

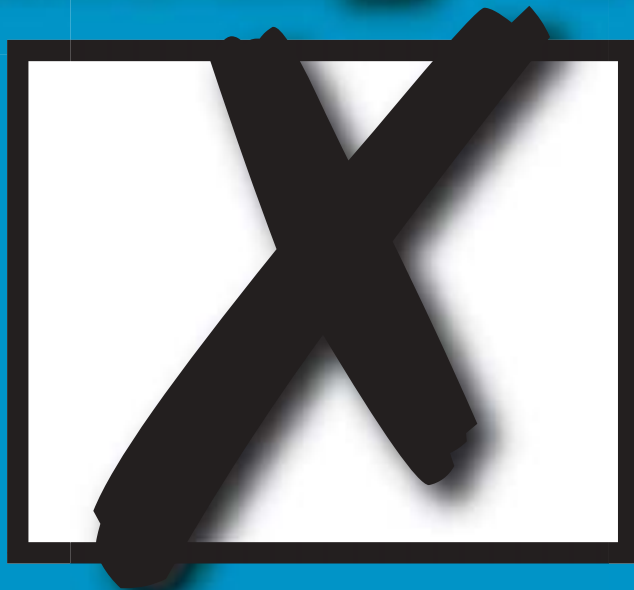
THE UNION OF HEARTS AND MINDS

HOTLINE



Local 258 I.B.E.W.
SPRING 2005

**Vote
for Change
on May 17th!**



Business Manager, Doug McKay



**Local 258 IBEW
Business Manager
Doug McKay**

The past few months have been very busy with negotiations for new collective agreements for our members at BC Hydro and the BC Transmission Corporation. It has been one of the most difficult and frustrating sets of bargaining given there has been a stranglehold in place by the Campbell Liberal government, known as the “freeze on public sector wage rates”.

If I didn't know it before, I certainly know it now - this government is no friend to working people. Interference in the collective bargaining process by PSEC, the government agency that coordinates the management of labour relations in the public sector, caused me to write a letter directly to Premier Campbell, reminding him of his correspondence to one of our members dur-

ing the last provincial election campaign where he stated, “politics has no place in the collective bargaining process”. I have yet to receive a reply.

Many thanks go to the members of both negotiating team who continue to fight the fight.

Our provincial election is just around the corner and I urge each and every one of you to make sure you are registered to vote. May 17th is election day, and if you can't make it that day, please vote in the Advance Polls.


It is in your best interests to exercise your democratic right to vote. Democracy is not a spectator sport – we all must participate, and I can't remember in all my years (and there are quite a few of them), a more important provincial election than this one.

The threat this Campbell government poses to our futures is a serious one. The acceleration of their privatization agenda will begin as soon as the polls close, if the people of British Columbia choose to re-elect this government. Healthcare, public services, crown corporations like ICBC and of course, the continuing privatization of BC Hydro will change our lives forever – and not for the good.

This government cannot be trusted, and now they have a track record to prove it:

- promised not to sell BC Rail – and then they did
- promised not to rip up contracts – then they did
- promised 5000 new long term care bed – broke that promise too.

They have already begun to carve up BC Hydro and we are just beginning to see the increased costs for power. Eighty percent of British Columbians oppose the sale of BC Hydro – and the only way we are going to ensure that it doesn't happen is to make sure they don't have the power to do it.

Think of your future and the future of your family when you go to the polls on May 17th. It is the most important election in your lifetime – take it seriously. 

HOTLINE

Published by Local 258 IBEW

TABLE OFFICERS

Doug McKay	Business Manager & Financial Secretary
Michelle Laurie	President
Tony Brand	Vice President
Larry Byhre	Treasurer
Dale Haines	Recording Secretary

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Klaus Kraft	Unit 1
Don McNabb	Unit 2
Leon Arishenkoff	Unit 3
Tom Greenwell	Unit 4
Mark Davison	Unit 5
Robert Abernethy	Unit 6

Ken McEwen - Editor

Change of address notices should be sent to: 7535 – 6th Street, Burnaby, BC V3N 3M2

Our telephone numbers are:
Administration Office: 604-520-3305
Dispatch Office: 604-524-3547
Fax: 604-522-3371

e-mail: ibew258@telus.net

Printed at Broadway Printers, Vancouver, BC
Design & Layout by Michelle Boudreau



What's Inside...

Business Manager Report	p. 2
Election Questions	p. 3
We Got Mail!	p. 6-7
Privatization of Nova Scotia Power	p. 8-9
Legal Briefs by Rebecca Murdock	p. 10
Supreme Court challenges Liberals' contract-breaking	p. 11
Send a Kid to Camp Jubilee	p. 12
Electrical Utilities Career Expo	p. 13
BC's Skills Shortage	p. 14
Burnaby's Labour Heritage Centre	p. 15
Update in BCTC Negotiations	p. 16
BC Liberals make life tougher for working women	p. 17
Congratulations IBEW members!	p. 18-19
Ruminations of a Retiree	p. 23
Single Transferable Vote	p. 23
From the Back Corner	p. 24



This BC election is all about power and that power is ours!

Some questions to ask your provincial election candidates:

1. As an MLA, would you **vote against any legislation that would sell, lease, transfer, outsource, or otherwise privatize** any part of BC Hydro, the BC Transmission Corporation or other publicly-owned electricity entities?
2. Do you support BC Hydro **purchasing electricity from private energy companies** at prices higher than what it costs BC Hydro to produce its own electricity?
3. The government has banned BC Hydro from building any new electricity generation, **forcing all new facilities to be privately-owned**. Do you support or oppose this policy?
4. Do you support the 2003 government **privatization of 1/3 of BC Hydro operations** and employees to Accenture?
5. So far, the Accenture deal has cost BC Hydro tens of millions of dollars in restructuring costs, but no benefits have been accounted for. Would you **support an independent investigation of this deal** to ensure the public interest is being served?
6. Do you support the BC government's position to use **highly polluting coal and fossil fuels** for electricity generation by private power producers?

The Campbell Liberal Record

On their first day in office, the Campbell Liberals announced a 25 per cent tax cut – giving people earning \$250,000 a year a \$23,000 tax cut, while the 24% of taxpayers making less than \$10,000 a year received an average cut of just \$6 a year.

The Campbell Liberals rolled back wages and benefits for health care and community social service workers by up to 15 per cent, and exposed clients to unstable care arrangements.

The Campbell Liberals eliminated class size restrictions in K-12 and college classes, and gave employers unilateral labour rights in a number of areas.

The Campbell Liberals lowered the minimum wage for young people to \$6 an hour and allowed 12 year old children to work up to 35 hours a week with no monitoring for abuse.

The Campbell Liberals slashed overtime protection, allowing employers to force employees to work up to 80 hours a week in some cases, with no overtime pay.

The Campbell Liberals gutted the ferry workers' collective agreement, privatized BC Ferries and exempted the employer from many BC Labour Relations Code provisions.

The Campbell Liberal Record

The International Labour Organization ruled that the Campbell Liberals' labour legislation violates United Nations labour agreements that ensure the protection of workers' rights.

"The government will collect an additional \$23.3 million from BC Taxpayers in additional fees covering everything from drivers' licenses to criminal record checks." – CBC News, February 11, 2003

Twelve hospitals have been closed by the Campbell Liberals, while remaining hospitals have suffered a reduction in patient services.

Waiting lists for surgery have increased by more than 20 per cent since the Campbell Liberals were elected in 2001.

The Campbell Liberals cut Pharmacare funding by \$150 million. The cost of a prescription has increased to between \$10-\$25, while at least 17 drugs are no longer funded by the program.

