

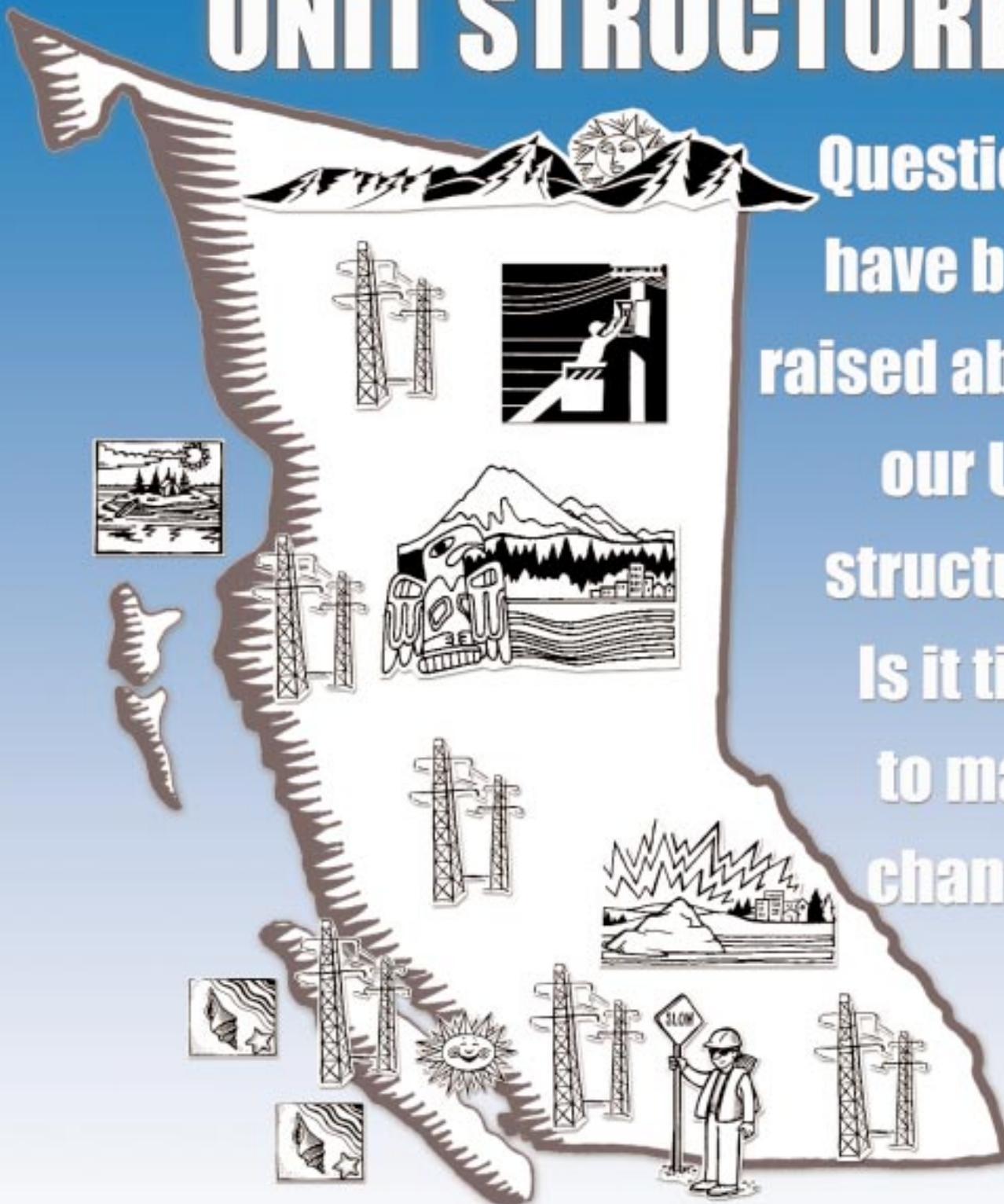
HOTLINE



Local 258 I.B.E.W.
SPRING 2003

UNIT STRUCTURE

Questions
have been
raised about
our Unit
structure.
Is it time
to make
change?



Business Manager, Doug McKay



As summer is approaching I trust you will take time to enjoy your holidays. Remember that safety is not only a concern on the job, but during times of relaxation. Please make sure you stay safe and enjoy your vacation.

Bill 39 – BC Transmission Corporation Act

Before the end of summer more than 100 Local 258 members will be transferred to BCTC, and control of our transmission lines will be given over to RTO West, a US entity. Under Bill 39, the Liberals have gutted parts of our collective agreement and expressly nullified other labour laws. This government doesn't care about the

rights of workers as they demonstrated in the public utilities sector as well as many other arenas. Local 258 is examining possible avenues of challenge to Bill 39. (See my Press Release on Bill 39 elsewhere in this issue).

Non-Union Workers at Cominco

We are concerned at the return of non-union Alberta workers to this Province. This is a clear violation of our mandatory certification for the trades. As employers and government officials turn a blind eye, Local 258 has engaged legal counsel to determine ways of enforcing the BCLRB order that gives us bargaining rights across the Province.

Thank You to Petition Signatories

We are currently waiting for a decision from the BCLRB regarding NW Energy and the fight to keep a disreputable Ontario union from receiving certification in BC. We appreciate the support of our members who have sent a strong message to the BCLRB by signing a petition endorsing the IBEW's representation.

Traffic Control Contracts

We are now looking at all our traffic control contracts with a view to bringing them under a master collective agreement. That mechanism

would ensure a level playing field for all. We certainly have some issues in this sector with employers not complying with their contracts, a problem we intend to rectify in the near future.

Shop Steward Training

We are presently trying to set dates for Shop Steward training. I realize this is well overdue, but we will endeavour to finalize the schedule in the near future. This training is critical if we are to give our front line workers the tools to do their job of policing our collective agreements.

Finally, as the Liberals steam roller ahead with new laws and ways of operating the Province, many of our members are feeling anxious and frustrated. As your bargaining agent, we need to hear your concerns. We also need to hear your remedies. Local 258 is in the business of fixing problems, and we especially value ideas on how to find workable solutions. If you register a concern, please remember we are delighted to hear your ideas for a solution as well. ☑

HOTLINE

Published by Local 258 IBEW

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Tony Brand	Vice President
Larry Byhre	Treasurer
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What's Inside...

Day of Mourning Report, Jim Greenwell.....	4
John Hiebert Memorial Trophy	5
We Got Mail!.....	6-7
Injunction Stops Union's Internal Discipline Process	8
ILO Condemns BC Contract Stripping	9
Unit 6 Report	10
Old Hang Ups About Trades Still With Us	11
Cover Story - IBEW Unit Structure	12
2003 Elected Members Conference	13
Tom Forkin Winning Essay - The Child Labour Nightmare ..	15
Ruminations of a Retiree	19
Canadian Health Care Being Sold	22
PharmaCare Changes Will Affect You	23
From the Back Corner, President's Report	24

PRESS RELEASE

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 258



On May 6, 2003 the BC Liberals introduced new legislation, the Transmission Corporation Act, bringing to life a corporate entity that will move and sell power to the United States.

Known as Bill 39, the BC Transmission Corporation (BCTC) will become a key player in RTO West, an American conglomerate governed by US fuel regulators. BCTC will also move and sell power to British Columbians, activities now governed by BC Hydro.

When BCTC becomes operational later this year, more than 130 unionized workers will be transferred from BC Hydro to BCTC.

Key Features of Bill 39:

- Bill 39 expressly negates notice periods required by the IBEW collective agreement and the BC Labour Relations Code. Employees will be transferred at will of the Liberals without proper notice - see Section 7(1), Bill 39.
- Bill 39 expressly nullifies Section 38 of the BC Labour Relations Code, a provision whereby the BC Labour Relations Board has discretion to declare that BCTC and BC Hydro are a single employer for collective bargaining purposes - Section 7(7), Bill 39. That Labour Relations Code provision enables a Union to force the real employer to the bargaining table, not just sit in the wings calling the shots.
- Bill 39 imposes "business efficiency" as the only criteria for the BCLRB to consider should BCTC apply to have one Union and one bargaining unit. Expressly nullified is the "labour relations history" criteria developed over decades of BCLRB decisions - Section 7(6), Bill 39.
- Bill 39 contains no information on the government's plans to use BCTC to move and sell power to the US, nor has any information been released on the risk liability to British Columbians when BCTC begins operations. To begin a new corporate venture in the US, the Liberals will underwrite BCTC's liability. Will taxpayers pay if someone sues BCTC in the US?

