

WORKING WHEN THE HEAT'S ON (P6)

Solidarity Times

50¢

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AN UNEASY TRUCE

**SETTLEMENT
SPARKS DEBATE
(PAGES 3, 4, 5)**

**MUTILATION! GRISLY
GOODIES! LASER -
SENSOR BURP GUNS!
BORING! (P15)**

**WOMEN AGAINST THE
BUDGET SPEAK OUT
A SPECIAL INSERT**

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10/26/84



BCGEU chief negotiator Cliff Andstein announces 'no concessions' contract settlement November 13.



**THE
FORGOTTEN
STRIKE
(PAGE 7)**

This Week

Back from brink

By Stan Persky

School teachers in North Vancouver had initiated and ratified a model seniority agreement. The North Vancouver school board, which had proposed the deal at the urging of Jack Heinrich's education ministry, had also initialed the document.

With less than 24 hours to go before a Tuesday, Nov. 8 deadline that could see 30,000 B.C. teachers joining 40,000 striking government workers in a fight against Premier Bill Bennett's right-wing legislative package, it appeared that partial peace was but a hair's breadth away.

High on the list of objections to the government's so-called restraint program was Bill 3, a law that wiped out seniority rights for the pro-

vince's public sector workers and left them prey to firing at will. The erosion of workers' rights, as well as attacks on human rights, social spending, and democratic decision-making had led to the formation of an unprecedented Solidarity Coalition of trade unions and community groups. On Nov. 1, the B.C. Government Employees Union had hit the bricks on the seniority question. Now, a week later, teachers were due to join the protest.

However, there was still a chance to pull back from the brink. If the government was willing to exempt public sector workers from Bill 3, the protests might be called off, and another way found to negotiate other contentious issues. The teachers' agreement was the key.

Sometime after the eleventh hour, the North Van school board called the education ministry for the final okay. Don't sign, said the ministry. Later in the week, provincial secretary Jim Chabot and education minister Heinrich both vigorously denied they had pulled the plug. Heinrich even pounded the table for emphasis. Despite the denials, the evidence pointed the other way. North Van board vice-chairman Roy Dungey said there were "lots of calls back and forth to the minister's office" before the trustees decided not to ratify the agreement. Other trustees backed up Dungey's account. So much



Government workers get support on Robson Square picket line.

for Heinrich's hands-off claims.

The question was not whether the government had squelched the ceasefire (it had), but why? Did Bennett and his chief negotiator Norman Spector believe the teachers' protest would quickly fizzle, given that only 60 per cent of the school teachers had voted to walk out? Or, as Province analyst Rod Mickleburgh asked, "Otherwise, why would the government turn its back on the relatively small concession required, when the price for saying 'no' is potentially the most wrenching confrontation this province has ever seen?" Did Bennett and company think the teachers would be Opera-

tion Solidarity's weak link?

The next morning, Nov. 8, it got its answer. Joined by 14,000 non-teaching members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, college instructors and unionized university support staff, the teachers shut down more than 80 per cent of the school system. From Prince Rupert to Revelstoke, from Fort St. James to Nanaimo, schools closed.

A middle of the night rush to the courts by various school districts seeking injunctions against the protesters had little effect. Where teachers were prevented from picketing, other unionists staffed the lines. Operation Solidarity's "phase two" was a near-total

success, and to many observers, more than a slight surprise. For the remainder of the week, schools and colleges remained non-operational. The number of those out protesting, in fact, grew during the week as many school principals joined the walkout.

Meanwhile, at the Labor Relations Board, where the B.C. Government Employees Union had been bargaining with the government for more than a week, there was a brief and bitter pause in the talks. The government's man, Spector, accused the BCGEU of holding "a hidden agenda." Chief union negotiator Cliff Andstein categorically denied Spector's charges. "The

See page 12: BRINK

THE B.C. GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET LEGISLATION PACKAGE:

LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ERODE THE RIGHTS OF EVERY CITIZEN...

Loss of basic democratic rights, elimination of local decision-making, and cuts in needed social services are the common features of the government's plan. Some examples:

Human Rights Repealed

Bill 27 would repeal the Human Rights Code and replace it with a statute that fails to protect against many forms of discrimination, and has no effective enforcement procedures or education program. Already the government has fired the Human Rights Commission and human rights branch employees.

Renters' Protection Ended

Under Bill 5, renters would be subject to eviction without cause and unjustified rent increases. Rent review and the rentalsman are eliminated — leaving tenants without protection.

Social Services Cut — Everywhere

Almost no area has escaped the inhuman "down-sizing" of vitally needed community services. Among the programs cut or eliminated: child-abuse teams; family service workers; legal aid; grants to the handicapped; consumer counselling; funding for community health groups; the list goes on and on. Bill 24 undercuts Medicare; Bill 8 disbands the Alcohol and Drug Commission; Bill 9 eliminates regional planning.

Basic Employment Rights Eliminated

Bill 3 would give government wide, arbitrary powers to fire employees, without real cause and without real appeal rights. All semblance of employment security is eliminated. Public employees face permanent wage controls which allow the government to end real collective bargaining by simply setting budget levels. Bill 26 takes away the guarantee of even minimum employment standards for all employees, and abolishes the Employment Standards Board.

And Taxes Go UP!

The budget puts new taxes on meals and long-distance calls, and raises tobacco and minimum property tax payable. Ironically, the social services tax is raised! Renters' and personal tax credits are eliminated — as are the minimal "price" controls: the 6 per cent rate increase for B.C. Hydro and other public corporations is ended. Overall government spending is up over 12%!

A BUDGET THAT ALARMS EVERY PERSON CONCERNED WITH EDUCATION...

All those who teach, all those who learn, and all those whose children's future depends on the quality of B.C.'s public education system, have special cause for concern. Here are some of the reasons:

Larger Classes in Public Schools

The government has consciously decided to put the quality of education back 10 years. School boards will have three years to eliminate 3,000 teaching positions, fire support staff, and cut \$80 million from present budgets — at a time when enrolment is growing! Returning to the days of over-sized classes, when today's students need more attention than ever, creates damage that can't be repaired.

No Room at the Universities and Colleges

The government proposes to starve universities to the extent that, for the first time, enrolment limits will mean that fully qualified students are turned away. All post-secondary educational institutions — universities, colleges and technical institutes — face cuts of needed programs, teaching, and non-teaching staff, as well as increased class sizes.

Education Decisions Centralized

Bill 6 means that politicians in Victoria — not locally elected school boards — will control key education decisions until 1987. School board budgets will be set by Victoria, based on centralized formulae, not local needs. Similarly, Bills 19 and 20 would allow a cabinet minister to decide what courses will be given at our regional colleges and institutes. All community and school board representation is removed from college councils.

Student Aid Cut

While tuition fees are rising between 15 and 50 per cent, and it is next to impossible to find summer work, the government has cut \$10 million from student grants. New rules make aid unavailable to those who need it most.

Educators Could be Fired at Whim

Bill 3 would allow the indiscriminate firing of teachers, college instructors, and university professors no matter how long they have taught, how well they have taught, or how important their program is. There would be no appeal on the merits of these firings, leaving wide possibilities for abuse of these sweeping powers.

"This is NOT about 'Restraint' — This is about losing our RIGHTS"

A Message from the B.C.
Teachers' Federation



NEWS

Time for talking

By Keith Baldrey

Solidarity union leaders are happy about the B.C. Government Employees Union's contract, but they're taking a wait and see approach to Operation Solidarity's agreement with Premier Bill Bennett.

About 250 union leaders gathered in Burnaby Nov. 14 to hear the details of both agreements, and sources inside the meeting said there was plenty of "restrained criticism" of the deal with Bennett.

But International Woodworkers of America regional president Jack Munro, who made the deal with the premier, said he is confident the government will take the consultation process seriously and that the deal will produce results.

"I don't think you can trust Socreds," said Munro after the meeting. "But I think that Bennett will not renege on the deal we made. It's not a total victory, but it's not over yet."

Solidarity chief and B.C. Federation of Labor president Art Kube said he did not consider the agreement to be a major victory, but said it was the best deal possible at this time. "Expectations are always high in a fight like this. But sometimes difficult decisions have to be made," he said.

Kube said he hopes the government is serious about the consultations. "I hope the government will be forthcoming, I hope they're serious. I will recommend to the Solidarity Coalition that they make their presentations as quick as possible."

But Solidarity's leaders warned of further job action if the consultation process fails. They said the process will be reviewed at the B.C. Federation of Labour's annual meeting Nov. 28.

"We'll re-examine the whole thing in two weeks. We don't have an absolute settlement. The strike has been suspended," said Larry Kuehn, president of the B.C. Teachers Federation.

Kuehn said it is up to the government to bargain in good faith, and said the deal produced "substantial gains" for his membership and for the province. "We had to find a way to accommodate everyone, and to allow us all to live together."

But not all union leaders were confident the consultation process will work. "The



Media hounds howl at settlement announcement.

BCGEU agreement is about all that was accomplished. The community groups have been let down," said Jim Sloan, president of the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada. "The job isn't finished. But we'll all keep together because you can't fight by yourself."

Jess Succamore, spokesperson for the Confederation of Canadian Unions and a former member of Operation Solidarity's steering committee said, "There's no settlement. The whole mobilization was basically a fight to have the government move on the social issues. It appears now that, after all the fears that the labor movement would look out for itself and turn its back on the old people, the poor people, the handicapped and the sick, have come to pass."

At press time, the exact details of the agreement had not been made public, but according to the B.C. Teachers Federation, the pact includes:

- Education funding for 1984 at levels close to 1983 levels.
- The development of a rent review process to replace the office of the Rentalsman.
- The restoration of Community Involvement Program grants for handicapped people, through 1984.
- Amnesty for provincial employees and a commitment to urge other public sector employers to provide the same.

The BCGEU's settlement exempt its members from Bill 3, the Public Sector Restraint Act. The government assured Operation Solidarity that similar protection will be extended to most public sector workers. If those exemptions are granted, most layoffs in the public sector will have to be based on seniority.

Teachers will have to negotiate their status under Bill 3 with individual school boards. Already, the Surrey school district has refused to waive the legislation for their teachers.

Coalition upset

By Keith Baldrey

Anger, shock and disappointment.

Those were the general reactions of Solidarity Coalition members to the agreement reached between Jack Munro and Premier Bill Bennett Nov. 13.

Coalition members said they expected something more concrete than the formation of a consultation process between them and the government.

And they're angry they weren't consulted before Operation Solidarity sent Munro to Kelowna to strike a deal with the premier.

"We want to be treated as equal, not as battered wives," said Women Against the Budget spokesperson Stella Crampton at a stormy Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition membership meeting Nov. 14.

Operation Solidarity leaders said later they regretted the lack of consultation.

"The agreement settled the labor end of the issues, but it didn't settle ours," said Shane Simpson, coordinator of the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition, after the meeting.

"I'm shocked and disappointed," said Tim Stanley of the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism, a Coalition member. "There was an appalling lack of consultation with the Coalition before the deal was made."

Although the meeting was closed to the media, sources said Operation Solidarity executives Art Kube and Mike Kramer were jeered repeatedly by the 350 people packed into the union hall.

"I don't think I sold out the coalition," Kube told the crowd. "I called the shots as I saw them and as the steering committee saw them. This wasn't an easy decision to make."

Kube defended Operation Solidarity's leadership and said they could negotiate only union issues, and not social issues.

The two most contentious pieces of legislation, in the eyes of the Coalition, are Bill 5, which abolishes the Rentalsman's office and lifts rent controls, and Bill 27, which replaces the Human Rights Commission with a one-person board of inquiry.

Kube told the meeting he didn't think a further escalation of the public sector strike would result in the withdrawal of any legislation. "Some people think that we should have stayed out until the legislation was withdrawn. That was not the case."

Earlier in the day, Munro told reporters outside an Operation Solidarity membership meeting that "what we had on the table didn't justify calling out workers again."

Kube's comments did not appease those who were upset about the lack of consultation with the Coalition before Operation Solidarity made the deal with the premier.

"There was obviously a lack of democracy involved in the negotiations," said Stephen Learey of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Kramer told reporters outside the meeting that despite the "disagreement" between the two Solidarity groups, the Solidarity movement will not fall apart, and said there will be more communication between the two groups in the future.

"As much as don't agree on everything, we're still alive and well. We recognize that each other is not the enemy," he said. "We made an error not consulting the coalition enough. We learned a lesson."

And while the Coalition is critical of Operation Solidarity's agreement with the government, and the way it was made, they vow to continue their fight against the restraint legislation.

The meeting unanimously endorsed a statement calling for consultation backed by "mass political pressure directed against the government," and said any consultation must "serve as a mechanism for further mobilization" of the Coalition's forces.

Publicly at least, the Coalition is saying they are willing to wait and see if the consultation process has the desired effects, before taking stronger action.

"We now have to explore the political arena. There will be more consultations," said Ed Lavalle, an LMSC executive. But, he added, "I don't think you can rule out the trade union movement not taking job action in the future."

NEWS

Teachers 'cynical'

Teachers have called a truce with the provincial government. But the war for the "quality of education" is not over, says B.C. Teachers' Federation vice-president Pat Clarke.

"The strike has been suspended. It has not been called off," Clarke said Nov. 15.

"We have pretty high expectations about what's going to happen now. We're expecting the government to make commitments about funding education on a long term basis."

The BCTF claimed substantial wins following the Nov. 13 verbal agreement made in

Kelowna between Premier Bill Bennett and International Woodworkers of America head Jack Munro. They included a promise from Bennett to funnel the \$18 million to \$20 million saved in the teachers' strike back into education funding for 1984 to head off most of a planned \$27 million education budget cut. Several school boards meanwhile negotiated layoff and seniority clauses with teachers to avoid the arbitrary firing permitted by the government's Bill 3.

Clarke said BCTF members are "cynical" about the Nov. 13 pact.

"Given that distrust, they're not going to give it a lot of time to resolve itself. They are probably more prepared than ever to go out and do it again."

"It's a good faith arrangement. We are taking the government at their word and our friends in Solidarity at their word," said Clarke.



Wimpy Roy roars new "General Strike" tune.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

Six hectic months in Lotusland

Here are the highlights of six-and-a-half hectic months in B.C.:

May 5

Premier Bill Bennett and his Social Credit Party are re-elected to a third term in office, defeating Dave Barrett's New Democrats. Despite a four-year record of scandals, an ineffective response to a major recession, and a refusal to bring in a budget, the Socreds increased their margin of seats to 35-22, a gain of four, and share of the popular vote 49-45 per cent, an increase of two per cent. To many, the turning point came when challenger Barrett said he would eliminate Bennett's so-called restraint program.

July 7

After two months of basking in the sun, the cabinet holds a major meeting in the Okanagan and is given economic advice by Michael Walker, head of the right wing Fraser Institute. The government then introduces a startling package of budgetary legislation. Among the bills: proposals to wipe out collective bargaining and seniority rights in the public sector, elimination of the human rights commission and the rentalsman mediating process, heavy cuts in educational funding, elimination of regional planning in favor of speculators, changes in health care, centralization of government power, and a raft of cutbacks in social services.

Mid-July

Public opposition to the extremist Bennett package quickly develops and takes organizational forms. A Lower Mainland Coalition Against the Budget, led by fishermen's union representative George Hewison holds a massive demonstration outside B.C. Place. Operation Solidarity, a coalition of trade unions, also forms, and demonstrates in large numbers in Victoria. By month's end, Solidarity Coalition, bringing together trade unions and community groups has taken shape.

August 10

Solidarity Coalition holds a rally of 45,000 at Empire Stadium in Vancouver to protest the budget package. Similar demonstrations occur throughout the province, in Kelowna, Kamloops, Victoria, Nanaimo, Terrace, and elsewhere.

September-October

While the Solidarity Coalition keeps up the pressure in the streets with weekly demonstrations focused around particular issues and a petition campaign, the NDP opposition in the legislature resists the government's efforts to railroad the bills through the house. NDP MLAs engage in filibustering talkathons and other legal delaying tactics to give Solidarity breathing space to continue the extraparlimentary side of the battle. The government is forced to bring in closure a record 20 times and to hold all-night sittings. NDP leader Barrett is dragged from the house in the middle of the night and barred from further attendance.

October 15

Despite repeated press announcements of the disintegration and death of Solidarity, on the second day of the annual Socred convention at the Hotel Vancouver, more than 50,000 Solidarity supporters take to the streets in the largest political demonstration in the province's history. The march past the Socred convention takes more than two hours. The government is clearly taken aback at the vigor of the protest despite initial denials.

October 20

Premier Bennett takes to television to make a speech that reiterates his determination to "stay the course," and at the same time offers some concessions to those opposed to his package. He invites the B.C. Government Employees Union back to the bargaining table with the promise of an

exemption from Bill 3, and provides vague assurances of consultation on as-yet unpassed legislation.

November 1

Despite 10 days of negotiations, the BCGEU is unable to achieve a contract settlement as their old contract expires. In the course of negotiations, they insisted that the preservation of seniority rights must apply not only to their members, but to all workers in the public sector. Operation Solidarity announces a schedule of escalating public sector walkouts if agreement is not reached. On Halloween midnight, 35,000 BCGEU workers hit the bricks. Talks continue.

November 8

With no resolution in sight, the province's teachers, who had earlier voted 59 per cent in favor of a protest walkout, join the strike. With them are 15,000 college, university, and support staff workers. The teachers' strike, a first in the province, is a surprising success as more than 90 per cent of all schools are shut down.

