

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPE OF MEETING BETWEEN AUCE PROVINCIAL
AFFILIATION COMMITTEE AND JACK ADAMS, DIRECTOR, B.C.
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' UNION TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 1979.

AFFILIATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Connie Bostwick, Local #4	Julie Moreton, Local #4
Bill Burgess, Local #6	Suzanne Marria, Provincial Organizer
Sara Diamond, Local #2	Marion Northcott, Local #2
Ginny Gibberd, Local #4	Lid Strand, Local #1
Anne Gilbert Local #4	Joan Wood, Local #2 and AUCE Prov. President
Mary Mabin, Local #6	Sheila Perret, Prov. Sec.-Treas. and #4

ADAMS: Let me start from the top, it might be easier to explain. We are, of course, an affiliate of the C.L.C. but through a national union called the National Union of Provincial Government Employees (N.U.P.G.E) which has about 22,000 members at the present time and is the third largest union in Canada. We have structured ourselves in B.C. as a provincial organization and we represent people who work directly for the provincial government in Crown corporations, educational facilities, group homes, hospitals and just about everything - we even have some clerical and technical people in a pulp mill. We have about 46,000 members in the Province of British Columbia within our union. We are structured on what we call component lines and they are primarily a political structure and a means by which representation at the highest level and our own provincial executive, NUPGE, C.L.C. Conventions, etc., can ascertain. Through the public service it is also part of the bargaining structure, I'm talking about provincial public service and these components for the public service are drawn on broad occupational lines, very broad lines. However, we have two components which are not public service and they are, I guess one of them is a bit of a catch-all, I suppose there might be 5,000 members in that particular component right now, hospital workers, community colleges and of course another one which is primarily a crown corporation, I.C.B.C. We also have other crown corporations such as the Justice Institute, the Transit Authority. So that's our best structure. However, on the very local level we also have locals that I'm sure most of you will see. We will start with the locals in what we call components in the provincial union of government employees affiliated with the C.L.C. and B.C. Federation of Labour and other labour councils.

AUCE: Does the affiliation to the C.L.C. take place through N.U.P.G.E.?

ADAMS: We have been an affiliate of the CLC since 1944, that's right, almost 36 years. However, when we formed the NUPGE we changed our direct affiliation to NUPGE.

AUCE: I wonder if you could outline for us if we were to affiliate with the G.E.U. what kind of structure, in fact, we would adopt in order to do that?

ADAMS: Well, there are a number of ways it could be done, but a lot would depend on what you need. If the majority of AUCE members from the locals in the universities and colleges affiliated, I think we would very likely give serious consideration to forming a new component composed of people in education and so as you already represent quite a number and we would probably give very serious consideration to forming a new component consisting of people primarily in that field. If it was only one local, say, or a couple of small locals, then we would fit them into component, depending on size, 14 on a local structure. We currently have a local which represents the support staff of Douglas College, P.V.I., B.C.I.T. There are also a couple of other groups in there too. When I say local, it's a fairly large local.

AUCE: First of all you said that we give serious consideration - what would that depend on? If a majority of our union decided to join B.C.G.E.U. would there be some kind of

ADAMS: If you decided to approach it in a serious way with those kind of numbers, what we would expect to do is sit down with a group from your union and some of our officers and staff and we would come to an agreement on how the affiliation would come about. When I say give serious consideration, I would probably make that recommendation that the structure - this is my area of responsibility and I would make a recommendation to our constitutional committee that we do that - to form a component. We don't want components of very small groups, you have to understand there has to be a bit of a numbers game, all sorts of representation.

AUCE: In relation to that, how do you see bargaining then? Would we bargain with the component?

ADAMS: No. At the present time of course, there's no other way of bargaining other than with each employer separately. That's very likely to change over the next few years. If that changes, of course a very different type of bargaining. We already bargain

for some groups on a province-wide basis so that's no problem, but the present time, bargaining will continue as it is now because there is no choice. The way it happens in our locals, each work group elects their own negotiating team even though there may be more than one certification in a local, there may be ten, but there will be ten negotiators.

ADAMS: P.V.I., B.C.I.T. and Douglas College are all one local: however, each one of those locals are institutions whose members elect their own N.C. We then assign a staff member to those negotiations who is by our by-laws a co-chairperson of the negotiating team but the committee is elected from the work site.

AUCE: I think one of the concerns that some people might feel is that if we were to affiliate in that way with the B.C.G.E.U. we already have in our contract what we consider some good items in there. What would be the process, we say affiliate to the B.C.G.E.U., would we still then maintain our own negotiating team to basically negotiate in the same way as we have been negotiating up till now?

ADAMS: Yes. When I say that we have what we call a contract review committee. The purpose of the contract review committee is to ensure that no one contract proposal from one group is going to seriously damage the bargaining of others. Again, we represent employees in a number of community colleges. We would not allow Okanagan College for example to put proposals on the table that would seriously damage PVI, Douglas College, etc. Other than that, they do their own determination in what they want in a contract.

AUCE: Can you give me an example of that, of a proposal that would damage the bargaining stance of other locals?

ADAMS: very serious problems with the Student Employment Programs and have taken a very hard line with some of the community colleges on it particularly since they don't want to give students when they hire them the provisions of the of the c.a. and we'll negotiate for salaries for them. We have had in the past a couple of groups who have said we don't care about that and we don't care we're going to let the employer do what they want and we say you're not going to do that because that seriously hinders bargaining in another area.

That's the kind of example we're talking about. Or if we had - well, we do have - maternity leave clauses in our collective agreements and they are better than the Act. For example, we would not allow a bargaining unit to give up those kind of provisions simply because the employer gives them another nickel an hour. That's what I'm talking about.