Doug McKay, Business Manager, IBEW Local 258 responds:

- "With this Bill, we're going back to the stone age. The government is taking away bargained rights under our collective agreement and legal rights under the BC Labour Relations Code, Employment Standards Act, and the Utilities Commission Act."
- "The Liberals are superceding our collective agreement which they said they would never do. That's bad faith bargaining."
- "I don't know what it will take for the public to sit up and take notice of what's happening to our public resources. Maybe when hydro rates go up 30% - 60%."
- "Local 258 has retained legal counsel and we're investigating a Charter challenge to this Bill. Collective bargaining is a constitutionally protected right, and if the Liberals won't acknowledge that, maybe they need a judge to remind them."
- "We're handing over our rights to the US to control our transmission lines. Who stands to profit? Only the Liberals' corporate friends."

Viewpoint from your

Senior Assistant Business Manager, Jim Greenwell



Wreaths were laid at this year's Day of Mourning ceremonies held in Vancouver honouring those who have died or been injured while on the job.

The Day of Mourning to commemorate lives lost as a result of a workplace injury or occupational disease is April 28 each year. It was in 1984 the Canadian Labour Congress Executive declared April 28th the National Day of Mourning. Since that time Labour Councils and governments around the world have adopted this day.

In 1991, the Canadian Parliament passed Bill c-223, which provides for the Act Respecting a Day of Mourning.

In 1992, the BC NDP government designated this day as an annual day to remember those who have lost their lives in the course of their regular jobs.

In BC in 2002: 232 workers were killed on the job, 4 of who were



CLC Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Yussuff attended the Day of Mourning ceremonies held at the New Westminster Quay.



Kevin Smyth, President of the New Westminster & District Labour Council, addresses the gathering at the Day of Mourning ceremonies in New Westminster.

I Choose To Look The Other Way

*I could have saved a life that day,
But chose to look the other way.
It wasn't that I didn't care,
I had the time, and I was there.*

*But I didn't want to seem a fool,
Or argue over a Safety Rule.
I knew he'd done the job before,
If I called it wrong, he might
get sore.*

*The chances didn't seem that bad,
I've done the same; He knew I had.
So I shook my head and walked
on by,
He knew the risks as well as I.*

*He took the chance, I closed an eye,
And with that act, I let him die.
I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look the other way.*

*Now every time I see his wife,
I'll know I should have saved
his life.*

*That guilt is something I must
bear,
But it isn't something you need
to share.*

*If you see a risk that others take,
That outs their life or health
at stake,*

*The question asked, or thing to say,
Could help them live another day.*

*If you see a risk and walk away,
Then hope you never have to say,
I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look another way.*

Don Merrell

Submitted by Real L'Italian

between the ages of 15 and 24. On average 3 people are killed every week. In addition to these tragic numbers, 4962 workers were permanently disabled.

At this year's ceremony held in Vancouver's Hastings Park, relatives described the events of the day that their loved one did not return home. In every case they described the tremendous hole that was created in their lives when the accident occurred. It was always a day like every other day until the police showed up and their lives were changed forever.

These people were there to leave the message that we must do everything we can to prevent the pain they feel from happening to others.

Please listen and work safe! ☑

2003 John Hiebert Memorial Trophy Winners



Congratulations to the Killerwatts hockey team on being awarded the John Hiebert Memorial Trophy. Joining the team for a photo is Verona Hiebert, standing back left, and John Hiebert, back right, son of the late John Hiebert.

The 2003 John Hiebert Memorial Trophy was presented to the Killerwatts Hockey Team, for being the Most Sportsmanlike Team in this year's IBEW/BC Hydro Hockey Tournament.



John Hiebert

Brother John Hiebert was one of our Charter members, and was involved in creating Local 258 in 1967. John was a Lineman by trade, and a union activist at heart. Over his years of involvement in our Local, he served as an Assistant Business Manager, as the Local Union

Recording Secretary, and as a trainer for those learning the line trade. Those who were fortunate enough to have known John remember a caring and hard working man, always willing to help out, and always with a smile on his face.

John passed away in 1986, and his wife Verona has continued to honour his spirit and his commitment to Local 258 by coming out to present this trophy each year. One of John and Verona's sons, Brother Gordon Hiebert, has also served our Local as a Unit Chair and Executive Board Member, and carries on his father's example of standing up for the important issues our Local believes in. ☞



Killerwatts Team Captain Nicole Prior with Verona Hiebert during recent trophy presentation.

Managers' Quiz

Paper Break/CEP 630/CALM

ARE YOU qualified to be a manager?

1. How do you put a giraffe into a fridge?

Open the refrigerator, put the giraffe in, and close the refrigerator door. This question tests whether you tend to do simple things in an overly complicated way.

2. How do you put an elephant into a fridge?

If you said, "Open the refrigerator, put in the elephant and close the refrigerator door", you're wrong. The correct answer is, "Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, put the elephant in, and close the refrigerator door."

This tests your ability to think through the repercussions of previous actions.

3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals are obliged to attend. Which one does not attend?

The elephant. The elephant is in the refrigerator. This question tests memory.

4. There's a river you have to cross, but it is inhabited by dangerous crocodiles. What do you do?

You swim across. All the animals are at the Lion King's conference. This tests whether you learn from past information.

According to Anderson Consulting Worldwide, 90 per cent of the managers they tested got all the questions wrong. However, many preschoolers gave correct answers to all the questions.

Anderson Consulting says this refutes conclusively the belief that most managers have the brains of four-year-olds.

We Got Mail!



From left to right, Jeff Cawker (lead), Kevin Ward (second), Bryan Buchan (Third), Jordan Swanson (Skip) and Leroy Anderson (Coach).

Dear IBEW Local 258;

I would like to thank the IBEW for your support during the past season. Your donation enabled us to participate in the Junior Men's and Juvenile Curling Playdowns. The boys had a successful year. Most of their goals were met and hopefully next year will be even better.

We are already planning next year's strategies and events and are looking forward to another successful curling season in 2003/2004.

A very special thanks to Bob Abernethy and Michelle Laurie for their support.

Sincerely,

Brother Leroy Anderson



Dear Local 258,

I am writing to express thanks from myself and the Tynehead constituency for Local 258 supporting our fundraising dinner March 30. The tickets purchased and the hat and shirt donated for our auction were greatly appreciated. Our event was a great success with the dinner being completely sold out to over 80 people who attended. Everyone there enjoyed the evening and left a bit more optimistic and hopeful for a brighter future after the 2005 election. The support of Local 258 was an important part of making this event such a success.

Thank you.

In solidarity,

Barry Bell, President

Surrey/Tynehead NDP



Sister Michelle,

Thank you so much for your Local's generous donation to the Council of Senior Citizen's Organization (COSCO).

As we are a totally grass roots organization, the Local's donation helps us to continue to strive to maintain and improve the "quality of life" for all seniors.

If your Local has a Retirees' Group/Lodge, we would be pleased to send them information on becoming affiliated to COSCO, to lend an even bigger voice in our advocacy activities.

In solidarity,

Ernie Bayer



Dear IBEW Local 258 Benefit Fund,

I am writing this Thank You note to try to express how I feel about your generosity. Frankly, I was overwhelmed. I hope that your generosity will come back to you many fold. I tried to write my own greeting card, and it goes like this:

"I thought the door to my life was closed,

Then I heard the voices of my family, friends and co-workers,

I turned and saw that there were other doors open, Thank you for being one of those voices."

By the way, I'm doing OK, working hard at rehab to get myself as self-sufficient as possible, test driving wheelchairs, learning how to drive a vehicle with hand controls and looking forward to returning to Hudson's Hope and eventually to work.

Jacqui Kinahan

I apologize for having typed this but writing is a slow process for me at present.



Dear local 258,

Thank you so much for your generous gift. With your help and the help of other good friends we have been able to make a difference in the lives of many people who are suffering through hard times.

Thank you sincerely,

Friends of Hudson's Hope Society



Dear IBEW Local 258,

Thank you so much for the lovely basket of fruit which you sent to us this week. It was very much appreciated. As well, thank you to Don Payne and Tom Greenwell for their visit. Carole's ankle is starting to heal now, but without the help from our family, friends and IBEW brothers, we would not have been able to manage as well as we have. Thanks to you all.

Harry & Carole Dorward

Thank you Local 258!

The Kirkwood Academy Tap Teams would like to thank you for your support. It will be an honour to dance as part of the Canadian Tap Team at the World Dance Championships in Germany.

With many thanks for your donation to the Team's fundraising efforts. We really appreciated the support. Deb Sywak,
Parent

PS. Leah's team placed 12th; the International placed 8th and our soloist placed 8th.