The Campbell Liberals have cut more than 3,300 acute care hospital and long term care beds across the province as of August 2003.

The Campbell Liberals forced 113 public schools to close since 2001, uprooting 20,000 students from local schools.

BC CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC POWER – POLICY 2005

An energy future that works for us all!

1. Return and maintain public ownership and control of the electric utility

Publicly owned BC Hydro provided British Columbians with some of the lowest electricity rates in North America, returned billions of dollars to the province, created thousands of jobs and produced a stable source of clean, reliable energy.

ACTION | Reaffirm a commitment to public power and BC Hydro.

BC Hydro is banned from building new sources of power. Private energy companies can charge a higher price.

ACTION | Lift the ban on BC Hydro and allow it to build new generating facilities.

To ensure low cost and reliable transmission of power.

ACTION | All transmission lines, new and existing, should be publicly owned and operated.

The BC Hydro/Accenture deal was signed without regulatory approval. The details have been kept secret from the public.

ACTION | A full and independent investigation into the Accenture deal.

2. Ensure security and reliability of electricity

The American Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is using its authority to promote deregulation and privatization of energy throughout North America. This threatens our ability to

control and manage our electricity system and maintain low rates.

ACTION | Maintain control of our transmission system and not surrender any part of our system to foreign organizations.

BC's need for reliable, secure and inexpensive electricity should be the government's key priority. Instead, the Liberal energy policy promotes private export of power. This costs jobs, especially in the regions, e.g. Alcan shifted from using electricity to produce aluminum in BC to export electricity when prices in the US were high. This hurt the town of Kitimat.

ACTION | prohibit the private export of electricity.

3. Promote conservation and green energy

Conserving energy helps preserve our environment, reduces reliance on imports and private electricity sources and keeps rates low.

ACTION | Increase Power Smart conservation targets by encouraging efficient customer practices and replacement technologies that use less energies.

ACTION | Increase energy conservation investments in schools, hospitals and provincial taxpayer supported infrastructure.

The government provides tens of millions of dollars in subsidies to companies such as Weyerhaeuser and Canfor and calls these subsidies "Power Smart initiatives and energy conservation." This is simply

a subsidy program for big industry.

ACTION | End energy generation subsidies for private industry.

Small hydro, wind, tidal and other forms of renewable energy are an important part of BC's energy future. The resources and expertise of BC Hydro should be used to promote this vision.

ACTION | Create a "Green Energy Division" within BC Hydro to promote and build small hydro, wind, tidal and other forms of renewable energy.

Global warming and greenhouse gas emissions are a serious concern.

ACTION | Continue to promote use of renewable sources of electricity.

More than 350 permits have been given to small scale private power projects throughout the province. No overall assessment of the cumulative environmental impact of these projects has taken place.

ACTION | Conduct a provincial environmental assessment of all private power projects.

BC should be a leader in developing new and more environmentally sensitive technologies for electricity production. This requires new research and the development of expertise on these technologies here in BC.

ACTION | Develop a new program, based in BC's universities that would focus on research and development of environmentally responsible energy technologies.

4. Maintain low rates

Under public ownership and control our electricity prices were based on the cost of production. Privately produced electricity prices are artificially manipulated by the market.

ACTION | Maintain public ownership and control of our electricity so that we can ensure prices continue to be based on the cost of production and not on what the market will bear.

5. Guarantee improved public oversight and public accountability

Because BC Hydro is barred from building new generating facilities, British Columbians will pay the high costs of new private energy without knowing if the private sector is performing efficiently and without having any effective oversight of the decisions of private energy companies.

ACTION | Increase public oversight of private energy companies. There should be no private energy development unless it is proven to be more efficient than public power.

BC Hydro and our energy resources belong to the people of the province. When significant changes are made, they affect all of us and we should have an increased role in ensuring our electricity system is managed in our best interests.

ACTION | Enact standards for public consultation and consent before any significant changes are made to BC Hydro.



Help make BC Hydro an important election issue!

www.citizensforpublicpower.ca

For more information call
604-681-5939 or
e-mail
info@citizensforpublicpower.ca

The Campbell Liberal Record

On March 5, 2004, the Auditor General reported that the Campbell Liberals' misguided disability review not only caused needless stress for thousands of people, but also cost taxpayers \$5 million to cut just 46 people off benefits.

On January 17, 2002, Black Thursday, the Campbell Liberals announced the biggest service cuts in Canadian history – slashing more than 8,700 family-supporting jobs in the public service.

The Campbell Liberals refused to fully fund legislated employment contracts, resulting in more than 2,500 full-time teacher positions being eliminated.

The Campbell Liberals eliminated student grants, allowed massive tuition fee increases, and introduced the \$6 per hour 'training wage' – making it difficult for students to pay for a college education.

The Campbell Liberals raised medical premiums by 50 percent, and increased Pharmacare deductible costs by \$200 per year.

In 2002, the Campbell Liberals cut the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management budget by 44 percent. Ministry staff are being cut by 33 percent, from 1,520 to 972 employees.

We Got Mail!



Dear Hotline,
I would like to send a special thank you to Michelle Laurie for all her hard work during my lengthy WCB appeal.

WCB had rejected my claim and her efforts made it possible for me to win my appeal.
Brother Dick Green
Lineman, Nanaimo



Dear IBEW 258,
Thank you very much for the nice gifts Brady Prentice presented to me on behalf of the Union. It sure is great to be retired. We had a nice lunch at the "Inn at the Pier" and I thank everyone who attended to give me a good send off.
Martin Colombo



Hi Doug,
Missed you at the lunch for my retirement. Didn't see any gold plated spurs, however thanks for the IBEW shirt and the plaque, also the knife as well.
Take care,
Mike Sutcliffe



To all the Brothers & Sisters at IBEW 258,
Hope you know how much it's appreciated. Thanks for the basket of fruit and goodies.
Romeo Samson



Dear IBEW 258,
I would like to thank Jim Greenwell for attending my retirement luncheon and for the gifts he gave me from the union. Where did the 30 years go? I made a good living working for BC Hydro all due to being represented by IBEW 258. As well as decent pay, a guy gets to enjoy a good pension with benefits which is a real bonus.

I have been off for close to a year now with my accumulated time and if anyone has any doubts about life after working, take it from me, it's good being your own boss. Again thanks for all you have done for me.
Sincerely,
Dan Blais



Dear Doug McKay,
With Local 258's support, the 2004 MS Run/Walk was a big success. Last year, 5,192 people in 21 communities across British Columbia WALKED/RAN or ROLLED to raise an amazing \$864,000 for MS Research and Support Services.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada's mission is to be a leader in finding a cure for multiple sclerosis and enabling people affected by MS to enhance their quality of life and with your continued support we can achieve this goal.

I wish to thank you and your Local Union for the support they have provided during the past fund raising campaigns.

Fraternally yours,
Wayne N. Brazeau



Dear Michelle Laurie,
Thank you very much for your donation to our annual banquet. The event was a great success and with your support, we can continue our efforts to protect and enhance fish stocks, as well as provide additional opportunities for anglers.

Funds generated from the banquet also allow us to continue our support of BCIT Fish and Wildlife Program bursaries, and also allow us to make a sizeable donation to the Fresh Water Fisheries Society. Funding also supports the "Pathway to Fishing" program, which we coordinate with Berkley Tackle. This program is a great source of pride for our organization, as it helps develop our youth as the future stewards of the resource.