AUCE: When you were talking about each work group electing their own negotiating team and you described it in terms of bargaining units at an institution

ADAMS: Well, certification, I think that's probably the best way to describe it. Where a group is certified by the LRB as appropriate for collective bargaining.

AUCE: OK, is there anything in the BCGEU structure that would make a difference from the original certification. Some people were concerned that because, for example, at Local 2, people who are clerical or library staff, that there would be some possibility of them, of their being separate negotiating committees or something like that. Could those people in that current certification be moved around into other areas.

ADAMS: What people are doing is they're taking a couple of unrelated things and putting them together. When you bargain in the public service, you're talking about 30-odd thousand people and when you talk about clerks, for example, you know we have about 8,500 clerical people alone in one component, that doesn't mean we bargain on a component basis for them, we also bargain for the master agreement for them. But you can't do that in smaller units, you can enlarge on it, it makes a lot of sense because the needs, say, of a group of clerical workers of a group of that size may be quite different than a group of technical workers, or they may not. We have a master agreement that tries to meet the needs and the component agreement for the specifics of the occupation. That's the situation that exists in the public service. I would suggest that if we ever have sector bargaining in B.C. which I think is likely to happen, at least on the education side, you may see that sort of thing eventually happening, to a degree, but it won't be that refined because the numbers don't exist.

AUCE: You said that if a large number, a majority of AUCE seriously consider joining a component, what if the minority of our union decided they want to join your union, for example, one local wanted to join, how would you see them fitting into the BCGEU structure?

ADAMS: Well, we'd fit them into the present structure, Component 14, as we call it, already houses the people in the other community colleges.

AUCE: I was going to ask if you could give a little more detail about the component structure - what they're called

ADAMS: We started the components - we structured them on component lines - because the law - the Public Service Labour Relations Act, which I'm sure you're not familiar with, is quite different in some ways from the Labour Code of B.C. and it provides for what is called two-tiered bargaining which is a very innovative way to bargain. You bargain first the master agreement and then occupational agreements on broad lines. The components are structured that way and they're structured in the master agreement that way. They are also structured in our constitution that way because we believe, rightly or wrongly, that your bargaining structure also has to be your political structure. In other words, you don't have two separate groups making decisions. The same people that are

responsible for the bargaining are the same people that are responsible for the political decisions. So even though we have a considerable amount of members not in the public service, and we appoint special components for them, we have locals on the same geographic basis and we have representation to our convention, to the NUPGE convention, to the CLC convention, to the labour councils, to our provincial executive in the same manner that the public service does. Now obviously those components vary in size, from a high of the clerical component, to a low of 600 in our marine-highway-ferries. As far as you would be concerned, it is a political structure, it's a method by which you would have representation at the labour council, the local to the component, the component to the provincial executive and so on. The same way that you must have representation from the locals to your convention - going up another step.

AUCE: When we first began to explore the question of affiliation, the mandate that we were given at convention by our membership was to approach the CLC about (undecipherable) AUCE. We were told by the CLC that we couldn't do that unless the unions that also share jurisdiction with AUCE would make some kind of accommodation on that and I want to ask what the BCGEU attitude would be towards AUCE trying to enter the B.C. Federation of Labour as AUCE as a whole because it raises a conflict in jurisdiction.

ADAMS: Well, first of all, I'm not quite sure who told you that because it's not correct. There would be very little chance that the BCGEU or CUPE or the OTEU even if we three agreed I doubt that you would be allowed in because that decision is made by the executive council. We would probably be opposed to it simply because we're opposed to the proliferation of small unions. We find that more and more small unions getting into trouble and that gives the labour movement trouble. Now you may not want to hear that but, yes, we would probably be opposed to it. We do not believe, particularly in the public sector, smaller unions can survive. The world is just getting too damned difficult.

AUCE: Just to follow up on that: can you talk a little bit about what BCGEU's opinion is at this point in time in terms of the kind of attacks on public sector workers going on in the province and what kind of steps need to be taken.

ADAMS: Well, first of all, of course, we've been taking a reasonably hard line with the employer. We have, I'm sure you (undecipherable) all of which we've won. We have found over a period of time that if you want to take recourse, if you talk softly and very (undecipherable) sometimes works and we find that's very effective. We don't have some of the problems that some other smaller unions are having in the public sector. With our strength we can be short and swift and we've been winning them (undecipherable) PVI, simply because we're large enough, we have a large enough membership that we can take on those type of employers. You may have seen something about our \$6 million strike fund. This has a telling effect on a (undecipherable) smaller employer, something like a college or small crown corporation. (Undecipherable) But certainly it has a very telling effect on a smaller employer. We are a large organization with a lot of resources, we can more than match them, it's as simple as that.

AUCE: What do you think would be the main benefits that members of AUCE would enjoy by joining your union. In particular, why do you think your union would be better for our membership than either the (CUPE or OTEU)?

ADAMS: Well, certainly, I wouldn't try to answer the second question. That's something for you. I think both questions are something for AUCE members to decide on. CUPE is a great union ...

AUCE: Oh, I agree, it's just I mean, why should we join?

ADAMS: Well, I think my union is a better union than those other unions, it's that simple, but you have to decide. I don't really know what you are looking for or what you want or what your needs are so it's very difficult for me to say what would be most advantageous to you.

AUCE: Could you explain the biggest question (undecipherable) you thought that the size and resources of BCGEU would give us a lot of advantages. Are there other aspects of BEGEU which are going to be useful?

ADAMS: Yes, of course. We have comprehensive research facilities, we have our own public relations person, we have good communications because as you know we have people involved only in communications, and so on. We also have a regional staff structure with a dozen offices throughout the province. We have more than any other union in this so we probably provide a far better level of service at the local level than any other union in the province. We probably spend more bucks per capita on education than any other union in the province, probably more than any two or three unions put together.

