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BCIT'S STUDENT NEWSMAGAZINE

LINK

January 27 1992



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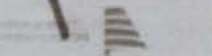
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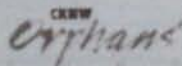
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A STORY EMERGES...

"We value our staff tremendously. We think they are tremendous people."
—Wynne Powell, Chairperson, Board of Governors

"I love working here—I like the people that I've met. It takes something like this to start tearing us apart a little and that's not what we want because we as a whole run the institute—not just the management, not just us but everybody as a whole, the instructors, the students—we are all responsible for running it."
—Auxillary Staff Member

"Even if BCIT's offer was accepted today we could be looking at cutbacks in programs, services and staff. The union's 14 per cent is impossible for us to consider."
—Terry Jorden, BCIT Media Relations

"We value our staff tremendously. We think they are tremendous people."
—Wynne Powell, Chairperson, Board of Governors

"I'm a single parent, one dependent, and a single income."
—Print Services Worker

"BCIT does attract an awful lot of single parents because it is big enough that if you hate your job, you'll not be out on the street, you can find something else."
—Secretary

"Our point wasn't to be disruptive to the students and we tried all we could but management didn't see that we were serious."
—Auxillary Staff Member

"It affects everyone in the pocketbook but you've got to do what you've got to do or else you'll end up with a low wage for the rest of your life. Somewhere you've got to draw the line and take a stand."
—Tool Crib Worker

"We value our staff tremendously. We think they are tremendous people."
—Wynne Powell, Chairperson, Board of Governors

"We're taking a selfish position and we think that our selfish position holds more weight than their selfish opinion."
—Jason Breitzkreuz, student

"... With its strong technology and business programs, BCIT can help us get the most out of our resources."
—Robert B. Findlay, President and CEO MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.

"The students should not be used as a bargaining tool in these negotiations."
—BCIT Student Association presentation to the Board of Governors

"BCIT is a small fish in big union negotiating pond."
—BCIT Press Release

"The Union has told management that we are prepared to move if you are, but they have refused to move at all and in our view the Institute is acting in a blatantly discriminatory way against support staff three-quarters of whom are women."
—John Shields, BCGEU

"We completely deny this is some sort of institutional sexism." Terry Jorden

"The New Democratic Party will ensure that women get economic fairness and true equality."
—Joan Sawicki, in a pre-election interview with the Link.

"It seems to us that common sense has been lost. The offer made to the BCGEU is not unreasonable given the current economic environment."
—8 Civil & Structural Engineering Instructors

"We're not doing anything devious" [by bringing in 10 unionized janitorial staff before picketing begins at 5:30 am].
—Patrick Prevost, Marriott Corporation of Canada

"There are valid points being raised on both sides. Certainly it is a women's issue and I'm not sure that the Support Staff are being treated with the same respect as other bargaining units on this campus. Equity in the workplace must be looked at if there is going to be a quick resolution to this dispute. But, any settlement must take into account the current economic realities such as the cost-of-living increase and restraints placed on BCIT's operating budget by the ministry."
—Stephen J. Miller, Director, BCIT Student Association

"I started the whole thing."
—Valery Lewis, student

"We value our staff tremendously. We think they are tremendous people."
—Wynne Powell, Chairperson, Board of Governors

LETTERS

January 21, 1992

To: BCIT Staff Society

The majority of the members of the Civil and Structural Engineering Technology Department wish to make their position clear as to why they are continuing classes through this present dispute.

The majority of our students are self-supporting and have made significant sacrifices to come here. It is unfair to treat them this way.

It seems to us that common sense has been lost. The offer made to the BCGEU is not unreasonable given the current economic environment.

If you wish to discuss this further we will be pleased to meet with you. If there are any comments or discussion about as at the membership meeting on Monday, 27th Jan., we ask that this letter be read to the membership.

8 instructors in Civil & Structural Engineering Technology

Mediator meets with both sides

Mediator Steven Kelleher met with the bargaining teams from both the BCGEU and BCIT on Saturday, January 25 at the Park Hill Hotel on Davie Street.

Brought in for exploratory talks, Kelleher listened to each side's position, as well as the history of the negotiations.

His initial assessment was that the union and management were too far apart to mediate but he made some suggestions to each and did not book out of the dispute.

The Institute said they would get back to Kelleher in a couple of days. No further talks are scheduled at this time. ♦

BCIT HOURS OF OPERATION

These are the open facilities on campus as of 10:00 January 20th. They may change and we will try to keep you informed.

Food Services at Inglis—normal hours
Library—8:30–17:00

Bookstore—17:00–19:30

Recreation/Athletics—8:00–18:00
(Mon–Thur); 8:00–17:00 (Fri); closed weekends

Medical Services—regular hours

Child care Centre—regular operation

Registration—8:30–19:00

Microcomputer Labs—8:30–16:30
SW3 2695, 2N320

STUDENT ASSOCIATION HOURS

General Office—8:30–16:30

TNT—8:30–16:00 (Mon–Fri)

DeskTop Publishing—8:30–16:30

Copy Centre—8:00–15:00

Hours subject to change without notice.
Please call 432-8600 to confirm.

Information regarding Financial Aid services during the strike

- Management staff is evaluating and processing requests for emergency loans by students in need.
- Schedule 2 of Canada Student Loans are being processed by management staff. These involve the second disbursement of loan funds.
- At this time management staff will NOT be processing Certificate 1, Schedule 1 or Equalization Payment documents UNLESS they are already posted.

1992 January 22



Institute accused of gender bias

By Martin Chester

Support staff at the British Columbia Institute of Technology are fighting institutional discrimination by demanding equal pay increases to other campus workers according to a member of the union negotiating team.

The predominately female support workers have been on strike since Monday, January 20 over wage demands. The BC Government Employees Union, which represents the support workers, is looking for a 14 per cent increase over two years, an increase equivalent to that given to the predominantly male trade instructors, who are also represented by the BCGEU, last year.

The institute has offered the support staff a two year contract with a seven per cent increase in the first year. In the second year, pay increases would be based on the average increase of the BCGEU Master Agreement, which regulates the wages of all BCGEU members. The support staff would then receive an

average of the BCGEU agreements, less the seven per cent.

Michelle Philippe, a member of the union negotiating team said, "What we're talking about is institutionalized discrimination." Philippe said the union came to the table with a realistic offer and was insulted by the institutes response. "[Discrimination] is really the only explanation."

"We didn't want to fool around in negotiations. We told them we don't have time to mess around. We said 'let's come in with an offer in the ballpark of what we want,'" Philippe said. "The fact that they came in with an insulting, demeaning proposal made [the membership] wonder," she said, referring to an early administration offer of seven per cent plus a signing bonus.

At the time Susan Ney, Manager of Employee Relations at BCIT, described as an "offer the union couldn't refuse."

"They expect the 'push-over women' to make all the sacrifices," Philippe said.

"What we're looking for is an equal percentage increase," she said. "We expect them, when they are considering wage increases, to at least give us the same consideration as they give to others across the campus."

"[We're asking for] pay increases that take into account cost of living increases and our commitment to this institute. [What we are being offered are] increases that reflect the attitude of the employer," she said. "We're looking for an attitude of respect. That can be reflected in pay, but that is just one way."

Philippe said promotions and hiring also reflect the attitude of the employer and that BCIT has a history of overlooking women in both areas.

"I guess it would have been different if we had been men. I don't think they expected this kind of militance—but they got it anyway," she said. "They were amazed we got a 91 per cent strike vote."

Terry Jordan, BCIT Media Relations Manager said the

administration did not consider how adamant the support workers might be.

"That's not part of what the bargaining teams were considering—how big a bat they carry," he said.

Jordan said the union is completely misreading the situation.

"We completely deny that this is some sort of institutional sexism," Jordan said. "The institute doesn't treat a bargaining unit [differently] based on their gender."

BCIT has recently created an Employment Equity director, but she could not be reached for comment.

Jordan said BCIT trade instructors received a nine and a half per cent increase over two years. He did not mention, however, that the instructors were stepped up into a higher wage level which brought their increases up to close to 14 per cent.

The increase came last year when the institute expected an

eight per cent increase in funding, Jordan said.

"A lot has changed in the last year in the economy and in what we can expect from the government," he said.