November 10

Protesting BCGEU members and teachers are joined by Crown corporation employees. Two sets of negotiations are underway, those involving the BCGEU, and another set dealing with the broader demands of Operation Solidarity.

November 13

The BCGEU announces a tentative settlement, a "no concessions" contract that preserves seniority rights. Two school boards, in North Vancouver Coquitlam, also agree to guarantee teachers' seniority rights. B.C. Federation of Labor first vice-president Jack Munro flies to Kelowna for a four-hour meeting with Premier Bennett. With less than 90 minutes to go before the deadline of the next escalation of the strike, Munro emerges to announce an agreement that will end the strike.

General Strike single to be released soon

If you're in the market for souvenirs of these turbulent times, Vancouver taxi-driver Joe Keighly and his friends Brian Goble, Dave Gregg and Gregg James may have something for you. In his guise as Joey Shithead, Keighly sings and plays guitar with a local combo, DOA, who are set to release a 45 RPM record entitled "General Strike" on Nov. 21. The tune is decidedly energetic and up-tempo and expresses the indignation many British Columbians feel with the government. "Stand up, stand and unite," Joe sings, "what we need is a general strike."

Of particular note is the "lightning fingered" guitar playing of Dave Gregg. General Strike is backed by DOA's updating of Old Blue Eyes' standard, "That's Life," wherein Joe waxes philosophical in his best warbling growl. A treat for young and old alike.

There will only be 1,000 copies pressed, so snap yours up quick. DOA will play Cariboo College in Kamloops Dec. 1, to make up for the Nov. 10 date they cancelled because they refused to cross picket lines at the institution. Their next Vancouver date is Dec. 9 at the Commodore Ballroom, where they will be joined by Wailin' Walker and the Houserockers. A 19-song album, "Bloodied But Unbowed," will also appear in December. A DOA profile will appear in the Times in a few weeks.

UBC student leaders to hire scab workers

By Brian Jones

Pickets are down from the 16 entrances to the University of British Columbia, but one still stands around the Student Union Building this week.

Despite the B.C. Government Employees' Union tentative settlement, Alma Mater Society employees were back picketing Monday in an attempt to force the AMS to bargain in good faith. The 11 workers, members of the Office and Technical Employees Union, had asked for a 15 per cent raise but had only been offered five per cent.

And if the AMS management has been less than conciliatory, the student council has been openly contemptuous.

At its last meeting two weeks ago, the council defeated a vote to ban hiring strike breakers. It was then that employees walked off their jobs.

Marnie Craft, an AMS employee, said her feeling about the council vote was "part-way between disappointment and disgust."

"First they vote to support the Solidarity Coalition. And then they try their damndest to break us," she said.

Aside from allowing their management to hire scab labor (which has not actually been done yet), several AMS executive members have been charged by OTEU members with doing scab work themselves. All but one of the five executive members of the AMS have been crossing picket lines to continue working at their SUB offices.

AMS president Mitch Hetman has been particularly active in strike-breaking activities, personally supervising the delivery of goods across picket lines to SUB, OTEU members charged.

The AMS actions will strain relations with their staff after the strike ends, said external affairs coordinator Lisa Hebert. "This is certainly something people can't forget easily."

Though the AMS has been suspended from the Campus Community Alliance, no action has yet been taken against them by the Solidarity Coalition.

"We have not reviewed any issues relating to members' activities," says Coalition volunteer Patsy George. There has not been time to deal with the AMS's actions, she said, though she would "personally" like to put them on the Coalition agenda.

But a Solidarity Coalition meeting was told about the AMS/OTEU conflict, said Hebert. "Everyone was quite surprised, but no one moved a motion to boot the AMS out."

Pickers have also been harassed by AMS programs coordinator Bruce Paisley, who physically threatened several picketers, according to UBC student newspaper The Ubsysey.

When picketers tried, unsuccessfully, to stop the Nov. 7 Gang of Four concert in SUB, Paisley told a picketing member of the pipefitters union: "Why don't you go and find a baseball team and a baseball bat and stick it up your c—?"

Asked Nov. 14 if the report was true, Paisley replied, "For one, she's not in the OTEU."

And two, don't forget there are two sides to every story." Paisley immediately hung up the telephone, however, and refused to give his version of the incident.

But AMS finance director James Hollis says Paisley was being illegally obstructed by the picketers. "Bruce was just trying to carry out his job," Hollis says.

Not all students have been treating the OTEU with such disregard as the student council and AMS executive. Many students have volunteered to help with picket duty, and staff at the student pub, The Pit, have taken up a collection for donations to the OTEU strike fund.

Regional news

When it was over, when agreements were signed and hands shaken, the players were left to tally the results.

Among teachers and government employees and community spokespeople across the province, there were

mingled feelings of goals attained and battles to come. And there was uncertainty, a lot of uncertainty.

Few canvassed by the Times Nov. 14 knew the details or the implications of the agreement between Premier Bill Bennett and woodworkers' union regional head Jack Munro, and none yet knew the details of the tentative contract between the government and its employees' union negotiators.

Few were prepared to trust Bennett though, and many were prepared to walk out again if promises are unkept and changes left unmade in the government's legislation.

Fired human resources worker Peter Threlfall, a coordinator for Solidarity's Kamloops Coalition, explained: "From the union point of view I think they are satisfied with what they got. But in the view of the Solidarity Coalition — and in mine — there are a lot of concerns. There's a feeling that we've got to remain vigilant if these talks

See page 14: DEAL

Bus drivers slam sardine service

By Trish Webb

The Victoria bus sways around the corner from Hastings Street and hisses to a stop. A few people stagger out the rear, but no one is allowed on. The driver stares blankly ahead, waiting for the back doors to clear. He ignores the woman banging on the front and eases his overloaded bus into the late rush hour traffic. Minutes later another bus appears, but the scene is repeated.

This is one of Vancouver's "work horse" routes where buses almost always carry maximum passenger loads. They exist only in the East End. Julius Fisher pilots the Knight-MacDonald route which spans the city: Chinatown, Clarke Drive to 41st Avenue, MacDonald Street to 16th Avenue.

"By the time I hit Campbell Avenue where the sweatshops are, there are groups of 10 or 11 Oriental women, some pregnant, and I'll have to pass them up. The legal passenger limit is 85 people, but you can never tell. I stop picking up when people can't fit behind the red line anymore."

But it's another story on the west side of the city. "It's amazing how many buses and how few people there are on them in Dunbar."

Fisher has been driving buses in Vancouver for 10 years and has enough seniority to demand good working hours and route selection. Others are less fortunate. Bob Smith was hired just two years ago when Metro was planning a new route for King Edward Avenue. Budget cuts stalled their plans, however, and they stopped hiring in January, 1982, leaving Smith near the bottom of the list.

"Drivers used to expect to work the lousy shifts for six months and the situation would improve every six months. Now when someone leaves they don't hire a replacement, they cut service," Smith says.

Without drivers being added to the system, junior employees cannot gain seniority.

When the King Edward expansion was canned, lay-off notices were served to 25 drivers. They threatened to strike. The notices were withdrawn. Service on King Edward was eventually started by pulling drivers from "work horse" runs. Extra buses were added to Tsawwassen routes at the same time.

"I worked on a suburban run for six months this year," Fisher says. "You're picking up 20 to 30 people in a nice plush bus when at the same time there would be 100

people on Commercial Drive in the oldest bus imaginable."

Eight drivers will be pulled from Victoria-Granville and Fraser-Davie at the route sign-up later this month, reducing service by 280 bus hours per week.

"We are operating at the whim of the supervisors, and their whims are frightening," Smith said.

Metro Transit drivers are represented by the Independent Canadian Transit Union, which planned to join escalating strike action in Operation Solidarity's war against provincial government and bring their contract talks into the fray. Their collective agreement expired March 31 and they are just beginning to reconvene negotiations. Talks broke down four months ago in the uncertainty about government labor legislation.

"The mediator checked in on the situation periodically, but our positions remained unchanged," Smith said. "The company wanted to talk about items we do not consider negotiable."

At the last negotiation session the company moved closer to the union with a proposal for speedy arbitration procedures. Instead of waiting months to settle a dispute, an arbitrator would be brought in within days.

This was seen as a major conciliatory gesture by the Metro Transit Operating Company. The union claims Metro is insensitive to workers' needs and deliberately frustrates them. Management accuses the union of adhering overzealously to the collective agreement.

Metro is currently seeking to consolidate parts workers in one union. The Office and Technical Employees' Union represents six parts workers, while the transit union represents 24.

The transit union is applying to have B.C. Transit and Metro Transit considered common employers, which would restrict them from contracting out work. The transit union is appealing the firings of three employees. And seeking a ruling on the seniority rights violations which caused a three-day wildcat strike in North Vancouver this summer.

If arbitration procedures improve, labor-management relations at Metro could improve considerably. If contract talks break down, ICTU might strike.

"If we lose against Metro it won't be any fun driving a bus," says Smith. "The limited amount of control over the work place we now would be completely gone."

ON THE JOB

Fire fighter Mark Holland speaks with John Mackie.

I guess the reason I became a fireman was that I enjoy helping people. It's been something that I've looked for all the time I've been in the job force . . . I thought that if I could do something that would help, well, fine.

I joined in '73. I played soccer with the fireman's soccer club for three years prior to that. It was actually my brother who put me onto joining the fire department. My brother is younger than I am and senior to me on the job.

We work four days on, four days off. Day shifts of 10 hours and night shifts of 14 hours. We're allowed to sleep after 9 p.m. The days are taken up with a daily work schedule, which includes such things as washing floors and waxing floors and washing windows, maintaining the rigs and drilling. Inspections.

On the average in this hall, I guess we get three calls a day. There are other halls in the city that aren't quite this busy. There's 20 halls in the city, and each hall has a specific district it covers. All the districts overlap.

As an example, if we were to take an inhalator call, which we do a considerable amount of (we provide basic life support until the ambulance gets there) we would go in as a single pump. There are three pieces of apparatus out there: one is a truck, one is a pump, and one is the chief's car. The operator would receive a call from 'John Citizen' and saying that we need an inhalator, or that somebody has had a heart attack, and we would be dispatched by our dispatcher to that address.

As the driver of the pump, the first thing that goes through my mind is 'how are we gonna get there?' What time of day is it — i.e., what kind of traffic I might encounter, given the situation and the information given by the operator, what will I do when I get there.

You just generally prepare for what you're going to receive. You don't always know what's gonna happen. As an example, we've been sent to accidents where you come upon them and you think, 'man, there's no way they're going to be alive in this,' and they walk away. There are people who literally just walk away from things like that.

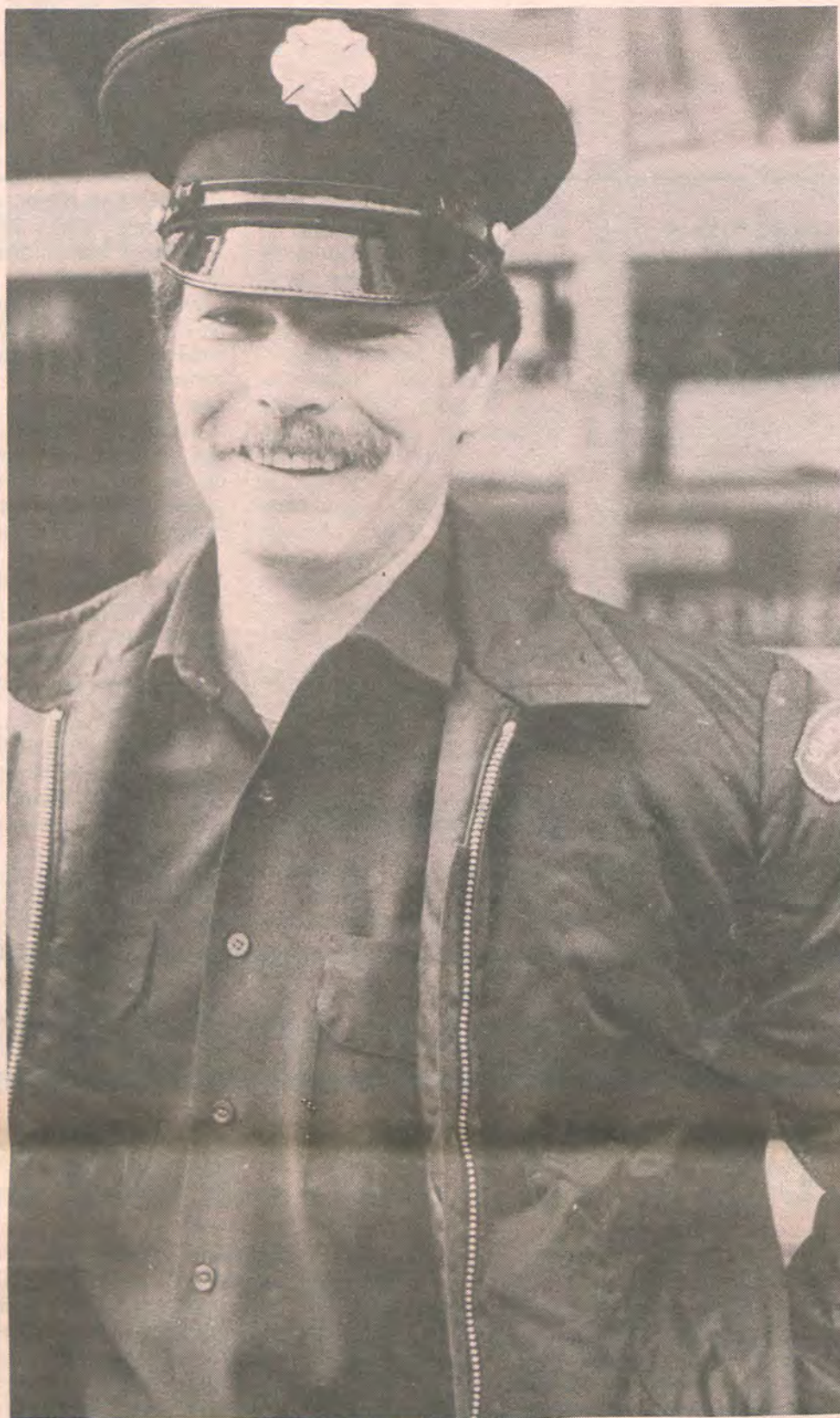
On the other hand, I've seen accidents where things are so innocuous that you would think nothing could happen, and there are people that are dead. You deal with the situation when you get there. That's one of the things I guess you have to say about firemen — they're capable of responding to the situation at hand.

The thing about this job is that you learn from the guys that have been around before you.

When there's an actual fire, I think of what other companies are coming in with us, whether there's life involved, and if there's not life involved, just following the officers' orders, cause that's their job. They'll tell us what we should be doing, and where we should be going, and what exposures they want protected. An exposure is a building that is not on fire, but is exposed to the fire and can be ignited simply by being exposed.

So what we do firstly is protect life, protect the exposures secondly, and extinguish the fire thirdly. That's our priorities.

The fire's already going. There's nothing we can do about that, other than that we will put it out. But we have to protect it from spreading. We have to take into account whether or not there's any life involved, and if



Fire fighter Mark Holland.

BEV DAVIES PHOTO

FIRE FOR DINNER

there is that takes priority.

The most spectacular fire that sticks out in my mind was the King Edward School fire. Hoses everywhere, men everywhere, and lots and lots and lots of time grinding it out, squirting water on it, overhauling it, getting inside the walls so you can make sure it won't spread. In fact, it lost the entire building. Running around inside those old structures, it's pretty tough to chase down a fire.

The most devastating of all the fires I've seen was on the 1100-block Nelson. I had just started the job, been on maybe six months. There were three houses involved — all three-storey homes. What had happened was that

somebody had torched a sofa that was on the front porch of the middle place, around two in the morning I understand. By the time the first-in company arrived, it was hot enough that they couldn't park the rig in front. In fact, it melted all their dome lights, it was that hot. If I remember correctly, there were seven lives lost.

The first place actually burnt right to the ground. It was that involved by the time they got there. The houses, or the exposures on either side of it, were totally destroyed as well, and they couldn't be salvaged. The middle house was just a pile of rubble. That's where I found out, I guess, how much I could take as far as fire is concerned,

and really, you find out when somebody says 'take a line inside that building and try and extinguish it from the inside out', cause that's what a Vancouver fireman does. That's really when you find out what you're made of. Especially when you've only got six months on the job and you're not too sure of yourself anyway.

Most often you'll find that two or three guys man a line. So if you're wandering through a house that's going, you've got two or three guys in there with you. If you're inside, you're really dependent on what's happening on the outside, on them to make sure that they're going to take care of me.

The only thing that goes through my mind is 'put the fire out.' It's that simple. With regard to fighting fire, I am there and committed totally to putting that out, and I will do anything I can to put it out, given the tools that I've got. The only thing that'll really push a guy out is lack of air or too much heat. Other than that, I know all the guys I work with are capable of going into a building and have shown time and time again that they won't back down.

It gets hot enough to blister you real bad. There's one guy had his helmet melt right around his head. That's how hot it gets.

Somebody died when they went up into a fire in an elevator, and for one reason or another the elevator door opened on the fire floor. And when it opened, it wouldn't close. The captain was trapped, the heat was so intense. The smoke was so thick, they didn't know which way to go. You can't stay in the elevator now, you've really got only one choice, you've got to go out and that way or out and that way — left or right.

Two guys guessed right, and the captain guessed wrong. The captain died. The other two guys got burnt, one more than the other 'cause he went back and tried to get the captain.

The fire department's an extremely close-knit organization. You don't just work together on this job. You work together on the job and you play together. You help each other. I guess it's camaraderie, as corny as that might sound. I don't think there's a guy on this job that I don't like. That's a fact. That's pretty good when you can say that about 800 guys. That includes officers.