AUCE: What kind of education programs (undecipherable)

ADAMS: We start with the basic stewards' course and go up to courses in collective bargaining. When I'm talking about education I'm talking about union education. I suppose the ultimate is always the Labour College of Canada. We send at least one or more students every year to that.

AUCE: How many?

ADAMS: Well, we send at least one and sometimes as many as three or four. While it's not a significant number it's significant for those who get to go. The important things are the basic course like the basic stewards, the branch stewards, and we have about three thousand stewards, everyone of them is equipped with a steward's course. Then we have as you can imagine, about 130 locals at the present time. Most of those local officers, at least the chairpersons and secretary treasurers get an opportunity to go through the leadership school at Harrison. We literally get thousands of people every year (to) go through courses.

AUCE: Do you have any provisions for BCGEU members to

ADAMS: Yes, but because of our size in conjunction with the assistance of the CLC we run parallel programs. The winter school, for example, the federation gets involved in that and the CLC but like the IWA and some of the other larger unions we run our own courses because it's much more practical if we're going to send 250 or 300 people then you might as well cater the course to fit that particular group - which is not unusual, other unions do the same thing. But we run most of it on our own. Because we have far better facilities for education than the Federation does.

AUCE: Could you explain the relationship between the GEU staff and (undecipherable) particular area that they are in charge of?

ADAMS: We have staff assigned to different (undecipherable) of course. My department, I'm responsible for the offices throughout the province and the service and staff. We service the locals, assist with administration (undecipherable) All the staff of the BCGEU are members (undecipherable) our constitution. We're not

allowed to attend our own convention as delegates but we are under our constitution allowed to run for, and hopefully, win an election (undecipherable). We work very closely, there isn't a great rift between the staff and the offices in the GEU. I like to think we have a partnership and I think we're all out to do the same thing and because we're all members, it works very well. Staff are assigned various roles to work at the headquarters level, there are some of those assigned, for example, to assist in administration at the component level, at the senior level. Each level has staff assigned to it. I don't know if I've answered the question.

AUCE: Are staff very much in contact with the local executives (undecipherable)?

ADAMS: I would say that almost invariably a staff member attends every local meeting or a local executive meeting (undecipherable).

AUCE: The BCGEU is the provincial organization (undecipherable). Do you have officers in other areas (undecipherable)?

ADAMS: (Undecipherable) not possible, we would have to have two or three thousand officers. We find it very very expensive to staff and when I say staff, at least one staff representative assigned to each (undecipherable) full time and of course we have the support staff.

AUCE: How are the representatives elected?

ADAMS: You mean the staff people?

AUCE: Yes, the staff people (undecipherable). Is there a hiring committee?

ADAMS: No. There's an interview usually by a senior staff person such as myself. We make recommendations to the general secretary. Our officers will sometimes change the conclusion. We try to build a team because you have to have people who know what they're talking about doing the interviewing, the selection process. No, our elected people do not get involved in the hiring of staff.

AUCE: One final question. If a staff person has been assigned to a component and between him and the component there's a conflict. How would that be resolved?

ADAMS: The general secretary in our constitution is responsible for staff so the executive member who was responsible for that component would I hope talk to John Fryer. Of course things like that happen.

AUCE: Could you outline some of the specific problems that relate to women (undecipherable) generally give us a bit of background information.

ADAMS: Well, we have a very active women's committee. A question like that, you'd be far better off to talk to someone, a woman from the women's committee. I'm sure they could give you a lot more information than I could. They meet on a regular basis, make submissions to convention and make submissions to the bargaining committee for improvements in bargaining, attend the women's committees of the CLC and of our national union, and generally get involved in those affairs.

AUCE: Is that one committee for the whole union or one (undecipherable)?

ADAMS: No, they're structured from the component again, and there are representatives from every component on the women's committee.

AUCE: So basically they make recommendations that go towards the master agreement ... ?

ADAMS: To the master agreement, primarily. They make reports to convention, they would get involved, we would hope, they are involved in the Federation of Labour women's committee, the CLC women's committee and so on.

AUCE: A question back to the structure. This is hypothetical. If you, for example, formed a new component (undecipherable), who would make decisions and how would subsequent decisions, for example, changes in the component structure, or changes in the locals. How are those decisions made about the structure of the union?

ADAMS: Well, of course, the structure of the union is pretty well enshrined in the constitution. But when you're talking about specifics under the constitution, the executive can create new components, we have to, otherwise we couldn't grow and evolve (undecipherable). But we have what we call a committee on constitutional structure which is a standing committee and it deals with all these matters, and they in turn, they investigate and make recommendations to the provincial executive. In a case like this, for example, they might make a recommendation to the provincial executive to get a new component (undecipherable). But the executive do make the decision.

AUCE: (Undecipherable) To follow up on Suzanne's question, is there any affirmative action program in the BCGEU and is there any program to try ensure that women are paid equal pay for work of equal value? Are those principles (undecipherable)

ADAMS: Of course, that's a matter for collective bargaining. I wouldn't want to mislead you, I wouldn't want you to think that by any means (we're) a primarily feminist organization, we're not. We believe that the women in our organization believe, if we believe what they say, they believe the best method of reaching equality in wages is through the collective bargaining process. All the rhetoric in the world isn't going to put a damn nickel on the pay cheque. But to be frank with you, that's where we put the emphasis on things like that (undecipherable) in collective bargaining. And our contracts I think show that, we're pretty good in that area.

AUCE: How many differentials are there between clerical workers & technicians ...?

ADAMS: A large differential.