Even if BCIT's offer was accepted today we would be looking at cutbacks in programs, services and staff," Jordan said. "The union's 14 per cent is impossible for us to consider."

Jordan said the trades instructors' wage increase was also intended to bring them into line with other vocational instructors around the province. He said the support staff wages are not out of line with those around the province.

"When we look at the support group and we did a comparison across the province, we found they are on the top," he said.

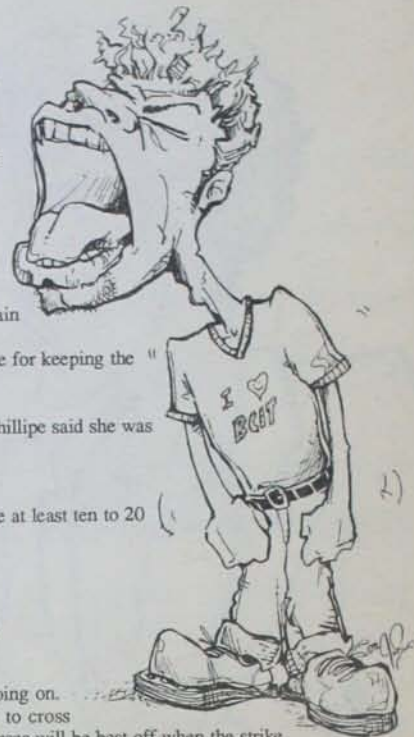
Jordan said the administration did not consider how militant the union membership might be. ❖

I am student hear me roar...

By Martin Chester

Students want their voice heard in the on going labour negotiations at BCIT. A group of students calling themselves Students for Studies have organized a rally for Monday, January 27 at 8:30 in the morning. Students are asked to gather on Willingdon, just up the hill from the picketers at the main gate. Valery Lewis, as spokesperson for the rally organizers said, "We're trying to draw attention to the students. We're losing out on our term. And to put pressure on the two parties so that they will go back to the table and start talking."

"It is important for people to know that we are the third party in all this and obviously we're taking the brunt of it," she said. Lewis, who also sits on the Student Association Council, said the rally had the support of the Student Association. "We have the support of the Student Association and that is really important, but we have to respect their wish that we remain professional," she said. "It's going to be non-confrontational, and very neutral, we're just staying away from the picket lines." The rally will be watched over by students, which Lewis referred to as being "sort of like student police," who will be responsible for keeping the students away from confrontations with the support staff on the picket lines. Support staff negotiator Michelle Phillippe said the student rally is a positive step. "I am anxious to hear what is said, I'm encouraged. If the students have something to say about this, they are very welcome to." Phillippe said she was sympathetic to the situation the students are in. "[The students] will be welcomed onto the campus, there won't be any problems with the picket lines," Phillippe said. Lewis said she could not guess at how many students would show up to the rally. "We had an organizing meeting yesterday and we had at least 50 people there. For every person there, I would guess there will be at least ten to 20 coming," she said. ♦



Students give perspective on strike

Students at the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby are beginning to feel the effects of a strike that has 480 support staff on the picket lines.

The labour dispute, the second in recent years at the institute, is over wages. BC Government Employees Union is asking for a 14 per cent increase over two years which the institute administration says is impossible.

Meanwhile, with most instructors not crossing the picket lines, the majority of classes have had to be cancelled.

BCIT Student Association President Alex Robinson said students will soon feel the effects of the strike.

"I think that, in the first three—four days, people are looking at it as time off, as a way of catching up," Robinson said. "I don't expect it to last long. We've received many phone calls from concerned students."

He said the effects will vary depending on the programs students are taking. "Technology students will be least effected. The trade students will be the hardest hit because a lot of them are under apprenticeships and, if they lose too much time, they will have to go back to work."

"It is my understanding that some of them will lose their jobs for various reasons because of this."

Michelle Phillippe of the BCGEU/BCIT Support Staff bargaining team said the union tried to avoid inconveniencing the students by limiting their job action.

"We tried that for a full work week until we felt that we had to escalate to a full strike," Phillippe said.

"When an agency's operations are shut down, the clients of the agency are the ones that are effected most," she said. "In this case the clients are the students, and that is unfortunate."

"A full scale strike is the only way to draw attention to a situation and to get the employer to negotiate with us."

Health Sciences Student's Association Chair Rick Veldhuis said Health Sciences will also be adversely effected, but not as badly as other students.

"There are a number of options available [to save the semester]. The fulltime and technology students have the biggest time window. It's the part-time and trade students who will really suffer."

"The nursing program is a very intensive program, so any time they miss is very difficult to make up," Veldhuis said.

Even students who do independent studies, such as nursing practicums, will be hurt in the end.

"There's only so much you can do on your own, as far as studying goes, before you hit a block." He said that time set aside for projects and independent study might be sacrificed to make up the time lost to the strike.

"I don't know if [interrupting studies] is the intent of the union, but it is the effect," he said.

"I don't want to say that I sympathize with either side. I recognize that it is the only weapon the union has and to use it effectively they have to disrupt services," he said.

Jennifer Comyns, who is in the degree completion program for Administration Studies and business offered through BCIT and the Open University, said her program is also affected.

"Besides the concern that our program may eventually be cut off or have to be extended, there is a concern that the money we have allotted for going to school may run out. [We are also concerned] that if the programmed is shortened, we won't get the same quality education," she said.

Not all classes are being cancelled, however. Several civil engineering instructors are crossing the picket lines to teach.

"There are not a lot of classes going on. Some instructors have volunteered to cross the lines, and that's great. Those classes will be best off when the strike ends," Robinson said.

However, not all students in these classes are attending. Engineering Chair Jason Breitreuz said the students not attending classes will not fall behind those who are attending.

"My guess is that about ten per cent aren't there. A few of them are union men and would prefer not to cross the lines," Breitreuz said. "They are getting information about what is going on in class from the others, but 90 per cent are going to classes and are getting instruction," he said. ♦

Strike has economic implications for Students

Students' summer work plans may be affected by the current support workers strike.

Engineering Chair Jason Breitreuz said the time in many programs would have to be made up.

"Well the first thing is the studies this year are so intense that it is impossible to make up all of the information that we would have learned during this time within the same amount of time we are allotted to finish. So either they are going to have to extend the year or they're going to have to cut out some studies."

"For the people who come here if they are going to have to extend the time, that's time we could have been working and that is money lost," Breitreuz said.

"I think that any loss towards either the institution through negotiation or to the union through negotiations is going to be far less than the total that the 14000 students at BCIT will lose."

"I think they should take a look at what they're fighting for and see if they're not putting out other people a lot more than what they are fighting for," he said. "Even without a negotiated agreement, I would like to see classes begin again."

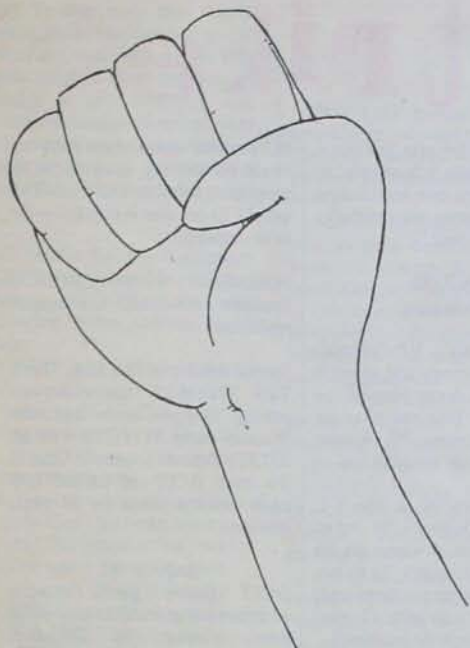
Jennifer Comyns, a student in the degree completion program for administration studies and business, said she was concerned about how a prolonged strike will effect students trying to find work in the summer.

"It puts us at a disadvantage as far as getting jobs," Comyns said. "Already, BCIT students get out later than the university students, and now we have to think about how hard it is to find a job when all the jobs are gone and with the situation with the economy, it's much, much harder."

Comyns is also concerned with the reputation of the institute in the business community. "Since they know that a strike is going on, we might lose some of the positive feeling towards the degree or BCIT because of the strike," she said.

Health Sciences Chair Rick Veldhuis agreed that finding jobs would be much more difficult this year if the strike pushes the year back.