Dear Local 258,

I would like to express my appreciation to Gord Burr and Frank Nassachuk for their attendance and as representatives of Local 258 IBEW at my recent retirement luncheon. Sandy Bull



Dear Local 258,

Thank you for the card you sent to us and all the Union brothers who came to Dad's memorial. His membership in the Union and his long service award was a huge source of pride to Dad. He would have been pleased to be remembered.

Thanks again,
Lynne Kington for the Paone Family



Dear Local 258,

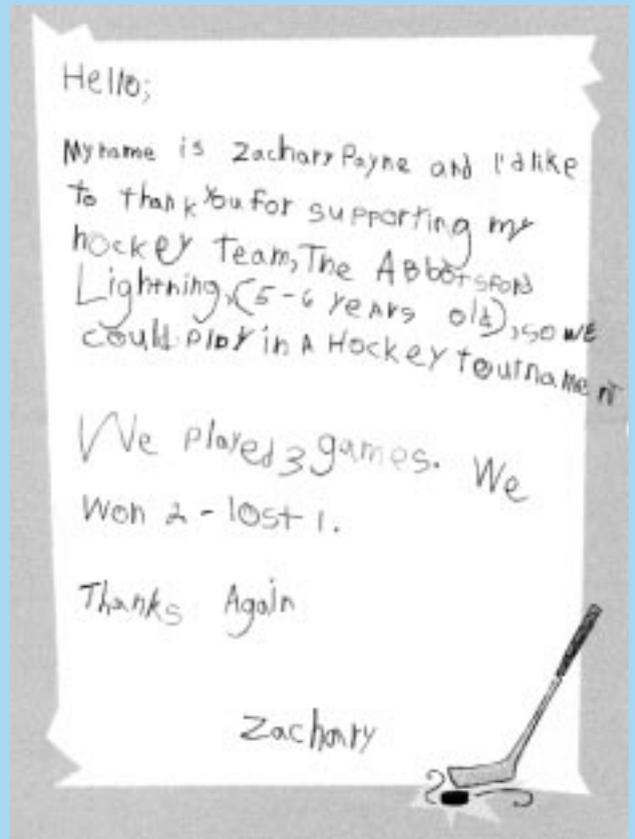
Thanks for the gift. As an IBEW member for nearly sixty years, I appreciate IBEW memorabilia. When I get finished with the treatments I'll drop in to the hall and say hello. Many thanks
Norm Morton



We
Got Mail!



IBEW 258 was proud to support the Abbotsford Lightning hockey team. Congratulations for their success in the hockey tournament this year.



Injunction Stops Union's Internal Discipline Process



A court ruling that could have an effect on unionized building trades across the country has recently been denied an application for appeal by the Supreme Court of Canada. We received word from Brother Cordell Cole, Business Manager & Financial Secretary of IBEW Local 625 in Halifax, Nova Scotia that the Union's appeal, to overturn a court order placed on the Local preventing them from disciplining union members who worked for a non-union contractor during the construction of a large oil rig in Halifax, would not be heard by the highest court in the land.

IBEW 258 assisted IBEW 625 with a financial donation to support this important legal battle and was disappointed to hear of the decision.

The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal recently heard arguments on a case that could have significant impact on how trade unions govern their internal affairs.

In July, 2001, IBEW Local 625 in Halifax issued a letter to its members which advised them that they were not cleared to work on the Oil Rig Eirik Raude, unless it was for an employer who was bound by the collective agreement between the IBEW, Local 625

and the Construction Management and Labour Bureau, the agency representing unionized employers in the construction industry.

Three employees of the Halifax Shipyard, which had the contract to perform work on the Oil Rig, were disciplined by IBEW, Local 625 as a result of their work on the Oil Rig without the permission of Local 625. The Halifax Shipyard, the Marine Workers, who represented employees

of the shipyard, and the individual employees applied for an injunction to prohibit the IBEW Local 625 from imposing discipline or otherwise refusing to clear its members to work on the Oil Rig. In September, 2001, the Nova Scotia Supreme Court granted the injunction.

In the meantime, the Union had agreed to clear anyone who had a pre-existing contractual relationship with the Shipyard to work on the Oil Rig. At the injunction hearing, however, the Union maintained that it had the right to advise its members who had no contractual employment relationship with Halifax Shipyard to not work the Shipyard. The issues that went on appeal to the Court of Appeal were whether a trade union can direct its members to not work for a particular employer and punish them if they act in violation of the order. Argument was heard on January 15, 2002. The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal reserved its decision.

Fern Tardiff and IBEW Local 625 v. Halifax Shipyard et al, S.H. No. 174189; appeal from Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Local 1 v. IBEW Local 625, 2001 NSSC 148.

Ron Pink (rpink@labour-law.com) and Gordon Forsyth (gforsyth@labour-law.com), Counsel for Fern Tardiff and IBEW Local 625. *Reprinted with permission from the on-line newsletter of the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers (http://www.callacams.com/EnNewsletter2002.htm).* ☞



"Look Hinckley, I know you just came from a non-union plant, but try to make eye-contact when I talk to you."

1st Year Line Apprentices



BC Hydro Apprentice Line group in training at E.I.T.I, February, 2003.

ILO condemns BC contract stripping

Vesta News/VESTA/CALM

The International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, has ruled that back-to-work and contract-breaking legislation passed in 2002 by the British Columbia Liberal government contravenes an ILO Convention-Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize.

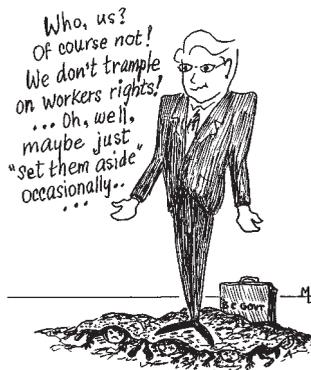
Canada and all ten provinces signed this convention in 1972. It applies to all levels of government within the country.

In uncharacteristically blunt language, the ILO ruled that the BC government repeatedly violated the rights of thousands of public sector employees by refusing to negotiate contracts and by using legislation to enforce its will.

The ILO has asked the BC government to repeal one bill entirely (Bill 18). It also recommends major amendments to other pieces of legislation and calls on the government to refrain from similar action in the future.

In a statement given to the ILO last August, the BC government characterized the complaints as "too frivolous, vexatious, political and trivial" for the ILO to consider.

The ILO reminded the BC government: "When a state decides to become a member of the ILO, it accepts the fundamental principles of freedom of association... and all governments are obliged to respect fully the commitments undertaken by ratification of ILO conventions." 



Here's the offending legislation:

Bill 2: *Health Services Continuation Act* forces health science professionals and nurses to cease lawful job action.

Bill 15: *Health Care Services Collective Agreements Act* imposes the employers' last offer as the contract for health science professionals and nurses.

Bill 18: *Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act* makes education an essential service.

Bill 27: *Education Service Collective Agreement Act* imposes terms and conditions of employment on all teachers.

Bill 28: *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act* eliminates limits on class sizes and other guarantees of service to students (kindergarten to post secondary).

Bill 29: *Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act* unilaterally eliminates long-held contract rights for health care and social services workers.

UNIT REPORTS

Unit 6

by Robert Abernethy, Unit Chair

How quickly four months fly when you're having fun and once again it's time to conjure up a few words. As you can see in this issue of the Hotline, there will be a Family Social put on by IBEW 258 and hosted by Units 5 & 6 on Sunday, September 21 from 11 am to 5 pm come rain or shine. May the weather gods bring us sunshine.

This social is for ALL 258 members, power pioneers, line contractors, tree trimmers, traffic control people and all those from the other categories I've failed to mention. Any members who may be in from out of town, come out and join us. Mark this on your calendar. As usual with these kind of events, we will be needing

help to put this on. If you can help, call me, Bob Abernethy, Unit 6 Chair at 604-574-5146. Leave a message if I don't get to speak with you, or e-mail me at robabernethy@hotmail.com or phone Mark Davidson, Unit 5 Chair at 604-522-9198 or e-mail Mark at mark-d@shaw.ca. This is our first go round at trying to put this event together. We are open to suggestions and ideas that you might have. Your ideas may not happen this year but we still want them for years to come. We only have a short time that day so we can't have too many things on the go at once. We will be looking forward to hearing from you. Flyers will be sent to all Shop Stewards in early June giving more particulars.



Now on to another subject.

I'll never forget when our son was graduating from high school and we went to an open house sort of thing on choosing careers and vocations. Everyone in the classroom had grandeur of going to university to be doctors, lawyers, dentists, accountants or computer geeks. All the students were going to meet recruiters from universities and the likes.

Then came the question, "Is anyone going into the trades?" it was obvious from the looks on the students' faces that no guidance counselors had talked with these young people about trades possibilities. Not one student in the class put up their hand except our son and a couple of other guys. It was foreign to the rest of the class. I don't think half of them knew what a trade was!