AUCE: (Undecipherable) convention talking about things of interest to women. One of the things was establishing a joint employer-GEU committee to investigate day care centres. But it didn't describe much more than that. Would that be, how many, would they be on-site day care centres.

ADAMS: No. No success at all and for the same reason that everybody also has had little success with day care centres, it's the cost factor. To get the employer to set up day care centres particularly with a government such as this trying to get out of the day care centres. No, we've had no success. I might add though that we didn't find that when we started doing surveys and things like that that there was that deep a need for it.

AUCE: Is the BCGEU involved in any research or investigation in occupational health and safety for particularly women workers or office workers, people who work in offices and so on.

ADAMS: Well, yes and no. We have a very extensive and comprehensive occupational health and safety program and it's had a priority in the last two agreements. It's not primarily directed at women workers or clerical workers. However, because we have a great number of both, that's a significant part of it, so yes & no, the

program is not designed solely for clerical women but is a comprehensive occupational health and safety program and it certainly is intended for clerical workers.

AUCE: Is the program in the workplace?

ADAMS: The biggest single obstacle to overcome in the area of occupational health and safety is in our view the education, to ascertain what the problems are and educating people to even look for them so what we negotiated in our last agreement, there was provision for a training program for occupational health and safety and what we negotiated is that first of all there's going to be some instructors trained by the WCB, six from the union and six from the management and these twelve people will be a team to instruct members of our occupational health and safety committees. This course will be about four days and it will be paid for by the employer so, now it may not seem like much but we're talking probably about 2 to 3,000 of our members will go through that course in the next year and a half. So, it's very expensive.

AUCE: (undecipherable) provide information to your members. Most of us work in offices (undecipherable) issues. We don't have very much information about hazards in the (work place?).

ADAMS: We have a staff person who's assigned, who is I think well qualified and he has as his primary duty health and safety. He teaches, he actually goes and does on-site inspections, and so on and so on. Now his primary role, of course, it to educate occupational health and safety committees so that they can do this for themselves. It's an area we (undecipherable) in the last couple of years.

AUCE: I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what BCGEU sees as the central common problems facing education workers - workers in the education sector. One thing that comes (undecipherable) considering is the issue of the employer forming joint bargaining and I wonder what kind of attitude BCGEU has towards that. And the second question, which is related, is the whole issue of part-time student workers. Most of the (undecipherable) that we have jurisdiction over face that as a problem ...

ADAMS: Well, first of all, of course, we have nothing good to say about the Ministry of Education or the Minister of Education, it really doesn't matter who it is and the ministry is a terrible ministry, we have been at war with them and probably will continue to do so for years. We believe that there is now a major attack on workers in the education field and we believe that eventually, if it hasn't already happened that there's going to be a public backlash to the cost of education, it's a very expensive proposition. We believe that a lot of money is wasted in the field of education, by the bureaucrats in Victoria, it's got nothing to do with the workers on the job, it's simply the bureaucracy that's been built up in that department in some of the community colleges and universities, it's unbelievable. We've watched over the last six or seven years the number of people who've been added on in the bureaucracy, it's fantastic. We we believe there's hard times in store. The government particularly, when they are going to look for places to cut costs in the field in education just like they did in the health. Because there's three areas where the government spends tremendous amounts of money: education, health and social welfare and those are the three that any conservative government is going to start attacking, right across Canada, it's not just unique to B.C. You're in for hard times and they are going to get tougher. I think that Bill 82 proved that out, in the stance of the

Ministry of Education and proved, I think, what's happening. Your community college councils no longer bargain. We know they say they do but in truth, they don't. The Public Service Employer's Council calls the shot and if anybody doesn't believe that, they're being very, very naive. The guy who heads that is a guy names Mike Davis, Chairman of the Government Employee Relations Bureau, he calls the shot because Treasury Board is calling the shot. All the bucks are coming from the same place. So you can believe what you will, but we believe that to be the facts.

AUCE: I suppose you've answered this saying the Treasury Board is calling the shots. Did you notice in the cabinet shuffle they put universities in one ministry and colleges in another. As I understand it they put universities under research which McGeer's got and they left colleges in Education under the other fellow ... All of the news coverage indicated that universities alone were going to be under McGeer and everything else ...

ADAMS: You mean, they were going to keep the Universities Council ...

AUCE: Yes.

ADAMS: It doesn't matter, the same thing is going to happen. I really don't think it matters what the Ministry

AUCE: How often do the locals meet?

ADAMS: That's up to the locals. The by-laws require them to meet at least quarterly, it would depend on their own areas, many of them meet every month.

AUCE: The members of the women's committee, how are they chosen?

ADAMS: Through the components.

AUCE: What does that mean? Do they elect them?

ADAMS: Yes, the women from the components. If it's a component that has few women and some of them do (undecipherable) almost invariably at the component level.

AUCE: What about stewards?

ADAMS: Remember now, think about an economy of scale. I did say that we had 130 to 140 locals. If we have every local electing a member to the women's committee, we'd have an awfully large committee, we'd have to start meeting in a quorum. So when you think about these things, please remember that there is an economy of scale.

ADAMS: Does every local have a women's committee?

ADAMS: No they don't have women's committees and there hasn't been a need for it. There's been lots of input, there's been no trouble getting input into the women's committee. / We have a local in Victoria that has about 4,000 members, primarily women, and they've never felt the need for a women's committee. They've always had representation on the women's committee.

AUCE: (Question undecipherable)

/ It's certainly no problem forming a women's committee.

ADAMS: No, they meet as executives, it's a delegated structure of course. People are elected at the local levels in a referendum vote. In other words, every member casts a ballot, a secret ballot, we do it through the steward system. The chairperson of each local is automatically on the component executive and there can be a provision for more representation on the component executive, it's up to the component that those people are elected. Then the component executive sits down from amongst themselves they elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and so on. After the local elections, which are a referendum vote, elections after that are delegated. Not unlike every large organization. (A couple of sentences undecipherable).