He said employers will be looking for people to work the same time periods as other years. "If [students] are looking to get a job, then they are going to have to look at sacrificing class time." ♦



IN SOLIDARITY

Employees are all but powerless in the capitalist world. Their lives are controlled by the daily demands of work and finances. When it comes time to do something about the position they are either lazy or greedy.

The early unionists who fought to limit the working day to eight hours were accused of being soft. The unions who have fought for higher minimum wage regulations were spoiling the workers and hurting the economy. Each time a union demands, on the behalf of the workers they represent, wage increases it is seen as greedy.

Each battle was and is hard fought and resisted by the elites of the society. In each battle the workers find themselves in a weak position. But they find one source of power—the strike.

Work is a commodity. It is the only commodity controlled by the worker that the employer needs. It is the only commodity which, when withheld, will hurt the employer—will pressure the employer.

It is a simple concept when you look at an industry which produces a product.

For example, a saw mill.

A saw mill produces lumber which is then sold at a profit (hopefully) to the owner of the mill. If the workers in the mill stop working there will be no lumber and no profit.

Strikes, in this case, are an economic weapon, just as boycotts, lockouts and demotions are economic weapons.

But the concept is more complicated in the service industries where no real product is produced by the work involved.

For example, a post secondary institute in Burnaby.

The striking support workers do not produce a product which is then sold at a profit for the employer. All they do is keep the organization working so that you, the student can continue to learn in relative comfort.

The students at BCIT are the product produced by this organization. The students bring in the money in tuition, in government funding, and in funding from industry which pumps money in to see students pumped out.

Students are economic pawns in this situation. The union is using students. But graduates are the product; therefore, ensuring classes are not taught and graduates are not produced is the only way the support workers can force the hand of the institute.

It is an unfortunate reality that someone always has to suffer. But without this it would be the underpaid support workers who would suffer more and more as they, economically, continue to fall behind.

Perhaps the students suffer in the short term. But if the union gives in because the students demand they do, the support workers will continue to suffer low wages and, at times, poor conditions. In fact the support workers would be in an even weaker position because their union would have caved in.

Martin Chester

EDITORIAL

"Too bad that all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxicabs and cutting hair."

—George Burns

Contrary to what some of you might suspect, this is not the "workers of the world unite" edition of *The Link*. (At least not for most of us.) And no, we are not a bunch of Marxist-Leninists itching for the revolution nor have we taken out an institutional membership in the Communist International. Rather, we are a group of individuals committed to the principles of social justice.

If that seems too lofty a set of ideals for some of you to stomach let us bring it down to earth for you. While we believe that all people are equal, we are not suggesting that all people should be paid equally for what they do. However, we hasten to add that an individual earning \$115,000 per year is no better (nor worse) than a person earning \$27,000 a year and *certainly no more important*. We believe that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of "position" and should be afforded a salary that allows them a comfortable existence.

We are not convinced that the BCGEU/BCIT Support Staff are compensated adequately for the contributions that they make to this Institution. We have heard too many stories of union members living from paycheque to paycheque or, worse yet, going further into debt simply because they are not valued highly enough as people and as workers.

We believe that *their* wage demand of 14 per cent is a fair one, and we urge the BCIT Administration to argue their case to the Ministry of Advanced Education. It is clearly an equity issue and the Institute should put some action where its rhetoric is.

However, we are not convinced that all public sector employees require a similar wage increase and feel that each set of negotiations must be bargained on its own merits, rather than blindly arguing 7 and 7 for everyone.

And finally, we would also argue for a wage freeze on all BCIT management positions for the next two years, including a cap on salaries. And if we had our way, you could kiss the performance bonuses goodbye, as well.

The Oliver Stone's around campus have been whispering "conspiracy, conspiracy" in our ears until they're blue or red in the face (depending upon their ideology).

The union members are pawns of the BCGEU, who are using this to test the new government and public opinion. It's a lot cheaper for 480 people to be out of work than 30,000.

That probably isn't true, although it wouldn't be a bad strategy. But that type of thinking seems to be coming from men who apparently don't believe that the predominantly female members of the Support Staff can think for themselves. But we can assure you—they can and they are. And we were most impressed with the access the union gave us to both the bargaining committee and to their membership.

This is the last dance for the Sacred-appointed Board of Governors and they're still dancing to the beat of the previous government.

That may be true, however, it is starting to appear as though they have changed partners and are now waltzing with Moe Sihota.

The Board of Governors anticipates that the tenor of this set of negotiations will resonate through the remainder of the public sector negotiations this year.

Quite frankly, who cares. The bottom line is that the Board must assume responsibility for this particular set of negotiations.

The Administration is using the strikers as pawns so they can receive more money from Victoria.

We hope that isn't true. How insidious it would be if the Administration was using the Support Staff to get a larger budget rather than making a case for it themselves.

We urge the provincial government to enact some form of equity legislation so that women in particular, and low paid employees generally, are guaranteed a salary that allows them to live with both freedom and dignity.

And finally, when this is all over, we urge both sides to work together towards making BCIT a wonderful Institution to work at and to attend.

L.G. Merson

"History balances the frustration of "how far we have to go" with the satisfaction of "how far we have come." It teaches us tolerance for the human shortcomings and imperfections which are not uniquely of our generation, but of all time.

—Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

Anatomy of a Strike

DEC. 90

BCIT commences bargaining with its BCGEU Trade Instructors—BCIT assumed a 9% budget lift for the 91/92 year.

JAN. 91

Threat of Wage Controls—BCIT assumed a 7% budget lift for 91/92 year—settled with Trade Instructors for two years costing 13.74% (5% plus new top step in year 1; and 4.5% plus new top step in year 2). This settlement partially addressed a \$5000/year discrepancy between BCIT's two instructional groups.

FEB. 91

Negotiations with BCIT Staff Society commence—BCIT assumed a 5% to 6% budget lift for the 91/92 year.

MARCH 91

Negotiations with Support Staff commence—BCIT assumed a 4% budget lift for the 91/92 year. (Contract expired Feb. 28, 1991).

APRIL '91

BCIT receives a 4.5% budget lift for 91/92, leaving the Institute \$1.8 million short. The Board approves a review of certain programs for cancellation or reduction.

MAY '91

The Board approves a plan for reduction and elimination of some programs, resulting in layoffs.

SUMMER '91

No negotiations as the entire public sector is awaiting the election call. BCGEU was meeting with BCIT but no serious progress was made until after the election call.

Sept '91 Negotiations with Staff Society resume and proceed slowly.

SEPT 31/OCT 7 '91

David Harvey, Director of Personnel/Employee Relations publishes two articles on Public Sector Wage Controls in BCIT's staff newsletter, BCIT Update. Staff Society sends a strongly worded letter to Harvey, John Watson, President, and Wynn Powell, Chairman of the Board, objecting to Harvey's "attempt to undermine the Collective Bargaining process."

OCT. 91

Provincial election, new government and opposition.

OCT. 31 '91

According to Labour Lines, the newsletter of the BCIT Staff Society, "David Harvey's attitude of 'What Part of No Don't You Understand?'" continues to frustrate us. B.D. (before David) we maintained an

ongoing dialogue with Personnel and were able to revolve many issues without grievances and arbitrations. We find it hard to get David to explain his concerns let alone to listen to ours..."

OCT. 91

Capilano College settles with faculty a three-year contract, reducing workload in year 1 (6% cost increase), a 5% wage increase in year 2 and a wage reopener on settlements at other colleges.

NOV 91

New government announces severe fiscal problems and early indications of funding shortfalls for 92/93—however, government abolishes Compensation Fairness Act and allows teacher settlements from prior year to be implemented (most School Boards have had to deficit finance under special regulation to be able to afford those increases).

BCIT resumes negotiations with BCGEU in spirit of cooperation.

DEC. 91

Most BCGEU issues are resolved and discussion of money issues starts.

Kwantlen College settles a two-year contract with faculty at 4.5% plus 3% (equal to 7.5%) in year 1; and 4% plus 3% (equal to 7%) in year 2 (totalling 14.5% on two years). Camosun College follows with a one-year contact with faculty at 7% wage increase.