One of the things this job is based on is seniority. As a firefighter, my officer has been where I am. That's all there is to it. He didn't come right out of school and become an officer. He's been exactly where I am. He's been through his probation, he's been through his training period, he's been through being a firefighter and writing his lieutenant's exams to become a lieutenant, from there to a captain, to a district chief, from district chief to assistant chief to city chief. Everybody has this opportunity, they can go that way. Aspire to be the chief. By that time you're 55 years old, so most guys are looking at their retirement. Mandatory retirement is at age 60, with early retirement at 55.

You've gotta be able to get along on this job. If you're thin-skinned and take exception to somebody poking a little fun at you, hey, you're really gonna be in lots of trouble, you really are, because you'll take offense easily at what anybody says to you.

One of the things that was said to me with regard to getting mad — it's called getting a rack, if you get a rack you're mad . . . I had been out fighting a fire, and when I got back, the dinner that I had made for myself, which happened to be soup, was gobbled up by these

Holding the line on Pandora

By Tom Hawthorn

It was real quiet this Remembrance Day down on Pandora Street, so quiet that shifting seas of dead leaves could be heard rustling in the gutter. They'd whip around in tiny whirlwind pools for awhile, before settling against the lonely trailer parked alongside the curb.

Everything eventually settles around the trailer. It's been here so long it's a permanent part of the street, like the trees, like the grey walls of the factories, like the plastic-covered picket sign leaning against the doors of Mainland Manufacturing.

This was once a thriving harborside neighborhood, where Italian families grew large in wood houses built before the Great War. Those families are long gone now, moved farther south; and the houses are just about gone too, replaced by big blocks of buildings housing Kar Collision Repairs Ltd. and Atom Delivery and Hallmark Poultry Processors, who have "the best dressed birds in town."

The chicken slaughterhouse attracts scores of cats from the docks and this day a tabby has come to settle in the trailer on Pandora. It sleeps in Lorne Hoisington's jacket.

Hoisington has come here from Maple Ridge to do his picket duty on the holiday. With him is Al Wells, 37, who grew up not far from here, lives not far from here, and is now in the undefinable middle of a strike here.

At issue are wages and the length of a new contract. The company wants to end coffee breaks, cut journeymen's wages and—"I guess you can't blame them for that," says Hollington—sign a three-year contract. The union wants to tie pay to the cost-of-living to protect its members, and wants a shorter-term contract in case the long-promised recovery actually happens so that 30 years' worth of benefits aren't eliminated overnight.

The great Industrial Revolution lumbers to its grave, creating casualties on all sides. It is part of a long drama: of producer vs. owner, of poor vs. rich, of (what could once be said without embarrassment) proletariat vs. bourgeoisie, the conflicts have resulted in the bloody strikes of Homestead and Paterson and Winnipeg and Asbestos. But the last happened in '49 and time and prosperity have tempered the emotions that once moved an entire class. This tradition has been inherited by the humble Hoisington and Wells. One line in the script is that no low-down cur can get away with stealing your job.

Wells: "10:30 at night. It was down by the big door. I had my car parked there."

Hoisington: "There was one of us there all night. Either one of us. All night."

Wells: "We'd walked along from about 4 o'clock to 10 and we saw nothing. Nothing."

Hoisington: "We didn't see anybody in the office or anything. We could see (through a window) a couple of guys working, but we didn't see anybody else around. They must have been watching us every minute. About 10:15, we decided to come back into the trailer—it was raining out—and have a game of crib. Then these guys, about 25 minutes after 10, we saw one guy go, and then another. But we didn't know. So we finished one hand and Al says, 'Well, I'm gonna go down and look around.' Just as he was approaching he heard the truck starting up inside."

Wells: "The door was being opened as I walked around the corner. So I jumped into my car and started up. He was rolling the truck out, not making any noise, you know; started it, stalled it. I stalled my car." The chase was on. "The idiot was doing 65 miles an hour on Hastings. Then he gets to the 401, er Highway 1. He musta been doing 80. Somebody came up on the side of the road there and . . ." He throws his hands open. "I eventually lost him somewhere between Cloverdale and Abbotsford, somewhere in there."

That was a week ago and now every roar down Pandora, about one each half hour this day, is checked out. The time is taken up with easy chatter in the crowded little trailer, with its sink and gas stove, two person bed, picket signs,

moved on, working in pulp and paper, then with Alcan in Kitimat, and for the last dozen years as a welder for Mainland in Richmond. He's only got nine years before it's pension time and has got to be worried; but a fellow's personal money concerns are personal and nobody's business except for his wife and unfortunately, maybe his bank manager.

Their cars were late-models some five years ago. They wear big, weathered work boots, blue work shirts and ancient beloved lumber shirts. If they're greedy unionists, they aren't very good at it. They've simply got principles.

Hoisington tells the story of the day a customer pulled up in front of the Pandora Street factory. "You're not going



Al Wells

DEB WILSON PHOTO

About a year ago Mainland made its first layoffs. Eighteen went at first, then more, some more, and more, and pretty soon the foundry was down to 30 workers out of 140.

fold-out table, cribbage board, stack of Times, union newsletters and the litter of a bunch of men who live a working shift inside a camper. A poster of Oahu hangs on the far wall, a bad joke, as is the newspaper clipping headlined: "Picket Line 'Passes'? Poppycock."

About a year ago Mainland made its first layoffs at its main Richmond plant. Eighteen went at first, then more, some more, and more, and pretty soon the foundry was down to 30 workers out of 140. The machine shop went just about the same way. Al Wells was a crane operator in the foundry, moving moulds, but would do anything to keep working: fork-lift driver, filling in for sick guys, "I've even cleaned out the lunch room." But Wells was in the first layoffs and is now on strike to get back on the recall list. No talks are on, none scheduled, and no one expects anything to happen till after Christmas. Wells has three children.

Hoisington came to B.C. with his dad in July, 1944, Oakies of a sort from Swift Current, Sask. He picked fruit for his seventeenth year, then

in there to do business with them, are you? I asked. "No, no," he said. He drove up the alley. They had told him what door to stop at. So by the time I got to his car, they were loading grates, small grates, about this wide and so long," he said, moving his hands about.

"I asked him what he was doing there. I told him, 'You're crossing a picket line. That's bad business.'"

"This is for my private house."

"I don't care what it's for, there's other places that make 'em, and you, you go gettem at another place."

"One of the company guys sees; he gives me a real bad time. Says, 'What's the matter with you, you bunch of radicals,' he says. 'You don't want to work anyways. Why don't you leave our customers alone! If you hassle him any, I'm going to call the police.' He was really chewing me out . . ."

Hoisington looked up. "That really got me when he said we don't want to work anyway . . . Bunch of radicals, he says." He chuckled softly, shaking his head.

"Radicals," repeated Wells, rolling his eyes.

two other clowns who were left behind. They didn't honestly feel that I was coming back because we were there most of the night. It really wasn't their fault, but I was as hot as a pistol, and I caught them both eating the soup, just like two rats. And after about 15 minutes of me hootin' and hollerin', screamin' and yellin' and calling them complete idiots, everybody else was laughing at me. Everybody. The entire hall, 11 guys, laughing at me. And eventually, I had to laugh too.

There's no point in staying mad, you've got to work with the guys. You have to live with them . . . not like you used to have to in the past, when you had to spend 20 hours in the hall, which is really living with the guys . . . but for all intents and purposes, you are in a living situation and you've got to get along. So there's no point in creating bad feelings over something as silly as a bowl of soup.

If a guy tries to get to you, and that happens on this job if you're sensitive about a particular issue, then guys'll hound you, that's all there is to it. That's the name of the tune, they bug you just for the fun of it. Gives you something to do. And if they can get you — it's fun.

The job can be satisfying. I've been elated to the point where I can't stand myself, because of just seeing a patient come around. Putting out fire is, especially if we make a good save, extremely satisfying. Especially if we see somebody's stuff not shredded in a thousand pieces. Getting back to the one save that I can think of . . . it was an inhalator call over by Little Mountain. An inhalator is like an ambulance — it's basic life support. What happens is John Q. Public phones and says my wife has had a heart attack, send an inhalator.

We were phoned up as the closest firehall to this gentleman who had had a heart attack. As well, our rescue-and-safety squad came along. The ambulance was also called on emergency and they sent paramedics. So you have four pieces of apparatus coming to that particular guy. When we got there the man was unconscious — supine, and not breathing. He was gone. That's all there was to it.

We started our work on him — basic cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, did what we could for the man, called for R and S (rescue and safety) emergency, found out they were en route . . . EHS arrived, took a look at him and jumped in. We still continued to work as a complete unit, the whole batch of us. They called for the paramedic emergency. Our rescue and safety squad arrived on the scene. A police officer arrived on the scene. The paramedics arrived on the scene.

Count the guys — there's two from the paramedics, two from the EHS, four guys from the pump, a police officer, and three guys from rescue and safety, and we're all doing something for this guy.

We had to work on this guy . . . it must have been for 45 minutes. We'd get a rhythm, and then we'd get nothing. We'd get a rhythm and then we'd get nothing. And eventually, the guy . . . by the time we left him, he was responding to stimulus, pain. For instance, you could pinch him and he'd flinch, which indicates no brain damage. He was in sinuous rhythm of his own accord and breathing with a good steady rhythm. And I understand this man is still alive today. Now I gotta tell you, I was . . . there's just no other feeling like it. That's the part of the job that makes it good for me.

EDITORIAL

Strike's end: did Bennett bend?

In the wake of the strike's end, two things can be said with some confidence amidst the uncertainties concerning the details of the settlement.

First, and most obviously, the fightback against Bill Bennett's right wing package of legislation and social service cuts is far from over. Those

who have supported the Solidarity movement during the past four months will be carefully watching the developments of the next two weeks, as a new round of meetings and "meaningful" consultations unfold. Labor leaders Mike Kramer, Jack Munro, Cliff Andstein and Larry

Kuehn have all indicated that the social-political issues that go beyond strict trade union rights matters will not be forgotten and must be satisfactorily resolved.

Within the Solidarity Coalition, it is a certainty that there will be long and vigorous debate, on the settlement, on the procedures leading to it, and on the outcomes. Within a broad and unprecedented democratic movement, that's as it should be. It can be expected that there will be criticisms and arguments. Those to whom they are directed should make a real effort to hear them. If criticisms are accepted in an open way, then the coalition will have a future. And it needs one. For clearly, we are engaged in a wide-ranging social dispute over the nature of the community we will be living in during the coming years. The coalition provides a forum for trade unions and community groups to develop unified positions on how to conduct that argument. It should continue to exist. To do so will require good will and an ability to see the broader picture.

Second, without in any way being an apologist for the tentative settlement, it is important to make a provisional assessment of the positive things that occurred during the strike.

The movement of working people and community groups in B.C. was not defeated in any way. If Bennett and his advisers thought that the B.C. Government Employees Union strike

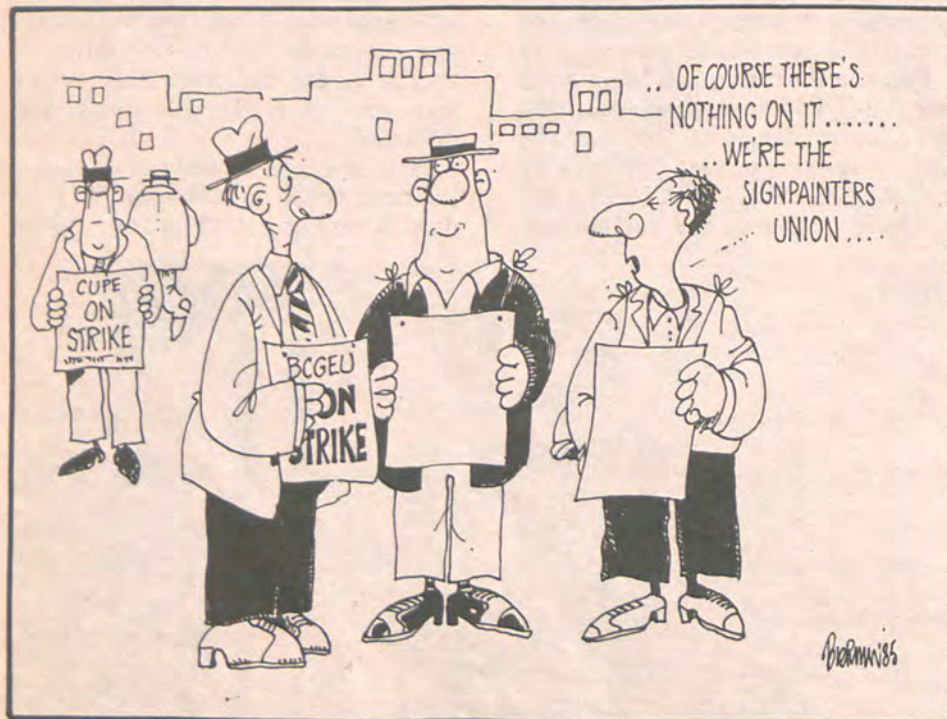
would crack or that the protest of teachers would fizzle, they were wrong.

The BCGEU succeeded in defeating the government's intention to fire 1,600 picked-at-random workers. It succeeded in defending the principle of seniority, as did all other public sector workers. Bennett may have Bill 3 on the books, but like Bill 2, it is inoperative. BCGEU chief negotiator Cliff Andstein's assessment that he signed a "no concessions" contract does not appear to be off the mark.

Other specific concerns await further developments. However, if at the end of the debate, we find ourselves with a recognizable and effective human rights commission, if we have a landlord-tenant mediation process that works, if educational funding is not reduced to the levels announced by the government, if adequate health care is preserved, and if certain social services, slated to be cut back, such as the \$50 a month CIP grant, are restored, it would be hard to describe the outcome as other than a success for Solidarity. Of course, those are many "ifs," and they're big ones.

If, however, the results are close to the expectations outlined above, then, from the national perspective, it will be clear that Bill Bennett, no matter how often he hoists the tattered flag of false restraint, has backed down, and significantly. And the rest of the country will be in no doubt as to the reasons.

BIERMAN



COMMON SENSE

Amway con game pitch not the whole story

By George Victor

Amway advertising urges viewers to "get the whole story." Last week, Canadians got a bit more of the story when Amway pleaded guilty to defrauding the Canadian government of \$28 million. Here's how they operate in British Columbia.

While thousands of workers in B.C. staffed picket lines, about 3,500 polyester-suited British Columbians gathered at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Nov. 5 to experience an orgy of "positiveness" about the virtues of retailing according to Amway.

Amway, or the American Way, is a U.S.-based pyramid-like selling scheme that retails soap, cook ware and vitamins. Individual retailers induce people to sell soap on a person-to-person basis, receiving a percentage of each sale. The larger the network, the greater the income collected by the original individual retailer. Amway corporation is at the apex, profiting from every box of soap and bottle of

vitamins sold, while it provides detailed guidance within a highly structured and hierarchical framework that has participants striving to become Emerald, Diamond, Crown or Ambassador distributors.

The basic economic relationship in Amway is that between a very small number of wealthy distributors who live off the profits earned by the labor of a large mass of part-time local retailers and those, usually middle-income couples, who earn those profits. That few of these retailers will attain the top level is a truism that Amway works hard at concealing by staging mass rallies such as the one at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

The audience of mostly middle-aged couples from all parts of B.C. paid \$9 each for the privilege of being told today's Amway is "bigger and better than ever" over and over again in a thick U.S. accent by an overweight, smiling master of ceremonies who was clearly a graduate of the Moral Majority school of oration. Speaker after

speaker stressed the positive nature of "the business" and hammered away at the idea that "Amway is the key to freedom, happiness, control of our lives and a return to basic freedoms and values." Asked the M.C.: "How could it be otherwise in an organization that includes Pat Boone, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta and a Republican Congressman?"

The testimonials were punctuated by a well-scrubbed group of young musicians, The Momentums, who sang about trust, faith and riches. Except for some of the lyrics, they could have been singing background at a Pat Boone Bible service.

The rally headliners were Jim and Nancy Dornan, Amway Crown Distributors and millionaires from Orange County, California. Following the standard opening one-liners about how Canadians say "eh" and the greenness of the B.C. landscape, they launched into a well-rehearsed, tight sales pitch. Their arguments were familiar Moral Majority views about the "evils of the state" and the need

for a "return to the individual initiative that made this country great."

By this time the audience was whipped up to a frenzy of "positive" enthusiasm and greeted each speaker and stale joke with a standing ovation while the theme from "Rocky" blared from the Queen E. sound system. Tales of instant millionaires, mansions in Hawaii, chauffeured Cadillacs and travel schedules that included 13 trips to Hawaii in 15 months, elicited gaspingly envious ovations. Each member of the crowd was vicariously enjoying the Amway fables and believed that they too would soon be rich if only they had enough faith in "the business."

At the end of the program, an exhausted but smiling crowd saw Jim Dornan bow his head and, in a solemnly sincere voice, look straight at the assembled faithful and declare that "God believes that you all deserve to be wealthy because you're all real good people and you know what to do with it."

George Victor is a Vancouver writer.

Solidarity Times

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Solidarity Times is a politically independent weekly newspaper that supports the aspirations of Solidarity Coalition, trade unions, workers, women, ethnic minorities, native people, the handicapped, pensioners, social service recipients, gays and lesbians, tenants, defenders of human rights, environmental and peace activists, consumers, students, artists, and religious people seeking a socially relevant church. It is published by a non-profit society and is not the spokesperson or official organ of any organization.