AUCE: What about shop stewards. How do people become shop stewards?

ADAMS: They are elected at the work place, by the people at work.

AUCE: How about the delegates to convention?

ADAMS: Elected at the local level.

AUCE: I just want to go back to this question of the structure of bargaining. You say it's going to get more difficult.

ADAMS: It is difficult. More difficult than it is now. More and more difficult.

AUCE: What's BCGEU's attitude towards formal accreditation. Do you see this as a weapon for the employer and are you opposing it?

ADAMS: No, we don't see it as a weapon for the employer and we think that people in the education field would be better served by some kind of province-wide sector bargaining. We don't agree with CUPE's stance on this. We think CUPE are wrong that they're doing is playing political games with their locals and that's why so many CUPE locals are having disastrous strikes. (undecipherable). We see nothing wrong with sector bargaining.

AUCE: Do you think accreditation is on the agenda for universities and colleges?

ADAMS: Yes, I do. I'm not quite sure how it will work. I think they'll probably start with the teachers. I've been expecting for the last three years to have something happen in Victoria which would require all the school districts to bargain collectively or at least in broad areas rather than the accreditation that you see now. I've been expecting that to happen and it hasn't happened. I think that's where it will start. I think they'll require the BCTF to bargain collectively with some agency representing the school districts.

AUCE: An area that was mentioned, the importance of student employees receiving the benefits in the contract. What's BCGEU's attitude towards them being members of the local union and participating.

ADAMS: We insist on it. As for what you mean by being covered by the terms of the collective agreement - requires them to join the union, pay the initiation fee and hope to get the benefits.

AUCE: Do you see trying to move in negotiations to, I guess, the definition of the bargaining unit away from (undecipherable) the student workers on the campuses.

ADAMS: We are going to make that a major project next year, a research project.

There are so many student employment projects going on that it's almost impossible to get a handle on it. We've identified, I think, at last count, a dozen or thirteen, I can't remember, probably more because in the last three months (undecipherable). Everybody's into it, it's a disaster, for us anyway. We're going to try to make that a major project next year, developing contract language and the rest. Yes, try to get a handle on it. We don't want to be in a situation where students are used as scabs, you'd better believe it. So far we've avoided that. That doesn't mean we're opposed to students working, we're not, we'll offer them orderly contract language.

AUCE: Further to what you said: it's definitely a problem that we face because the Local 2 strike we have, a third of our membership is part time. They have their jobs because they were students and if they didn't cross the picket line they were no longer students therefore they lost their jobs. They were faced with the (undecipherable) that is something we face.

ADAMS: Well, then, you'll have to keep that up in your collective agreement.

AUCE: Oh, yes, that is a problem, we relate to that obviously. The other thing I wanted to ask you about: can you briefly explain the financial structure. In order words, I know that the dues structure is 1% and just to tell us where the money goes, like a certain amount goes to per capita grants and so on.

ADAMS: Well, OK, I don't know whether I said this previously. The BCGEU is quite a centrist organization. We're not a decentralized organization, we're not ashamed of this, we think in this day and age, particularly in the public service that you need a centrist organization to maintain the strength and we hope the discipline to deal with the most difficult of all employers - the government. So our dues structure is very simple: it's a straight one per cent. The components I think at the moment get a \$1.75 rebate per member, but they get a minimum of \$3,000 a month. That's a fair amount of money because the vast majority of things are paid for at the headquarters level, like the education we were talking about, all BCGEU education courses the members are booked off the job, so that's paid for. Most bargaining expenses are paid for, the defence funds provides for (undeciph.) expensive arbitration cases. So our components don't have that much (undeciph.) and some of them have a lot of money. I don't know how much AUCE has but I have four components, one of them has over \$100,000 now. I don't know what we're ever going to do with it. We're not broke.

AUCE: What I mean is, what I think you should explain to the people, like I mean I've met with you so I know the information. What comes out of the dues? So, okay, they pay a per capita payment to the CLC (undeciph) what do they get for their 1%, where does it go?

ADAMS: OK. The one percent all goes into the same coffers and in return we give the component a rebate of \$1.75, remember a minimum of \$3,000. The component is then required to fund their component locals. Now they do that on what we call an imprest account system, each local will have depending on its size and the component, three, four or five hundred dollars whatever, they expend funds for meeting halls, etc. they simply put it in, the way an imprest account works, they just put in the bills and they get returned. The components, through that system, bear the major cost. The only costs the components really have that's significant, are wage loss for meetings and what have you, but again that's handled centrally and they are billed for it. We (undeciph.) the loss and we pay them, in turn we bill the components.

AUCE: (undecipherable) they pay any of the dues?

ADAMS: No, they have an imprest account, they pay current expenses, meeting halls, stationery, that sort of stuff, but they don't incur any bills of any size, so there's no requirement that they should have that kind of money.

AUCE: What if the locals decided that they wanted, say, to give a donation to a local charity or something like that. Can they vote to get those funds?

ADAMS: No, we have what we call a central finance policy adopted by the executive. We have an area council system which I don't think we've talked about. We have 12 areas in the province and all the locals in the union belong to an area council. There's a separate funding arrangement for those area councils. We expect those area councils, and the membership in those area councils, to get involved in community activity and if there's going to be funding for charity or something like that it comes through the area councils - Vancouver area Council, Abbotsford, and so on. But, no, we don't expect locals to make direct donations of any sort. If there are labour donations, you know, to a union in trouble, then they come to us.

AUCE: What is the relationship between area council and the components?