BCIT offers 4.25% to Support Staff, with wage re-openers in years 2 and 3 (to be negotiated in August '92). Union bargaining team turns this down, calling it an insult. Historically, there has been a linkage in wage settlements between the BCGEU Instructors and the Support Staff and they want parity with the instructors. The BCGEU negotiating team is unwilling to consider a wage reopener because the benefit reopener from the previous collective agreement was never resolved.

BCGEU counters with a .71/hr on March 1 '91/3% on October 1 '91 (7.3% endrate in the first year) and a .71/hr. on March 1 '92/3% on December 1 '92 (7% endrate in the second year). While the endrate is 14.3%, the cost to the Institute in the first year is 4.5% and approximately 10% in the second year. Susan Ney says the two sides are "within a sliver" of reaching an agreement.

BCGEU negotiating team receive a signal from the employer to wait until after staff society negotiations

have been concluded with no guarantees. Union makes it clear that they would bargain on their own merits and would not wait for some other unit to settle. BCGEU reiterates that they would not consider wage reopeners.

DEC. 13 91

Susan Ney said the Institute would be coming to the table with an "offer the union couldn't refuse." BCIT makes a new wage offer of 7% (not retroactive) plus \$1500 signing bonus, including a provision guaranteeing that BCIT employee wage increases will be at least as large as any negotiated by the government in their Master Collective Bargaining with the BCGEU. There is no retroactive wage increase for employees who have resigned or retired and only a \$150 signing bonus for auxiliaries. BCGEU negotiating team turns this offer down and calls for a government supervised strike vote.

DEC. 16 '91

Employer releases details of Dec. 13 offer to management, a number of whom explain to their employees what the deal entails and counselling them to accept. This is two days prior to the union's presentation of the offer to their membership.

DEC. 18 91

Employer demands that Industrial Relations Council (IRC) supervise strike vote. BC Federation of Labour (whose membership, including BCGEU, boycotts the IRC) gives BCGEU exemption for the vote. Employees vote 91% in favour of strike.

Susan Ney was notified of strike vote and the BCGEU said they would be available to meet over the holidays to avert possible job action affecting students. Employer said that with holidays and the difficulty with arranging for the Board of Governors to meet that January 9 was the earliest the employer could meet with the union.

DEC. 30 '91

BCGEU served 72-hour strike notice and demanded to meet with the Employer on January 7, 1992.

JAN. 2 '92

BCIT Staff Society issues a Special Bulletin to its membership stating that "if ... [the BCGEU] are faced with the same type of intransigent attitude on the part of the Institute there is a distinct possibility of there being a picket line around the Institute as early as January 8th..."

"It is vital not only to the success of the BCGEU negotiations that ALL members respect the picket

lines. Since we are also without a contract at this time, it is essential to the success of our own negotiations that we demonstrate our solidarity with the Support Staff."

JAN. 7 '92

Board of Governors meet.

Clayton McKinley, VP Finance, attends negotiations and gives a presentation on the realities of the BCIT budget. This includes an analysis that for every 1% increase in wages, 13 people would be lost.

BCGEU proposes 3% on March 1, '91 and 4% on October 1 '91 and an "average increase of wages for the first year (from August 1 '91 to July 31 '92) for government employees (Master Agreement) with all other outstanding issues to be negotiated.

JAN. 8 '92

BCIT proposes 3% on March 1 '91 and 4% on October 1 '91 plus "the sum of the across the board percentage increases over the two contract years (from August 1 '91 to July 31 '93) for government employees (BCGEU Master agreement) with all outstanding issues to be withdrawn on a without prejudice basis by the parties.

BCGEU begins targeted job action as of 10:30 am by removing employees on the switchboard and at Kaslo campus.

JAN. 10 '92

Employer calls the Union back to the table to clarify the last offer as they didn't think Union members understood it.

Union confirms that membership understood the offer. The Union makes it clear that they are flexible on the term (18-20 months) and tells the Employer that "we're prepared to move if you're prepared to move." Employer says they would get back to the Union.

JAN. 15 '92

After no word from Employer for five days, Union contacts employer. Employer is prepared to meet on Friday, Jan. 15 '92.

Employer distributes "Employee Bulletin" to "clarify" a number of questions being asked during the current negotiations.

JAN. 17 '92

Negotiations stall.

"BCIT is in a difficult economic position right now like a lot of other public and private sector organizations," said BCIT spokesman Terry Jorden. "Even if

BCIT's offer was accepted today we could be looking at cutbacks in programs, services and staff. The union's 14 per cent is impossible for us to consider."

John Watson writes to BCGEU President John Shields and requests mediation.

Special edition of The Link, "Let's Talk Wage\$..." has everyone talking. Did you know that John Watson earns \$115,716 with an \$32,831 expense account? Also in the issue, BCIT and the BCGEU each inform students of their positions.

JAN. 19 '92

BCIT issues press release recommending students stay away from classes on Monday. Administration cancels Spring Break without consulting with Student Association.

JAN. 20 '92

BCGEU begins picketing BCIT.

BCGEU President John Shields says "equitable and fair treatment is the key issue for the Union's predominantly female support staff bargaining unit which went on strike this morning at BCIT."

Student demonstration fizzles as only 10 students show up.

JAN. 21 '92

8 of 11 Staff Society members from the Civil and Structural Engineering Technology Department decide to continue classes through the present dispute. They argue that "the majority of our students are self-supporting and have made significant sacrifices to come here. It is unfair to treat them this way."

"It seems to us that common sense has been lost. The offer made to the BCGEU is not unreasonable given the current economic environment."

JAN. 21 '92

Student Association Executives make presentation to BCIT Board of Governors. Accuse administration of manipulation in cancelling Spring Break the day before pickets went up. Do not support Administration's decision to cancel Spring Break. SA also requests the negotiators sit at the bargaining table each day from 10-3:00 and that the Institute seeks both an injunction against the picketers and police protection for those who wish to cross.

JAN. 22 '92

Union incensed by SA's requests for an injunction and police protection. Manager of Media Relations,

Terry Jorden, says that "upon investigation, incidences on the picket lines were less serious than initially thought. There has been no damage to any property and certainly no injuries. However, there has been some verbal harrassment as people go through the line, but nothing that we can call the police for."

BCIT Media Relations releases "BCIT Support Staff Bargaining January 7, 1992" to The Link. Under the heading "Some Relevant Facts" it states:

6. BCIT is a \$100 million institution in a province with an \$8.4 billion public sector wage bill. BCIT is a small fish in a big union negotiating pond.

8. There are indications that when they get to the Master BCGEU negotiations later this month the government will not be offering its BCGEU employees more than BCIT has proposed for our employees.

9. There are other indications that the health industry main table discussions with the Nurse's Union and the Hospital Employees Union will not involve wage offers in excess of those BCIT has proposed for our employees.

JAN. 24 '92

BCIT cancels classes for 600 apprenticeship students but 80 per cent have their classes rescheduled.

As requested by representatives of the BCIT Student Association to the Board of Governors on Tuesday, Jan. 21, BCIT has directed its lawyer to prepare an injunction to control alleged picket line harassment by striking support staff. At this point the injunction has not been served to the courts.

JAN. 25 '92

Mediator Stephen Kelleher meets with both sides and decides that the two sides are too far apart for mediation at this time.

The Link phones Clayton McKinley at his home to ask him some questions about the BCIT budget ending March 31, 1991. McKinley refuses comment saying the financial statements "are fairly self-explanatory" and adding that he will "not negotiate through the media."

The questions were:

Why is there a deficiency of revenue over expenditure in the past two years (1990, 1991) of \$3 and \$2 million respectively? And what is the Fund Balance of \$17 million that we had at the end of 1991?

JAN. 27 '92

Students for Studies Rally in front of BCIT—"Mediation=Graduation." ♦

UNIVERSITY BOARDS UNDER SCRUTINY

By Thomas McNamara, Richard Heffernan, and Canadian University Press files

While the government of Ontario has set up a task force to investigate university spending after a scandal at the University of Toronto, Tom Perry, BC's Advanced Education Minister says his government is considering a "structural review" of BC university boards.

Last month, Ontario's minister of colleges and universities set up a task force to monitor universities and the way they spend public money. It was struck after audits of universities concluded there was insufficient accountability for the spending of public funds.

One audit revealed the University of Toronto had hidden a surplus of approximately \$100 million—taken from the universities operating budget over four years—and had reported \$127 million spent on future and equipment that could not be accounted for.