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GOU

Put it in Writing

Labor vet says cover work risks

Enclosed please find a cheque for \$50 to pay for a year's subscription and some for the sustaining fund. When my old age pension is increased, I'll send you more.

During the past 55 years I have been a member of: auto workers, building workers, coal workers, shipyard workers, a forest workers organizer and the Relief Camp Workers Union. All those years I have urged unions to establish and maintain one publication where we could find out what is going on amongst the working people of Canada. How many Canadians, or even British Columbians, know that over 70 workers are killed in our forests and lumber industry each year? Many, many more are injured. And how many are killed and injured in the coal mines, gold mines and other working places?

Each time that a worker gets killed or injured, we should have a photo and the story about his or her life in *Solidarity Times* — for these are important heroes who are risking their lives that the rest of us may live a more abundant life. All we read and hear in the profit makers' media is about the high cost of labor,



Readers write: don't shortsell Cruise demo.

very seldom about the risks involved.

One criticism: your story deliberately minimized the Oct. 22 anti-Cruise missile demonstration (*Times*, Oct. 26). The march, extending about two miles, was condensed to two young women walking side by side. My family and I marched there along with thousands of B.C. *Solidarity* supporters.

Al Grinkus
Vancouver

No surprise

It should come as no surprise to VanCity members that its majority right-wing board joined the Fraser Institute and then reaffirmed its membership when complaints were laid by the Lower Mainland *Solidarity* Coalition.

It has been the practise of this board to hold clandestine closed meetings, cutting off the democratic process for its 126,000 members. Had we

been able to attend meetings I doubt whether such blatant irresponsibility could have occurred without at least members expressing their opinion on such a serious matter.

The only opportunity for members to currently express their concerns and to even pretend to have a say is by writing to the board hoping that their concern will be looked at—even then, there is no guarantee. I urge members to honor the boycott but to retain their shares so they can vote in the spring elections.

Susan Harris
Vancouver

Regimen

Continue your good work. Here's the "New Bennett Super-Socred Weight Loss Diet and Exercise Program:"

Eat all you can afford of the following food group: macaroni, spaghetti, rice, potatoes, home-made split-pea soup, beans, and hand-outs from the overstrained food bank. Fee free to use any other cheap source of starches.

You will lose weight.

Get lots of exercise whenever you can, attending protest marches, rallies, and walking on the picket line.

When your pants get baggy, replace them from the Sally Ann.

Above all, vote Socred, so you can continue to follow this miracle regimen.

Success absolutely guaranteed, or your tenure back.

David S. West
Vancouver

I ask you

Now I ask you: who in their right mind would be interested in a listing of "proletarian" novels from obscure foreign countries compiled by someone out of "some sort of highbrow" U.S. university who threw away an academic job because he thought writing "would change the world" but wound up pushing a hack? ("Is Albanian Fiction Interesting?", review of Rolf Knight's *Traces of Magma*, *Times*, Nov. 2)

Laughable! Surely this isn't the same Rolf Knight, son of immigrant migrant workers, who grew up in and later worked off and on for a decade in the work camps of B.C.? I suspect that that guy's books are intended as a memorial to a people who are immortal.

By the way — Albanian fiction isn't especially interesting which may be why only one out of 360 pages in *Traces of Magma* deals with it. Soviet literature is quite fascinating, but no more so than the greater number of Canadian and U.S. books described in that guide to left wing literature.

A. Draegerman
Draegerman Books
Burnaby

MEDIA PATROL

Marjorie in Mexico: don't drink bathwater

By Stan Persky

About a week before the B.C. Government Employees Union launched Phase One of Operation *Solidarity*'s massive protest against Bill Bennett's extremist legislative program, Marjorie Nichols, the *Sun*'s chief provincial political columnist, decided the dispute was over.

"Attempts are being made to convince us that a general strike by the foes of restraint remains an ominous possibility. Well, it just ain't so," Nichols confidently predicted Oct. 26. "The odds are overwhelmingly against a remounting of the bitter and divisive debate that has rocked the province," the crystal-ball gazing Nichols reported to avid and anxious readers.

The rest is history.

Perhaps Nichols was miffed that the Delphic Oracle Award for accurate political forecasting was slipping from her grasp. Unfortunately, "the actual events had the audacity to prove her totally wrong," as one correspondent to the *Sun* noted last week, while 80,000 protesters picketed everything from schools to the Queen's Printer. Clearly, hell hath no fury like a columnist scorned by reality.

Whatever the reason, once the strike was on, Nichols went wonky, unleashing a stream of invectives against government employees, teachers and even fellow reporters (who refused to cross picket lines) during Week One of the protest. Of course, she wasn't alone. A rat-a-tat-tat of *Sun* editorials could find nothing just in the strikers' cause, and little re-

quiring concession in the government's hard-line. And in case readers didn't get the message, there was a corps of second-string columnists including: Denny Boyd, Pete McMartin, and the thinking readers' Jim Keegstra (Les Bewley) to bring up the rear.

Meanwhile, the working press at the *Sun* provided the actual facts with consistent skill. Across the aisle at the Southam Press conglomerate, the Province was more moderate than the *Sun* editorially, and its front-line reporters were probably as conscientious as their *Sun* counterparts, but it was difficult to tell since the Province, in its bright, new, illiterate tabloid form, doesn't allow reporters to write more than nine paragraphs at a time. Nonetheless, the morning daily did suffer a small staff revolt. When a Nov. 8 editorial denounced teachers for "a disgraceful betrayal of the children," 45 Province editorial staffers signed a letter "dissociating" themselves from the editorial.

However, it wasn't until Week Two of the *Sun*'s strike coverage that columnist Nichols dipped into the pure vitriol at the bottom of her inkwell. In a column on Wednesday, Nov. 9, headlined (in part of the three-star edition press run) "Solidarity goons perpetrating terrorism," Nichols let loose.

Among the temperate tidbits to be found (mostly aimed at *Solidarity*) included: "a guerrilla force bent on destruction"; "blackmailed by an unelected and irresponsible force"; "goon tactics of *Solidarity*"; "idiotic

act of terrorism . . . Peace through bombing? Kick the weak to help them?"; "the morons who run the BCTF"; "nothing more or less than attempted anarchy"; "blackmailing street brawlers." Had enough?

By contrast, nice Mr. Jim Matkin, president of the B.C. Employers Council (the man who likened a mild-mannered demonstration against human resources minister Grace McCarthy to the tactics of the KKK) was portrayed as a fellow "given to restrained statements."

Having torched her thesaurus with an acetylene flame, analyst Nichols then sailed off on a 10-day holiday in Mexico (she'll be back Nov. 21, unless you decide to contribute to a fund to extend her visit until spring).

Even *Sun* editorial-page editor Frank Rutter seemed slightly embarrassed when I called him last week. Rutter took one look at the "Solidarity goons perpetrating terrorism" headline rolling off the presses and gave the order to change it to "Solidarity perpetrating terrorism." "Goons" was going too far; "terrorism" was apparently okay. Blessed be fair-minded editors.

"Sometimes we change heads," mumbled Rutter when I asked him why he revised. He wouldn't be pressed, however. "I don't know that I want to say anymore." Did Rutter think that Nichols had gone a teensy-weensy bit too far? "Well, it's her opinion. I'm not in the business of censoring her opinions," he replied. He only censors her headline writer's opinions.

Sun temporary civic columnist Peter McMartin was equally reticent on the merits of his colleague's work. McMartin had come to the *Times* newsroom to interview us. I decided to kill two birds with one stone and interview him at the same time.

I asked him what he thought of Nichols' column. He haltingly told me "Can I quote you?" I asked sweetly. "Huh?" he gulped.

"Well, you're a journalist, and I'm a journalist, and we're both talking, so I assume we're both on the record, right?"

"Let's make some ground rules," murmured McMartin.

After the ground rules were made, I asked McMartin, "In your opinion, is Nichols' column an extremist, in-temperate, hysterical off-the-wall, bonkers, piece of writing?"

McMartin: (chuckle) "Er, terrorism is too strong a word . . . but basically the position Marjorie has taken is a correct one."

Thanks Pete. Obviously, you'll make a swell Canadian ambassador to Upper Volta. After a bit more verbal scuffling, Nichols' editorial page bedfellow allowed that "obviously, we're on opposite sides of the fence."

Meanwhile, Nichols basks in the Mexican sun. Thank the gods for small mercies. I suppose I should offer her some helpful travel hints.

Don't worry about drinking the water in Mexico. It's fine. But Marjorie, remember not to drink your own bathwater. It's a killer.

Put it in Writing

New voice supported

Please find enclosed a cheque covering my subscription. Vancouver, until recently, has suffered the brutalizing effects of dailies which deal with serious issues in a manner that too often engenders confusion and retreat into self. It is my hope that you will be led by the spirit of justice and compassion, and avoid the danger and disservice of rhetoric and *ad hominem* attacks wherein the little pharisee in all of us says, "Thank God I'm not like other people."

I hope your Get Serious pages will reflect intelligent and thoughtful considerations on the human condition. Issues transcending the sphere of economics and just distribution of goods must be treated in your pages, though it will be likely to upset some, myself included, from time to time. If, however, the two or more sides to fundamental issues are fairly treated, your (dare I say our?) paper can become a badly needed forum. I look forward to receiving my next issue of the Times at home and hope others will agree that even in this time of sacrifice, supporting our new voice in the media is of considerable importance.

Paul Boire
Vancouver

5 examples

B.C. inhabitants have grappled with questions of morality, loyalty, and conscience concerning a general strike.

In many ways, the handling of the case of the Five (Julie Belmas, Gerry Hannah, Ann Hansen, Doug Stewart and Brent Taylor) now before the courts represents a portent of things to come in this pro-



Portrait of a woman.

vince. What is being played out on a broad scale throughout B.C. is occurring in concentrated, deadlier form in the case of the Five. Put simply, the issue in both cases is a question of repression and response: what tactics are necessary in the face of intensifying evil?

An irony is evident in the relationship between the current B.C. Government Employees Union strike and the Crown vs. the Five. Since the provincial sheriffs are currently off the job, the defendants are being transferred to and from court by the RCMP. The resultant difference is apparent in court: the departed sheriffs may have been prone to bullying; the RCMP seem inclined towards systematic sadism.

At the current time in B.C., we face a turning point. What responses are appropriate? In conditions where there is time and a basis for respect in spite of differences, compromise may be reached by negotiation. Where there is treachery and evil, do we willingly forego our freedom rather than make painful choices? In the case of a possible general strike, repression has also forced choices of conscience and action. In the rest of the world (whether El Salvador, Afghanistan or Grenada), the effects of power left unchecked results in worse than union seniority rights lost or individuals jailed.

The case of the Five, the general strike, and the effects of greed and power on a global

scale must be seen as points on a continuum. If we are to survive, it is necessary to take action to preserve what is good, and to engage in resistance against evil. To do less is to lend a helping hand to our own eventual destruction.

Ruth Fahlman
Vancouver

Long life

I am sorry to see that one of the letters to the editor (Times, Nov. 2) felt that this paper should be dropped after a general strike ends. First off, let's hope that a general strike does not happen and that the Bennett government comes to its senses, although it doesn't look like it will at this time.

I am a union member (International Woodworkers of America), a member of the NDP, and on the executive of both in my area, and I do not feel that any involvement I have with Solidarity would reduce my input towards the NDP or my union; rather, it causes me to have stronger convictions toward all these groups.

We have a chance to have a newspaper the general public can read and have some input into. When Solidarity types buy the Sun or the Victoria Times-Colonist, they are putting money into the hands of the very people who are backing Bill Bennett in his fight against workers, old age pensioners, handicapped people, school children, as well as health care and human rights. With the monies that are spent buying these types of newspapers (plus the resources that unions, church groups, etc., spend to try and get their message across) we could have our own newspaper. Solidarity Times is doing such a job.

W.B. Wilson
Sooke

Atrocious

Congratulations are due to the Solidarity Coalition for having the foresight to begin publishing an alternative media voice in this most crucial period of the province's history. The commercial press has consistently sided with the Socreds and their big business backers, as was most recently seen in the Sun's atrociously poor coverage of the Oct. 15 Solidarity march. Although individual journalists working in the media attempt to present a reasoned look at the Solidarity Coalition's aims and the Socreds' vendetta against most of us in this province, the media owners and their hired editorial hands ensure that the public is given a highly biased view of events.

Bill Tieleman
Vancouver

Jeopardy

Enclosed please find a cheque for \$16.50 — as I may not receive any money this month I cannot jeopardize my mortgage and food budget by taking a full year's subscription. I'm a member of the Union of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of B.C. — no strike fund — and even though employed to date, cheques are unlikely to be processed mid-month.

I so enjoy various perspectives and articles in issues to date.

Mary Anne Ellens
Vancouver

Write in

We want to hear from you.

Here's how to Put It In Writing: write to Letters, Solidarity Times, 545 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1K9.

SOAPBOX

McMartin: afraid to face unions' future?

By Paul Kelley

Peter McMartin's column, "Unions: afraid to face the future?" (Vancouver Sun, Nov. 4) appears to be that of a journalist who has an obligation to the "spirit of free inquiry." The question its title asks is supposed to be the kind of question that sparks discussion and "a free exchange of ideas." It is, of course, merely rhetorical. We are invited by this title to read the column expecting to discover if and why unions fear a future which McMartin has obviously already glimpsed. We never do. Instead, we get a rather schematic account of McMartin's History of Unions, including his own involvement in them, and his scolding of two of them.

The implications are that McMartin is clearly having his doubts about unions, and he offers up these doubts as something we all could share. The theme under which these doubts are organized is "Progress."

Summarized, his argument runs as follows: In the beginning, labor unions were good things because they sought to correct "very real wrongs," such as

the exploitation of child labor, safety in the work place, unfair wages, and "equal opportunity for women." The struggle for these advances was a long, hard one; blood was shed, and people died for their beliefs and desires. The unions were, for the most part, victorious in these struggles.

Once these victories were secured, however, the unions became vested interests which protected themselves by maintaining an outdated ideology based on the belief that workers were still oppressed, even as they contained the comforts of the middle class. In short, the world has progressed, but unions have not. History has made them obsolete.

According to McMartin, whether they know it or not, unions belong in history's dustbin, along with the steam locomotive, the Model "T", and the cross-cut saw.

Is life really this simple? Having established to his satisfaction that it is, McMartin proceeds to attack the B.C. Government Employees Union and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, separating each of them from

Solidarity. He writes: "... the actions of the BCGEU and the PPWC are picayune and do not reflect the demands of a changing world ... Compare that to the respect the unions and the Solidarity movement won by voicing their outrage over the emasculation of human rights legislation at the hand of the Socred yahoos. The unions and Solidarity are rightly to be applauded ... But the BCGEU and the PPWC exemplify best what threatens unions: they are perceived as frivolous, stolid, and afraid to face the future."

Unfortunately, McMartin does not bring in the evidence to support all his assertions. How he has measured the world's change? By whom are unions perceived as "frivolous?" Moreover, the logic of "Progress" on which he has elected to base his argument requires that he overlook a lot of evidence that runs counter to it. The truth is that "very real wrongs" are not corrected once and for all. They continue to take place.

In fact, even if we accept McMartin's premise, unions cannot be

outdated in times such as these, when the present provincial government threatens to return both labor relations and social relations to those characteristic of the nineteenth century.

According to McMartin's particular brand of naivete, labor organizations in our "progressive" society are required to do no more than voice their outrage, and they should content themselves with this. That they should attempt to do anything about outrageous conditions is unthinkable.

McMartin is yet another "analyst" without an analysis. His purpose is not really to present a discussion of the current issues. Such a discussion would require him to comment in some depth on the nature and the function of the present state. It would require him to come to terms with history as something other than a past tense.

Paul Kelley is a Vancouver writer and educator. This article is from a longer piece, "Hard-pressed politics and journalism."



WOMEN AGAINST THE BUDGET

GOU 48

A mother is missing

by Nora Randall

Why can't I believe that this is a time of austerity and that we will just have to go without until things get better? One reason is that I read in the newspaper about a company that for \$1500 will fly you and your friends by helicopter to the top of a mountain and serve you champagne and caviar. When times are hard I don't mind going without to help out somebody who's got less than me. It's just that I can't shake the belief that I'm being asked to go without to help out people who have way more than they need. I read in the paper that BC's budget shows an increase of 12% which is the second highest increase of any governmental budget in Canada. I look out my front window and see the stadium, I look out my back window and see the ALRT and I cannot make myself believe that this is restraint.

I watched a TV report about the Fraser Institute. One of their members said on the program, "If there were no support for single mothers, there would be no single mothers." This at least has been confirmed in my life. I have a friend who was a single mother on welfare who crossed the picket line on the first day of the strike to give her baby up for adoption. I know for a fact that without the support of *Project Parent*, *Family Place* and her social worker there is in fact one less single mother in BC today. What I can't seem to understand is, why this is a desirable state of affairs. It can't be because it saves money. The government is paying for the emergency psychiatric unit where she is staying. And the government is paying someone else more to foster her child than they ever paid her to care for it.

I talked to my friend this morning. They changed her medication. She sounds like a wall with a mouth in it. She told me the staff curled her hair. We didn't talk about the baby. I heard an actor on TV once say that all he had to do to cry in a scene was to think of this really sad thing in his life and it made him cry. I think of my friend and her baby, then I think of the helicopter and the caviar and I start to cry. Maybe I can get a job as an actor.