Thank you again for your donation and we sincerely hope we can count on your support in the future.
Cal Aronetz, Banquet Chair,
Rod Clapton, President
BC Federation of Drift Fishers



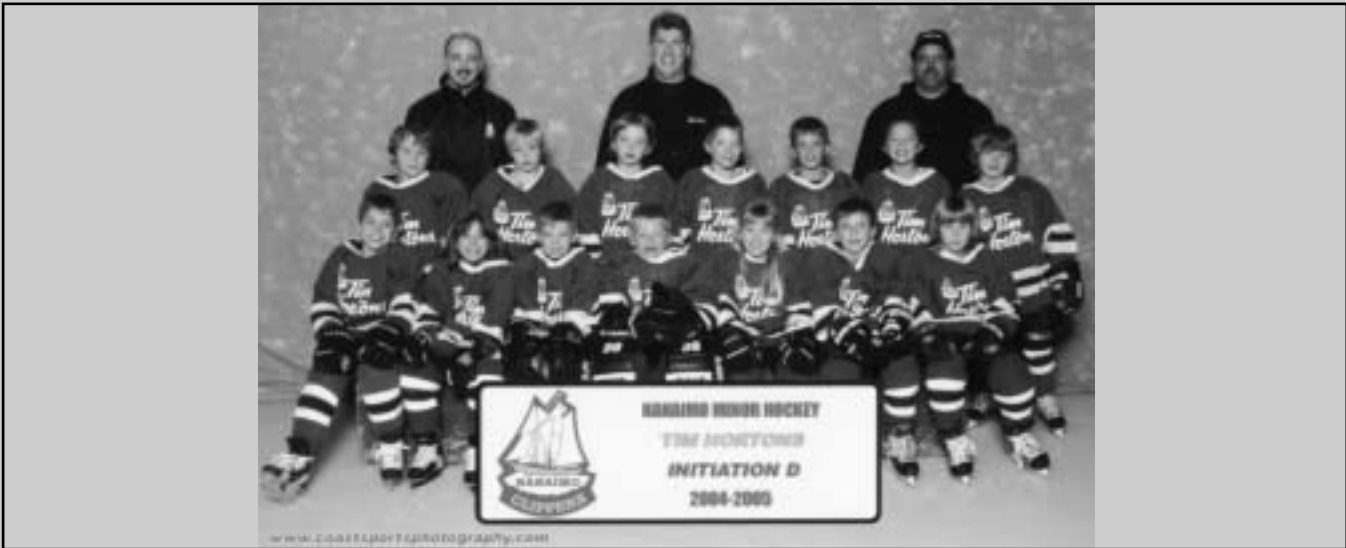
Dear IBEW 258,
Thank you so much for your generous gift. With your help and the help of other good friends we have been able to make a difference in the lives of many people who are suffering through hard times.
Thank you sincerely,
Friends of Hudson's Hope Society



Dear Sisters and Brothers;
We write to thank you for your contribution of \$200.00 to this year's Labour Community Christmas Eve dinners. The 2004 event was the 9th annual and a huge success.

Approximately 3,000 people attended the dinners in either the Surrey or Vancouver location. Our guests enjoyed turkey dinner with all the trimmings, including mandarin oranges, candy, shortbread and pumpkin pie.

We received financial contributions from affiliates,



allies and friends in the amount of \$30,292.35. These contributions were enough to meet all the event expenses.

In excess of 350 union members and their families, from virtually every Federation affiliate, worked very hard to provide a memorable evening for those who would otherwise experience little happiness at Christmas.

We sincerely thank you for bringing a night of happiness and caring to your community.

In solidarity,

Jim Sinclair, President

Angela Schira, Secretary-Treasurer

BC Federation of Labour



Dear Brady Prentice;

On behalf of the 8,000 individuals and their families in BC living with multiple sclerosis, thank you and the IBEW for your continued support.

Events like the IBEW Golf Tournament in support of the MS Society of Canada BC Division make a difference in helping us come closer to a cure. We are so very grateful and would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to your members.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Cuttell,

President, MS Society of Canada, BC Division



Dear Doug McKay,

On behalf of BC Hydro and the Ministry of Forests, we wish to extend our sincere thanks for your donation of \$300.00 towards our 2005 Northern Regional Bonspiel, which was held February 18-20, 2005.

Thank you once again for your generous donation.

Yours truly,

Richard Shymanski, Chairman,

BC Hydro & MoF 2005, Northern Regional Bonspiel

Dear IBEW 258,

Thank you so much for your support of our hockey team, the Nanaimo Rangers.

Players: Zachary, Bailey, McKenzie, Callom, Joel, Paul, David, Dakota, Jesse, Dayna, Ryan

Coaches: Dan Payne, Ken Large



Dear IBEW 258,

On behalf of the Abbotsford Vipers, I would like to thank the brotherhood for the \$200.00 sponsorship of their Pee-Wee tournament in Nanaimo last weekend.

The boys won their first two games which resulted in the Assistant Coach coming good on a promise to dye his hair pink. Their last two games didn't turn out as planned, but an honest effort was given.

The sponsorship money went straight toward team jackets for the boys. They sure looked sharp. All the parents were thankful. The kids were very proud to wear them.

We all had a great time and it was a great experience for the boys.

Brother Denis Levesque



Dear Sirs;

On behalf of the Coquitlam Hitmen Minor hockey team, I extend our sincere appreciation for your organization's generous donation of 4200.00 to our hockey team.

Our team is a dedicated mix of eleven and twelve year old boys who have come together as a team and have demonstrated hard work and commitment to the game of hockey.

Once again, thank you very much!

Yours truly,

Lynn Steffenhagen

Team Manager,

Coquitlam Hitmen

One disaster after another since utility was sold 12 years ago

National Union of Public and General Employees Union

HALIFAX (18 November 2004) — Need another privatization nightmare? Try Nova Scotia Power Inc.

Privatized by provincial politicians 12 years ago amid promises of better, cheaper and more reliable service, the utility has presided over one disaster after another since then.

The latest occurred this past weekend when more than 100,000 residents (in a province with fewer than one million people) were plunged into cold and darkness by an early winter storm.

Predictably, the utility was swamped with thousands of calls from alarmed residents. But because it lacked the staff to handle all the inquiries, NSPI came up with an ingenious response. It posted a message instructing customers to stop calling.

“Other utilities seem to be able to operate successful customer inquiry lines during time of emergency,” said Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly. “What’s wrong with Nova Scotia Power? This wasn’t the first time they stopped answering phones.”

Towers collapsed

The snowfall, although wet and early in the season, was not all that unusual, according to Environment Canada. Yet 12 of the utility’s transmission towers collapsed, raising questions about the general state of the company’s infrastructure.

Five days later thousands of Nova Scotians are still without power and it may be days yet before all the lights are on again. The situation has many residents asking why the utility was privatized in the first place.

NSPI is now owned by a company called Emera Inc. that operates across the northeastern United States and Canada. A week before the latest storm, Emera reported third-quarter profits of \$22 million, more than double the level a year earlier.

But while Emera’s profits are moving

Privatized by provincial politicians 12 years ago amid promises of better, cheaper and more reliable service, the utility has presided over one disaster after another since then.

north, its service is sliding decidedly south. The company now employs one third fewer linemen than when it was first privatized and, to add insult to injury, it is asking the province to approve a 14 per cent rate increase.

Even radio talk show hosts, and newspaper editorial writers, normally unshakable apologists for the private sector, have turned on the company with a vengeance.

Failed to correct weaknesses

Nova Scotians are especially angry because NSPI has failed repeatedly to correct communications and structural



weaknesses exposed by past emergencies, most notably during Hurricane Juan and its winter sequel, White Juan, in the last year.

Even radio talk show hosts, and newspaper editorial writers, normally unshakable apologists for the private sector, have turned on the company with a vengeance.