Over the years I don't know how many people I've met, who went to university, obtained a degree and then entered the real world, only to find no employment opportunities in their field. Or the ones who worked long hours with little pay, even after a few years on the job. Some of them ended up in the trades to find out they were further ahead.

Which brings me to this article that I have kept for many years. I don't know who wrote it, can't remember where it came from, but I sure can relate to it. Looks like this person went to the same school I did.

(see article next page)

Mark this on your calendar!

IBEW Local 258 Family Social

Hosted by Units 5 & 6

Sunday, September 21, 2003, 11 am - 5 pm
at Semiahmoo Fish & Game Club,
1284 - 184th St., Surrey, BC

Everyone is welcome to join the festivities!

- Free Food & Beverages:
Hamburgers, Hot Dogs,
Snacks & Pop
- Bucket Rides
- Tug of War
- Sack Races
- Face Painting
- Nature Walk



Look for complete details and directions posted on your IBEW bulletin board, or check the IBEW website:

www.IBEWloc258.com

Old Hang-ups About Trades Still with Us

Some things, as they say, never change. And isn't that a shame.

About a hundred years ago I was in high school. Yes, 100 years ago it was still called "high school". Senior secondaries, junior secondaries, learning centers and colleges were, along with fire, yet to be discovered. Things were so primitive that high schools were staff by teachers. Since then, as we know, teachers have been replaced by professional educators. They still have guidance counselors though. And it seems they remain as firmly unqualified as they were "way back when".

In my case, I was sent off to see a guidance counselor when I was about 15 or 16 years old. I have no idea how old she was. To my eyes she looked as old as time itself. She was all wrinkles, red rouge and dangling earrings. I don't remember having a choice in all of this. The meeting was likely mandatory. At the end of the day the purpose generally boiled down to that time-honoured question: What do you want to be when you grow up?

I don't have the vaguest idea. I really hadn't given it any thought. But, I was wide open to suggestions once the subject was broached. Unfortunately, when it came to suggestions she had only one. I, she declared, would make a fine school teacher! Now then, I may not have known what I wanted to be when I grew up, but I certainly had a short list of things I did not want to be. And at the top of that list was a school teacher. It was right up there with being an undertaker and an accountant.

Being a school teacher would mean being in a school. And, in my teens, getting out of school, never to darken it's dusty chalk-infested hallways again, was one of the very few defined goals I had in life.

Old "wrinkles and rouge" was adamant though. She would not be diverted. When she finally realizes she wasn't going to make a convert out of me she simply referred me to a rack of brochures outside her office and ushered her next victim in. All I remember is that the rack had a lot of old dusty recruitment brochures from the RCMP along with a booklet called, "So, You Want To Be A Dentist?" I didn't, so I left.

I later found out that a couple of my buddies had exactly the same meeting with the same old lady with the exact same result. We decided in our wisdom that teaching was likely the only job she knew anything about. Any other job left her lost. Looking back over several decades, I'm still willing to bet we got that one right the first time around.

Young people who take up careers in the building trades are still regarded as failures by their school teachers and guidance counselors. "The apprenticeship programs are still regarded by many in the education system as something you go into when all else fails."

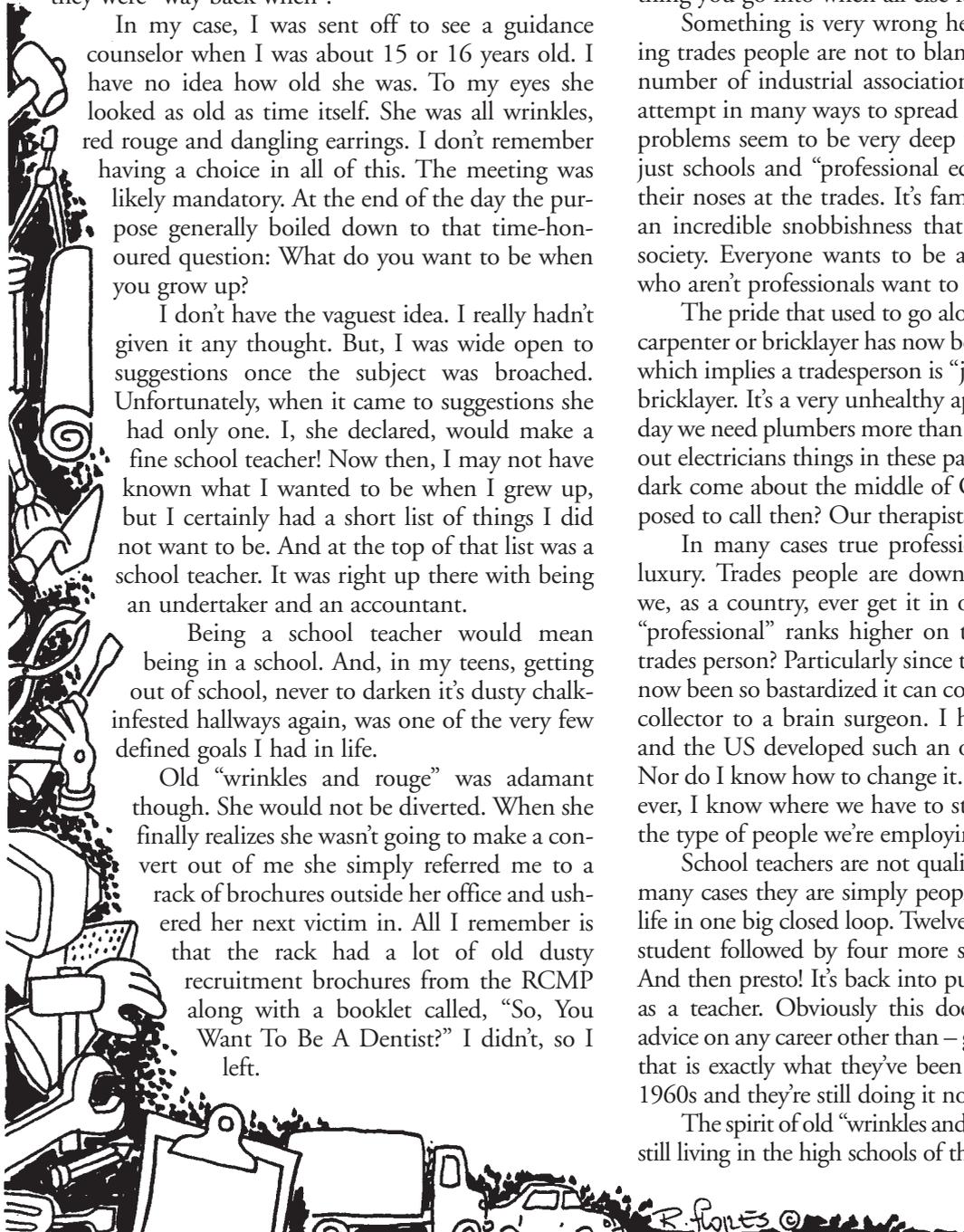
Something is very wrong here. The industries requiring trades people are not to blame. There is no end to the number of industrial associations that go to schools and attempt in many ways to spread the word to students. The problems seem to be very deep within our society. It isn't just schools and "professional educators" who look down their noses at the trades. It's families. It's parents. There is an incredible snobbishness that has come to rest in our society. Everyone wants to be a "professional" and those who aren't professionals want to pretend that they are.

The pride that used to go along with being an excellent carpenter or bricklayer has now been replaced by an attitude which implies a tradesperson is "just" a carpenter or "just" a bricklayer. It's a very unhealthy approach. At the end of the day we need plumbers more than we need lawyers and without electricians things in these parts will get pretty cold and dark come about the middle of October. Who are we supposed to call then? Our therapists?

In many cases true professionals are often a bit of a luxury. Trades people are downright necessary. Why did we, as a country, ever get it in our collective heads that a "professional" ranks higher on the scale of things than a trades person? Particularly since the term "professional" has now been so bastardized it can cover anyone from a garbage collector to a brain surgeon. I have no idea why Canada and the US developed such an odd idea about the trades. Nor do I know how to change it. If change is to occur however, I know where we have to start. We have to start with the type of people we're employing as guidance counselors.

School teachers are not qualified for the position. In so many cases they are simply people who have gone through life in one big closed loop. Twelve years of public school as a student followed by four more student years in university. And then presto! It's back into public school, only this time as a teacher. Obviously this doesn't qualify them to give advice on any career other than – guess what – teaching! And that is exactly what they've been doing. They did it in the 1960s and they're still doing it now.

The spirit of old "wrinkles and rouge" is alive and well and still living in the high schools of the 21st century.