ADAMS: They're completely separate. The structure of the area council is that the executive of each local put a member, they elect a member, each local elects one of its members to sit on the area council. The area council executive, in turn, elect their own officers. They have regular meetings and any member in the area can attend at which time they decide on what kind of community affairs they're going to get involved in. We spend a fair amount of time trying to convince membership that they should get involved in community affairs.

AUCE: It's kind of a parallel to the component?

ADAMS: That's right, for that purpose, for community purposes. Now they also get involved in things like, I sume you never them them, they have regular dinners for retirement. As members retire we honour them with something like a dinner, a plaque things like that, so we expect the area councils to fulfill that role. And they handle the social affairs too, picnics

AUCE: Back to contracts ... what are BCGEU's major bargaining points, what are the things you consider your priorities moving towards (undecipherable)?

ADAMS: Well, the last couple of rounds of bargainings were things such as family leave and I think we've successfully completed that. The benefit package is such now that it's going to be difficult to expand upon it because we have ^{already} every employe paying the full cost of dental, the full cost of medical. The last round of bargaining there was a provision in the contract, now we're going to put some emphasis on, for some kind of legal insurance, you know, just like group health insurance. We think that's one area that has to be explored. And, of course, there's occupational health and safety, it's a big thing. We also, I think, are going to get deeply involved in various types of union counselling, we're developing a course now and our structure provides that each local elect a committee for this. For the future, we believe that there I'm going to use the term saturation, but that's not the right term. But you reach a point in time where you know there are going to be no huge gains to be made. Indications, for example, after you reach a certain

point from then on the gains are going to be steady, but you know they're not going to be huge, you know they're not going to be tremendous, we'll get a day here, a day there, particularly when you're way beyond the norm. I think many of your contracts are that way. That's the same way with most fringe benefits. But we reached our plateau so what we're going to try to get for them are innovative things like the one we're interested in right now that'll give us some kind of legal insurance. We're kicking around the various ways to do it.

AUCE: You gave some examples of some recent strike situations that some BCGEU locals were involved in. I wonder if you could just outline for us some of BCGEU's experience, some of the discussions you might be having around strategy, as alternatives to strikes, and how in general you see strikes in the public sector?

ADAMS: Well, first of all, we believe that you have all the debating ^{you want} before you go on strike, but once you go on strike, the debate ends. Now, under our constitution, any group that goes on strike and wants access to the strike fund, the provincial executive starts calling the shot and we don't go on strike without putting a great deal of thought into the strategy of that strike before we call the strike. When the strike is called, we have an elected strike committee but I might add that the executive also assigns staff and there's pretty rigid control on it. We believe that you have to have absolute discipline, you can't play games with it, and using that method we can safely say we've won all our strikes, legal or illegal.

AUCE: Can you talk a bit about development of strategy?

ADAMS: OK, but often when you're talking about strategy

AUCE: Putting pressure on.

ADAMS: (indecipherable)...the larger groups by means of what you call part-of-group strategy (?)...Under law, a lot of unions don't realize, or don't think about it, when you declare a strike or call a strike you don't have to take everybody out, there's no requirement, you can just take out a few people, in significant groups. We've used that (word)...You can take out X amount of people and have the others (indeciph.)...and you could in theory maintain the group on strike for ever, with very little cost to the members of the bargaining unit.

AUCE: (indecipherable)

ADAMS: First of all, the success of a union is not going on strike, it's not going on strike. You don't measure success by the amount of strikes. I would think just the reverse. If the contract is not (indeciph.)...you measure success by the fact that you don't go on strike. It's a different philosophy. We believe, and certainly I believe this, the easiest thing in the world is to hype the workers up to go on strike. That's easy. Any idiot can do that. The trick is to get them back with their heads still held high, winning the damn strike. So, if you believe that, as I happen to believe it, then the trick is to negotiate decent collective agreements without going on strike. In other words...(indeciph.)...build a situation, create a situation, be in control of a situation, but you don't have to go on strike. And that's our (objective), always our (objective). We're opposed to strikes, we always are opposed to strikes. Strikes mean that the collective bargaining process has failed, that it's not (indeciph.) That's a difference in

philosophy. So we're more proud of the fact that we've had very few strikes than we are of the strikes that we've won.

AUCE: You mentioned something called union counselling, could you outline what that is.

ADAMS: OK, what we found, like everybody else must have experienced, that when people get sick, for example, then all kinds of problems arise. Quite often they're not in a position to deal with it because, maybe they're too sick to even contact anybody, or their relatives don't know who to contact, or they get confused. What we want to have happen is our committee members visit them, just to talk with them, if nothing else just to leave them a little card saying if you need any help just contact me. That's counselling. Simply trying to direct that person to the correct staff person in the Union necessary to correct it, whether it's a problem with their group insurance, whether it's a problem with their indemnity plan, or whether it's simply some other kind of problem. We also, like every other union that has a large group of members, have a problem with alcoholism, drug abuse, and family problems and all the rest of it. And, like everybody else, we're (indeciph.)...for a drug and alcohol abuse program. And if you're going to do that, you at least have got to start to train stewards to recognize the problems when they see it. Not to try to deal with it, because you're not going to train people to be experts in counselling alcoholics, but you've certainly got to make people aware of the signs when a member is experiencing serious problems, so that somebody can flag it, and so that some kind of treatment can be had...(inaudible)...Then there's all sorts of marital problems and family problems and so on. But you don't try to train people to deal with all of those problems, you simply try to train them to recognize the problems and direct that person to the proper area to get help.

AUCE: In other words, the Union has taken a lot of the burden of that kind of thing...(indeciph.)...(off of) management?