“Most residents of this province now consider Nova Scotia Power customer service to be an oxymoron,” wrote John McLeod, a former business editor of the Halifax Daily News.

“The power company’s customers had every right to believe that the lack of information they suffered through in (last year) would not happen again. But happen it did — in spades.

Ruined its reputation

“Already under stern criticism for being poor communicators by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board... NSP further ruined its own reputation by telling customers in the middle of this latest storm not to bother calling about power failures,” MacLeod wrote.

“Don’t call when Nannie is sitting in the old family home on the South Shore wrapped in her winter coat and unable to make herself even a cup of tea?” he asked incredulously.

(cont’d on next page)

Nova Scotia Power - the latest privatization nightmare

(cont'd from previous page)

"Or when your sister and her four kids are wrapped in blankets in Dartmouth, unable to get anything to eat other than some leftovers and the fruit on the kitchen countertop?"

Robin Carter of Dartmouth, in a letter to the editor, called the storm "a joke."

"What is going to happen when we get a real storm? We know NSP is useless. I can't afford another blackout. It's not a joke when the power goes off. Who do we ask for help?"

Self-serving propaganda

For its part, Nova Scotia Power has responded with the kind of self-serving propaganda that consumers have heard all too often in an era of corporate scandals involving the likes of Enron, Arthur Andersen, Conrad Black and Nortel Networks.

"Community Restoration Underway," said an NSP headline this week. "Nova Scotia Power continues to thank all of

its customers for their patience and understanding in the aftermath of the storm."

Provincial NDP Leader Darrell

...Provincial NDP Leader Darrell Dexter spoke for many when he said glossing over the utility's shortcomings was like "putting lipstick on a pig."



Dexter spoke for many when he said glossing over the utility's shortcomings was like "putting lipstick on a pig."

When privatization occurred in 1992, Nova Scotia Power promised solemnly that no layoffs would result. Within three months, the first round of job cuts took place and three other waves of layoffs have occurred since that time.

Only Emera wins

What's clear in retrospect is that the only winner privatization has produced is Emera Inc.

The company's revenue grew 22 per cent to \$951 million for its last full fiscal year and it reported proudly to shareholders that employee levels had declined 77 per cent for the year.

The company president is Christopher Huskison. The top board member is Derek Oland. Not much has been heard from either of them this week. ☒

Would you like fries with that?

Union Farmer Weekly/NFU

Decades ago, North America began exporting its garment trade jobs. Today, it's nearly impossible to buy a shirt made on this continent.

Once corporations moved clothing jobs to low-wage countries, shoe assembly followed. The next wave saw North America move its entire machine tool production system to low-wage, low-benefit, low-worker-protection countries.

In the 80s and 90s, the computer-manufacturing sector waved goodbye, looking for more "liberal" economies. Home appliance factories were similarly relocated.

More and more of our automotive components are produced off continent.

India has become a software development centre and a leading call centre. Canadians are getting calls on

behalf of their local bank or insurance company and these calls are not originating in the next city or province, but in call centres in India, the Philippines or elsewhere. George Bush used a call centre in India to solicit donations during the U.S. election campaign.

Now there's a new development in the U.S. that will make even the most devoted followers of globalization wonder.

A sharp entrepreneur named Steve Bigari has outsourced order taking at his McDonald's restaurants in Colorado.

When customers at one of Bigari's 12 McDonald's pull up to the menu and speaker at the drive-through and hear "Would you like fries with that?" they assume the disembodied voice belongs to someone in the building a few feet away. But they're wrong.

Bigari has set up a centralized call centre in Minnesota where minimum wage rates are lower than in Colorado.

A high-speed data link relays the Colorado customer's voice to the Minnesota call centre and the call centre employees type up the order and flash it, with a picture of the customer (so restaurant staff can match orders to faces) back to the remote restaurant where the order is placed, assembled and served.

Knowing that India and Russia have lower wage rates than Minnesota, is there any doubt that once the kinks are worked out, you'll be placing your fastfood order with someone on the other side of the world?

• *The National Farmers Union promotes policies that will revitalize agriculture by strengthening family farms.*
www.nfu.ca

LEGAL BRIEFS

IBEW welcomes CPC Technologists

On January 5, 2005 the British Columbia Labour Relations Board ruled there was nothing improper in BC Hydro's decision to merge two IBEW Local 258 and Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union Local 378 (COPE) classifications, placing the new "CPC Technologist" in the IBEW bargaining unit.

The decision was the result of an application filed by COPE claiming the new CPC Technologist belonged to COPE, not the IBEW.

In dismissing COPE's application the Board followed a long line of authority that requires a union claiming exclusive jurisdiction to provide proof of such through its certification, past practice or collective agreement terms.

"COPE has not established exclusivity of representation over employees in all technologist positions. To the contrary, some of the work in dispute historically overlaps the IBEW and the COPE bargaining units", concluded the Board's Vice-Chair Hassan. On that basis alone it was difficult for COPE to claim the new classification over the IBEW.

On January 28, 2005 COPE filed a reconsideration application, the appeal process established in the Labour

Relations Code. A group of Certain Employees (former P&C Technologists under COPE representation) filed a parallel proceeding. Final submissions were filed in mid-April, and a decision is expected by summer.

Because the law in this area is not fraught with a lot of ambiguity, the IBEW expects the reconsideration panel to uphold the original decision.

The IBEW understands the difficult dilemma this has posed for the former P&C technologists, and respect your choices. Local 258 IBEW welcomes its new members.

The full text of the ruling can be found on the internet at www.lrb.bc.ca and click "decisions" and scroll to B5/2005.



Qualicum Unit Meeting



Congratulations to long term IBEW members. From left, Ralph Jay, 25 year pin; Unit 4 Chair Tom Greenwell; Ivan Ruel, 30 year pin; and, Lyle Vallor, who received his 30 and 35 year pins.

Revised sins

Internet/CALM

A recent poll of BBC viewers resulted in an up-dated version of the seven deadly sins.

The new seven include cruelty, adultery, bigotry, dishonesty, hypocrisy, greed and selfishness. In case you've forgotten, the old seven are pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony and lust.

There's also a proposal to expand the ten commandments to 20 and include new directives like "live within your means," "appreciate what you have" and "enjoy life."

Supreme Court of Canada to hear charter challenge to Campbell Liberals' contract-breaking law

BURNABY, BC, April 21, 2005 – The highest court in the land said today that it will hear arguments on whether the Gordon Campbell government's contract-breaking law violates the equality and freedom of association rights of health care workers in BC.

On trial is Bill 29 - the 2002 legislation that shredded legally negotiated collective agreements paving the way for an unprecedented privatization of health care services and the mass firing of more than 8,000 health care workers - mostly women.

The legislation also made it easier for the government's health authorities to close down or downgrade health care facilities across the province.

Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that in addition to causing chaos in the delivery of health care, Bill 29 has had a devastating impact on health care workers and their families.

"Decades of progress towards pay equity were erased. Thousands of decent, family-supporting jobs - nine out of ten held by women - were eliminated. And the subsequent privatization of health services has generated an entire workforce surviving on poverty level wages.

"Everyone knows that Gordon Campbell violated his pre-election commitment to health care workers that he would respect their collective agreements," says Darcy. "Now the Supreme Court will hear how he violated their constitutionally protected charter rights as well."

HEU, the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, the BC Nurses' Union and several other unions first launched their constitutional challenge to Bill 29 - the Health and Social Services Delivery Act - in March, 2002.

The unions' charter challenge was dismissed by the Supreme Court of BC in September, 2003 and by the Appeal Court of BC in July, 2004. But today, the Supreme Court of Canada granted

the unions leave to appeal the latter court's decision.