IBEW 258 Unit Structure

A concern with our current Unit Meeting practice has been raised, bringing our Unit structure into question. Article IV, Sec.1 of our Constitution states: “No L.U. shall meet more than twice

This means that each Unit can have one monthly meeting. Our Units are defined in Article XIII, Section 11 of our Bylaws: “The following Units are hereby established in the jurisdiction of Local Union 258: 258.1, Terrace,

place we can conduct Union Business is at monthly meetings in Terrace, Prince George, Vernon, Nanaimo, Burnaby and Surrey. All of the other meetings are unofficial, and are really ‘information sessions’ - no motions, nominations, elections, etc. can occur at any ‘information session’.

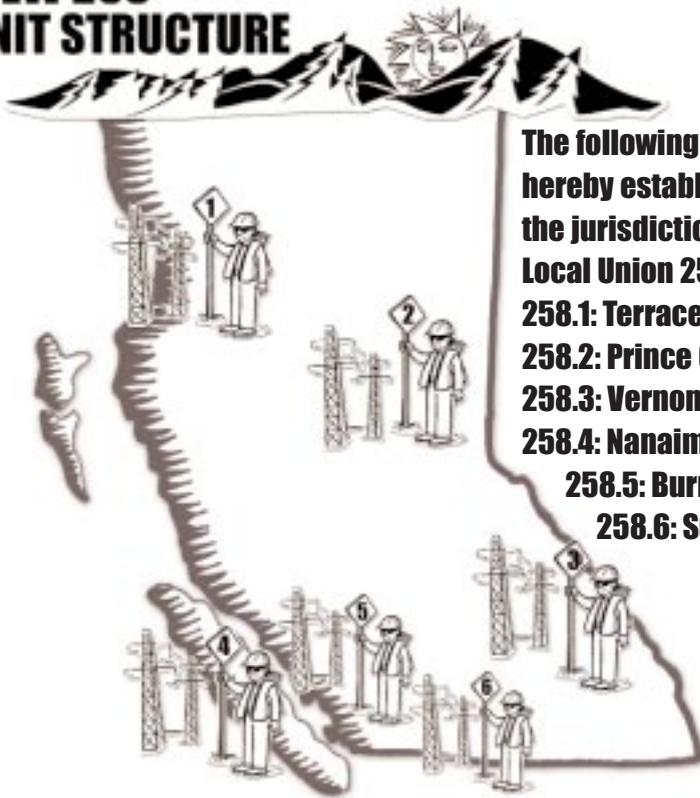
At the recent Elected Members Conference, Local Officers and Unit Officers agreed that we should take these concerns to our members in this issue of Hotline, with suggested fixes for the problem, so that you can provide some feedback.

We can either begin to follow our Bylaws properly and only have Unit meetings in the charter cities noted above, or we can change the Bylaws to allow for more Units, and therefore more cities that could hold proper meetings each month. If we stay with the current structure, we make it very difficult for each of our members to have a voice, since the long distances to travel would make attendance at meetings unreasonable for many.

If we amend our Bylaws, we could have as many Units as we deem feasible to give as many members the opportunity to attend meetings as possible. Each of these Units would elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, Recorder and two Executive members every four years, but these Unit Executives would only be responsible for the one meeting per month, and presumably it would be in their own home town so that the time commitment would be minimal. Rather than have mail out ballots for all of the various Units, it is my proposal that we elect these positions directly at the Unit meeting. We have broken down the membership by population in each town across BC, to try to assess what places make the most sense for Units, and have a tentative list of 23.

As per Article XVII of the
(continued on next page)

IBEW 258 UNIT STRUCTURE



The following Units are hereby established in the jurisdiction of Local Union 258:

- 258.1: Terrace, B.C.**
- 258.2: Prince George, B.C.**
- 258.3: Vernon, B.C.**
- 258.4: Nanaimo, B.C.**
- 258.5: Burnaby, B.C.**
- 258.6: Surrey, B.C.**

monthly unless specifically called.” Special called meetings are only convened to deal with specific issues (ie: collective agreement ratification), and are not the same as regular union meetings. The Constitution also, in Article XIII, Sec 6, states that: “Units may be established within a L.U. by provision in the L.U. bylaws when it’s jurisdiction covers more than one city, town or community...”.

Article II, Sec. 2, of our own Bylaws states: “Regular meetings shall be held once monthly at the time and date as decided by the Local Union.”

B.C.; 258.2, Prince George, B.C.; 258.3, Vernon, B.C.; 258.4, Nanaimo, B.C.; 258.5, Burnaby, B.C.; 258.6, Surrey, B.C.”

These articles raise two specific concerns – first, our Units are defined as cities, not by region, as is our practice. Secondly, we must have one, and only one, meeting in each Unit each month. Currently, we have several meetings in each region most months, and some months (in the summer) we do not have any meetings in some regions. So, if we are to follow our Constitution and Bylaws, the only

IBEW 258 Unit Structure

(cont'd from previous page)

Constitution and Article IV of our Bylaws, we still need an Executive Board to conduct business of the Local between regular Unit meetings. The maximum size for an Executive Board is seven members, and we would continue to elect our Executive Board members regionally so that we would stay with the six regions we currently think of as Units. These Executive Board Members, along with the other Local Union Officers (Business Manager/Financial Secretary, President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary) would continue to be elected by mailout ballot, once every four years.

In writing this article, it is my intention to explain the issues at stake, so that you will be prepared to make an informed decision on the issue. Any changes that we make will come in the form of a bylaw amendment, which every member will have the opportunity to vote on. What I am asking for at this time is your feedback – would you prefer to follow our bylaws as they are, or do you want to revise our structure to allow more access to valid Unit meetings? Please provide your comments either by mail to the union offices, or by e-mail to Michelle.Laurie@ibew258.bc.ca, so that I can keep track of the feedback. ☒



2003 Elected Members Conference



Left to right, back row: Riob Hove, Robert Abernethy, Derek Egroff, Phil Clattenburg, Klaus Kraft, Dave McMinn (hiding), Mark Davison, Bill Hood (also hiding), Alex Coutts, Fred Ruttan (yes, he's back there), Ryan Angman. Center row: Michelle Laurie, Cathy Tagseth, Nicole Biernaczyk, Ray Lapointe, Burke Lundy, Clay Dunsford, Don McNabb. Front row: Tom Greenwell, Larry Byhre, Tony Brand, Doug McKay, Dick Green, Leon Arishenkoff.

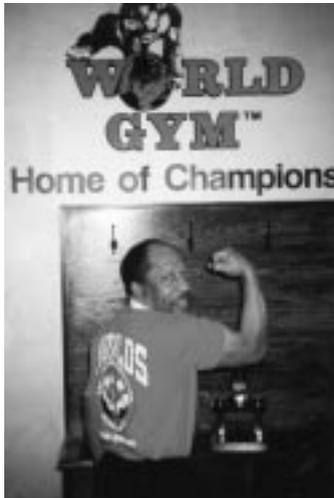
Once in every four-year term, the elected members of IBEW Local 258 give up a long weekend to get together and discuss our policies, bylaws and issues of general concern to all our members. This year, we gathered in Burnaby in early May to provide input and listen to each other and guests as we considered the matters facing us. Brother Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour, joined us on Sunday morning to speak about what is happening to workers across the province, and the importance of realizing that the ballot box has a direct connection to our paycheque. After his talk, Jim stayed to answer questions and to discuss some of our specific concerns about what is happening to our public utility and its effect on our communities.

On Monday morning, Brother Laird Cronk, our International Representative for BC, gave us a presenta-

tion on Political Action and Labour Lobbying. Brother Cronk is working with other International Representatives to revitalize the COPE program (Committee on Political Education) in Canada, and to educate IBEW members on how to be effective union activists in federal, provincial and municipal politics.

Your elected members spent workshop time in seeking ways to encourage member participation in our Local, in clarifying the duties and roles of the Unit Executives, and in reviewing our bylaws and policies. Our goal now is to communicate with the membership about upcoming change, and to ensure that we have broad participation in the decisions we are faced with. We also agreed that it was important to develop new member orientation materials and delivery methods that would be effective tools for educating and inspiring involvement. ☒

Congratulations Brother Dave Hicks!



Brother Dave Hicks, World Armwrestling Champion.

In a letter received by IBEW Local 258, Brother Dave Hicks of Surrey, BC informed us of his success at the recent World Armwrestling Championships he attended. We were proud to have helped support his endeavours. Congratulations Brother Hicks!

Hello Michelle,
I finally got around to getting some pictures for you, "better late than never", right?

