

Local 59, B.C.G.E.U.

Local 59, B.C.G.E.U. received its certification on August 15, 1974 to represent the Administrative and Dietary Support Staff at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

A negotiating team was elected and began collective bargaining with the BCIT Board of Governors. Our first agreement was signed in November, 1974. This agreement provided local 59 members with a substantial wage increase, a COLA clause, a dental and Extended Health Care Plan and 4 weeks vacation after one years service. The new agreement also provided for the establishment of several joint union-management committees; Safety Committee, Education and Training Committee, Selection Committee, and most importantly a Joint Job Evaluation Committee. This committee was established to evaluate all the jobs within the B.C.G.E.U. bargaining unit. The Committee members (2 union and 2 management) were elected and in January 1975 began the onerous task of job evaluation.

In July of 1975 local 59 elected its second negotiating team (the first all female team to be elected by the B.C.G.E.U.) and commenced bargaining in July, 1975. When the local finally reached a settlement the employer refused to sign the agreement. The union took the employer to the Labour Relations Board charging "unfair labour practices". The Board ruled that the employer had ratified the agreement because of the ambiguous wording of the motion that the Board of Governors had passed. The newly established A.I.B. however, rolled back this negotiated settlement by 3.29%.

The third set of negotiations commenced in July of 1976. After several months of negotiations the employer applied for mediation. After eight months of negotiation and mediation an agreement was reached. This agreement included a better fringe benefit package, educational development funding and the implementation of the completed job evaluation plan. The AIB once again ruled that the settlement was above the allowable increase. A joint submission was sent to the AIB appealing their decision. The submission justified the exclusion of the job evaluation plan from the AIB costing. This appeal was successful and the new salary grid and salary grades are now being implemented. The local is very pleased with the results of this decision because we feel that we have set a precedent for other workers in similar situations.

We have a number of negotiated provisions in our collective agreement that are quite unique. The agreement is written in the feminine gender, a partially-paid maternity leave, a personal rights clause, 4 union meetings per year on the employers time and a selection procedure that gives union members 50% of the panel that selects positions in the bargaining unit and 1 position on the selection panel that selects positions outside of the bargaining unit, (the member's boss).

what was it

The local is also very active in "policing" the provisions that have been negotiated. The local files an average of 20 grievances per year and have won 95% of them. Three grievances went to arbitration and the union won two of them. The two grievances we won dealt with employees who had been terminated. The grievance we lost was a matter of interpretation that we had wanted to clarify regarding a statutory holiday.

* { Our members also participate in the numerous B.C.G.E.U. education courses, seminars and conferences. The B.C.G.E.U. spends more money on education than any other union in B.C. The members also attend the B.C. Federation of Labour and C.L.C. education courses.

The 160 members of Local 59 form the largest group in the General Services Component. For two years the Chairperson of Local 59 has also been elected to serve as the Chairperson of Component 14 and is a member of the Provincial Executive. The Provincial Executive is the governing body of the union between conventions and it meets regularly.