ADAMS: Well the Union has always done that. In drug and alcohol, management has paid lip service to it. We do have a program now that's not sufficient. In this last round of collective bargaining we (inaudible) a much more comprehensive program...When I tried to say that we were going to develop (indeciph.), we've already made provision for these things in the collective agreement, like the legal insurance, the drug and alcohol abuse program, and so on, and so on. The structure has to be, the vehicle has to be the collective agreement, then you develop the (program).

AUCE: Can you give us an idea of what percentage of employees who are not stewards and are not officers would go to educational (indeciph.)...

ADAMS: Very few. Our priorities are with the stewards and local officers.

AUCE: If a local elected more people as their stewards would that

be counter to the financial policy (of the BCGEU).

ADAMS: Well, it depends on what we're talking about. Not everybody that goes to the basic steward's course is a full-fledged steward, there's some flexibility there. Not everybody that goes to the local officer's training course is always a local officer, there's some flexibility there. But I wouldn't want to mislead you. Remember, economy of scale again. We're booking people off the job and paying all their wage cost. (indeciph.)...Our advanced steward's course is a week, five days, which means that they are booked off the job from Monday to Friday, and of course they're travelling, all over the province. So it's a very expensive proposition. (inaudible). We're not going to try to educate 46,000 people on that basis, it's impossible.

AUCE: How long are stewards elected for, and how many stewards per number of people.

ADAMS: Well, it's on a worksite basis. So one steward might represent 30 people, or he might represent 12 people, or he might represent 3 people. If we have a liquor store, in Terrace for example, with 9 employees, they'll have a steward. We might also have a liquor store in Vancouver, with 35 employees, and still only have one steward, just to use an example. Where you have large units you might have more than one steward. There's no firm numbers when it's on a worksite basis. Stewards have to be right on the worksite. We want a steward on every worksite.

AUCE: Is there a maximum number, because our locals vary between around 100... (indeciph.)

ADAMS: But you're a little different, all your membership are involved in definable institutions. We have people...any place there's a wide spot in the road we have members. There are ranger stations, liquor stores, highway guards, people that fly airplanes, drive ships. They're all over the place, and there in small...some places there are only...a place like Ocean Falls there are probably only half a dozen or so members... (inaudible)... It's a different structure, it has to be different.

AUCE: OK, I was just wondering, if it's a ball park figure.

ADAMS: No, we don't try to do that because there's no need for it. We provide...there's enough stewards to provide the coverage in the workplace. Like Medical Services Plan in Victoria, there are about 1500 members working in that one building. I don't know, I suppose there must be at least a dozen stewards...they've got one on each floor or more.

AUCE: Ok, the other question about education is: What if in a particular local the local executive and the stewards all thought that the membership was being kind of laid-back, apathetic, they wanted to sort of get things going, they to put out some educational material that specifically concerned those local members at that institution. Would doing that, and then billing it thru the provincial, or whatever, run counter 1) to the financial policy

or run counter 2) to some public relations or other, educational policy within the union?

ADAMS: Well, the answer to all that is No, it would not run counter to any policy. We do have one large local in Victoria that prints a regular paper, for example, a newspaper, a newsletter, what you will. And there are others (do the same). They have to get the payment authority from the component, they simply just don't decide to do it, and then away they go. The component would have to authorize it. I don't think the component would turn it down. I don't think they turn down things like that. There are no hard and fast rules on things like that. (inaudible)...whether we have a financial policy. We do. It covers things such as expenses, donations, honorariums, you know, the usual...it's a fairly lengthy document, but we don't try to cover things like how much you can pay for a meeting hall, or whether or not you can put out a regular newsletter. First of all, we'd probably do it thru the area office, which means the cost might be virtually zilch. I was just thinking that the one in Victoria (indeciph.)... We have duplicating facilities, and a Gestetner, and one of those thingam'jigs that cut stencils, pictures, all that sort of thing. In the office there...what they do is, simple. A work-party from the local comes in and they run it off, and so the cost is virtually nothing.

AUCE: ...undecipherable...The more I listen to the structure of the BCGEU the more I am impressed with how radically different it is from what I've seen in AUCE. In some ways it's really hard for me to deal with those differences because it's ..you know.. my initial reaction is I'm going to get swallowed up in this huge organization that's very centralized and it's not clear to me how I'm going to be able to deal with these differences I have without undecipherable or even to maintain the kinds of things that AUCE locals have and the relationship between the local leadership and the membership and so with all of that in mind I'd sort of put the general questions to be drawn about the ... what is it that the BCGEU is really a substantial benefit that we should consider accepting something that's so radically different?

BCGEU: But that's been possible and quite financial. You're asking me to make a value judgement on your values, and that's impossible. If you're asking my personal opinion, I'll tell you. I don't think you can afford some of these things that you've been through! You know, you were forming a group during a hey-day of organising and of negotiating in the public service and it would all be very well during that particular period of time, but that time is gone. Recognise it or not it's gone. Now, you've had some successes; you did have some success with that, but when times are tough, I don't believe, it's been my experience after quite some years; and you can disagree with me that membership don't want you to go back and keep asking every pleasantries; they elect people and they elect leadership and they select leadership and they expect that leadership to lead. If they don't like the leadership, they'll soon tell you, they'll get rid of you - they do that at the ballot box. But this business that every decision has to be made on the shop floor, is absolutely ridiculous; that's not the kind of system that's going to work in this country.

AUCE: It came from Britain.

BCGEU: Some groups, now, do transpose that into Canada, it does not work, no more than the Swedish business can be brought over, again, much more typical in Provincial Canada.