I was successful in defending my title as Men's Grand Master at the World Armwrestling Championships in Illinois last

November. I had a great time. Team Canada was a very close second, just 5 points less than Team USA who won.

I am very grateful for the support from IBEW Local 258. I competed against a brother from Local 569 in San Diego.

Thanks again to all for your financial consideration. It does really help a lot. This also makes me work harder to achieve my goals.

Sincerely
Dave Hicks



Brother Dave Hicks of IBEW 258 proudly displays the Canadian flag after his championship award.



Team Canada was victorious at the World Armwrestling Championship coming in a close second to Team USA.

20 Good Ones

Internet/CALM

1. A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tired.
2. What's the definition of a will? It's a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism it's your count that votes.
6. She had a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but she broke it off.
7. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
8. If you don't pay your exorcist, you get repossessed.
9. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
10. Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft, and I'll show you A-flat minor.
11. When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.
12. The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
13. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
14. You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
15. A Local Area Network in Australia is the LAN down under.
16. He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
17. Every calendar's days are numbered.
18. A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.
19. A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
20. He had a photographic memory that was never developed.

The Childhood Nightmare: The Cause and Fight Against Child Labour

by Sarah Hruschak

In almost every society, children work. However, the types of work they do and the conditions of their involvement differ among societies and over time. Child work refers to “adult-guided activities that focus on the child’s growth and enculturation into the families and societies of which they are a part.”¹ Child work is



developmental in nature. This is not child labour. Child labour is synonymous with child exploitation. The activities may be hazardous, may interfere with the child’s education, and may be “harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.”² It includes both paid and unpaid work that may enslave them and separate them from their family. Child labour

is work “carried out to the detriment and endangerment of the child, in violation of international law and national legislation.”³ It does affect Canadians, and there are measures to reduce and even stop child labour. Although, many believe that the abolition of child labour would be the best solution, it is important to tackle such a problem by implementing programs, like trade unions have, that focus on the causes of child labour, such as primitive technology, poverty (large household size and low wage), and lack of parent and child education.

The concept of “child” differs

greatly across societies and cultural settings. In most Western countries

Child labour is synonymous with child exploitation. The activities may be hazardous, may interfere with the child’s education, and may be “harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.”

chronological age is the sole criteria.⁴ However, in other countries social and cultural factors are incorporated in the definition of a child versus that of an adult. Also, whether a youth is considered a child may depend more on social responsibility, rather than age. It is the traditional conceptions of childhood that defines what a

child is. For example, the Tonga people of Zimbabwe may have boys, as young as ten, owning and working land.⁵ The phrase child labour has uncertainty attached to it. Meanings of the words constantly change. The Convention on the Rights of the

This is the third and final installment of the winning 2002 Tom Forkin Scholarship essays. Congratulations again to the winners, Sarah Hruschak, Colin Partridge and Kirk Kidd. The 2003 essay submissions have now been received and are being evaluated. Stay tuned to the next issue of Hotline for results.

Photo of Sarah Hruschak



Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989, defines child as a person "below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) has "designated fifteen years as minimum age for entering the labour force, and eighteen years as the minimum if work is hazardous."⁷

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has "designated fifteen years as minimum age for entering the labour force, and eighteen years as the minimum if work is hazardous."

In 1996, the ILO estimated that 120 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are working full-time. With part time workers included, the total would increase to approximately 250 million. This figure was also estimated by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions on 27 June 1996, in its Child Labor Charter.⁸ Of these working children, 61% are in Asia, 32% are in Africa, and 7% are in Latin America.⁹ Child labour is more dominant in the informal and unorganized segment of the labour market, rather than in the formal sector.¹⁰ The bulk of economic activity in poor, developing, nations are informal. Labour markets in developing countries are characterized by "monopolistic demand conditions, due to credit monopolies, concentrated ownership of the means of production, or simply the lack of alternative employment possibilities."¹¹

Many believe that the cause of child labour is from economic backwardness. Therefore, child labour is a pre-capitalist practice that will be eradicated by further development.¹² Primitive technologies can create situ-

ations in which adults cannot substitute for children. For example, boys as miners, in tunnels too small for adults to crawl through, and children that weave carpets because their "nimble fingers" can tie the small knots.¹³ Therefore, changes in technology have helped to eliminate child labour.

The child's wages serve as a safety net against poverty. Child labour arises because the children, or their families, would have insufficient resources to live, if the children did not earn an income through working.¹⁴ The children work to compensate for the falling incomes (low hourly earnings) of the adult family members.

The more children in a family, the more ability to increase family income. However, as more children are working for lower wages, it is harder for adults to obtain jobs, and unemployment increases. But, adults must send children to work for the family income, because they cannot find jobs themselves. It is a vicious cycle. Employers will hire children, mostly in their own

self-interest, for greater profits.¹⁵

There are four major economic circumstances that create poverty, therefore creating and maintaining child labour.¹⁶ First, there is an employer demand. Many employers see children as a cheap and obedient labour force. Second, there are family needs. Children are a useful way of relieving the family's financial problems. Third, there are "politically induced" economic problems. For example, large-scale political upheavals have economic problems that encourage child labour, such as Russia, and Romania. Fourth, geographical factors influence the circumstances, such as extreme flooding in India. These circumstances create a poverty stricken society.

Lack of education is another factor that contributes to child labour. The worst child labour abuses take place among the most vulnerable socio-economic groups in society.¹⁷ These groups can rarely afford education, even if it is available and less expensive. With such inaccessibility, parents often engage their children in more profitable opportunities.

However, parents do not realize that by starting children so early, in unskilled work, they are locking them into unskilled work for the rest of their lives.

Therefore, actions to improve education need to be part of programs for disadvantaged population groups. These programs need to empower the poor and destroy social discrimination by providing "income-earning opportunities," such as minimum wage systems, credit systems, and social safety nets for the most needy.¹⁸ Children with basic education and skills have better chances in the labour market. They are aware of their rights and are less likely to

accept hazardous work and exploitative working conditions.¹⁹ Education on their rights, and on the dangers and risks of work to their health, safety and education will teach children about “their responsibilities to themselves and to others.”²⁰

Also, education should be directed at the adults. Educated parents are more likely, than non-educated parents, to enroll children in school. “The content of education [for both children and parents] should be adapted in part to meet local needs,” combining general cultural education with practical training.²¹ Parents may feel they have a natural right to take advantage of all family resources, or that children are learning “something that will be of value for their future.”²² However, parents do not realize that by starting children so early, in unskilled work, they are locking them into unskilled work for the rest of their lives. It is important to educate these parents, so understanding of such consequences is achieved.

UNICEF (1986 report) outlined a number of factors involved in child work that can have a detrimental effect. These factors include, beginning full-time work at too early an age, working too long of hours, having inadequate remuneration and excessive physical and social strain, working and living on the streets, having extreme responsibility at too early an age, hampering of psychological and social development of the child, and inhibiting of the child’s self-esteem.²³ Therefore, it is important for child labour to be prevented through effective law enforcement and large-scale awareness raising, where there is a high risk.

From the start, trade unions have worked for the “prevention of child labour and the removal of children from the workplace, and for their placement in schools.”²⁴ The first International Workers’ Congress in 1866 called for an inter-

national campaign against child labour. In 1919, The International Labour Organization was established, and the first “Convention on minimum age for admission to industry was adopted.”²⁵ Trade unions can aid in the destruction of child labour, and it is clearly indicated in organized industries. Trade unions are able to undertake information gathering and participate in national surveys. “They are strong players in child labour campaigns, can negotiate collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct to protect workers and children, and are able to monitor ongoing workplace practices and ensure that agreements are not abused.”²⁶

However, in some countries it is difficult for trade unions to be a major contributor in the prevention of child labour, since awareness and acknowledgement of such a problem is new, and the members are not necessarily sympathetic to the

need to destroy child labour. Yet, in many countries, trade unions ensure that children are not working in hazardous conditions, and in partnership with other organizations, provide them with “welfare services and relevant education.”²⁷ The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has played a major role in the campaign, as have many other organizations such as the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW), and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation (ITGLWF).

International trade union organizations, like the ICFTU, have been able to compare experiences within countries and industrial sectors.²⁸ They also play a significant role in developing codes of conduct and model collective bargaining agreements. Also, the Canadian Labour Congress has been working in cooperation with the ICFTU, on a worldwide campaign against child labour. Since child labour does affect Canadians, it is important that Canada has a voice in the campaign to eliminate child labour.