I would like to believe that this is not happening, but everytime I turn on the TV, or read a paper, or listen to the radio, I am assaulted. I cannot make it go away. There is only one thing that makes me feel I can go on. It is fighting back. I go to *Solidarity* meetings and *Women Against the Budget* meetings, I walk the picket lines and write for pamphlets because it makes me feel better. I am not alone. Besides the stadium, I can see the pickets outside my window and they give me strength. That's all I have to say.



THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

On July 7th, 1983 two things happened in B.C.

First the Bennett government in the name of restraint, handed down an unprecedented package of legislation which ruthlessly cut at human rights and social services yet is the most expensive budget in B.C.'s history.

Second, though less tangible, but in many ways more dangerous, on July 7th the political climate of our province changed. Bigots were given permission to act out their prejudices. Men were given permission to abuse their children and their wives. Seniors were told to go back to their lonely private rooms. Landlords were given permission to charge whatever they could get. Retailers were given permission to cheat their customers. The rights we have fought hard for were stolen from us in one day. We have to get them back.

Using restraint as their rationale, the Socreds are trying to fool people into believing that social services, human rights and freedoms, secure housing, safety from sexual harassment and assault, access to health information and legal aid are unnecessary frills. **Restraint is not the**

issue, for the government is spending plenty of money, more money than it ever has before. It has committed itself to half a billion dollars for major projects which would create short term construction jobs, mainly jobs for men. The issue is one of priorities.

As we write, a tentative settlement has been reached between the government and Operation Solidarity. Operation Solidarity represents the trade union movement, including the B.C.G.E.U., in the negotiation process. The strike is officially off and we are told an avenue has been established to negotiate all of the issues and concerns that have been raised in the last months. However we have no guarantee that our concerns as women are being addressed. Our experience in the women's movement has shown us that legislation and service cuts that affect women are not likely to be resolved by three men meeting in a room in isolation.

We want this to be a meaningful settlement. We hope it will be. But the struggle continues . . . As women and as members of the broad-based Solidarity Coalition we will continue our negotiations until our demands are met.

Linda is a single mother with two kids who went on welfare five years ago when she and her husband split up.

The welfare rates are frozen. That's one of the ways the budget affects me. I can't afford to buy clothes for me or the children anymore. I've just stopped doing that. I feel really frustrated, sending them off to school with patches and socks that don't match.

Before, at the end of the month my check money would run out about the same time as the month had run out, but nowadays I run out about a week and a half early. So I have to borrow money. And there's little things — I just hate it. But the worst thing is not being generous with the children. That really hurts.

I do welfare rights information work. We're part of the Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of B.C. We help people figure out what the best thing to do is if they are having a problem with welfare and we also help them go through stuff like the appeal process. In the Surrey/White Rock area, we must have handled 400 cases this year. MHR is taking more of a hard line. They're saying no to crisis grants and food vouchers.

Now CIP is cut out for single and disabled people. \$50 is really a lot when you're on welfare. It was a way to get out of the house and meet people and feel good about yourself. And it's not saving the government that much to cut it.

continued on page 4

SCHOOLS FAIL

Susan is a 34 year old staff assistant at an alternate high school in Vancouver.

The kids I teach have had problems in school. They wouldn't survive if they had to go back to regular school. Some of them live in foster homes and group homes. Most of them have been out of school for awhile.

One of the girls in my class told me that her father beats her up, and she never knows what's going to happen. Family support workers have all been cut. If I refer them to MHR now, there's no one to try to change what's happening in the family.

B.C. already has the lowest budget per student and the highest pupil-teacher ratio in Canada.

A lot of the one to one attention that kids get in any school is from staff assistants, and the City of Vancouver alone is planning to lay off 106 staff assistants next year. English as a second language programs are going, skills assessment programs are going, and they're talking about firing a fair number of teachers and librarians, too. So there'll be a lot more kids in every class room. Enrolment is going up in elementary schools. And they're saying they have to close seven elementary schools in Vancouver.

The kids in my school feel like they're being told to quit school. That they don't count. They're scared. They say "What's going to happen to me if I don't finish high

school?"

It seems to me that that's part of the purpose of the cutbacks, which is also the purpose of provincial exams, to get those kids out of the school system. Bennett is constantly saying he wants to make the climate better for investment, and one of the ways to do that is to have a less educated population. The less educated the work force is, the less confidence they may have, the less money they'll demand, the easier they'll be to manipulate. And that means higher profits for investors.

Colleges and universities are having to restrict enrolment. Kids whose families can afford to send them to college will go. Even student loans may become more like a bank loan. So kids from poor families who don't have the material assets won't even qualify for student aid.

I get really scared. Not just for the kids in my school, but about what the province of B.C. is going to look like. What are these kids going to do? They're not going to have jobs. Some of them will be on welfare, and the rest out on the streets. They're going to steal. They're going to deal drugs. A lot of them will end up in jail. The streets are going to be a lot more violent.

All the family support workers and people who work with those kids and change that cycle are just going to be gone. **But the kids are still there.**

Sanna is a grade twelve student in Vancouver.

Many people are hard hit by this "restraint" budget: as students the problems we now face are the cutbacks and changes in education.

It is ludicrous, now that student enrollment is rising, to eliminate 5,000 teaching positions and cut back school spending. This will bring classes with as many as fifty students and much poorer equipment, teaching materials and school upkeep.

Government control of tuition fees, cutbacks in student loans and limited enrollment all seem to be geared towards stopping students from furthering their careers. It almost seems as though the government wants students to drop out in grade ten and never advance themselves further. If vocational training schools and job training programs are cut back or eliminated it will be almost impossible for a student who has dropped out to re-enter school or train for a career.

I feel that as students and as concerned citizens it is important for us to speak out against this. We must act for ourselves and for students to come. Education is one of the most important things in a person's life, it should be given first priority and should not be cut back.

An up among the downs

On a positive note the **Vancouver Women's Health Collective** has been given \$5800 by the City of Vancouver. City Council voted unanimously to give the Health Collective all of the money left in their 1983 emergency fund. As well there is a possibility that the City will provide a rent free space to the Health Collective since they are being forced out of their present building which is being torn down for development. Whether the City comes through or not, it is heartening to see one level of government taking some responsibility for the needs of its citizens. The Collective is still active and busy these days. For more information or support call 736-6696 (1501 W. Broadway).

What good old days?

People keep talking about feeling like we are going back in time with all these cuts. But that's not really true. Ten or twenty or thirty years ago we didn't have safe houses or child abuse teams partly because we didn't really think or realize that wives were getting battered or children were getting beaten up and sexually abused. Now we know it's happening all around us. Now if we don't have services to protect and help these people we can't plead ignorance. So I guess now they are saying they know it's going on and it's okay . . . ?

Disabled handicapped further

A woman in her late thirties handicapped by myoclonic epilepsy shares her views on life in Bennett's B.C. Let's call her Jane. She has not been able to work for ten years, due to her handicap.

Jane has mixed feelings about what is happening in the province at this time and feels that the government does not understand the needs of handicapped people. Jane supports the idea of restraint but not in the way Bennett has chosen to do it. She feels human rights are necessary, as is the Community Initiatives Program (C.I.P.) These cuts hurt disabled women. She'd like to see justice done and believes justice will be done. **"\$50.00 means so much, why would they cut the C.I.P. when \$50.00 means so much?"**



CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC

Two women fight back

Teresa is a 27 year old woman who works for a cablevision firm. Sherry is 39 and a social work supervisor at a Ministry of Human Resources office. Neither woman has previously been politically active (except in very small ways). They speak here of how it feels to become active.

Teresa—Before I moved back to Vancouver I was involved with the Manitoba committee on wife abuse. They were creating safe houses and telephone lines for battered women; and it was really an encouraging atmosphere to be in. When I got to Vancouver it seemed like the calendar was turned back. I found it quite frightening and that's basically what started it. I don't even think there is enough as it is (services and protections), so what frightened me is that what we do have is being taken away.

Sherry—The other thing there is—if they can take away these things, then what happens tomorrow. I mean if they can take away Transition Houses or destroy protection for tenants or any of those other things and get away with it without us standing up and fighting—what happens tomorrow?

Teresa—That's where the fear comes in. Those things were a protection for us. There's no—there's no conscience left for how you are to operate as a society . . . no fair standard. And I think that is necessary.

Sherry—The choice is one of being active or one of being absolutely overcome by despair. But one of the consequences of being active, of doing something, is constantly having to overcome absolute fear. Look at that fear, acknowledge it, and only then could I go on to being active. And every day I'd go through that, but the other side was just despair.

Now that fear has certainly diminished. Now it is very rare.

Teresa—I find that if I focus on what they are trying to do to me as far as taking away my rights as a human being, as a woman, as a woman who is half white and half black, the anger—takes over the fear. So the fear of what will happen is much greater than the fear of acting. What else gives me strength is to see other women—its really encouraging, to see other women standing up against it too. And it feels good to not sit back. It feels good to be part of the movement to stop what is happening. It makes me feel strong. And it makes me realize the strength I have as an individual woman and that women have as a group.

Sherry—Furthermore when we are eighty we are going to have some great tales to tell.

THESE SERVICES HAVE BEEN CUT!...

WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE • WOMB • SERENA • DAYCARE SUBSIDIES • POST-PARTUM COUNSELLING • FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES • LINDA WILLIAMS COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTRE • CHILD CARE CENTRES — SUTHERLAND HOUSE AND MARY HILL HOUSE • TRANSITION HOUSE (SHELTER FOR BATTERED WOMEN) • CHILD ABUSE TEAMS • LEGAL AID TO BATTERED AND SEPARATED WOMEN • FORT NELSON'S EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN • PROJECT PARENT EAST AND WEST • FAMILY PLACES • ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS • COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM • PLANNED PARENTHOOD • VANCOUVER STATUS OF WOMEN • STUDENT AID — \$10 MILLION • RENTALS MAN • CONSUMER PROTECTION CENTRES • AND THE LIST GOES ON!

What a way to say thanks

The majority of seniors are women. The women who worked, raised families and made British Columbia what it is today are getting their reward.

The provincial government is saying thanks with cuts in seniors' incomes, higher costs and taxes, and fewer services.

Seniors' income is being reduced through elimination of the Personal Income Tax Credit, as well as the Renters' grant. Disposable income is also cut thanks to higher sales taxes, higher health care user fees, and a freeze on rental assistance under the SAFER program.

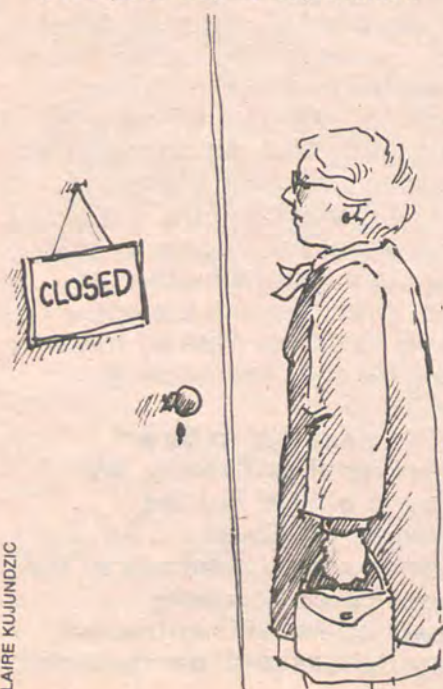
Increased hospital charges — \$8.50 a day for acute care and \$12.75 a day for extended care — hit particularly hard at seniors.

Seniors' lives will be further impoverished through the elimination of grants to 23 seniors' centres. As well, grants to community groups providing volunteer services have been cut.

The end of rent controls will mean higher housing costs for many.

Like others, seniors will be subject to eviction without cause, and stripped of the protection against discrimination formerly provided by the Human Rights Code.

It's a poor way to say thanks.



CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC

HUMAN RIGHTS:

Ridden out on B.C. Rail

"B.C.'s Human Rights Legislation flies in the face of Canada's international obligations to the U.N. to uphold Human Rights."

Gordon Fairweather, Head of Canadian Human Rights Commission

■ Elimination of "Reasonable cause" provisions of the Human Rights Code effectively removes protection against discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, language ability and other grounds not covered under the Act explicitly. It is generally considered that discrimination against pregnant women is not covered.

■ Complaints under the new Act can only be filed by the person discriminated against, not by the Human Rights workers or community groups as was formerly the case. In the context of Human Rights the person discriminated against is often the least able to carry out the case.

■ The Human Rights Commission has been abolished and the Council of Human Rights which replaces it, has no explicit provisions for staff. Now when someone files a complaint there will be no one to help her and she will have to either find and pay her own lawyer or conduct the case herself. This is especially difficult for immigrant women who may have a language barrier as well as a cultural barrier to cross.

■ The new Act covers only intentional discrimination. Thus for example height and weight restrictions can no longer be considered sex discrimination against women unless it can be proven that the intention of the regulations is to restrict women.

■ The section in the former Human Rights code prohibiting discriminatory advertising has been eliminated. It is now possible to advertise for "Men Only" or "Whites Only" or "Able Bodied Only" and so on.

For more information contact:
Human Rights Coalition, Vancouver Region
600 West Queens Rd., North Van.
988-7115

Lesbians lock your doors

Donna is a single mother of two children and a student. She is also a lesbian.

I see Solidarity as being a long term ongoing process in which we have the chance of reaching people and educating them. But as for the immediate problem I'm still very fearful about the outcome. I am a woman, I am a single parent, I am a lesbian and I see the budget as affecting me in all areas of my life. I am a student. I'm on a student loan and living on the poverty line and I manage, which absolutely amazes me.

My future — I'm working in the health field and I want to work with children. There are a lot of myths about homosexuals and children and I would like to see those myths spoken to. I want to be able to live my life and do the work that is important to me and raise my children without being discriminated against.

Five months ago (before the budget) I was aware that the Human Rights Commission had proposed changes which made my situation, my future, a little brighter. For instance, if I wanted to rent a house the landlord couldn't discriminate against me because I happen to live with a woman.

In the past lesbians have been

put in institutions by parents and relatives and friends because the system states that there is something wrong with us, that we are sick. And I see from my own experience people growing and learning that these myths are just that — myths.

Yet with this legislation, I see that all being turned around again. To come out (as a lesbian) is really a big change in your life. You've been hiding behind closed doors with your lover, hiding a big part of your life. And my concern is that that promotes a lot of pain. The legislation could very easily force me to go back into the closet but I don't intend to let that happen.



Are you an immigrant? Are you afraid?

Mai has been in Canada for six years.

Even though I spoke English when I first came it was such a cultural shock. I went into a depression that I didn't dare take the bus. Often I would stay in bed and get out just before my husband came home because it was too embarrassing to explain.

Right now because of the legislation... I didn't want to make myself too visible. If I didn't involve myself I didn't have the right to complain but in this situation since it's so heavy for everyone it becomes so much more scary to be involved in anything. It wasn't just a question of losing a job, it's a question of losing where you've chosen to live. It feels pretty scary and very uncomfortable and really strange.

The only thing I have counting for me looking for a job is that I'm white.



PHOTO BY HOLLY DEVOR

Help for new mothers taken away!

Lois went to the Post-Partum Depression Counselling program three years ago when her son was five years and her daughter was 10 months.

In our neighborhoods the support systems for new mothers aren't the same as they were at one time, when most women did stay home. You sit in your home and you look out on the streets and there are no children. You start to feel that you are alone, that you really are alone in your house with your children. The isolation is very very real.

When my son was born I was really into being a mother. I filled my days with nursing and walking but the days started to get really difficult. The same thing sort of happened with my daughter. I started to be unable to cope with my daily work. I had a great deal of trouble vacuuming or cleaning or shopping. And then my crying started which very soon almost incapacitated me.

My older child — he was just being a little boy — but I was really picking on him; a lot of yelling. I could sense I was borderline with my anger. I didn't identify it at the time. I knew one day something was going to happen and it would be to my children. That is where the real terror came. And there was all this crying, this ache all the time.

At one point I did go to my doctor — what I got was a prescription for valium. I didn't go back. Things really started to deteriorate. My husband and I were getting worse and worse. And he was a good man. I know suicide thoughts slipped in.

It did reach a crisis, but I couldn't do anything. My husband

called the crisis line and they gave him the number for Post-Partum. I called and for the very first time someone said to me, 'I understand what you are feeling. You are not crazy. You are experiencing what we call a post-partum depression and we can help.' I had never, ever heard that. The relief was just absolutely overwhelming. It (the program) works. It is the thing that saved me. Saved my family. Saved my marriage.

They want me to believe that the doctors will be able to treat post-partum depression. The psychiatrists will. The public health will. The social workers will. That is Bull Shit! They haven't. They can't. They don't understand what it is.

Hurting doesn't have to be a way of life

Thousands of children in the province are regularly beaten with hands and fists, hairbrushes and belts and a variety of other weapons. Thousands of children, especially little girls, are sexually fondled and mauled and raped.