Tom Perry has plans to review the entire governing process. "Over the next year, we will be reviewing the structure of college and university governing boards," he said in an interview.

Perry pointed out that all government appointments to BC university boards were made by the previous Social Credit government, many of which were based on partisanship. "We want university boards to be less political and make decisions on a non-partisan basis."

Yet he was quick to caution that there won't be any "automatic purges" of board members. "We're not going to go on a vindictive rampage. . . what we're really concerned about is representation from the community at large." Nine of the 16 BCIT Board of Governors

appointments expire at the end of April of this year.

Student activists reiterate this concern, saying the problem of accountability stems from the deeper issue of representation.

Canadian Federation of Students BC Region Chair Brad Lavigne said, "The boards must be more representative of the community it serves. This will be a real challenge though, because a university, unlike a college, services the whole province."

Most governing bodies have few students or community members. SFU's board of governors is comprised mainly of corporate presidents and high-level business managers, with only two students and no labour or municipal government representatives. A similar situation exists at Ontario's York University.

BCIT's board has one non-voting student representative.

Bruce Bryden, Chair of York's Board of Governors, says that boards look after the financial matters of a university and choose their members accordingly.

"York's board is representative of the community," he said. "If the university had to hire the expertise that is presently on the board it would be very expensive."

But a representative board and a financially knowledgeable board are not mutually exclusive, said Nikki Gershbnain, Vice-President of the York Federation of Students.

"Bryden's argument buys into the myth that only rich businessmen can make financially sound decisions," she said. ♦

Board of Governors refuse to disclose their places of employment

The Link asked the Institute to provide short biographies on the Board of Governors so that students at BCIT could meet those "faceless others" who make decisions on their behalf. At the very least we asked for a list of their place of employment, their position, and the professional affiliations.

We were denied access to this information by the Board themselves who said the information was confidential. Want a bet?

WYNNE POWELL, Chairma
VP, Marketing & Retail, Technical Group, London Drugs

HILDA RIZUN, Vice Chairma
Self-employed; ex-Chair Cap College Board of Governors

ABTAR BERAR
Dominion Securities

JACK COLBERT
Retired surgeon

THOMAS DEWOLF

ROBERT FINDLAY
President & CEO, MacMillan Bloedel

SYLVIA GWOZD
ex-Chair Richmond School Board and 1970 BCIT Marketing Mgt grad

JOAN HARRISON
Principal, Peat, Marwick, & Stephenson

ALICE JOPE

JAMES MCEWEN

OONA M. MCKINSTRY

EDWARD REMPEL
Self-employed

THOMAS A. SIMONS
President, HA Simons

BRIAN SUNG
Regional Comptroller, Finance Dept., CBC

GEOFFREY WALKER
Operations Manager, Canadian Energy Services, 1962 grad of Welding Program (BCVS)

PIETTER ZEEMAN

**Top Five Reasons
why the Board of
Governors wouldn't
want BCIT students to
know where they
work:**

5. The Link might start bothering us at work.

4. Our place of work has nothing to do with why we were appointed. The fact that Robert Findlay is the President and CEO of MacMillan Bloedel is just a coincidence.

3. They might realize that some of us were appointed for our political affiliation and not our expertise.

2. They might find out that some of us don't work.

1. It's none of the children's damn business!

Rain doesn't dampen pickets' spirits or their resolve

By Paul Dayson

Most BCIT support staff members are finding picketing to be a cold, wet and boring pastime, though they believe that it is well worth while. Financially, they wonder how long they can remain on strike. All hope for an early agreement and return to work.

"It is really boring," One receptionist on the picket line said. "I dance around and hum a tune in my head. Mostly, we find someone to talk to or go off to other places where other picketers are for a change of scenery."

"I was out on Thursday, that was the worst day," she said. "Here it's really bad because you get the traffic, a lot of trucks and buses, and the water doesn't drain of the street and so everytime a car or truck goes by you get a splash that literally goes across the whole sidewalk."

Another picketer who works as in a Tool Crib said, "It doesn't bother me. Sometimes it's cold, sometimes it is wet. It's for a good cause."

Indeed, none of the support staff walking the picket line seem to doubt they have a right wage increase of 14 per cent, similar to those of the trades instructors last year.

"We have to feed our families,

too. We have to buy the same loaf of bread that instructors buy or that management, who make \$70,000 or \$100,000 a year, buy. Why can't we be entitled to a fair wage."

How long the support staff can remain out on strike appears to be an entirely financial situation, mostly bleak for the strikers.

"Everyone can make it for a week or two," the Tool Crib assistant said. "It's after that, and you don't know until the time comes."

A support staff member who works with welders said, "I think there is probably a misconception a lot of people have that we are being paid to be out here when all we are doing is losing money."

"Everybody is counting pennies at this point," he said.

Some strikers were not optimistic about how long they



PHOTO: Mike Głowacki

might be able to remain on strike.

"Financially, that's it, I'm at the end of it I'm at the end of it," said the receptionist who has two teenage children to support on her salary. "I spent my last money today."

Picketers spoke of exhausting their savings accounts or cashing in RRSPs, others of the possibility of part-time jobs.

"When you start judging and waying," said one striker, "you start trying to figure out when are we going to be too poor to hang out much longer. Most of the

people here are on the low end of the pay scale, \$30,000 and under. We're just treading water as it is, paying rent and getting by. So a long protracted strike would probably clean out most people's savings."

Despite this there is a determination to hold out.

"The fun part of picketing is I'm meeting all these people I've never met before, or I don't know their name, or it's a voice I've talked to on the phone everyday but never met because you're too busy to go and meet people."

BCIT's striking support staff understand the hardship their strike is causing students.

"We understand what we're doing here but we couldn't just settle for nothing and pretend everything was fine," a striking Tool Crib assistant said. "We're sending students off to good paying jobs. Are we supposed to take no wage and send them off to get a good wage?"

And strikers repeatedly expressed concern for the students situation.

"They've got deadlines because they've got jobs lined up somewhere or they're from out of town and they've [only] so much cash to last [them] so many months," said the receptionist.

"The students I've talked to are all really good. They just want to go in and get their books and there is no way I'm going to stop a student," she said. "I try to help them out by telling them where a security guard is because that's who they have to find to get in."

Other picketers said students did not stop to talk to them but hoped they would.

"They could stop and talk, let us say what our beef is and why we are out here getting rained on," said one striker.

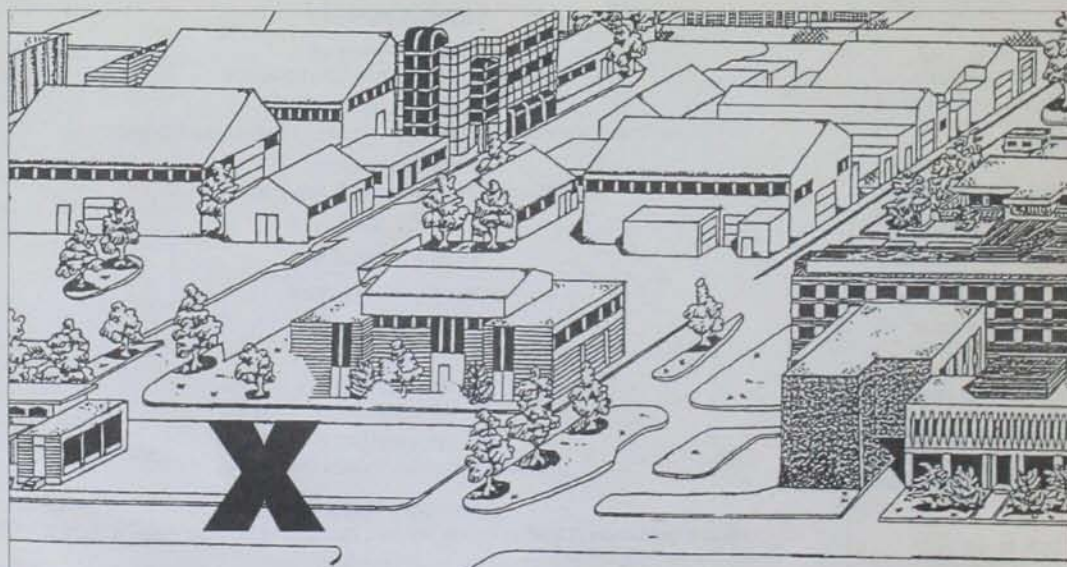
STUDENT DEMONSTRATION

Friday
January 31
3:30-5:00pm

On the front lawn between
Goard Way & the
Administration Building.

