

AUCE workers ON STRIKE at SFU

With 2 departments LOCKED OUT by Simon Fraser University Administration the Association of University and College Employees membership voted to go on an all-out strike Thursday March 8.

Last June the University informed AUCE's contract committee that monetary items would be discussed only after the non-monetary items had been disposed of. Proposals to improve benefits for temporary workers and strengthen our contracting out clause were dropped and the only item now in dispute is wages.

When AUCE was certified, the lowest paid workers in the unit earned less than 5/8 of the monthly salary of the lowest paid workers in the polyparty trade unions on campus, despite the fact that these jobs in the polyparty are unskilled and the workers in our union have to have office skills. We argued very hard that the skill, effort and responsibility involved in clerical and library work be recognized. By the end of our first contract we had succeeded in bringing salaries of our lowest paid full-time workers to the level enjoyed by the predominately male workers in the other campus unions in 1974 - parity two years late.

The AIB limited gains made in our next contract, and we are now in a desparate struggle for the third contract.

The University is telling us - we are overpaid. The governments, federal and provincial, have introduced policies of establishing public service salaries by job comparability. This means that salaries for government workers are to be directly related to salaries for the same jobs in the private sector. This sounds fair at first hearing, but in the private sector - banks, insurance, industry - office workers are still mostly unorganized and have no access to collective bargaining. These policies mean that the wages of unionized office workers are to be determined by the salaries of non-unionized workers.

In February the University offered us restricted binding arbitration. They proposed that only our wages go to arbitration and that the arbitrator be directed to consider our wages only in comparison with 8 employee groups they have choosen. At that time the University also stated that there should be no discussion of inflation or of equal pay for work of equal value. The job comparability written into the arbitration section of the Essential Services Disputes Act has given the University a basis for proposing restrictions which can only prejudice an arbitrator and hinder a fair settlement.

The University has offered us 6% over 2 years. We are striking for 9% over 2 years. Last Monday the mediator, Sam Waterston brought the 2 parties together with no result. The University said they were prepared to increase their offer with a bonus.

Government policies of fiscal restraint in education have allowed our employer to justify the bitter struggle going on at SFU. Support AUCE! Join our picket line!

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