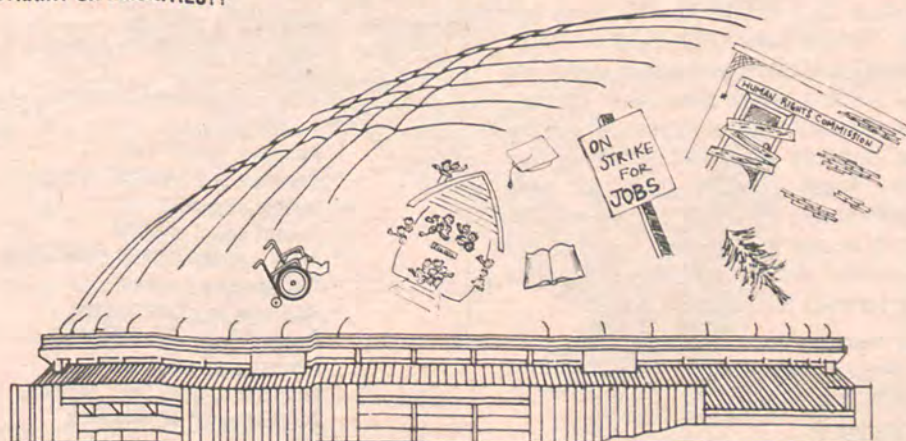
Child Abuse Teams were created in Vancouver in 1974 and in the Fraser Valley in 1978, to act as consultants to and trainers for social workers working with difficult child abuse complaints. The teams were originally formed to assist with physically abused children but enormously increasing amounts of their time have been spent on sexual abuse cases.

Keeping on top of current research and relaying this information to community groups as well as social workers throughout the province was another important responsibility. Without the work of these teams Ministry staff will work in isolation with limited resources and almost no back-up.

In 1982 the Vancouver team alone responded to 1,200 consultation requests, seventy percent involved sexual abuse. Social workers have expressed a real need to consult with the teams... however the government has decided that their work is an undue burden on tax-payers.

In April, one month before the May 5th election, \$55,000 was spent on renovations at their 575 Drake Street office to accommodate an expanded service. Psychologists, psychiatrists and medical doctors were added to the Child Abuse Team which was renamed Family and Children Assessment Team. Two months later the government said their services were no longer required. **We cannot afford the cost to British Columbian children.**

IN 1983 THE GOVERNMENT SPENT \$205 MILLION ON B.C. PLACE....
RESTRAINT OR PRIORITIES??



Shady deal for battered women

The women who live in Vancouver Transition House, some with children, come there for support and safety. Battered women have few places to turn, few people who believe and understand the fear and uncertainty they may have lived with for years.

The women who work at Vancouver Transition House want to work there because they know about the importance of working with and for women who have been physically and psychologically abused by their partners.

Just after 25 July 1983 all the women at Vancouver Transition House, including the supervisor, received letters telling them that because of 'program changes' their jobs would be redundant. Soon afterwards the MHR announced that Vancouver Transition House was to be

privatized on or before 31 March 1984.

What will battered women lose when Vancouver Transition House is privatized? Other privatized transition houses in BC have been unable to maintain 24 hour staff coverage, childcare programmes, educational programmes for the community and others who work with battered women, and follow-up work with women and their children who have moved out on their own from transition houses.

Vancouver Transition House workers understand from the MHR that they would not be considered for such a privatized contract if they formed a society themselves. The reason given was that they did not represent a 'broad base of the community'.

Women at Transition House are worried that they will be blamed for being battered, and that it will be even more difficult for women

to leave violent situations and stay away. Transition house workers are also afraid that a needs test will be required so the house will not be open to ALL women and their children.

In July the government called Transition House workers 'redundant'. In November the same government declared Transition House an essential service necessary for the continued health and safety of the women of B.C., so that the house was operating with full staff during the strike. Which is it?

All women in B.C. are losing something precious. We think the government in this province has a responsibility to provide adequate protection for the women and children of B.C. We demand that Vancouver Transition House be maintained at full staff complement and that funds continue to be available for its effective 24 hour operation.

Health cuts hurt

User fees are among the sacred attacks on health care that will directly affect women.

■ Hospital charges increased from \$7.50 to \$8.50 per day.

■ \$4.00 charge for outpatient and emergency visits.

■ \$10.00 charge for fetal monitoring for high risk prenatal patients.

Significant Points from Bill 24 (Medical Service Act) at present under negotiation with the B.C. Medical Association:

1. Restriction of Billing Numbers: supposed to decrease the number of doctors in Vancouver.

2. Medical Services Commission (has no lay representation) may determine itself if service received by patient is medically required, and can limit the coverage a patient may have or that his/her practitioner may have.

3. Disclosure of Information: Inspectors may

review any medical record of any patient. Entirely negates doctor/patient confidentiality.

BCMA is negotiating to amend this and to set up its own 'patterns of practice' committee.

4. Commission wants to delete counselling and stress management as a paid service. It would then be extra billed. Affects many people especially preventive services.

5. Enabling legislation: These are clauses related to detailed regulations, which have yet to be drawn up, that can be introduced by cabinet order without legislative debate if this bill is passed.

BCMA is fighting to delete this.

At present with this bill the way it is, doctors can opt out of the medical plan at any time. Also the government can put through this legislation as is and ignore BCMA negotiations.

All these measures promote incremental privatization of medicine and will further centralize government control over funding, administration and actual practice of medicine.

BCMA has been told there is no more money to pay doctors for the rest of this year.



MARSHA ARBOUR

Women Against the Budget

Women Against the Budget (W.A.B.) is made up of many different women, who meet every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at 1st United Church, 320 E. Hastings.

Women work hard. Many women already do 2 jobs: one at home and one in the work place. The new budget will make our work harder. It will cut our services for you and your family. It will mean worse working conditions and wages.

Women have fought hard for these services. Women have fought hard for better working conditions and wages. Now the government is taking them away from us.

We demand the restoration of all the social services discussed in these four pages. These services have not been restored under the recent settlement. The rights of women and children must not be a low priority. We will continue to fight for these services and our rights.

For more information contact:

Women Against The Budget

P.O. Box 65366

Station F

Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5P3

(Or the W.A.B. group in your area.)

The official policy of Women Against the Budget.

1. The purpose of WAB is to make sure that all women's concerns are addressed at all levels of the struggle against the legislative package and for the full restoration of social services, and that women are part of the decision-making process.

2. That all members of society have the right to:

- meaningful work
- right to organize and belong to a union
- a decent standard of living
- decent housing
- adequate health care
- personal and physical safety
- quality education
- decent social services
- equal pay for work of equal value
- reproductive freedom
- adequate legal assistance
- freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, political belief or disability

And that WAB opposes any policy, legislation or action which restricts the above rights for any member of our society.



PHOTO BY HOLLY DEVOR

PRESS RELEASE

14 November 1983

Women Against the Budget today extended its congratulations to the BCGEU and BCTF for their partial victory on union demands. At the same time WAB members expressed their concern at the lack of inroads made in the fight for human rights, social services and for the demands of women, tenants, students, pensioners, the disabled, lesbians, gays and the poor.

"We are appalled that the Solidarity Coalition was not consulted regarding the negotiations preceding the settlement and that we were not informed of the conditions of the settlement before the public announcement was made," said Stella Crampton, WAB representative to the Provincial Steering Committee of the Solidarity Coalition. The demands of the Solidarity Coalition have not yet been met but they continue to be central to the development of any real truce.

"It is clear that the force of the union walkout was largely because the members were not just fighting over bills two and three but for all of the Solidarity Coalitions' demands. Our members and those of many other community groups were called out at 4 a.m. to staff the picket lines following the injunction against the teachers. It is this unity that has been the source of strength in the Solidarity movement over the last four months," said Sara Diamond.

WAB said it will continue full support for the Solidarity Coalition and will maintain its commitment to carry on the struggle not only for women's rights but for the human rights of every person in the province.

A process of consultation is no guarantee of anything. Most community groups have been consulting for years. The government has shown us that these consultations have had no effect. "Consultations are supposed to take place before legislation is introduced," said Crampton. "The only possible way to make these consultations work is to have them take place openly, publicly and with a clearly specified time limit."

What you can do

Call Phone In Television and Radio Shows. Write Letters to Editors:

e.g. The Vancouver Sun or Province, 2250 Granville, Van. B.C.

Phone in With Comments on Television and Radio News Coverage:

e.g. T.V. - CBC, 665-6670; CKVU, 876-1344; BCTV, 420-2288

Radio - CBC, 665-8060; CKO, 254-5161; CJAZ, 684-2111

Start a Neighborhood Phone Tree with Friends:

With news bulletin updates To call MLA's

To call T.V. and Radio

Put up signs in Your House, Business and Car Wear Buttons



CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC

Speak Out - at parties, to your neighbors, to your children, to delivery people, to colleagues.

TALK WITH YOUR FRIENDS - we all need support!

Join the Solidarity Action groups in your area.

Don't Cross Picket Lines.

GET SERIOUS

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 16 VANCOUVER

• Committee of Progressive Electors — South's regular monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m., Fraserview Library, 1950 Argyle St.

BURNABY

• Labor lecture on the emergence of public sector unionism by Peter Warrian, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., BCGEU Hall, 4911 Canada Way. For more info call 291-3521.

THURSDAY, NOV. 17 VANCOUVER

• Women Against the Budget's weekly meeting, 7:30 p.m., 320 E. Hastings.

• People's Law School class on RHOSP's, a detailed explanation of this plan in light of the April federal budget, 7:30 p.m., Britannia Secondary School, 1001 Cotton Drive. Chartered accountant Harvey Loen will instruct. Free.

• Demonstration by Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition at noon. Call 251-1281 for location and other details.

FRIDAY, NOV. 18 VANCOUVER

• Second annual conference on unemployment, from 6 p.m. Friday at the Fishermen's Hall, 138 East Cordova. Friday's schedule includes registration and guest speakers. The key-note speaker is Charles Paris, former director of the B.C. Human Rights Commission and current director of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. Also a paper on unemployment and the future of the movement will be presented. Saturday's schedule begins at 9:30 a.m. with 3 seminars: towards a policy of full employment, format for a federated unemployment organization, and the future and actions of the unemployed movement. After lunch, B.C. Federation of Labor president Art Kube will address the conference and be followed by a plenary session. This conference is sponsored by the Vancouver Unemployed Action Centre. Organizers ask that each group, organization or union send two delegates. Delegate fee is \$10 each. The unemployed are admitted free. Qualified daycare provided. To register call Mike or Vic at 688-9001 or 688-9083.

SATURDAY, NOV. 19 VANCOUVER

• "Living in the Nuclear Age: Despair and Empowerment," a workshop, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., SPEC, 2150 Maple St. Pre-register at 734-5393 or 253-4012. Sponsored by Women Against Nuclear Technology.

MERRIT

• Renata Shearer and Fr. Jim Roberst speak on the implications of the Sacred legislation, 7 p.m., Merritt Library.

MONDAY, NOV. 21 VANCOUVER

• People's Law School class on obscenity laws with instructors Barry Sullivan and Ace Henderson, 7:30 p.m., Little Mountain Neighborhood House, 3981 Main St. (at 24th). Free. For more info call 734-1126.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23 VANCOUVER

• People's Law School class on welfare rights instructed by Marjorie Martin, 7:30 p.m., Kitsilano Neighborhood House, 2305 West 7th (at Vine). Free. For more info call 734-1126.

NEW WESTMINSTER

• Labor history lecture series continues with "Women Workers in the 20th Century" by Sara Diamond, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., CAIMAW Hall, 707 12th St., New West.

VICTORIA

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 16

• Nancy White in benefit concert for

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 16 VANCOUVER

• Film "The Clockmaker" by Bertrand Tavernier, 7:30 p.m., runs for two days at the Vancouver East Cinema, 7th and Commercial. For more info call 253-5455.

• Vittorio De Sica's Italian film "Il Generale Della Rovere," 7:30 p.m., Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For more info call 732-6119.

THURSDAY, NOV. 17 VANCOUVER

• Nancy White concert, 8:30 p.m., Ridge Theatre (16th and Arbutus). Reserved tickets are \$8 and are available at the Ridge from 8 to 10 p.m. daily and at Black Swan Records and Octopus Books East.

• Film "From Munich to the 'Funny War'" is shown as part of Pacific Cinematheque's history of French cinema series. Film starts at 7:30 p.m. at 1155 West Georgia. For more info call 732-6119.

FRIDAY, NOV. 18 VANCOUVER

• "Living and Laughing in the Nuclear Age — the Fran and Charlie Show," an anti-nuclear performance, 8 p.m., Kits Secondary School, 2550 West 10th. Tickets are \$7 employed and \$5 unemployed and are available at Ariel Books, Octopus Books East and at the door. Child care is available. For more info call 734-5393. Sponsored by Women Against Nuclear Technology.

• Canto Latina Americano performs in a benefit for the Nicaraguan boat project, 8 p.m. Admission is a tool or piece of equipment that will be sent to Nicaragua. At La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive. For more info call 251-6626.

SATURDAY, NOV. 19 VANCOUVER

• Kitchen Syncopators perform swing and

Guatemalan refugees, 7:30 p.m., Oak Bay High. Tickets \$6.

• Amnesty International meeting on adopted Vietnam prisoner, 7:30 p.m., St. John's Crypt Anglican Church, 1611 Quadra Street.

SUNDAY, NOV. 20

• Disarmament Coalition annual general meeting, 7 p.m., Fairfield United Church.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23

• Film, "Women Under Apartheid." For time and place call 383-1691.

SATURDAY, NOV. 26

• Workshop of Thinking and unthinkable — The nuclear threat. Sponsored by University of Victoria extension department; \$5 fee. Call 721-8463 for agenda.

western style tunes, 8 p.m., La Quena, 1111 Commercial. Tickets \$3. For more info call 251-6626.

SUNDAY, NOV. 20 VANCOUVER

• Green Thumb Theatre presents "One Thousand Cranes," public premiere at 1 p.m., Vancouver East Cultural Centre (Venables and Victoria). Tickets \$4 for adults, \$3 for children. The play will tour B.C. For more info call 682-4664.

TUESDAY, NOV. 22 VANCOUVER

• Jazz with Tom Keenleyside quartet at 10 p.m., Classical Joint, 231 Carrall. For more info call 689-0667.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23 VANCOUVER

• "Xica" a Brazilian film by Carlos Diegues, 7:30 p.m. "Montenegro" by Yugoslavian director Dusan Makavejev at 9:30 p.m. Both films are at the Vancouver East Cinema, 7th and Commercial and run for two nights. For more info call 253-5455.

• Film "Nights of Cabiria" by Federico Fellini, 7:30 p.m., Pacific Cinematheque, 1155 West Georgia. For more info call 732-6119.

• Premiere party for "Angles", Vancouver's new monthly gay newspaper, at Buddy's, 1018 Burnaby St. This is a fund raiser for the Vancouver Gay Community Centre. For more info call Neil Whaley at 681-6437.

Blather

A Tenants' Rights Action Centre, operated by the B.C. Tenants' Rights Coalition, is opening in a Vancouver office donated by the B.C. Teachers' Federation and the Unemployed Teachers' Action Centre.

The centre, at 2235 Burrard St., will handle tenants' complaints, especially those concerning entire buildings, like massive rent increases in an apartment block.

Telephone calls for the tenants' coalition received at the Red Door Rental Aid office and the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association will be redirected to the new office number: 738-0147.

Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition has opened a support centre at the Ukrainian Hall, 805 East Pender. The centre will work on strike support and provide information and communications for community groups and people using essential services.

Open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday. Phone: 251-1281.

Get happy! as San Francisco comedians Fran and Charlie leave us in stitches with their hilarious look at the holocaust, on Friday, Nov. 18, 8 p.m., at the Kitsilano secondary school auditorium, 2550 West Tenth Ave., in Vancouver. Ducats are \$7 for the working, and a mere fin for the rest of us. There's free on-site child care. For information call 734-5393 or 253-0412.

Get Serious the next day at a Living in the Nuclear Age: Despair and Empowerment workshop, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at 2150 Maple St., Vancouver. Pre-register by calling 734-5393 or 253-0412, or simply arrive early. Both events sponsored by Women Against Nuclear Technology.

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Brink

From page 2

government still can't seem to understand there's a strike going on, and other unions are going out."

The two sides soon returned to the table, and for the rest of the week remained closeted in marathon talks under a news blackout. On the first night of phase two, as Solidarity chairman Art Kube urged a New Westminster audience to keep up the fight, he was overcome by emotion, exhaustion and flu.

While Kube rested, his place was taken by B.C. Federation of labor secretary-treasurer Mike Kramer. Like Kube, he was frustrated by the government. He was also blunt. Referring to the welter of injunctions, LRB rulings, and cease-and-desist orders being sought, Kramer warned, "If there is one move made against any one of us, we will retaliate, and I mean massive retaliation . . . an all-out, total war."

Late in the week, however, there was again a glimmer of hope. It emerged from a meeting of private sector unions. Union leaders said that if the seniority rights and layoff issues were settled, and if Premier Bennett agreed to "meaningful" talks on the political questions, the escalating walkouts would end. If not, private sector unions would also walk. Even as they spoke, new protesters from Crown corporations joined the picket lines, bring the number of those off the job to over 80,000. At the same time, government representative Spector reported "significant progress" in the BCGEU talks.

For the remainder of the weekend, a high level meeting of labor leaders and government was in progress alongside the BCGEU contract talks. The broad-based talks included B.C. Teachers' Federation president Larry Kuehn, Kramer, and Munro; the government's Spector shuffled between negotiations (his boss, Premier Bennett, was at home in Kelowna); and hovering nearby was the representative of big capital in the province, B.C. Employers Council president Jim Matkin.

A leaked memo listed labor's demands for a settlement to avert the final phase in the public sector's schedule of walkouts: an agreement allowing all public sector workers to be exempted from Bill 3; restoration of education financing levels to 1983 standards; major changes to, or rescinding of, the government's proposed human

rights and landlord-tenants legislation; consultation on other social issues

Although rumors of peace breaking out circulated widely, the deadline countdown toward midnight Sunday continued as the various negotiating parties talked on, through Friday, all day Saturday, and on, into the last day.