Let the administration, the
union, and the government
know that you want the
BCGEU strike settled
immediately!!!

Let your voice be heard!!!



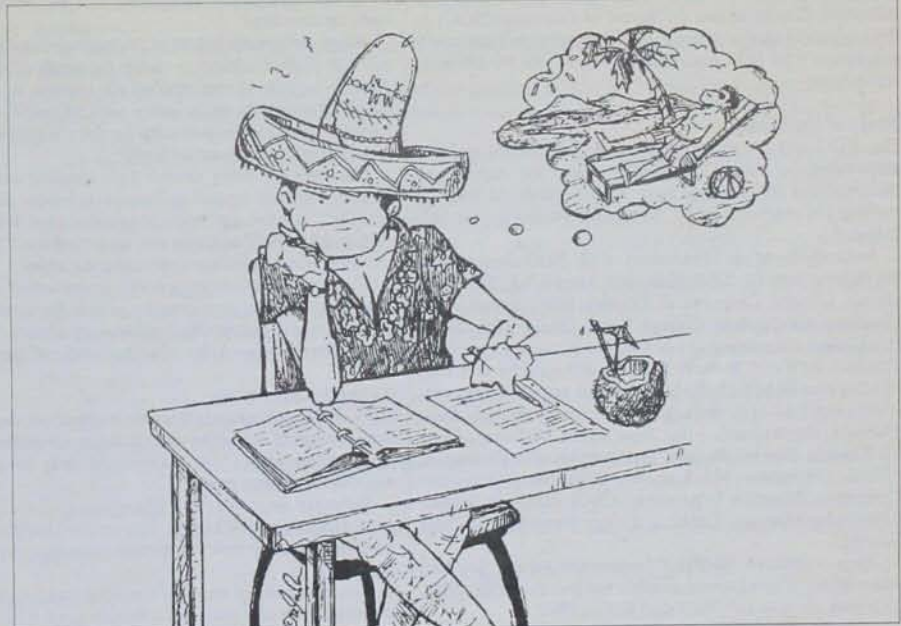
Willingdon Avenue

The Winter of our Discontent

According to BCIT Manager of Media Relations Terry Jordan, the Institute "is a small fish in a big union negotiating pond." But one mustn't forget that management also lurk in those murky waters. Following are a list of some of the negotiations in BC's public sector that are presently underway or soon to commence.

Industry	Company	Union	# of Employees	Contract Expiry	Status of Negotiations
Education	BCIT	BCGEU, Local 59 (Support Staff)	450	Feb. 28/91	On strike
		Staff Society (Technology Instructors)	600	May 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	Comosun College	Faculty Association	350	Mar. 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	Kwantlen College	Faculty Association	229	Mar. 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	Malaspina College	Faculty Association	150	Mar. 31/91	Mediator-S. Kelleher
		CUPE, Local 1858	146	Dec. 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	Northwest Community College	BCGEU, Locals 57 & 64	150	Sept. 31/91	Negotiations-commenced
	Okanagan Labour Relations Council (School Districts #13, 14, 15, 21, 77 & 89)	CUPE, Local 523	500	June 31/91	Negotiations-yet to commence
	School District #1 (Fermie)	CUPE, Local 2208	155	Sept 30/91	Negotiations-commenced
	School District #12 (Grand Forks)	Teachers' Association	81	June 30/91	Negotiations-continuing
	School district #27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)	Int'l Union of Operating Engineers, Local 959	300	June 30/91	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #33 (Chilliwack)	CUPE, Local 411	200	June 30/91	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #35 (Langley)	CUPE, Local 1260	350	June 30/91	Negotiations-commenced
	School District #45 (West Vancouver)	CUPE, Local 1851 (Maintenance)	160	June 30/91	Negotiations-yet to commence
	School District #46 (Sunshine Coast)	West Vancouver Municipal Employees Association	150	June 30/91	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #48 (Howe Sound)	CUPE, Local 801	87	Dec 31/90	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #57 (Prince George)	CUPE, Local 779	120	Dec 31/90	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #62 (Sooke)	Int'l Union of Operating Engineers, Local 858	385	May 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	School District #65 (Cowichan)	CUPE, Local 459	203	June 30/91	Negotiations-yet to commence
	School District #86 (Creston-Kaslo)	CUPE, Local 606	120	June 30/91	Negotiations-yet to commence
	School District #88 (Terrace)	Teachers' Association	129	June 30/91	Negotiations-continuing
	Simon Fraser University	CUPE, Locals 2861 (Custodial) & 2831 (Clerical)	180	June 30/91	Negotiations-yet to commence
	University of BC	Poly Party (various trades)	70	Mar 31/91	Tentative Agreement-rejected
		CUPE, Local 116 (Trades & Services)	1,650	Mar 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
		CUPE, Local 2950 (Clerical & administration)	1,500	Mar 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
		CUPE, Local 2278 (Teaching assistants)	1,100	Aug 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
	University of Victoria	CUPE, Local 917	179	Mar 31/91	Negotiations-continuing
		CUPE, Local 951	426	Mar 31/91	Negotiations-continuing

Source: Industrial Relations Council, 1991.



The Student Association's presentation to the BCIT Board of Governors

January 21, 1992

On January 19th, it was publicly announced that the BCIT Administration had cancelled Spring Break for the students at BCIT.

To have announced such a move to the press a day before strike action actually began can only be seen as a manipulative move on the part of the Administration. The students should not be used as a bargaining tool in these negotiations. We feel that this move by the Administration could perpetuate the strike rather than bring it to a quick resolution.

About two weeks ago the Administration discussed with the Student Association several options for making up class time, affected by the strike. We were pleased at that time to be included in the process. At that meeting there was never any mention of the cancellation of Spring Break. We have subsequently been told that the cancellation was not a hastily made decision. Therefore, it is evident to us that this piece of information was deliberately withheld when we met with the Administration. This is unacceptable to us.

We request that the Student Association be a part of the decision-making process as decisions of this nature clearly affect our lives more than yours. Remember you are dealing with 14,000 people not 14,000 objects.

BCIT students use Spring Break to prepare job packages and meet perspective employers. They must have this time in order to compete with university students who finish classes in April, a full month earlier. Without the week of March 9-13 to prepare for the job market, many BCIT students will miss out on career opportunities.

BCIT carries with it a reputation for being a demanding and intense institution. A five day break in a five-months term is necessary not only for the physical well being of students but for their continued positive state of mind. There are universities which have dubbed their spring breaks "Suicide Week." as it is well known these breaks are a much needed pressure release.

The Spring Break is the student's time. It was never there for the Administration to give away without the consent of the students at BCIT. Therefore, the Student Association will not support the Administration in its move to cancel Spring Break.

We the Student Association of BCIT request that the Board of Governors adopt the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the negotiating team for the BCIT Administration be present and willing to discuss any issues pertaining to the current labour dispute between BCGEU and BCIT. Effective immediately, representatives from BCIT will be at the bargaining table, Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, until such time as the current disruptions to students have ceased.

It has come to the attention of the Student Association that there have been a number of abuses both verbal and physical by picketers towards students as they enter the BCIT campus. We have also been informed that there has been no action to date on the part of BCIT to prevent this situation from recurring. Therefore, the following resolution is requested to be passed by the Board of Governors:

Be it resolved that the Board of Governors authorize the Administration to engage the services of their legal counsel to make a motion to the court to impose an injunction on the picketers at BCIT and provide police protection for students who wish to cross the picket lines. ♦

Industry Comes Full Circle

By Susan Spence

As a student you hold certain basic rights. You hold the right to explore interests, the right to choose a post-secondary institute and the right to receive training in order to achieve your educational goals. Should you not also hold the right to understand the various corporate influences behind your education?

At BCIT the influences range from the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Board of Governors (BOG) to the corporations that support BCIT training and the many volunteers who hold positions on any of the 90 advisory committees.

Board of Governors

The BOG makes major policy setting decisions and are responsible for the BCIT mandate. They are captains of business and industry and have an interest in the kind of training you receive at BCIT. But is their interest in your best interest?