BCGEU president George Heyman says the unions' charter case is central to the preservation of the rights of workers to engage in free collective bargaining.

"This government has treated the collective bargaining process with contempt and has been condemned by a United Nations' agency no less than nine times in two years for its poor labour practices," says Heyman.

"Today's decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to hear our appeal is a clear signal that Gordon Campbell is taking BC in the wrong direction when it comes to labour policy."

BC Nurses' Union vice-president Anne Shannon says that Bill 29 makes it more difficult for registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses to look after their patients.

"By a legislative stroke of the pen, this government has closed off training opportunities, restricted our ability to move into new jobs, and resulted in the layoff of hundreds of RNs and RPNs to the detriment of patients."

The unions' constitutional challenge to Bill 29 involves both the equality and freedom of association provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In seeking leave to appeal the case to the Supreme Court of Canada, the unions' argued that their challenge raised questions that are of national and public importance.

One such question is whether certain aspects of collective bargaining are protected by the freedom of association provisions contained in Section 2(d) of

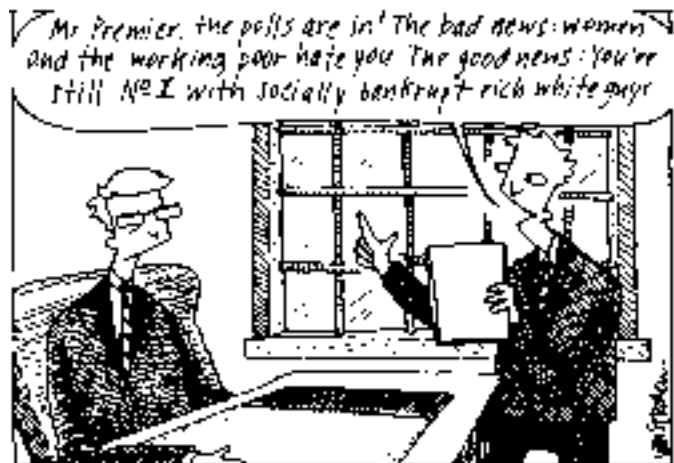
the Charter.

Counsel for the unions, Joseph Arvay, says that the "granting of leave is very significant since the Supreme Court of Canada had ruled in the late 1980's that there is no constitutional right to collective bargaining in our Charter and this decision today would suggest that the Court might be prepared to reconsider that critically important constitutional question."

Another question raised by the unions is whether legislation that targets the collective agreements in the most female-dominated sectors of the economy - such as health care and community social services - violates the equality provisions contained in Section 15 when the legislation is aimed at depressing wages which have been subject to pay equity processes.

Bill 29 was passed in January, 2002 and voided many long-standing provisions of health care and community social services collective agreements including protections against contracting out, seniority rights and labour adjustment programs.

The Court has not yet scheduled hearing dates but is expected to do so in the next few weeks. The case will likely be heard later this year or early in 2006. The unions' legal counsel is the BC-based firm Arvay Finlay.



2005 "Send a Kid to Camp"

IBEW Local 258 supports the "Send a Kid to Camp" program at Camp Jubilee - and you can too!

Camp Jubilee Retreat and Conference Centre is situated on a 128-acre, oceanfront site of unspoiled evergreen forest at the base of Mt. Seymour. It lies halfway up Indian Arm at Orломah Beach between Deep Cove and the Indian River.

Campers and guests are transported to Camp Jubilee aboard one of Camp Jubilee Retreat and Conference Centre's certified passenger vessels. During this short 30-minute ride you will have the opportunity to experience the beauty and magic of Indian Arm, an 18-kilometre fjord branching northward from Burrard Inlet. Separating the communities of Deep Cove and Port Moody.

Camp Jubilee believes that Camp is a special place where children learn, grow and develop. They believe that all children should be able to experience Camp regardless of their family's current financial situation and in 2004, through generous contributions, over 60% of campers received a partial or full Campership to attend Camp.



For more information about Camp Jubilee's "Send a Kid to Camp" program, call Dave Duckworth at Camp Jubilee at 604-937-7388, fax to 604-937-7322 or visit their website at www.campjubilee.ca

Congratulations Brother Hardy



Brother Walt Hardy recently received his 30 year service pin award from Unit 6 Chair Bob Abernethy at the Chilliwack union meeting.

EITI Hosts Electrical Utilities Career Expo

**When: Saturday, June 11, 2005
from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm**

**Where: EITI Training Institute,
124th St and 88th Ave,
Surrey**

With all of the hype about great career opportunities arising in the construction sector over the next few years, we wanted to make sure there was a opportunity to showcase the great career opportunities that are available in the electrical utilities. To that end, EITI will be hosting a Electrical Utilities Career Expo on Saturday, June 11 at our training center located at 124th St and 88th Ave in Surrey.

IBEW Local 258 will be co-hosting the event, showcasing to the public the positive contributions that the IBEW makes to safety and training in the utility environment.

Various Utilities and contractors will be on hand to talk to the public about careers that they have to offer. Wholesalers, employer and labour groups will be on hand to show the contributions that they make to the utility industry.

We are hoping to demonstrate the kinds of work done in the utility industry, in the Power Line Technician, Electrical and Utility Arborist trades. All IBEW members are invited to come out with your families, enjoy a hot dog, and celebrate the great contribution that we make to our local communities.

BC's Growing Skills Shortage Will Only Get Worse with BC Liberal Training Strategy

Editorial by Jim Sinclair

President, BC Federation of Labour

If you believe spin from Advanced Education Minister Ida Chong, trades training in BC couldn't be better and those concerned about BC's growing skills shortage have nothing to worry about. What Chong won't tell you is that since dismantling the successful

Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC), trades training in BC is worse off and the Gordon Campbell government does not have a plan to make it any better.

In fact, the most recent numbers from Statistics Canada show that in 2002, while every other province in Canada enjoyed an all-time high in apprenticeship training program registration, under the Campbell Liberals, British Columbia experienced a **1.7 percent decrease overall** and an **8.2 percent drop in the construction sector**. But far from admitting their failure and putting together a comprehensive plan to train more workers, Chong and the Liberals decided to use a different method of counting to inflate their numbers.

Figures released recently by Chong and the BC Liberals' Industry Training Authority (ITA) are just a numbers game and are far from the reality of what's happened to trades training in our province. Chong has claimed that registered apprentices are up by 29 percent in BC. This whopper is more than political manipulation – it's a government that refuses to take the blinders off and actually prepare for

the looming economic challenge our skills shortage creates.

In previous calculations, registered apprentices were removed from the list once they were inactive for six months. Now the ITA has extended that period by 200 percent – to eighteen months. In addition, many registrants are now counted multiple times because the ITA has no effective method of ensuring that the numbers

apprentices in the system. Despite the BC Liberals' attempt to spin the numbers, leaked internal government documents reveal that the ITA "lacks the internal capacity to develop, implement or maintain programs." The documents go on to admit: "There is no coherent provincial picture of training demand and supply," a far cry from Minister Chong's claims.

The BC Liberal approach to training refuses to take advice from educators or those in the labour movement. Instead, they've handed over the reins to their pals in big business. The result – piece meal training that makes the prospect of completing a full apprenticeship in a timely manner difficult. Why? Because industry groups running the show aren't interested in building skilled workers, their only interest is in providing just-in-time skills to get their short term corporate needs met. The end result – cancelled training classes. Students face bleak prospect of ever completing a full apprenticeship and BC's commitment to maintain Canada's Red Seal standard is being eroded.

