



association of university and college employees

STATEMENT FROM THE AUCE EXECUTIVE

A year ago the AUCE Local One membership decided it was time to join a larger union. After careful consideration the Executive has made its recommendation. All of the information you need to make a decision on this ballot is contained in the report from the Merger Committee which was mailed to you several weeks ago (additional copies available from the Union office).

What CUPE is offering us is a two-year service contract. This is an unusual arrangement in that it allows us to change our minds and return to our present status if we are not satisfied. During the period of the service contract, we will have full voting representation within CUPE, and access to all services available from CUPE. Some of these services will strengthen AUCE by adding to our current resources, others will substitute to some extent for services that we now contract out. Most importantly, we will have access to legal research and aid, contract research, public relations specialists, union education, the CUPE defense fund, and the assistance of a National CUPE representative in the administration of our collective agreement. The CUPE service contract will also provide for affiliation to the Canadian Labour Congress and the BC Federation of Labour.

This is a difficult moment in our history. Joining CUPE may be a turning point. We presently face a situation that is probably worse than the situation we faced when we first decided to become a union. We are currently very seriously underpaid, and many of our contracted rights are being threatened. Looking into the future we see only further budget cuts, probable lay offs and very little possibility of meaningful contract settlements, or even meaningful negotiations. Our isolation only adds to our vulnerability. Even if the depression in this province somehow lessens, we will face an enormous uphill battle to ever regain what we have lost. Furthermore, in our present financially weak and isolated condition, we are very vulnerable to classic union-busting techniques: expensive arbitrations and long lockouts. A merger with CUPE will not immediately solve all of our problems, but we are convinced that it will add to our strength and therefore to our prospects. CUPE has committed itself to rebuilding our debilitated steward structure and to training our executive and staff. Access to the CUPE defense fund, and the support of the BC Fed, will strengthen our position at the bargaining table. The defense fund can also be used for some arbitrations and this, coupled with access to a CUPE staff rep and CUPE lawyers, will improve our ability to deal with grievances.

Two further points need to be made. First of all, by joining CUPE we do not forfeit our independence. Locals within CUPE are autonomous. Our relationship to the CUPE locals already on campus may become closer, but we will remain entirely independent from them. The only difference to our local structure will be an eventual cut back from three paid officers to two. This will be offset by a strengthened executive and steward structure, and the presence of a CUPE staff rep. Secondly, it should be pointed out that the dues increase, while apparently large, will only bring us into line with the dues paid by most union members - the dues we currently pay are extremely low (see May 84 newsletter). Even before the membership decided in favour of joining a larger union, the Executive had decided that a dues increase to approximately the same amount as now recommended was necessary. In other words, even if you vote against this motion we will need an increase in dues. Finally, keep in mind that union dues are tax deductible.

We encourage you to vote in favour of this motion.

The AUCE Local One Executive