In response to consumer pressure (consumerism aids to child labour), many North American firms, including those that sell goods in Canada, such as Levi Strauss, Wal-Mart, The Gap, Ikea, Nike, Starbucks and Adidas, have adopted standards of conduct that prohibit inhumane working conditions and child labour. These firms responded quickly to negative reports about their activities overseas.²⁹ However, families cannot avoid illegally sending their children to work since the countries where they work can neither “provide all the children with direct



or indirect means of subsistence from other sources, nor make available to them the needed educational, cultural and recreational facilities.³⁰ Also, child labour cannot be legislated away. Its “roots lie deep in poverty, in entrenched custom and tradition, and in attitudes that have prevailed over many years.”³¹ If law prohibits child labour, then the law cannot introduce new measures to protect child workers, since legally they do not exist.³² Therefore, Canadians are indirectly affected by child labour, since children may in fact have made the goods that Canadians purchase, for instance in sweatshops.

In Canada, although a developed country, there is hidden child labour. The Christian Children’s Fund of Canada “has identified garment manufacture, amusement park operation, agriculture, cleaning, construction, and exotic dancing as areas of work in which immigrant children are to be found” in Canada.³³ Although, Canada has legislation, compulsory schooling, tradition and economic conditions that allow for child labour to be extremely low, there are exceptions. These include some street vendors, delivery boys and those working in family businesses. Therefore, child labour directly involves Canadians. It is occurring in Canada, even though it may not be as extreme as other countries.

The governments that are affected by child labour can create new programs to increase the quality of schooling, decrease the costs of schooling, provide households with insurance against income fluctuations, make jobs safe, healthy and humane, and provide alternative income sources available to households. Priorities in their national budgets need to change.

However, on an individual level, there are many actions I can take to aid in the prevention of child labour. As a consumer, I can boycott and protest any brand names that relate to child labour, like Nike. Being aware of what I buy is essential to my understanding of what I am supporting. I

can consult with others who have experience in unions or national organizations, or others working in my community. I can build alliances with those who share my commitment locally and nationally. I can find out what is happening in my area, as it relates to how children are employed. I can plan seminars and discussion groups at my school, and publicize the issue. It is important to campaign against companies that have become familiar household names, because they will set the trend for other, less familiar, companies to “follow suit.”³⁴

It is taken for granted that children have to work, receive low wages and be surrounded by poor working conditions. It must be made clear that children are not born to undertake horrendous labour, since their physical and mental characteristics are not “sufficiently developed to enable them to cope with the demands made on them by work.”³⁵ Childhood is a time for education and recreation, not a time to engage in work.

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14. Sandy Hobbs et al., Child Labor, 193.
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16. Sandy Hobbs et al., Child Labor, 193.
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18. Ibid.
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20. Ibid., 150.
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22. Ibid., 5.
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26. Ibid., 254.
27. Ibid., 256.
28. Ibid., 265.
29. Nomi Morris, “Saving the Brand Name,” Academic Search Elite. EBSCO Publishing, 22 April 2002 <http://search.egnet.com/login.asp>
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33. Ibid., 27.
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Ruminations of a Retiree

by Ken McEwen

There have been a lot of subjects that require a lot of rumination since we last spoke. Stuff like the war on Iraq, the provincial government's attack on senior's benefits, the Canucks, the provincial government's attack on worker's benefits, SARS, the provincial government's attack on just about everything that's good for the workers of BC, the strengthening Loonie, the provincial government selling off chunks of BC, the price of gas at the fuel pump, etc. The list just goes on and on. A conscientious ruminating retiree would need overtime to give just minimal attention to all the issues. Caution must be used to prevent rumination burnout.

I don't know if you remember that I mentioned the topic of gas mileage in a previous column. I know I mentioned that we had bought a camper van. Boy, was that ever a good move. Catherine Dear and Sesame really enjoy travelling in the camper. Anyway, when we get to RV parks and start talking to our neighbours (mostly retirees), one of the first questions asked is, "What kinda mileage ya get on that thing?" I've always had to answer, "I don't know. I've never figured it out". Like, how important is it anyway? You've got to get where you're going. When the tank gets down you fill it up. Also, figuring out gas mileage on RVs can be depressing. We had an old Winnebago (30 feet or so) and on a real good day with a slight downgrade and a favourable tailwind, it could get up to around 7 miles per gallon. Who wants to know that? And all the other RVing retirees



Hotline editor Ken McEwen with his "holiday on wheels".

with bigger rigs than ours reported that they got 10 or 12 miles to the gallon. I know they wouldn't lie, but perhaps they learned a different math than I did.

However, to be able to partake in the discussions, I figured it out for our camper. Because we travel in Canada and the United States, the Systems International form of measuring things doesn't work well. Older Canadians and any USAmericans don't want to hear that your fuel consumption is 18.8 litres per 100 kilometres. So, out come the conversion tables. Now, you can't just do a simple conversion. If you're in Canada, you have to report in Imperial gallons, and in the States, you have to report in American gallons. So, when somebody asks, "What kinda mileage ya get on that thing?" you have to consider where you are and the age of the person who's asking. To young Canadians the answer is 18.8 litres per 100 kilometres, to older Canadians the answer is 15 miles per gallon and to all USAmericans the answer is 12.5 miles per gallon. Life can get complicated.

Another thing, when you're travelling with Catherine Dear and you

need fuel you can't just stop at the next station. You need to compare prices. Speaking of prices, have you ever tried to apply logic or rational thinking to fuel prices? It can't be done. There is no rhyme or reason to the system. The only constant is that fuel prices rise every Thursday and Friday and reduce somewhat on Sunday. On long weekends the price stays up 'til

Monday if that's the holiday. If Friday is the holiday the price starts up on Wednesday. Now I know fuel suppliers will tell you that this isn't so. Perhaps they change the practice on one weekend a year just so they can say that they don't raise prices every weekend. I don't know, I haven't been able to discover that weekend.

Down south, where we spend the winter, fuel prices rise dramatically around the end of March and the beginning of April, the time most Snowbird retirees start heading home with their 100 gallon capacity motor homes. The timing is probably just a coincidence. The real reason, say the oil companies, is the situation in the Middle East. That situation just happens to worsen on weekends and around Snowbird going home time.

Listen, I've taken enough of your time talking about mileage and fuel prices. I'd get into some of the other topics mentioned up front but I'm running out of space. I'll have to save those until next time. And price comparison. That'll take a bunch of time all by itself.

Please continue to work and play safely. Retirement is good.

Congratulations



Congratulations to long time IBEW 258 member from Burns Lake, Jim Bridges, left, on the occasion of his recent retirement. He is shown above with Unit 1 Business Rep Klaus Kraft. Brother Bridges worked at BC Hydro for 38 years and has been with IBEW 258 since the beginning.



IBEW member Tom Neary, left, and Unit 1 Chair Klaus Kraft present the special gift selected for Brother Jim Bridges on the occasion of his recent retirement.



Unit 6 Chair Robert Abernethy (left) presents long time Local 258 member Rod Trenholm with a 45 year service pin award at the recent union meeting in Chilliwack.



Allan Steidle receives his ten year pin from Robert Abernethy.



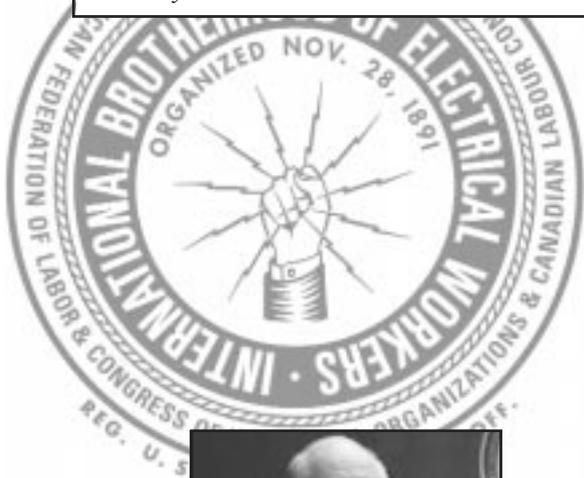
IBEW members!



IBEW members Barry Bell and Nicole Biernaczyk have received their five year service award pins from Unit 6 Chair Robert Abernethy.



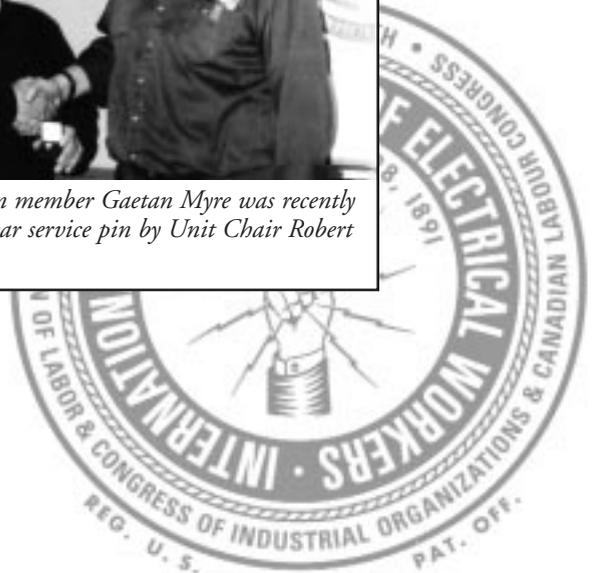
Long time Union member Gord Burr receives his 35 year service pin.