The Red Seal program establishes national standards for designated trades and builds the labour mobility

required for a thriving economy. While many employers are opposed to the BC Liberals' vision of trades training,

... trades training in BC is worse off and the Gordon Campbell government does not have a plan to make it any better.

Multiple registration is a growing practice students use to ensure they can enter a training program.

Figures released recently by Chong and the BC Liberals' Industry Training Authority (ITA) are just a numbers game

some jump at the chance to limit labour mobility because in doing so they can also help drive down wages. That's not the economy we want for our children.

This week Carole James and the NDP unveiled their plan for solving BC's skills shortage. Their three-point plan calls for investment, co-operation and innovation:

1. A roundtable that includes representatives from business, educators and labour, that reports directly to the minister responsible;

2. A 25 percent increase in fiscal year 2005-06 of the number of people participating in apprenticeship and trades training programs, including a budget increase from the current budget of \$75 million to \$95 million (this would be part of a long-term strategy to double, by 2009, the number of British Columbians in apprenticeships and industry training programs);

3. Better support for employers and apprentices, from on-the-job training as well as improved access to the work-

force; including better matching initiatives, appropriate monitoring and career planning support for apprentices.

The BC Federation of Labour released a report in mid-November out-

...leaked internal government documents reveal that the ITA "lacks the internal capacity to develop, implement or maintain programs." The documents go on to admit: "There is no coherent provincial picture of training demand and supply,"...

lining the steps needed to make trades training more effective. The plan calls on the government to take decisive measures now to double the number of apprenticeships within four years.

In addition to several of the proposals outlined by James, the Federation

has also called for better access to trades training by making it more affordable and more inclusive.

We need new measures to fund real improvements in trades training, with emphasis on incentives that reward employers who take their commitment to training seriously. We also need to move BC back into line with provinces like Alberta and Quebec where compulsory trades certification is well established and properly enforced. The Federation has also lobbied for building a stronger connection between training priorities and collective bargaining, and strengthening our commitment to the principle of labour mobility by working with the federal and provincial governments to expand the Red Seal program.

When you hear Gordon Campbell and the Liberals talk of a golden decade, you can't help but ask, for whom? A skilled workforce of British Columbians, or those from other jurisdictions where real training is taking place. While the NDP has not fully adopted our proposal, it's safe to say with Carole James' plan for BC, trades training will be back on track. ☑

Burnaby to be home to British Columbia's Labour Heritage Centre

British Columbia's rich and vibrant work history is about to be celebrated in a home of its own with the opening of the Labour Heritage Centre in Burnaby's Deer Lake Park planned for the fall of 2007.

To be situated on 4.1 acres of land near Burnaby's "cultural precinct" of the Burnaby Village Museum and the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, the Labour Heritage Centre will document, research and ensure that all British Columbians and visitors alike continue to hear the voice of labour history, learn from the exploration of labour history and celebrate the role that workers have played, and will play, in building our province.

Plans for the Labour Heritage Centre include display of both permanent and temporary attractions. It will display work artifacts, photographs and other items relating to the labour history of the province, incorporating audiovisual and interactive educational exhibits. The educational component of the Labour Heritage Centre will also involve structured programs and tours specifically geared toward both school-age and post-secondary students. The Centre will host lectures and other work-oriented programs and features a Memorial Garden in remembrance of workers who have died on the job. The Centre's bookstore will feature literature and gifts related

to work history, culture and art.

This project is an opportunity to preserve "the working life" of BC as a legacy that inspires a sense of pride, dignity and achievement, offering a unique context to our history and culture.

The 35,000 square foot Labour Heritage Centre will be a central depository for the collection and permanent safeguarding of a wide range of library resources, archival materials, art and artifacts and will be administered by a broadly-based society, ☑

Congratulations on your retirement Brother Joe Chan



Brother Joe Chan recently retired after more than 30 years of service as a union member. He is shown above with Jim Greenwell who presented Joe, who worked at BC Hydro, with a plaque and retirement gifts. Happy retirement Joe!

Update on BCTC negotiations

**By Jim Greenwell,
Assistant Business Manager**

There has been much work to date on the new Collective Agreement. We are doing the hard work to reduce the collective agreement to reflect the reality of British Columbia Transmission Corporation (BCTC). I would like to thank Perry Bracken and his committee for doing much of this work.

The Negotiating Committee received information on proposals prior to meeting for the first time on February 15, 2005. At that time we went over the proposals from the field and decided on our final list.

The committee has met for five days face-to-face with BCTC and further dates are scheduled for May.

To date there has been progress, but, as you can imagine, creating something that is unique to BCTC will take time. We are looking at creative ways to improve benefits, developing a system of continued training that may lead to

job enhancement, as well as paying our members for work that they have historically done without compensation.

Your Business Manager has sent a letter to all of the utility members outlining the negotiation efforts to date on March 31, 2005. Much of the work of lobbying the government applies equally to BCTC and BC Hydro. The committee will continue to look for ways to maximize the potential for wage increases while facing government-directed guidelines.

The committee members are knowledgeable on the concepts and propos-



Congratulations to Ugesh (Bubba) Ram on his graduation from the Operator/Area Dispatcher program. He is shown above with ABM Jim Greenwell.

als that are on the table and they are in the field looking for feedback, so please I urge you to talk with them or call me at the Union office so you are well informed as we go forward.

Your committee members are Al Bruder, Curtis Matthews and Bill Zeilstra. Thank you in advance for your valued input. ☑

BC Liberals make working life tougher for women

The Provincial/BCGEU/CALM

The combination of cuts to public services and weakened employment standards in BC has hit women especially hard.

Because women make up both the majority of public sector workers and those who rely on public services, cut-backs disproportionately affect women's job opportunities and their working conditions.

In 2002, 71 per cent of provincial public sector workers were female. Spending cuts and privatization initiatives since then have resulted in a total loss of more than 20,000 public sector jobs, nearly three quarters of which were held by women.

"Public sector downsizing is especially harmful to women because it shrinks an important pool of jobs that

are both relatively secure and equitably paid," says Sylvia Fuller, co-author of *Women's Employment in BC: Effects of Government Downsizing and Employment Policy Changes 2001–2004* (released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

Says Fuller, "When we compare men's wages in the public and private sectors, we find that those with similar jobs and qualifications earn about the same. However, women's wages in the public sector are substantially higher, even when we compare similar workers. Our research shows that this is not because the public sector pays women too much, but because the private sector pays them too little."

CUPE privatization database

CUPE/CALM

The Canadian Union of Public Employees has launched an online database that tracks more than 500 incidents of privatization, contracting out, and public-private partnership.

Visit

<http://cupe.ca/www/database> and you can view incidents by province, town, sector, or keyword.

Keep track of what's going on across the country—successes, failures and lessons learned.



VISIT THE TYEE'S
**ELECTION
CENTRAL**

Original, investigative coverage • Fast-paced riding predictions

**Get the news you're missing!
Daily scoops 'til May 17**

Tyee reporters' election blog • Hot button issues

www.thetyee.ca

Congratulation



Al Beeson posed out in the cold winter for a photo after winning the watch draw in Prince George.



Congratulations to Glen Cromarty who was recently awarded his 40 year service pin by Unit 2 Chair Dave McMinn.



Unit 4 Chair Tom Greenwell, right, congratulates IBEW 258 member Bruce Pilkington on receipt of his long service pin.



Congratulations to Brother Robert Verhoeve, left, who received his 55 years of service plaque from Brother Bob Verhoeve. The photo was sent in by Unit 3, Salmon Arm/Vernon.



Congratulations to James Crenar, left, who works at Galbraith PowerLine Contracting on receipt of his 30 year service pin.

s IBEW members!



