

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGES & EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

AUCE Local #3 Report (David Thompson University Centre, Nelson, B.C.)

Local #3 is the pint-sized member of the AUCE team, with a current membership of 38 of which 15 are presently on lay-off. The main reason for this discouraging situation is that the provincial governments have been playing political football with our university for the past six years.

Notre Dame University of Nelson was a private university - the second university chartered in B.C. (after UBC and before U. of Vic. and SFU), and the only one serving the interior. We felt we filled a need in the scheme of things, and in 1970 applied to become the fourth public university in the province. We've been the governments' (both Socred's and NDP's) yo-yo ever since - up with campaign promises, down with inaction and indifference, up with royal commissions, down with indecision

One of the problems has been that, in the interim, in order to keep their heads above water, the NDU faculty unionized. This is anathema to Dr. McGeer and the ivory tower elite of the coastal universities. More delays - while plans were laid for an end-run around the faculty union (FANDU) and the Labour Code. Finally, in June of this year, NDU was declared officially dead. Its assets were purchased by the government and christened David Thompson University Centre. By the elimination of funding for NDU's first and second year courses last year, ^{and} all third and fourth year courses this year, FANDU has been rather effectively eliminated. However it refuses to go away. On Monday, October 31, the Labour Relations Board starts a three-day hearing on unfair labour practices, charges filed by FANDU against Education Minister Pat McGeer, Deputy Minister Walter Hardwick and other officials of the Universities Council of B.C., SFU and U of Vic.

This year Selkirk College has been asked to fill the void by offering

a two year program on DTUC's campus in Nelson along with its regular offerings in Castlegar, 30 miles away. It has been made interim manager of the new campus while the Ministry of Education decides what to do next. With no guidelines, no advertising, limited funding and an undefined future, our university is at an all-time low. And we with it . . . Enrollment at DTUC this year is a depressing 116 (only 30 full time students).

Against this background, here are a few of our gains:

- certification as Local #3 of AUCE in April 1974, covering non-teaching, non-administrative staff including clerical, library, food services, custodial and maintenance -- AUCE was chosen after an investigation of other alternative unions because of its stress on local autonomy and its non-sexist bias.
- three contracts, negotiated with the NDU Board of Governors.
- establishment of a joint Labour-Management Committee to "discuss and recommend settlement of all matters of concern between the Union and the Employer" -- this has proved a most useful committee.
- the reclassification of all positions within the bargaining unit in 1975, at which time a joint union-management committee re-evaluated each position by means of point/weighting scale in an effort to bring traditionally male occupied and traditionally female occupied jobs more into line.
- a continuing joint Revaluation Committee which considers all applications for job revaluation within the unit and sets salary scales for all new positions.
- an increasingly effective grievance procedure.
- a successfully pursued arbitration case to clarify the wording of a vacation clause giving employees an extra week of vacation upon completion of each five years of continuous employment.
- a decrease in the hours of work from 40 hrs/wk to 35 hrs/wk and the introduction of flex-time.
- dental, medical and disability insurance.
- increased vacations and holidays.
- maternity leave of up to one year.
- substantial improvements in wages (from a base rate of \$406.00 /mo. (minimum wage) in 1974 to \$770.00/mo. in 1976-77).

-- a severance allowance of 2 weeks wages (at current levels) for each year of employment, negotiated with NDU to cover those employees laid-off in the transition to DTUC.

Our present position finds us under the interim management of Selkirk College until 31 March 1978. This has occasioned an application to the Labour Relations Board by CUPE, who represent the staff at the College, asking that we be declared part of their bargaining unit. Our own application to the LRB requested that Selkirk College be declared our employer for this interim period only, and that no further changes be entertained at this time. We await their ruling.

Our 1976-77 contract, which expired 30 June, is still in effect until the status of the College and their authority to negotiate with us, is clarified.

The present is gloomy, but . . . the future lies ahead!