IBEW 258 member Len Hildrebrant (left) on receipt of his 40 year service pin.



Long time Union member Gaetan Myre was recently awarded a 35 year service pin by Unit Chair Robert Abernethy.



An interview with Shirley Douglas

Canadian Health care being sold, Douglas says

CALM

“People have no idea how much of the health system has been privatized,” says health activist and actor Shirley Douglas. “Our health care is simply being sold.”

“But even worse than that,” she continues, “is that once we’ve privatized health care in this country, in the NAFTA agreement, Chapter 11, Fair Trade Practices, you will then have opened up the door for any companies that want to come into this country.”



**The late
Tommy Douglas**

Then, she points out, Canadians run the risk that American companies will take over electricity, prisons, schools, hospitals. “The taking over of what we publicly owned and what is for the common good,” is how she describes it.

Douglas has a history of working for the common good. “I watched the birth of hospitalization, which was 1947,” the daughter of Tommy Douglas, then CCF Premier of Saskatchewan, says. “But I also saw the opposition. I watched the American Medical Association, the Canadian Medical Association, all the insurance companies of America and Canada, the pharmaceutical companies coming into Saskatchewan to fight the 1948 election.”

Douglas first noticed the decline in Canada’s health care system in 1977 when she returned to Canada from the United States and settled in Toronto with her children (including son Kiefer Sutherland, now an actor). Her father warned her even then, “We are watching the death knell of health care in this country, unless the people that are concerned about it are going to get out and fight for it.”

For years, governments have been nibbling away at Medicare, turning more and more of it over to private, profit-making companies, even though study after study shows that public health care is more efficient than private and results in better care.

Douglas notes that almost all diagnostic work is now private. Every time someone goes for a blood test, she says, a 25 per cent minimum profit is going to a private company – money that could be going back into the public system.

Currently, Douglas is spokesperson for the Canadian Health Coalition. She talks about meeting the CEO of a regional health district when she was speaking in Saskatchewan. Their local lab costs were \$1.4 million, and he went to the government and said he thought he could do the work, on a non-profit basis, for \$600,000. The government gave him \$600,000 for the lab work but they came in at \$420,000.

“There was a million-dollar profit



**Canadian Health Activist
Shirley Douglas**

there,” says Douglas, “and if you add that to every little lab that is set up – I think they figured out that for Vancouver that would be \$25 million.”

She continues, “Health care companies must have a 25 to 30 per cent profit for them to continue to function. And when they don’t have that, they close down.”

She says, “My father used to say that if you let a two-tiered system come into existence, one group will have the best care, the best surgeons, the best nursing, they will have the best facility in the country. And the rest of the people will take what is left over.”

Shirley Douglas intends to make sure Canadians don’t end up losing the health care system that her father started to build.

“For a lot of people it’s hard to see what’s wrong. That is why groups like large unions have a great responsibility to their members to educate people,” Douglas says.

I would say to anybody who is interested in saving their health care system that there is nothing like an election to make your voice heard. You have to get out and get doing. You can’t just sit and wait for everyone else to save the health system.”



Read This!

PharmaCare Changes Will Affect You



In British Columbia, our Medical Services Plan (MSP) insures medically required services provided by physicians and supplementary health care practitioners, laboratory services and diagnostic procedures.

PharmaCare is BC's public drug insurance program. PharmaCare provides financial assistance to British Columbians who need help in paying for their prescription drugs.

Presently the Pharmacare deductible is \$1,000.00, after which Pharmacare will pay 70% of your drug costs. If you are covered by an extended medical plan, then that plan may pay some or all of the remaining 30%.

The provincial government is now requiring that all citizens of BC register for Pharmacare, and provide detailed income information.

If you do not register, your deductible will default to \$10,000.00 dollars before Pharmacare starts to pay their 70%.

Even if you have extended medical to cover the deductible, your insurance carrier will be responsible to cover up to that \$10,000.00. They will have to spend more money. Premiums will go up. The cost of your benefit package will rise, and when it comes contract time, your bargaining position will be compromised.

TAKE THE TIME TO REGISTER!

The easiest way to register is by going on the Internet to the Pharmacare website at <https://pharmacare.moh.health.gov.bc.ca/> or follow the links from the provincial government home page at www.gov.bc.ca. You can also register by phone at 1-800-387-4977, but we have heard many reports of long waiting times.

You will need your CareCard and your income tax statement from 2001.

Easy Trivia Quiz

VESTA News/CALM

1. How long was the Hundred Years War?
2. What country makes Panama hats?
3. From what animal do we get catgut (for violin strings)?
4. When do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel hair brush made of?
6. What animal are the Canary Islands made of?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is the purple finch?
9. Where do Chinese gooseberries come from?
10. How long did the Thirty Years War last?

Answers:

1. 116 years, from 1337 to 1453.
2. Ecuador.
3. Sheep and horses.
4. November, the Russian calendar is 13 days.
5. Squirrel fur.
6. Dogs - it comes from the Latin name *Insularia Canaria*, which means Island of Dogs.
7. Albert - when George VI came to the throne, he respected the wish of his grandmother Queen Victoria that no future king should be called Albert.
8. Bright red.
9. New Zealand.
10. 30 years, from 1618 to 1648.

Private health care facts

Ontario Health Coalition/CALM

Who benefits from private health care? The goal of profit-seeking companies is profit. And profit has to come from somewhere. For a private company to provide health services for the same cost as the public system, profit margins must come at the expense of facilities, or levels of patient care, or staff wages and working conditions.

Privatization simply means more public money going to profits instead of patient care. And frequently, the drive for profits forces costs to go up beyond costs in the public system.

Is private health care more efficient? Lessons from around the world tell us it is not. Generally, privatization simply draws personnel and resources out of the public system

into the more expensive private system. In short, privatization just shuffles the queue instead of getting rid of it. In many cases, it makes the queue longer. ☹



From the Back Corner...

Well, it's been a long cold winter for the working people of British Columbia, and it's hard to see positive changes coming with the spring. As you know, in their fall sitting, the Provincial Government drastically changed the appeal structure for Workers' Compensation Board issues, making it more difficult for workers to dispute decisions handed down by the WCB – this after they cut back on workers' entitlement to benefits last spring. Now, the WCB is beginning some regulatory review, with an aim to reduce the number of regulations that need to be enforced. No one has been able to explain how reduced regulations will increase worker safety, which is what the WCB is supposed to be concerned with in the first place. Last year, there were more workplace deaths than in the year before. If workplace deaths are on the rise, one would tend to think it means we don't have enough regulations, or we aren't enforcing the ones we do have. So, why isn't the focus on enforcing the regulations to protect workers instead of reducing the regulations to save employers from being fined?

Well, the MLAs are still thinking about us working folk this year – in the last sitting of the legislature, they introduced a new bill to deal

with trades training and apprenticeship issues. It isn't a very big bill – it doesn't need to be, since they have removed most of what we understand to be apprenticeship and journey certification issues. This government believes that the best answer to a trades shortage is to just start producing trades people faster, and the only way to do that is to cut down on the amount of training, and to reduce the regulation about what the training looks like. So, let's see – we have less training, less standardization as to what the training will be, and the expected outcome is more highly skilled trades people?!! Now I know that I'm just an electrician, and a blonde one at that, but I can't find even a shred of logic in that kind of thinking.

Wait, there's more – the long awaited legislation announcing another split off of our public electric utility has arrived! So, a new Transmission

Company for the province. It will be cold comfort to know that we still own the dams and



**IBEW 258 President
Michelle Laurie**

the transmission lines after we lose control of what passes through and over them, and at what cost? Yes, we all still own some bits of it, and gosh darn, I sure trust that band of 77 in Victoria to keep it public and in our hands, don't you??? After all, we elected them, and they promised to represent us.

Speaking of elected persons, I would like to thank all of the brothers and sisters who gave up their weekend to participate in this year's Local 258 IBEW Elected Members Conference.

Your willingness to give your time is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the Local and to the brothers and sisters you represent. Together, we struggled with some complicated issues, seeking to provide a real voice and inclusion of each of our members, and we hope to make positive changes as we move forward over the next three years. ⚡



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