Brother Abernethy congratulates Hans Blecker on receiving his 30 year service pin at the Chilliwack meeting in February.



Congratulations to



Peter Quanstrom is awarded his 30 year service pin by Brother Abernethy at the December meeting in Chilliwack.



Brother Brady Prentice congratulates Lorne Powley with his 10 year service pin award.



Unit 5 Chair Mark Davison congratulates Brother Jow Rossa on 50 years of service as a union member! Super congratulations to you Brother Rossa!



Unit 4 Chair Tom Greenwell, right, congratulates Brother Laurie Petersen on receipt of his long service pin.

May we remind you...

Now is the time to check and make sure you are registered on the provincial voting list for the provincial election on May 17, 2005.

To vote in an election for an electoral district, an individual must:

- be a Canadian citizen;
- be 18 years of age or older on General Voting Day for the election;
- be a resident of the electoral district;
- be registered as a voter for the electoral district, or register in conjunction with voting;
- have been a resident of British Columbia for at least 6 months immediately preceding General Voting Day for the election;
- not be disqualified from voting in the election.

If you have moved since the last election, or just want to confirm your voter registration information, please contact Elections BC toll-free at 1-800-661-8683.

You can also register as a provincial voter at your local Government Agent office, visit the Elections BC Victoria office or you can go on-line to download an Application for Registration as a Provincial Voter that you can then mail, fax or e-mail to Elections BC. Visit <http://www.elections.bc.ca/>

BROKEN
PROMISES



OTTAWA SPA

Humour

Very dry wine

Internet/CALM

Vintners in the Napa Valley who primarily produce Pinot Blanc and Pinot Grigio have developed a new hybrid grape that acts as an anti-diuretic, reducing the number of trips to the bathroom.

They are going to market the new wine as Pinot More.

Do Re Mi by Homer J.

Simpson

Internet/CALM

Dough, the stuff that buys me beer.

Ray, the guy that sells me beer.

Me, the guy who drinks the beer

Far, the distance to my beer.

So, I think I'll have a beer.

La, la la la la la beer.

Tea, no thanks, I'm drinking beer.

That will bring us back to...(looks into an empty glass)

"D'oh!"

The art thief

Internet/CALM

A thief attempted to steal several paintings from the Louvre in Paris. After getting past the security and removing the paintings, he was captured two blocks away when his get-away van ran out of gas.

When he was asked how he could have forgotten to fill up his gas tank, he replied, "I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."



Ruminations of a Retiree

by Ken McEwen,
Editor, **HOTLINE**

It's time to think about heading home again. We've actually been thinking about it for around a week now. However, Catherine Dear had an opportunity for one more trip to Laughlin, Nevada and so our departure date has been deferred. The Nevadans are undoubtedly happier for Catherine Dear's trip. And maybe we didn't really need to bring all that money home with us anyway. We'll probably leave here Thursday or maybe Friday. This is Tuesday.

As I've mentioned before, one of the best things about retirement is not having any particular place to be at any particular time. Well, I think our Federal government wants us home in time to pay our annual dues. And then the USAmerican government doesn't want us Class B aliens to be in their country for any more than 182 days. Also it's getting hot here and neither Catherine Dear nor Sesame the Dog likes the heat. So, all in all, it's about time to head north.

Speaking of governments, I understand that we will be arriving home in the midst of a provincial election campaign. Being a Retiree gives me the obligation, and right, to whine, carp, complain and natter about inroads made into my limited income. All Retirees do that. It's one of the major topics in the Retiree Apprenticeship. A good Journeyman Retiree should be able to hold forth for hours on the subject. Our current provincial government has certainly given Retirees the ability to do that. You know, stuff like the loss of medical benefits, increased cost of extended health coverage, loss of dental benefits, increased prescription costs and the list goes on. Then there are issues like closing hospitals and the resultant costs of transporta-



tion to the remaining ones. You'd need a whole truck full of wood to resolve all these concerns around the campfire.

Someone, somewhere, sometime, is alleged to have said that people get the kind of government they deserve. I've been ruminating a lot about that. Like, I think I've been reasonably OK, which gives me cause to ponder what it is that I've done to deserve this bunch now in Victoria. I've even ruminated about the theory of re-incarnation. Like, if there is re-incarnation did I do something nasty in a past life and this is the pay-back?

Leaving governments for a minute, and turning to the subject of weather, I have been advised that the weather is wet on the BC coast. Now, all winter long, people around New Westminster have been telling me how dry it has been. They've remarked how the news has shown southern California to have had one of the wettest winters on record and "Gee, it's sure been dry in New Westminster." And it has been one of the wettest winters I've seen in Southern California. Like, for a while

the desert looked more like a lawn than a desert. There was green grass and pretty flowers everywhere. Also there have been lots of gophers and rabbits and other critters for Sesame the Dog to hunt and dig for. So, now it's turned hot and dry here and we're heading home to where it's reported to be wet and cold. Let's see, we have to pay income tax, listen to all the nonsense during the election campaign, the weather is wet and cold... no, the decision has been made. We have to head home.

While we're on the subject of wet, have you ever wondered why people wash towels? A while ago Sesame the Dog and I were wandering around the green desert and I was thinking of having a shower before dinner. Then I got to ruminating about how sometimes when I go for a shower I find that Catherine Dear has taken my towel to the laundry. Now, the whole purpose of a shower is to make yourself clean. Then you get a towel and sort of wipe the water off your clean self. So, if you've done a good job showering how does the towel get dirty enough to need washing? That takes some ruminating. Let me tell you.

I mention some of these things to illustrate that being a Retiree isn't all sunshine and roses and lolling about in the green desert. Well, there is some of that. But there's also the heavy responsibility of having an opinion on just about everything and ruminating on some pretty important issues. Like governments and shower towels.

That's it for this time. Please continue to work and play safely because, notwithstanding the responsibilities, retirement is worth getting to. ☑

Putting wild salmon in food banks



Why should large volumes of surplus food stuffs be stockpiled while hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens go hungry?

A partnership between the United Way, provincial food banks and the UFAWU-CAW, through its Sustainable Fisheries Society, the "Food Bank - Protein for People" program, provides quality tinned salmon, a premier source of protein, to those most in need. Because this salmon is so nutritious and "shelf stable," it's a sought after commodity by food banks.

The "Food Bank - Protein for People" program will boost BC Food

Bank supplies and help an important BC industry.

You can make a donation to "Food Bank - Protein for People" through the United Way's donor choice program. This makes "Food Bank - Protein for People" an exceptionally convenient way to help individuals and families who are forced to rely on food banks for basic sustenance.

A direct tax exempt gift can be made by mailing a cheque to the food bank at the address below, or call the food bank to process payment conveniently by phone. Be sure to specify your donation is in support of "Food Bank - Protein for People".

Alternatively, you can support the United Way and "Food Bank - Protein for People" by indicating it's your char-

ity of preference when making an additional donation to "Food Bank - Protein for People" through the United Way's donor choice program.

Just indicate on your cheque or payroll deduction form that you wish to donate at least part of your United Way gift to "Food Bank - Protein for People". The United Way will ensure your gift of salmon goes to meeting community needs by forwarding your designated portion to "Food Bank - Protein for People" for distribution to food banks across BC.

For information about donating directly to "Food Bank - Protein for People", please call Robin Campbell at 604-581-5443, fax to 604-588-8697 or write to 10732 - 135th Street, Surrey, BC, V3T 4C7 ☐

Know your rights

Local 8 OPEIU Journal/CALM

It's up to the employee to request that a shop steward or union rep be present during an interview that might result in disciplinary action.