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Last independent daily spanned Lincoln to Kennedy years

COLUMBIAN GOES ON TO BIG PRINTING PRESS IN SKY

Special to the Times

Weeks of uncertainty ended Tuesday as the bankrupt Columbian newspaper published its last edition.

After 122 years as a New Westminster institution, the aging daily finally succumbed to an up-and-coming local institution: the Royal Bank, the lone new building in the dying downtown of what is ironically referred to as the "Royal City."

A \$7.5 million debt load burdened the paper for the past four years. Combined with the recession and incompetent management, creditors decided to pull the plug on the only B.C. paper that covered the assassinations of both Kennedy and Lincoln.

First in line for the assets of the paper are the bank and federal government, which is owed taxes arising from employee deductions.

As preferred creditors, the government stands to gain its share of assets as soon as they are sold. Less lucky are former Columbian employees on pensions and those nearing the age of retirement. Their cheques will stop and any money left after bank and bureaucrats dip into the pile will be dispersed in a lump sum payment.

Revenue Canada's enthusiasm for the demise of the paper comes from the same government that spent \$2 million on a study of the newspaper industry that concluded government legislation is needed to save newspapers from being gobbled up by chain ownership.

This same conclusion, in an ironic twist, effectively prevented any last-minute save from Thomson Newspapers Inc. or Southam Ltd., the two largest actors on the Canadian newspaper stage.

But the real story is to be found in its own newsroom. Owned by Rikk Taylor, scion of the turn-of-the-century Sen. Taylor (who was active in the East Asian Exclusion League, the Conservative party, and other standard-bearers of West Coast enlightenment), the Columbian served as a small town daily for New Westminster and its sparsely populated surrounding suburbs.

With the growth of bedroom communities around Vancouver, the paper, with its catholic daily coverage of municipal council meetings — tales invariably running half a column or more on some obscure zoning change or dispute between neighbors, the paper steadily became a throwback to another age.

While the Sun and Province launched mighty sections of lifestyles, cooking, and other baubles to attract readers, the Columbian had a women's page with weddings.

Never changing, the paper looked till the end like a nineteenth century product, with long grey columns and no full-color shots of pies and infants.

Over the years, the paper accumulated a group of hangers-on, yes-men for the easily flattered Taylor. The benefits were many. Trips to far corners of the planet, cars and fishing trips — all paid for by the paper.

Things looked pretty good for the paper following the lengthy Pacific Press strike of 1979, which closed both Vancouver dailies for nine months. Advertisers flocked to the Columbian. Circulation, which had hovered at 25,000 or less for a decade, jumped to over 40,000.

At the end of the strike the Colum-

bian had \$3 million in the bank and began an ambitious program of expansion. Five weekly newspapers were created, each earmarked for a particular municipality, bringing the total circulation up to more than 200,000. But the prosperity was accompanied by an orgy of spending by Taylor and his buddies. The publisher was often to be found in such places as Thailand and the Caribbean.

Back at the paper the daily's management seemed to need more and more money. Huge bank loans soon followed. Then the recession and a loss in ad lineage.

In 1980, the paper put out 28-page editions regularly, and on many days it was a 36-pager. Over the last 18 months, the paper had dwindled to an average of 18 pages.

As readers compared the Columbian with a fat, superficial but satisfying Sun, they jumped for the latter. Circulation began to slide.

By this summer a line of creditors was forming at the door. The Columbian was declared bankrupt on Oct. 14 and day-to-day operations fell to Don Seaman, of Peat Marwick Ltd. bankruptcy trustees.

The trustee immediately began seeking buyers for the assets of the Columbian but decided to let the newspaper continue normal operations.

Security guards arrived to watch over the creditors private property after an employee borrowed an ancient typewriter (probably for the purposes of typing resumes) and forgot to inform the boss. It brought fears that workers would try to run off with the remaining assets.

The typewriter later turned up.

Nov. 14 Selman announced that the Columbian would print its final edition the next day and that over 150 people would be out of work by Wednesday. A last-minute move by Taylor and his associates to buy title to the weeklies was quickly dubbed the "ship of fools" by employees. Some said they would rather be unemployed than work for the man they see as the author of the death of the Columbian.

The demise of the Columbian brings to an end not only the oldest daily in B.C., but the last independently-owned daily newspaper. Sixteen other dailies in the province are all owned by one of three chains.

Elbert Rose was supposed to have written this article, but by a strange coincidence, he too died Tuesday.

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Deal cancels demo

From page 5

don't produce results in the near future."

He said many Kamloops Coalition members were asking why Munro was picked to strike a deal with Bennett on social issues, and not coalition representatives from outside the labor movement. He said people should be prepared to strike again if the promised consultation produces little.

"Of course nobody likes to be on strike," he said. "But we've had consultation before."

Threlfall said Kamloops is more "politicized" now because of the provincial budget and the opposition to it.

"It seems to have brought a lot of different interest groups

together. There's a feeling that we have to maintain these connections. People were phoning the coalition this morning saying 'you've got to keep this organization going.'"

News of the agreements cancelled a planned pro-government march scheduled in Kamloops for Nov. 14. It also cancelled a counter-demonstration planned by Solidarity.

Government employee's union spokesperson David MacPherson was optimistic.

"A lot of people who were just going along for the ride thought we couldn't budge the government one inch. We moved them a foot. Now we have to move them a couple more feet."

the cut-backs in the area of education."

Howden said he was not surprised that all classes but one were shut down in Nanaimo schools during the teachers' strike.

"I think teachers have to be aware of what's going on on a social level, when virtually every teacher in this province saw a government that put \$42 million extra into schools just before the provincial election, then after the election said they would take over \$100 million out."

And while teachers were happy to be back at work, he said, "there's a 'wait and see' attitude."

Howden said while the legislation brought in by the provincial government and the battle against it brought people together as never before, the splits and polarization which also resulted will be damaging.

"I don't think what happened Sunday is closing that gap a lot," he said.

Trail is open

The most obvious features of the strike in Trail were closed highways and support for strikers.

Few teachers crossed picket lines, and parents turned up at the lines in support more often than in protest. Steelworkers in Trail, a town dominated in-

dustrially by the huge Cominco smelting operation, provided coffee and doughnuts to picketers.

Local members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, who earlier this fall voted against job action to support their own contract demands, voted to walk out in support of Operation Solidarity.

Gordon Tittsworth, labor spokesperson on the Trail Solidarity Coalition, was reluctant to remark on the agreements reached with Bennett and government negotiators.

"We don't have any details," he said.

Some government employees who returned to work Nov. 14 with apprehension are finding their apprehension is turning to anger.

Members of the B.C. Government Employees' Union in several northern B.C. communities, who asked for anonymity, said they were happy to return to work. Many were worried about running short of money if the strike continued, and they said their financial troubles were compounded by lean wage settlements in this and previous settlements with the government.

The tentative contract signed between government and BCGEU negotiators Nov. 13 "will hurt the public," said

one union member. "The public will lose its best employees because public sector wages aren't keeping up with private sector wages." He said some employees have already spoken about taking private sector jobs, or even out of province jobs when the opportunity arises.

U.S. troops poised

A report detailing plans for a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua has been leaked to NDP MP Pauline Jewett.

Recent reports from Central America say that at least 11,000 U.S. troops are stationed on Nicaragua's northern border, and that U.S. troops are gathering along the Costa Rican side of Nicaragua's southern border.

NDP leader Ed Broadbent has stated that the invasion may well start "within days." Last week, however, Jewett told the audience of a local fundraiser that increased tension in Lebanon may temporarily delay a U.S.-backed invasion.

In the meantime, Coalition for Aid to Nicaragua continues to seek donations of all kinds of usable goods or cash. Drop-off points have been set up until November 21 across Greater Vancouver, and other items can be delivered until November 28 to 2524 Cypress. Call 733-1021 for information.

School pact begs question

While tentative pacts were forged Nov. 13 between the government, Operation Solidarity and striking government employees, an agreement between teachers and the local school board was reached with less fanfare in Nanaimo.

The agreement on seniority and layoffs was modelled on the North Vancouver agreement which exempts teachers

from the arbitrary firing procedures of Bill 3.

Said Jim Howden, Nanaimo and District Teachers' Association president: "I guess we prefer to have done away with these arbitrary powers. However, you've got something that in normal times we wouldn't be happy with at all. We really question

AN INJURY TO ONE IS STILL AN INJURY TO ALL

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Disabled
Colleges
Patients
School Boards
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Women
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**Bill Bennett opened this wound
— Band-aids won't close it.**



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To share an evening with Dave Van Ronk is to experience a sampling of many of the notable styles and streams of twentieth century music. His voice slides from a ragged whisper to a lusty roar through material as diverse as Billie Holiday, Woodie Guthrie and Bertholt Brecht. His guitar stylings range from classic Scott Joplin rags to Jelly Roll Morton tunes. Every visit of Dave to Vancouver reveals more surprises from his eclectic bag of tricks.

Sunday, November 20

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ENTERTAINMENT

What would you do if you found out your best friend was Sam Peckinpah?

SCREEN

GEMS

MARK VATNSDAL GRAPHIC

By Dale Jack

Sam Peckinpah should have air injected into his brain.

With its advertisements that say things like, "What would you do if you found out your three best friends were Soviet agents?" The Osterman Weekend seems to be an attempt to cash in on the neo-Red scare.

But once you get past the box office it becomes painfully obvious that the king of movie mutilation had problems translating the cowboy cut-em-ups into the twentieth century.

The old black cowboy hat/white cowboy hat method of separating the good and bad guys is thinly veiled. You can tell from the start that the hopheads, the coke fiends, and the anonymous gunmen have got bullets with their names on them. The yoga-practicing "anarchist nihilist", the all-American newscaster and his well-armed family are all keepers, as is the family dog (although they really leave you hanging on that one).

Aside from the scene of a woman getting a hypodermic needle jammed through her nose (repeated four times, in case you forget it), modern technology offers no grisly goodies to compare with a frontier shoot-out or lynching.

The laser-sensor burp guns are boring. The high-tech overskill puts the Grenada invasion to shame. The slow motion fighting isn't exciting, but it does make the screams sound really funny. And, of course, there is waiting to see who is going to get skewered by the bows and arrows lying everywhere. In the end, the real men are reduced to using baseball bats, poker, and their bare hands.

Perhaps the greatest mutilation is that of the plot, which gets horribly twisted before its merciful demise. There are too many loose ends left hanging. It is probably no great coincidence that the whole thing slips into absurdity once there are no people left to kill.

Characterization goes beyond the point of being two-dimensional, and in many cases turns into caricature. If Ronald Reagan ever dies, Burt Lancaster has got a guaranteed job as official understudy. John Hurt does not fare so well. He could be the new keeper of the "twisted little maniac" role which, a few years ago, would have been given to Bruce Dern or Roddy McDowell. The scene where the FBI saves the day is like something out of Dragnet.



No! Not the laser-sensor burp gun! You fiend!

Star 80 far too black and white

By Bob Bossin

While not so weighty as the other things up for consideration this week, I want to correct the false impression, conveyed by the Times, that I liked *Star 80*. How embarrassing. In fact, I thought the movie was a turkey. The last half of the story was left off by mistake. Here's the original text:

The right stuff that Dorothy Stratten had was something else again. She had a body, face and innocence of expression that enraptured Hugh Hefner, who made her his Miss August. It was also the right stuff for Playboy readers, if readers is the proper noun, who voted her Playmate of the Year, and for Peter Bogdanovich, the film director who took her into his movie, his heart and his bed. She was murdered by her cuckolded husband.

Star 80 depicts the last few years of Stratten's short life and director Bob Fosse keeps things moving along with almost enough verve to cover up the movie's obvious failings. Above all, credit must go to Mariel Hemingway who once again plays an ingenue, as she did in *Manhattan* and *Personal Best*. God, she does that well. Soon other such performances will be compared to hers in the way that actors doing rebels are judged against Brando.

Hemingway is so beguiling that when her Dorothy Stratten reneges on her promise to take care of her estranged husband "for ever", and in its place offers him a flat \$7,000, we are on her side, at least until Hemingway is off-screen and we can think about it a bit.

But despite Hemingway's performance, and Cliff Robertson's avuncular Hugh Hefner — a daring approach in the '80s — the movie dies of two mortal wounds, the first inflicted by leading man Eric Roberts. The pivotal character in *Star 80* is not the star but the husband, an ambitious grafter named Paul Snider. For the movie to work we have to kind of like him or at least find him complex. Eric Roberts as Snider, to put it politely, has difficulty with complexity. He is a one-emotion-at-a-time actor, and coming in the wake of Robert De Niro's super-groupie Rupert Pupkin in *The King of Comedy*, Roberts would have been better to turn down the role. Hemingway wipes the floor with him.

Ultimately, though, the movie is sunk by Fosse's shallow perspective on Stratten's murder. She was killed, he seems to say, by a bad man, or with a tad of sophistication, by a bad working class man who couldn't make it with the nouveau super-rich into whose class Dorothy Stratten had risen. Fosse is awfully easy on what may be his own milieu. Snider's low-rent wet T-shirt promotions look appropriately sleazy, but life at the Playboy mansion is so clean that it shines. Where is Hefner's reported relish for inter-species relations and the other dicy and documented pastimes in this particular heaven? In *Star 80*, innocence and guilt are a little black and white.

Speaking of which, there is the sidelight controversy about Hem-

ingway's cosmetic breast surgery. Bob Fosse is outraged that the press should focus on such a thing. It is, he says, totally irrelevant. I am not so sure.

As every movie-goer over 30 knows, wars are fought so that American heroes have a place to ply their trade. This genre is now making a comeback with the risky days and passionate nights of the press correspondent highlighted against the background of third world revolutions. *Under Fire*, set in Nicaragua at the time the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza, is not quite as blatant as in its perspective on what is important as *Reds* or *The Year of Living Dangerously*. But it is getting up there. It might be less offensive only because it is so muddled, with motivations as opaque as Nick Nolte's diction. Between Nolte and the poorly recorded soundtrack, it is often difficult to tell what is going on. When the plot devices do come into sharp focus, they strain credulity.

There is plenty of action, with the movie making maximum use of its two tanks and helicopters, and there is yet another catchy performance by Ed Harris, this time as an American mercenary, a sort of John Glenn gone bad. There are also unexpected moments of intelligence and a refreshing streak of sympathy for the Sandinista cause. "Bennett goes next," someone in the audience shouted after the fleeing Somoza. A movie which elicits such a response cannot be all bad.

Wacky tales from the hardware right

PULP ON PAPER

By Robert Campbell

W.A.C. Bennett And The Rise of British Columbia, by David J. Mitchell (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1983 \$24.95).

I can't completely dislike a premier whose political advice included "make no decisions when you're hungry," and who served Ovaltine martinis to celebrate the swearing-in of his cabinet in 1952. But I loathe a fawning author who attempts to make an unprincipled opportunist into the democratic populist responsible for the rise of B.C.

In spite of David Mitchell's best efforts, however, what emerges from a careful reading of **W.A.C. Bennett** is the story of a crafty, sometimes brilliant politician who made and broke rules as he saw fit to maintain his alliance with foreign capital and to keep Social Credit in power. Born in New Brunswick in 1900, William Andrew Cecil Bennett (Cecil to his friends) came to B.C. in 1930. Already a successful hardware merchant after a decade in Alberta, Bennett and his family settled in Kelowna where he bought another hardware store.

Elected to the provincial legislature as a Tory in 1941, Bennett developed a reputation as a political maverick, strident anti-socialist and strong supporter

of coalition government to keep the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) from power. Mitchell sees Bennett's switch to Social Credit as a result of his distaste for the patronage and corruption of the Liberals and Conservatives. Bennett's distaste for the Conservative party did not prevent him in previous years from running for its leadership twice and twice seeking a federal seat under its banner.

All attempts with the Tories failed and Bennett jumped to the increasingly popular Social Credit movement, even though he had no interest in its "funny money" theories. Harold Winch, provincial CCF leader for many years and the man who coined the name "Wacky", said it best: "I knew him first of all as a Conservative. I knew him as a coalitionist. I knew him as an independent. Then I knew him as a Social Creditor. Now, a man who switches politics like that is completely unprincipled."

In a very close 1952 election, the Socreds came to power. According to Mitchell they represented a "new people's party" which fostered a "reform approach" and sought to avoid the "evils of party patronage." Then, for the posts of attorney general and finance minister, Bennett chose Robert Bonner and Einar Gunderson. Neither was in the legislature. He then forced two reluctant MLAs to resign, and, against much local Socred opposition, got his two boys nominated and elected.

Gunderson was defeated in 1953 but



'Second to the ice age? I'm second to nothing! Say, how'd you like an ovaltine martini?'

was retained as finance minister until defeated again in a by-election. He remained as advisor and Socred bagman.

Bonner, who now heads B.C. Hydro, became notorious in the mid-fifties because he took 707 days to lay charges against Robert Sommers, the resources minister who was later con-

victed and jailed for criminal conspiracy to accept bribes.

What counts to Mitchell though, is "second only to the ice age, he (Bennett) was the force that did the most to sculpt the face of British Columbia." Until defeated in 1972 Bennett and the Socreds ran the province like a hardware store on a pay-as-you-go basis.

What Mitchell does not dwell upon is that the Socreds coincidentally came to power during a period of massive investment in the expanding provincial economy. Under Bennett's guiding hand, the result was ruthless exploitation and foreign domination of B.C.'s resources. His government also entrenched the boom-and-bust character of our economy because it was most profitable in the short run.

Bennett certainly did not create the political polarization in the province but he exacerbated it to keep his party in power — "the Socialist hordes are at the gates." His hostile labor policies pale only in comparison with his son's present government.