Presently there are 16 members of the BOG consisting of the Wynne Powell, Chairman (VP, Marketing, Technical Group, London Drugs Head Office), Hilda Rizun, Vice Chairman (ex-Capilano College Board Chair), Abtar Berar (Dominion Securities), Jack Colbert (retired Physician), Thomas deWolf, Robert Findlay (President & CEO, MacMillan Bloedel), Sylvia Gwozd (ex-Chairperson, Richmond School Board), Joan Harrison (principal, Peat, Marwick, Stephenson), Alice Jope, James McEwen, Oona McKinstry, Edward Rempel (self-employed), Thomas A. Simons (President, HA Simons), Brian Sung (Regional Controller, Financial Department, CBC), Geoffrey Walker (Operations Manager, Canadian Energy Services) and Pieter Zeeman.

Rick Veldhuis, Health Chairperson on the Student Association, is an observer member but has no voting rights. This position was just established in Fall 1991.

With a lineup like that can this body establish what is best

for students, or do they act only in the interest of industry? Do they look objectively at course curricula and decide which direction to go or do they look through corporate eyes vying to change curricula for their own benefit? Do they choose the correct path to bring students into society with the knowledge needed to form their own opinions or do they force industry opinions on students who are, perhaps nicely, open for direction?

When the powers that be in the institute focus on pumping out 'job ready students' to match the needs of industry can they be capable of restructuring the institute to account for changing important social issues such as gender equity, the need for increased opportunity for interdisciplinary studies and the quality of education itself?

Students are being denied their creative individuality. Instead, they are trained to become products, programmed machines to serve the needs of industry. And John Watson, President of BCIT supports this by stating that "We (BCIT) are dedicated to fulfilling your (industry) needs"

Students are not given the knowledge needed to objectively look at how industry affects the social, cultural, environmental and political spheres of society. Rarely are they given the opportunity to see both sides of the story.

Advisory Committees

Over 1000 professionals from their respective fields, drawn from a range of industries and corporate environments, make up the many advisory committees that help keep programs relevant to industry needs.

Industry sees that the changing technology in the workplace requires highly literate and highly educated workers, a luxury that the present education system is not providing.

This increase in demand for educated employees has coincided with an increase in corporate support on campuses.

At UBC, Dr. Strangway has headed their campaign which

has so far raised over \$132 million since 1990, for building projects.

The "HIGH TECH, HIGH PROMISE..The Drive FOR BCIT" capital campaign plans to raise \$10 million dollars for equipment, labs, scholarships, the Campus Centre and the President's Enterprise Fund, half of that money will come from matching grants from the BC Government.

BCIT staff and administration have identified equipment that is urgently needed by instructors for students. The campaign then tries to match donors with the equipment needed.

So far over \$7 million has been collected from companies such as IBM, MacMillan Bloedel, BCTel, Chevron, Medgate, Sony, BChydro and West Coast Energy. Although the investment pays no interest and carries fairly long term rewards, the donors presently have their name plastered on a Corporate Sponsor board on Willingdon Ave. What better way to show the public how dedicated your company is to higher education. But do you think those companies would still support BCIT if the curricula was not to their standards?

So that brings us back to square one. Who controls the curricula. The BOG. "In theory, they (the BOG) are fully responsible for the academic program", says Patricia Maertz, Secretary to the Board.

According to the Power and Duties of Board in the Institute of Technology Act they "provide for the management and carrying out of the curriculum, training, instruction and education offered and provided by the institute and programs approved by the minister" (Section 5.(1)(a)) and "determine courses or programs to be offered or cancelled at the institute" (Section 5.(1)(j)).

And who controls the amount of corporate influence on campus? The BOG. And where do the BOG come from? Industry. A full circle. And objective education for the students is kept on the outside. ♦



From Your Student Association

The strike action by the BCGEU Support Staff at BCIT has claimed its first casualties.

Due to the short term of their training at BCIT some 1,000 apprentice students are the first to be affected in a major way by having their current period of study cut.

Although a portion of these students have been slotted into different times between now and September 1992, there are some who at this time have been told to simply go back to work with no idea of when they will return for further training. To say that these students will be 'inconvenienced' by this method of negotiation is a gross understatement. Job losses and lay-offs could result from these cancellations.

The Student Association will not allow more students to be sacrificed in these negotiations.

THE CONDUCT OF THE TWO PARTIES IN THIS DISPUTE IS VERY DISAPPOINTING TO THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION AND THE STUDENTS AT BCIT.

The Student Association has asked both sides to return to the negotiating table in an effort to resume talks.

The Union is clearly waiting for the Management team to return with a higher offer in their proposal. The Union has indicated that there is some room for movement on their part.

The Management Bargaining Committee is feeling the restraint imposed upon them by the NDP government. They claim there is no money to offer.

The Student Association feels that either team could eliminate this impasse and that they should return to the table without further delay.

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION CHALLENGES THE UNION TO GO BACK TO THE TABLE WITH A MORE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE PROPOSAL.

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION ALSO CHALLENGES MANAGEMENT TO GO BACK TO THE TABLE AND NEGOTIATE WITH THE UNION TEAM FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE WAGE SETTLEMENT.

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION WILL BE SENDING REPRESENTATIVES TO VICTORIA TO ASK THE NDP GOVERNMENT TO INTERVENE.

BCIT Reschedules Apprenticeship Courses to reduce impact from BCGEU Strike

According to BCIT spokesperson Terry Jorden, the Institute is doing all it can to reduce the impact of the current strike on all students, particularly apprenticeship students.

As of Friday, January 24, 600 students have had classes cancelled but 80 per cent of those classes have been rescheduled. Ray Walton, Dean of Trades at BCIT, is hopeful that the remaining 20 per cent can also be accommodated.

If the strike is resolved within a week the Institute could make up lost class time for the remaining 400 students in the 8 week courses by lengthening the school and holding classes on weekends. Walton said that the Institute will make a decision on January 31.

Entry level trades training (ELTT) programs and the pre-employment programs will carry on after the strike without affecting any students.

BCIT delivers apprenticeship training to about 65 per cent of the province's apprentices. Students are registered in 28 different trades ranging from welding, roofing, plumbing, carpentry, boilermaking to advanced electronics and instrumentation programs. Students are already employed when they come to BCIT. Employers give these students four to eight weeks off work to attend classes to earn higher certification levels. ♦

THE LINK IS...

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ALL PHOTOS BY MICHAEL GDOWSKI

Business as usual

By Martin Chester

In what they call a neutral position, the BCIT Student Association is continuing to pay student employees who cross the picket lines.

Student Association President Alex Robinson said "the Student Association is open for business."

"If [the employees] show up for work they get paid," Robinson said. "If they cross the picket line its their choice, but if they cross they get paid."

"The reason that we are staying open is that while we are not encouraging people to cross the picket lines we don't want to penalize the students who chose to," Robinson said. "It is hard enough to cross the lines without having to cross again to get a coffee or something."

The Student Association will lose money by keeping some services open. Some hours have been cut back, but no employees have been laid off because of the strike. According to Manager Heather Boles, the Student Association owned and operated TNT is "losing about \$8,000 a week. We've had to cut our fulltime staff back to part-time, but we're committed to minimizing the effects of this strike on our employees."

BCGEU negotiator Michelle Phillippe said the union was not concerned about the Student Association remaining open.

"Ultimately a strike would like to see all of the services offered by the employer be shut down," Phillippe said. "However, the Student Association is a satellite for the employer. The institute doesn't feel it as much."

She said support of the student would help the strikers and they would prefer students not to go on campus.

"I think that the majority [of students] are staying away from the campus is some sort of declaration that they understand that we have a beef with the employer," Phillippe said.

The support staff would also like to see some sort of endorsement of their position from the Student Association.

"It would strengthen our position if we had full support of the Student Association," Phillippe said. "We don't mean they have to endorse our position, but sympathise with us."

"That would help solve things and bring the strike to an end more quickly," she said. However, Phillippe also said the Student Association's stand on paying its employees who come to work is the only stand it could take.

"They want to remain neutral, it's the only statement that could be called neutrality," she said.

Student Association Director Stephen Miller said all but two of the association's 50 fulltime employees have crossed the picket line to come to work.

