. And until these other things are achieved and entrenched in our society then we still have a long way to go, indeed.

Bad faith bargaining

continued from page 3

The hearing concluded with lengthy legal arguments from UNA's lawyer, Jim Robb, and Hardisty's lawyer, Brian Thompson.

Robb introduced numerous decisions by Labour Relations Boards across Canada which "defined the parameters of good faith in bargaining."

Among the cases cited was the recent controversial decision by the Ontario Labour Relations Board which found that Radio Shack Ltd. had refused to bargain in good faith with the union representing its employees. In the Radio Shack case, the company was ordered to make a complete proposal for a col-

lective agreement, and to post an apology to its employees for its behaviour.

In the Hardisty case, UNA asked the Board to order the company to make a complete contract offer including some specific proposals which the union contended were necessary to remedy the alleged violations.

On behalf of Hardisty: Thompson argued that the company had not failed to bargain or engaged in "surface bargaining" as Robb had argued. Rather the company had simply engaged in "hard bargaining".

At the hearing, no evidence was entered on the company's behalf.

CORRECTIONS CORRECTIONS

It was incorrectly reported in the *UNA Newsbulletin* (Dec. issue) in the article entitled *AFL president urges UNA to affiliate*: that "delegates instructed the executive board to pose some questions regarding the AARN's position on the desirability of baccalaureate degrees". This motion was defeated by delegates attending the *UNA Annual Meeting*.

Reported in the same article that "delegates also endorsed a motion calling for an investigation into the feasibility of establishing a refresher course to facilitate inactive nurses in the community into upgrading their skills...". Delegates also defeated this motion.

We apologize for any inconvenience that these errors may have caused UNA members.

Contract Clips:

Name game played

In what appears to be a move by hospitals to remove head nurses from the bargaining units and from UNA, head nurses across the province are being informed that they are unilaterally being reclassified.

Without any consultation with the nurses involved the hospitals have not only changed their job titles but have also informed them that they will no longer be members of UNA.

Obviously, the impact of removing head nurses from the union will be to weaken UNA in the event of another strike. On a daily basis the move will diminish the strength implied by having head nurses along with duty nurses in the same union.

The Alberta Labour Act (Section 50) provides grounds for challenging what appear to be attempts by the hospitals to undermine the union.

Currently, the locals at Cold Lake and High Prairie have challenged the hospitals' actions. As well determinations at Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray are being sought.

If any other locals are facing reclassification of head nurses they should contact their Employment Relations Officer.

Unionist wins environment award, suspension

TORONTO (CPA) — Ken Willet said no. In some ways it was just that simple. He said no to an instruction from a supervisor who told him to send some 80 tons of chemical pulp stock sluicing down through a sewer pipe into the Little Cascapedia River near the community of New Richmond in the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec, on Chaleur Bay.

Because he said no, Consolidated Bathurst Incorporated, for which he works, suspended him and fined him a day's pay last summer and put on his record a written notice of his failure to co-operate.

And because he said no, Ken Willet has been named Canada's first official environmental hero as winner of the first annual environment award (labour category).

The Canadian Paperworkers' Union Local 574, which represents Ken Willet, filed a grievance on his behalf as soon as he was suspended. They asked that the written notice on his record be withdrawn, that he be paid his wages for the day he was suspended, and that in future employees not be asked to perform similar tasks.

The grievance against the company is now at the third stage, about midway through

the appeal procedure to rectifying justice. The processing of the grievance has been suspended because when the matter came to public attention, the lawyer for the Quebec Environment Ministry got in an action against the company and that matter is still before the courts in Quebec.

But although the legalities of the problem are still unresolved, and although Ken Willet still does not have his day's pay, his action has prompted corrective measures at the Consolidated Bathurst New Richmond mill. Local union leaders say their effluent disposal system, while not perfect, has improved.

And it happened because Ken Willet, for 15 years a member of the Canadian Paperworkers' Union, simply said "no".

"If you work in a mill for 15 years, you see pollution firsthand. Eventually you have to do something about it," he said.

In Oct., the award was presented to Willet by Environment Minister John Roberts at a special ceremony in conjunction with a conference on environmental challenges for the '80s, organized by the National Survival Institute in co-operation with the Social Science Federation of Canada. Canada.

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EXTRA, EXTRA

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READ ALL ABOUT IT

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