When management wants to question or "interview" you, first ask what's involved. If the interview might lead to you being disciplined,

- tell management that you want a union rep or shop steward present
- refuse to answer any questions until a union rep is there
- refuse to allow any tape or other electronic recording of the interview.

If management insists on proceeding with the interview, make it clear that you are proceeding under protest.

If you start the interview and become disturbed by the direction it's taking, stop and request that your union representative be present before continuing.

Remember these magic words: "If this meeting could in any way lead to me being disciplined or terminated or affect my working conditions, I request that my steward or union representative be present. Without union representation I choose not to answer any more questions."



The importance of loaned representatives to the United Way Sister Tagseth commended

The United Way of the Lower Mainland recently sent a letter to IBEW 258 member Cathy Tagseth, thanking her for her commitment to the United Way, who recently worked on the United Way's recent community campaign as a "loaned representative".

Loaned representatives play a critical role during United Way's Community Campaign, providing assistance in planning, implementing and monitoring effective employee campaigns that raise over \$20 million. IBEW 258 supports this important community campaign and was proud to recommend Sister Tagseth to the campaign last fall.

The United Way benefits tremendously from loaned representatives as they contribute with their energy,

ideas, presentation and training skills that support workplace volunteers. They help problem solve, negotiate and motivate committee members to reach their goals.

Sister Tagseth was commended for her enthusiasm, spirit of cooperation and sound advice.

"All you accounts met or exceeded their objectives due to the positive impact you had on committee members at each company. Using your training and recommendations, you played a major role in campaign planning. You were highly respected and your contribution to the campaign was valued," wrote Anita Kean, Resource Development Coordinator of the United of the Lower Mainland in a letter sent to Sister Tagseth. ☐

STV – Single Transferable Vote

By Michelle Laurie,
President, IBEW Local 258

On your May 17 ballot, you will see the question: “Should British Columbia change to the BC-STV electoral system as recommended by the Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform? Yes/No”

A short question, a shorter answer, but huge implications to our future form of government in British Columbia. The STV (single-transferable-vote) system is very complex, and the format has been proposed with the intent of creating more proportional representation. The real question is whether or not the proposed system will accomplish that, and at what cost to our system. There are of course, completely opposing views on the matter, and I would encourage you to seek information from both sides prior to making your choice. The Citizens’ Assembly website at <http://www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/resources/deliberation/BCSTV-FactSheet.pdf> sets out their position (which you should also have received in the mail), and for an analysis of some of the possible problems with the proposal, look at: <http://www.knowstv.ca/>

This is an important question, and will change the way we vote, and the way we are represented in British Columbia if it is approved. Please be certain that you are properly informed before you make your vote. ☒



From the Back Corner...

(cont'd from back page)

when the resource sector is in a downturn, because it has always been (and will always be) a cyclical economy. Instead, we now have the highest debt we've ever had in this province.

As I said earlier, your one opportunity to have an impact on who takes control of this province comes up on May 17. That is a huge responsibility, and the only way you can be sure you've made the best choice you can is by learning everything possible about your candidates. Ask them tough questions about exactly how they will carry

out their mandate. If you are talking to the incumbent, ask them why they didn't do what they promised, why they said one thing and did another when it came to BC Rail, collective agreements, BC Hydro, etc, etc..

As you head for the ballot box on May 17, please seriously consider this critical tenet. Think about the social conditions in your community, across our communities in BC, and ask yourself who will be able to best improve those conditions, so that we can all hold ourselves up as protectors of social justice. ☒



Promise won't erase record of mismanagement

HEU/CALM

The Campbell Liberals are promising a major salvage operation on a health care system reeling from a three-and-a-half year campaign of cuts, closures and privatization.

“They say they'll spend new federal health dollars to fix the mess they've made but they won't tell us how,” says Hospital Employees' Union financial secretary Mary LaPlante.

Despite an announcement of an increase in the threshold for MSP (Medical Services Plan) premium assistance, working families are still paying \$360 million in extra MSP premiums imposed by the government in 2002.

To support their drive to privatize health services, the government is exempting privately owned consortiums from property tax on health care-related projects.

In the last three and a half years, the Campbell Liberals have

- slashed thousands of long-term care beds while failing to deliver on their promise to build new ones
- shut down or downgraded hospitals in communities from Delta to Kimberly to New Westminster
- torn up health care contracts and fired 8,000 skilled, experienced health care workers—mostly women
- cut wages for the newly privatized workers to the lowest rates in the country
- slashed wages for licenced practical nurses, cardiology technicians, lab assistants, computer specialists and trades workers by 15 per cent causing a looming retention and recruitment crisis. ☒

From the Back Corner...

Spring has sprung, and the politicians are all a-bloom around us. A provincial election in just a few more days, another federal election looming at any time the opposition parties get confident, and municipal elections are coming up in November. The airways are filled with promises, and the candidates are busy as bees, desperately seeking your vote to keep them in the honey.

Like many, you probably find this particular kind of activity a little, well, disgusting. Still, we are a parliamentary democracy, and the most effective input we each hold is our vote – our particular show of support for the one candidate whose ideals, integrity, credibility and work ethic are the closest match to our expectations.

Politicians rely on short memories, hoping that whatever has happened in the last two months is all you will think about when you cast your ballot. For many of us, the last two months have seen funding come to one or more of the communities that we are involved in, and that has been welcomed. If you take away someone's food for a week, and then offer them a crust of bread, that seems great, too. The problem is that right after you thank them, the food might well disappear for a long time.

Typically, governments will make their cuts in the first couple of years after an election, and then be good in the last couple of years leading up to the next. This provincial government was a little rougher – they kept cutting for more than three years, and then gave back for four months. Some of those cuts will take a long time to repair – removing compulsory trades certification, leaving the standards for trades training wide open and in the hands of employers; closing emergency wards, long term care facilities and even whole hospitals; removing all funding from women's centres in the province; closing schools and cutting school board budgets so drastically that class sizes increased and important services for our children dis-

appeared; wiping out funding for legal aid services for the poorest members of our communities; closing court houses in many towns; tearing up legal contracts between workers and employers, and imposing their own contracts instead; contracting out hospital services work to minimum wage paying companies and out of province companies; increasing post secondary tuitions by as much as three times; increasing electricity rates, with promises of more increases; banning our public electric utility from developing any further generation, forcing us to buy power from private for-profit companies; selling BC rail; selling BC Ferries; eliminating thousands of public service jobs (and therefore the tax base in many communities); cutting back on benefits for disabled persons; re-writing the Workers' Compensation Act so that injured workers receive less benefits, less wages and have less ability to fight for their rights; increasing the cost of basic medical coverage by 50%, while at the same time cutting out services provided in that coverage... I could go on, but your address has to fit somewhere at the bottom of this page, and I think you get the point.

The economy is picking up, and that is a good thing – but is it because of the government of the day? No, we are a resource-rich province, and when the value of resources goes up, so does the economy. It is the global economy that is


working to our advantage at the moment, and that is great, but has no relationship to the spending habits and programs of provincial government. When our resources become more valuable on the world stage, we should be making sure that the province reaps benefits from that situation for future years
(cont'd on inside back cover)



**Local 258 IBEW President
Michelle Laurie**

*Take some time to review your IBEW Constitution – in the very beginning, the “objects” of our brotherhood are defined. One of the most vital of those objects, in my mind, is the last on the list:
“Any by legal and proper means to elevate the moral, intellectual and social conditions of our members, their families and dependents, in the interest of a higher standard of citizenship.”*

Return to:
IBEW Local 258
7535 Sixth Street
Burnaby, BC V3N 3M2

CANADA		POSTES
POST		CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Addressed Admail		Médiaposte avec adresse
3262510		