"I think its the only position the Student Association can take is to remain neutral is to do business as usual," Miller said. "If we were not to cross the lines we feel we would be siding with the union."

He also said paying workers who cross the picket lines to work is not unusual. "I think the reality of the workplace is that if people come to work they get paid, and if they don't come to work they don't get paid."

"It would be unfair to our employees to ask them to cross the line when they don't want to," Miller said. ♦

Fire in the Rain

Compiled By Paul Dayson

"Instructors instruct, and that's it. We do the rest. Support staff does everything else."

— Tool Crib assistant.

Receptionist:

"We deal with the outside public more than students but have students on work studies, where they will get a project that has come into the office and they will build a prototype, do material testing or market research."

"We get [people making inquiries] through [to the specialists]. Sometimes they are just applying for grants or for funding and then we'll help them out with that, like getting a National Research Council grant. Or people will want a patent search done."

"I'm also the prime location for lost people on campus."

"I do a lot of the typing and, basically, the organizational end of the office."

"I'm a single mom with two teens. This is very scary for me. I'm tempted to go and look for a job somewhere else."

"Right now, I can't survive on what I'm doing."

"I'm living in my dad's basement suite. I could never afford to pay what someone else pays in an apartment. So, I live at home and I feed and clothe my children. If I rented a rented place like a normal person then I wouldn't be able to feed and clothe my children, its that simple. So, I chose to go home."

"Just starting [my children] up at the beginning of the school year, buying them their clothes and their books to get them going that's two pay cheques right there."

"I hope we get a raise out of this. It would be nice to have my own home."

Tool Crib Attendant:

"I issue tools to the students so they have tool boxes, and also any extra specialty tools they need. I order in any part needed, anything the instructors need we are the ones that bring it in and get it into the department."

"At one time you can have seven classes of 16, and back and forth and back and forth, all day long. You can have days where you don't stop, you don't even stop to breathe."

"I'm on one of the lower pay scales of all tool cribs. And that's because I'm the second man in the crib which was a position that used to be a pay grade four and has now been moved down to a pay grade three."

"What they did was reclassify the job before I went in there."

"With my salary I support myself and my girlfriend."

Print Services Worker:

"We do the printing and duplicating for the instructional unit we also run a word processing centre."

"We do all the staff printing for classes and all the information students need. All the posters you see going around. All the way down to business card."

"I'm a single parent, one dependent, single income."

Word Processing Centre Worker:

"The centre publishes all the instructional material for the institute and that's a wide variety all the health parttime studies modules, exams, course outlines, lecture notes—all professionally published"

"Ten operators go at it full-time. We certainly have more work than we can handle all the time and its a very high quality."

"We participate in the development of formats for modules, so we're involved in the design decision-making. So, it's a little bit of desktop publishing and a lot of word processing."

"We enjoy our work. We get to talk to the instructors quite a bit and see the material that they and the writers are preparing. We're in the middle so we see the incoming and the outgoing, the unpublished and published versions."

"We are quite proud of our work."

Student Records Clerk:

"We handle student loans, final grades, and graduation ceremonies. Once a student is a student we take care of them and if we're not there they are not getting any services."

"I do all the night school grades. Before we went on strike everything came in and I can't see any [students]

complaining too much. Now if it had been before Christmas there would have been panic."

"I don't have a family to support, but it still isn't easy."

Weld Testing Unit Worker:

"I work with a welding inspector."

"A lot of people from outside use this institution for their weld testing if they want to get a job. Iron workers and boilermakers and all these guys have to be certified welders—so through the welding department they get there welding tickets."

"The students who are taking the welding course and lots of people that are already working use the place. Also, [welders] can pay \$25 a day to practice because a lot of the companies will want them to do a company test, like a pressure pipe test. So, they'll come down to here, BCIT, and practice for two or three days and then they'll go apply for the job."

"It's just like playing golf. You go to the driving range before you go out and play the game."

"With the ticket system the higher up they go the more employable they are."

Auxiliary Secretary:

"With my job I work as an auxiliary, which is a little different, but I'm not in any set area but I'm around and I do anything and everything depending on what I'm needed to do filling in for people who are on sick leave or medical leave. It's interesting because you see a lot of students, and management, from different areas and how they work."

"I work in development right now, before I worked in Building which is for students taking architecture and construction courses."

"I do mostly secretarial stuff and if you are a secretary people think you don't do much. That's not the case. When [the managers] are out of the office and [I am] taking all the clients calls and dealing with students on my own. Its hard, especially in a job like mine where you are just filling in and you don't know everything, but you are expected to."

The Peons who really pay

By Chris Burges

Strike while the victims are the most vulnerable. It always seems that whenever there is a labour dispute, its the people that have the least to do with the issues that end up paying the highest price. What is the reaction of students in the wake of a new term and a pending strike or lock-out.

First day back at school, January 6, and new schedules are already full of changes. Once your time table is sorted out and you know where you are going, how to pay for your education then becomes a priority. Although your outrageous tuition fees are due, you already have homework assigned to you and the need to get your books is more immediate. All you can think about is getting your student loan.

A trip over to Financial Aid Services leaves you despondent. Your loan is not in yet. No, they don't know when it will be in. Check back tomorrow is the response you get from a staff member that is short-tempered and abrupt. Perhaps you caught her on a bad day. Maybe the worry of escalating contract negotiations is on her mind. Whatever her

problem is, you are sure it can't compare to yours.

You are unable to pay for your rent, tuition, books or buy a parking pass until your student loan comes in. Not to mention buying food. Everyday you check with financial services. Everyday you get the same response; check back tomorrow. The weekend is approaching fast.

You rush to the Financial Aid office at the end of your lecture. It's just past 4:30. You check the board posted on the wall for your social insurance number. It's not there. Panic sets in. You pop your head into the office and ask the receptionist when the next posting of numbers will be. "WE ARE CLOSED", is what you hear. "I realize that", you start to explain, "I was just wondering when the next....." "WE ARE CLOSED" you hear again. She must be having another bad day. You wonder if it's as bad as yours.

Its Friday and your loan has finally arrived at Student Services. You are already down the 3% that the government deducts for insurance premiums. This is

because too many students before you have defaulted on their loans. You take your check to the bank and they tell you that there is a time lag for processing that can take up to a week. Your tuition is automatically deducted when the check is cleared which is probably a smart move on their part.

In case of last minute changes, you are advised not to purchase any books until you meet with your instructors. Some of the texts that you are required to purchase is based on a decision that is made by the instructor alone or jointly with the course co-ordinator. Strangely enough, the authors of some of your required text in past classes, have also been your instructors. This seems like a conflict of interest but hopefully someone is making sure that you are using the best material available.

Time constraints make it almost impossible to purchase your books used. The bookstore offers some used books but theres usually not that many. It's hit and miss as to when these books will be repriced and put out on to the shelf. A marketing text, for instance, that is

originally purchased new for \$58.00, can be resold to the bookstore for \$22.00 who then sells it to a new student for \$38.00. Somebody's making money and it's not the student.

There are no resources in place to locate a student who has taken a course before you. This means that new students have no alternative but to purchase new books to the tune of \$400.00+ (book costs for first term marketing). Some second year students, with books to sell, will strike up a deal in the book store with first year students. This, of course, is the best method of exchange. No middleman. The bookstore might not like the idea though.

The option to buy used books doesn't happen very often. A used book sale in the gym is something our Student Association should prioritize and organize. It's too late for this year's executive, but those students considering running for council next year should make it a campaign pledge.

So, you have received your student loan, purchased a parking pass, gathered up all your books, payed the rent and put food in the

fridge. You are ready to learn. All you seem to be learning about though, is contract negotiations at B.C.I.T. You have tried to ignore the stalemate that has developed between management and staff. You hope that all the time, money and effort that you, and those close to you, have put into your education won't all be in vain.

It's been one week since the strike began. You are powerless with the forces that be. Everybody is apologizing to you, as a student, for any inconveniences that they may have caused you. The probability that you will lose your spring break is a new aggravation to deal with. It's hard to be sympathetic to anyone's side when it's cost you so much already.

You ultimately have the very most to lose in all this mess and you have the very least control of the situation. You will be playing catch up for the remainder of this term, if there is one. This is on top of an already brutal schedule. You are the third party in this battle and you have no voice. You feel like such a peon.