

AUCE PROVINCIAL

December 4th, 1980

Mr. Robert McKee
President
AUCE Local 4
Capilano College
2055 Purcell Way
North Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Robert:

Many apologies for the length of time it has taken for me to respond to your letter about the Special Affiliation Convention and related issues. The issues that you have brought up are complex and important ones.

When the Provincial Executive called a Special Convention to discuss the results of the last referendum we felt that we were acting in the most democratic way possible. The Affiliation issue is the most important issue facing the Provincial Association and its locals. When many difficulties started to become apparent with the balloting procedures that had been decided upon we felt that the membership of AUCE, through their elected delegates should discuss these problems and come up with ways to resolve them.

Unfortunately, many members misinterpreted what we were trying to do. We were accused of acting in an undemocratic way to frustrate the will of the membership. If we had wished to act in the undemocratic way that we had been accused of we could have declared the vote invalid and overturned the result. At no time was this option brought up. We recognised that the membership had spoken and accepted the results.

When it became clear that our actions had been misinterpreted, we reversed our decision and agreed to proceed to the next ballot.

You also seem to misunderstand the role of the Provincial Association in this debate. The results of this balloting procedure will affect us all. The decisions made, whatever they are, will have to be implemented by the Provincial Executive. The relationship between the Provincial Association and the Local Associations and between the Local Associations themselves will be affected by this debate. It is important that this debate occur on as many levels as possible.

The debate has occurred on all levels. Members have used the Provincial Newsletter to express their wide range of opinions. Each Local Newsletter has been used. Debate has occurred in each office. Regardless of the positions that we, as individuals take, we must agree that this issue is too important to be swept under the carpet. It should be discussed as widely as possible.

To limit the debate to the local level would reduce the ability of the membership to make an informed decision. Members of one local would not have the advantage of the insights of the members of another local. Each local would become isolated. The results of the balloting procedure would be more open for dispute if the membership of each local did not have a full grasp of the issues involved.

Many members have felt the need to discuss this issue in several media. The results of our affiliation debate will have wide ranging implications on other labour groups. Other unions are having the same debate and our decisions will influence the debate in those unions. As well, our decision to join the CLC and how we decide to join them (either directly or through another union) will affect their internal structure.

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These members have felt the need to use their democratic rights as members to discuss the ramifications of Affiliation on other groups in these media. The Provincial Executive does not have the right to limit the scope of debate and I, for one, would not wish to have the power to prevent these members from expressing their views. Provincial Executive members have the same rights as any other members to express their view points on Affiliation and other topics. The members of our executive were elected because of their ability and their attitudes towards AUCE and the issues that affect AUCE.

The Provincial Executive represents the membership view in that they were elected by the membership. The members of the Provincial Executive have always been free to express their views and usually the free discussion of their views on various topics has led to vigorous debate. By no means does the Provincial Executive have one "party line". Our monthly meetings are open to any member to come and participate.

This debate is too crucial to be limited to the Local level. The kind of free debate that we have had to date will lead to a better decision by the membership (whatever the decision is) than a limited one at the local level. Our December Newsletter, which will be going out during the middle of December, is going to concentrate on the Affiliation issue. I would appreciate your help in informing the membership of this.

To sum up, I found your letter very interesting and I have relished the opportunity to discuss these issues with you. I know that our opinions differ on many issues and that our views about AUCE and how the Provincial Association and the Local Associations should relate differ greatly. However, I know that both of us wish to represent our members as effectively as possible.

I hope that we will be able to meet and discuss these issues and others soon. We may agree to disagree, but at least we would understand our positions better.

In Solidarity,



Lid Strand
Provincial President
AUCE

cc: AUCE Locals