What emerges from this book is not the portrait of a statesman, but an astute politician who bid the huge provincial debt in "contingent liabilities," sold 30 years of hydro-electricity for half price so he could build an unneeded dam named after himself, and damned socialists but nationalized B.C. Electric and the ferries. He even rigged an all-party swimming race so the Socred entrant would triumph. Still, Bennett remains more appealing than the author of his biography.

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Shaw inspires gut reaction

By Ralph Maurer
Acceptable Losses, by Irwin Shaw.
Avon, 309 pages, \$4.75

People used to ask "Why me?" when they got sick. Nowadays they ask instead, "What did I do wrong?" If you have cancer, it's because you smoke or eat too much fatty foods or took the pill, (if you die of it it's because you ignored that lump, that cough, that bleeding for too long). And everybody knows why you get herpes or AIDS. The notion that people are in some way personally responsible when their bodies break down is pretty widely accepted these days.

It's this notion that lies at the bottom of *Acceptable Losses*, and it's no accident that the main character, Roger Damon, is almost killed: not by the kook who threatened him on page one, but by an ulcer. An ulcer— isn't that the punishment for a lousy diet, for bad work/worry habits, for a life lived too fast?

Roger Damon is 65, the head of a respectable and principled New York literary agency (he's genuinely embarrassed by the one commercial, as opposed to artistic success his agency's had). He makes enough money that retirement doesn't loom so much as beckon. He's honest. He's healthy. He's virile and irresistible even to women a third his age. He's got a perfect (the perfect) marriage.

And yet here he is, interrupting untroubled sleep to take a call from some stranger who wants to kill him. Sure, the caller might be just some crank who picked "Damon, Roger" at ran-

dom out of the phone book, but neither Damon nor any of his friends think so. "Somewhere in his past there's something that happened, somebody who wants him to suffer," says wife Sheila.

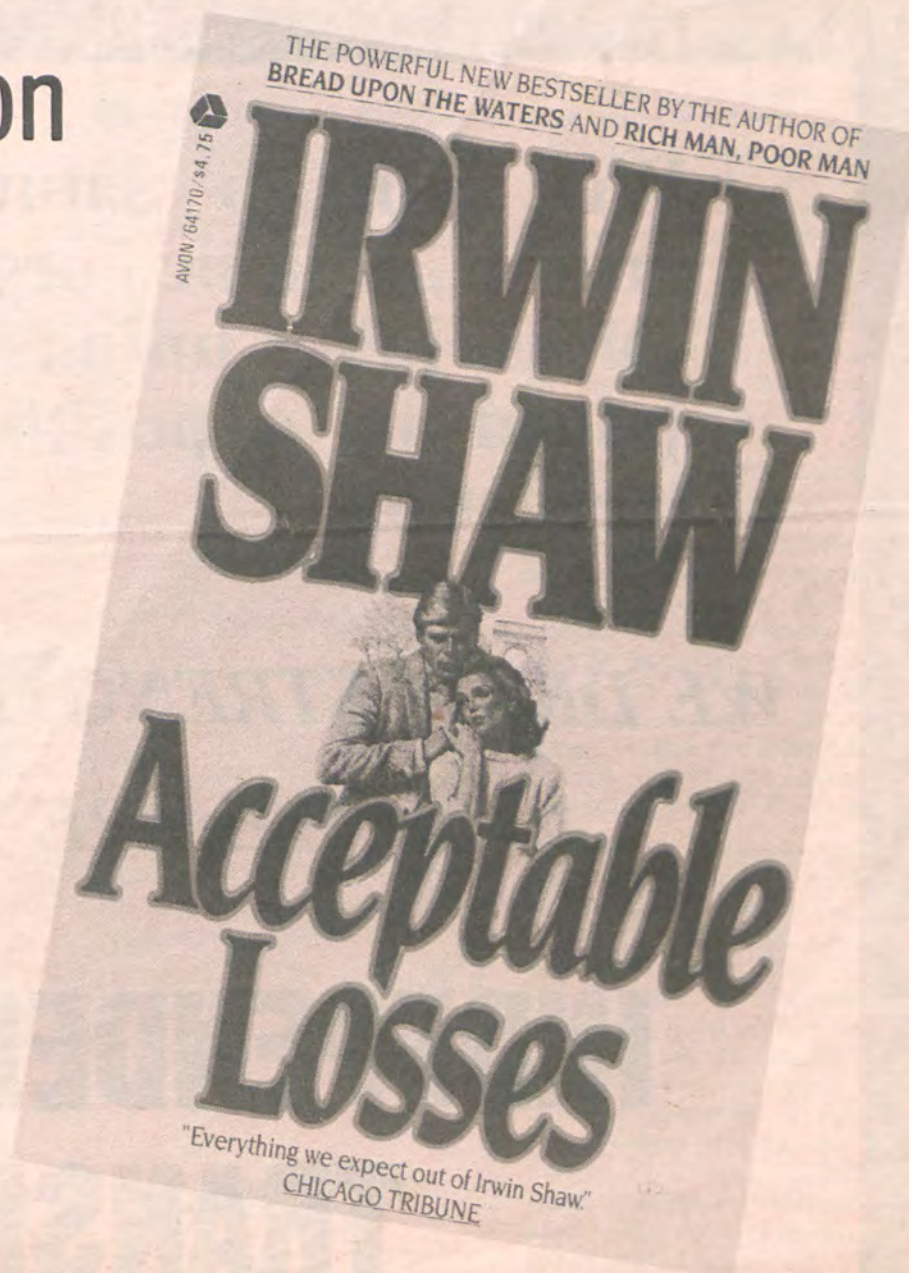
That somebody is Damon himself. Shaken from his self-satisfied revery, Damon is compelled to sift through his past, reliving all of his worst moments, reviewing all his most regrettable decisions, in search of something that will explain his current dis-ease. Not surprisingly, under close examination a little tarnish does show up on his sterling character, and the notion of "goodness" becomes a shade ambiguous.

Meanwhile, more than his past keeps coming up; Damon can't keep his food down. Oh, no, it looks like a perforated ulcer! Roger Damon's hidden insides are finding all kinds of way to punish him.

But not kill him. When the operation screws up and Damon feels like dying, his loving and loyal wife pulls him out of it. The day Damon leaves the hospital—surprise!—the mystery caller actually pops out from between the parked cars, gun in hand. Fortunately another loyal and loving buddy (Damon must have been doing something right all these years to deserve such friends) has been on the lookout for just this eventuality, and kills the man before he can pull the trigger on Roger.

Roger Damon is allowed to retire happily ever after.

Why not? He deserves it.



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Alliance Vice-President Guy Jacob presents a \$100,000 cheque for "Operation Solidarity" to B.C. Federation of Labour President Art Kube (right) and Secretary-treasurer Mike Kramer (left) at the Vancouver demonstration, Aug. 10.

BUT IS IT ART?

By Scott Watson

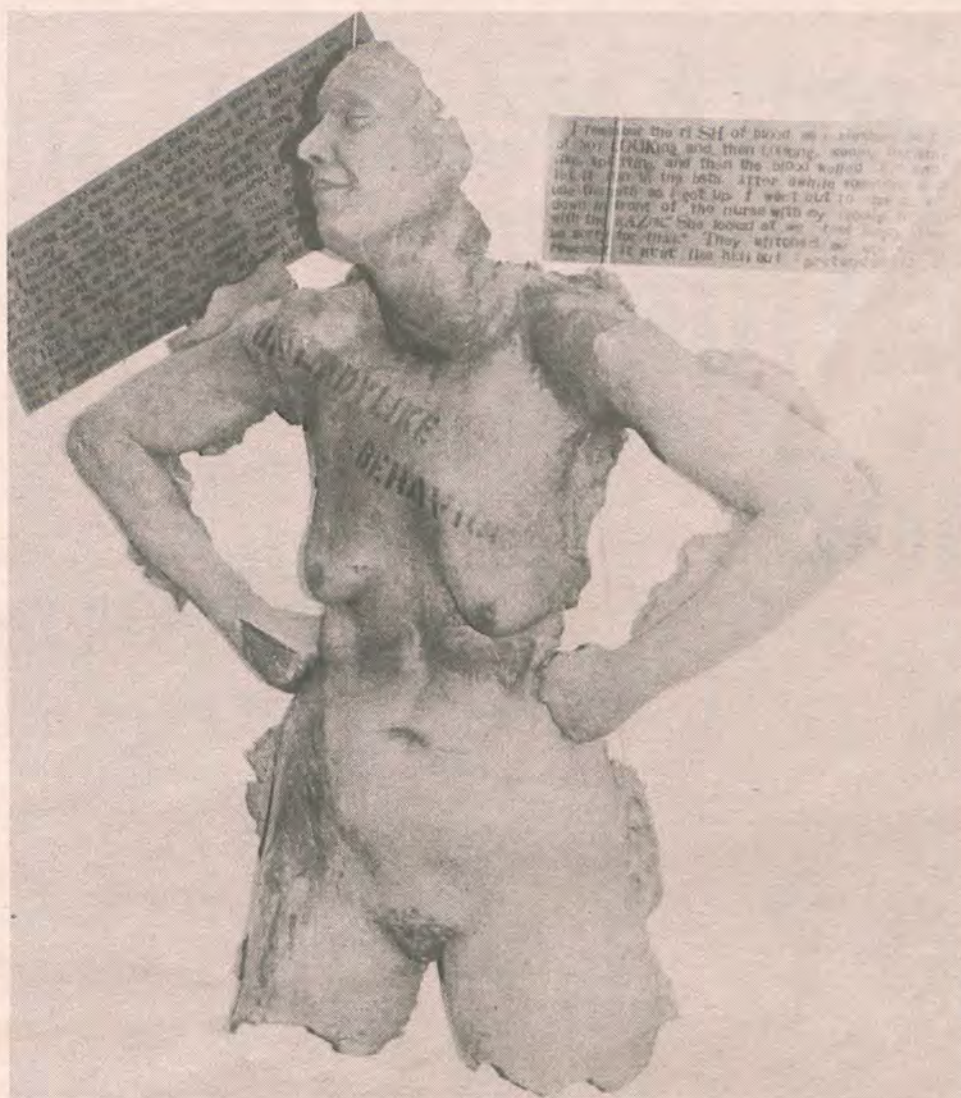
Every time the Unit Pitt, Vancouver's most unkempt gallery, mounts an exhibition on the theme of sexuality, attendance skyrockets. The subject of sexuality, about which little seems to be known except that it's "mine" or "yours" and rarely "ours", is naturally of immense interest in a society overly given to introspection. This time it's **Sexuality and Seeing** (until Nov. 19), for the most part a baleful meditation on the privacy of desire and the difficulty of public gender roles.

There are few surprises here. We've seen and heard most of this before. Half the work shouldn't be in an art gallery. The organizers of this exhibition should realize that it does a disservice to genuine work when it is given equal time with what someone's friend did yesterday. But, despite the large contingent from kindergarten, the exhibition gives us a chance to assess the state of what is known in the art journals as "feminist" art — a category into which all erotic art seems to have been consigned.

Gone are images we've come to expect — no male nudes by women painters, no young androgynous ideal and practically no humor. As expected there are pieces which express a generalized hatred of men and sex, ill-drawn female nudes expressive of "self", and, of course, a few cosmic vaginas.

For me, this exhibition, as a thoughtful statement, depends almost entirely on the work of Persimmon Blackbridge and Jeannie Kamins.

Blackbridge is represented by several works in clay. They all seem full of anger. Even her two undulating lovers seem to emanate rage. The most powerful and successful of her pieces, *Unladylike Behavior*, is a cast of a torso and face (from life) of a woman who has just slashed her wrist. On the wall a written narrative tells the story in the



Unlady like Behavior by Persimmon Blackbridge.

Blackridge and Kamins save Sexuality and Seeing

first person. The woman is incarcerated in a mental hospital, trying to conform so as to appear "well". As part of her behaviour modification program she is expected to groom herself, to take the pains to be ladylike. She goes to shave her legs but, sweet reason intervenes (they are mad, not I) and she slashes herself instead.

This is not an easy work to take. The artist seems to want to draw our atten-

tion to a parallel between-grooming and self-mutilation. As such it is a portrait of a woman victimized by her society. Her powerlessness is compelling. However, the work's real worth is not in the position it takes on leg shaving. Rather, it is that it gives an authentic voice to the incarcerated. (A collaborator is credited, presumably the hospitalized woman herself.) For it is in our prisons and mental hospitals

where society most strongly exerts force on the body to make the psyche "normal". Indeed, most theories of the "normal" individual derive from these uniquely modern institutions. It is rare that the incarcerated are allowed an unmediated voice. Of course, as art, this voice from hell has been mediated. It must have been Blackbridge's decision to represent the figure in a moment of triumph rather than pathos. It is, after all, only by slashing herself that the subject can gain "control over her own body." We, however, as viewers, know the gesture is futile. For this reason the work might be suspected of lacking compassion.

If Blackbridge's work is as shrill as a fire engine siren, Jeannie Kamins' colorful fabric pieces are as gentle as the summer dawn. Her dancing, love-making figures emanate a joy and warmth that is hard to resist (I managed, barely). Everyone is plump and Rubenesque. Begone the lean and hungry, begone the muscle-bound and anorexic idols of the consumer age. Rejoice with the aging, fleshy androgynous.

Vaginas are laughing mouths and penises unthreatening handles — and we are grateful that the cosmos is not erupting from these gentle, tame, humanized organs. This soft pink flesh likes pleasure. Is this paradise? The wholesome good will of these erotic pieces is so unusual that one has to like them. However, one must remember that wholesomeness is still a banal estate where smoking, drinking and malice have been banished. And wholesomeness, even this earthy, erotic kind, avoids the conflict and complexity required of serious art.

Both Kamins and Blackbridge understand their materials, something one can't take for granted when walking into the Unit Pitt, and their work is evidence of the strength of feminist art in this community.

However, wouldn't this have been a more interesting exhibition if it had included, as well, work which deals with sexuality in more conventional "high art" idioms by artists like Vickie Marshall, Vicky Alexander and Allyson Clay?

Art Gallery opening an orgy of individuality

By Gerry Gilbert

I joined the old Vancouver Art Gallery once, in the early '50s. I liked to go to the lounge and feel rich.

In that lounge a decade later, as an artist, I was handing the video camera to the Secretary of State, out from Ottawa for a look-see at this notoriously successful civic art gallery. The gallery seemed to represent the Vancouver artists, who in turn were representing the city's public.

Artists banded together in groups like Intermedia. Professional artists expanded their consciousness and joined, as cultural workers, with anyone who wanted to help wake the city up to itself. The VAG was a resource. It was a festival of expression that included every *ism*. Even liberal tendencies braved exposure to the radical spirit of the times; we all drank together. ("Give that Canada Council officer a toke too, willya.") And it was a living, as I remember. Much of the good will that the Vancouver public has for the VAG stems from that era.

In the '70s, possibly in that same lounge, I butted into some gallery director's apology to the Soviet diplomats for a demonstration outside protesting a poetry reading by Yev-

tushenko. "Fuck you, you officials are all the same."

In the '60s the world had flowed through Vancouver. In the '70s we went back to the end of line and the VAG seemed to be in business primarily to remind us of our place in the serious art world.

Everything the gallery touched turned to display cases. The city's artists returned to their ghetto and kept local art alive. The money for theatre, publishing and art was reserved for mainstream projects. Research that didn't match the sofa dried up. Suddenly no one knew each other any more.

Now it's the '80s and it's the new Vancouver Art Gallery and it's me again, lounging around the gala opening last month, selling the news that B.C. is again the place in Canada where art, like politics, can come true. But looking around the inaugural exhibitions at the VAG (and at the alternate show, The October Show) you can see what's missing: co-operation between artists in the making of art.

The October Show was a good beginning, with artists collectively presenting their work, but, as at the VAG, everyone went to the muse alone

and came out with their own precious thing.

The VAG curators dealt with local artists individually, but there was no call among artists for a show of solidarity in the face of the new opportunity at the VAG for their work to be seen by the likes of everyone. So, for all the extensiveness of these exhibitions, they are just rough sketches of what's going on, of what's coming, of what's necessary. The sense of possibility is exhilarating — there's so much deeper to go.

The new gallery gives art a forum in the city, a place as substantial as the courts and the city hall and the jail. The fake grandeur of the original architecture has been handled with humor — escalators always cheer me up. The galleries are human-scale, for all their decorator whiteness. The art will get younger as the gallery gets older and the paintings won't need repainting. The art may tend to frame the building now, but the facility amplifies the art. Visitors are quite dazzled, as if they'd never realized what a work of art was before.

Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983 is the big hit, decade by decade: the perfection in the paintings from the National Gallery — before

science when art was one of the few places perfection was permitted; and the standard that Emily Carr's paintings and life still set for us. Too bad there was no children's art in the children's gallery. Some meticulous contemporary native Indian work, but only a few mentions of the second and third worlds and of Canadian ethnic cultures in works done from Anglo-Canadian angles. We could use some alternate logics.

A woman walking past a picture of a "resting stone" laughed, "What else can a stone do?" Art is what else we can do.

I look forward to the sounds of performance art hushing the hush. "There are 60 things that can go wrong," the audio-visual man sighed. The catalogue quality of the 440-page catalogue is artfully heightened by the Eaton's sign in the cover picture. Errors of fact and unaccountable omissions make the book even more interesting reading.

The absence of work by artists like Gregg Simpson makes some of the paintings in the show look better than they are. The delegation of crafts to some other time is plain stupid. The bicycle racks collect water. The cafe isn't open yet.

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