BCGEU: But my opinion, for whatever it's worth, and I think the majority of people in the BCGEU, the membership, when they elect leaders, they expect those leaders to lead. If they don't like the job, they'll soon tell you. You can beat your head about how many people are going to attend a local meeting, but if you're expected to take every question back to a local meeting to have a decision made, it is in my opinion an abrogation of duty. Why elect people to lead if they don't do that? That's not leadership; it's anarchy! This beef.... So we are quite different from AUCE, and from what little I know of the history of your organisation, I don't think you can survive under your present structure, you know, maybe you will, you're being warned.

AUCE: Getting back, when you were being asked, 'If the local determined that they wanted to do some sort of education, can you expand a little bit on your education department; I know you have an education co-ordinator, and a whole department, but if a local, I would think, perhaps determined, or a component or whatever determined a particular need within their area, that they would be able to approach the education department with that need?

BCGEU: It happens on a regular basis, yes, but we wouldn't agree, I mean there would be no ... I mean the local wouldn't suddenly decide that they were going to develop and deliver a particular education programme. To be perfectly correct, if there was a demonstrated need, they would go to the Education Department, again we are talking about a very expensive proposal. I mean we have a policy of paying wage loss, the Education Department would develop it, and then make a recommendation to the Provincial Executive and then it would be acceptable. I can't ever remember them being turned down, as a matter of fact, I was at an Executive meeting on Friday, it was decided on the principle to develop a seminar awareness seminar for Labour Council Delegates, it's...you know...it's an ongoing thing. Now some of these things are not extensive programmes, but, uh, they're not....

AUCE: Education is important in the BCGEU. They spend a lot of time and effort and money in determining that need, ...

BCGEU: It's more of, ... but again, that can only work contingent upon the system, because it's prohibitively expensive. Nobody else does it very much. Take the auto workers again, the auto workers are quite a centralised organisation. You have to, I mean, it's a very expensive sort of thing, and if you're going to be in an organisation, for example, like CUPE National, where they collect their own dues, and pay a per capita for CUPE National then that means the National is responsible for all the union education programmes and they're all going to be starved for money. Our system works differently, and that's why.

AUCE: I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what the general situation is, if you have locals or one particular local that are negotiating, or have won particularly good clauses, how would you try to apply those clauses to other locals, is there any kind of systematic way of doing that?

BCGEU: Particularly if they are a vulnerable component? In the component 15, where we vote, recall them, now of all those locals sit on that executive and they meet on a regular basis and these are the kinds of things that we get them to talk about. We also, you know, of course, you know when I said earlier that we always assign a staff person, to every set of negotiations, well eh staff meet on a regular basis, too. And of course, last but not least we have a couple of ardent arbitration departments whose responsibility is to coordinate,

AUCE: Can you point out some examples of that?

BCGEU: Yeah, I think paid education leave, maybe...we made some success on it. I think Douglas College, I'm not sure, was it Douglas College, I'm trying to think but in one of them, we use that to expand another section of negotiations. And obviously, things like family leave, we try to transpose that into every collective agreement. I don't know, I can't remember the details, there are so many details ... high priority for awhile, Ah, most of our collective agreements reflect that. No, we deal with & negotiate with 'employer-run' private hospitals.

AUCE: Are contracts and negotiation demands developed through a contract and wage conference; how is that dealt with?

BCGEU: Yes, that's what we call a bargaining conference.

AUCE: And who attends?

BCGEU: The bargaining conference? The entire executive of every component turns up and attends that and all of the staff. We have a massive ... the bargaining conference is meant for people in the, we're talking primarily about the public service, because people from the other two components come, too, because obviously what happens in the public service is going to turn around and affect them too, because they're in the public sector, so of course.. That's where priority is set; priority and principle, we don't try to sit down at a bargaining conference and hammer it out that we're going to go for a 7½ % increase, see what you want at the conference, you've got to get into realities here, that's something different.

AUCE: Jack, what role does the Provincial Executive play in union affairs?

BCGEU: Well, there's, of course, heh, because we're quite a centralised organisation there is a very significant, every decision of significance is made by the Provincial Executive. They meet on a regular basis, monthly, or more often if more meetings are required. They receive a great deal of information from ah, quite a few committees, naturally, structured from that, quote, 'bargaining committees, and other types of committees, all of whom make reports, which may or may not be accepted by the Provincial Executive. The major departments of the union do the same thing, I make a report and so on, we make recommendations and they will be accepted or rejected, of course. They are involved in every major decision; they make the decision. With the exception of Convention, you know that

AUCE: Do they direct staff; do they set the priorities for the staff and for the General Secretary?

BCGEU: Nah, well, ah, they don't set any direct perimeters for staff. They will make the decisions based on the priorities and of course, then the staff are required to set those same priorities. They don't get involved directly with staff. Our Constitution is quite rigid - the direction of staff is the General Secretary's responsibility. And, I don't think a majority of them want to get involved in that. They make the decision and it's up to, it's the job of the staff to see that the job gets cleared up. That is to say they set the priorities, but not in the same way.

AUCE: Are they, did you say that the Provincial Executive are in closer contact with the members or in equal contact with the members? Like, I know that staff are in constant contact, or attempt a high profile in the 'GEU, do the Provincial Executive have a higher profile?

BCGEU: Well, that's a hard question to answer, because our structure, remember, we

BCGEU: response con't re 'higher profile' - - 'structure':

BCGEU: parallel the staff structure and the elected structure everywhere, from the local on up, I mean we are not as, I would say that at that level of course the reps in the area offices, would have more contact with the membership at large than would any single officer. In the local we might have a dozen, say in one area; an officer in one local, would only be in contact with the members in that local, unless he was a representative of the area council, whereas the staff member would be in contact with all members of the local. And I would say that that probably goes all the way up, I would probably have more contact with the membership, the officers of the union or locals at large than would any single executive except possibly the President. ... I could deal with them all ... basically an officer only deals with her or his obligations, you know they don't travel a lot for example, they do attend their own meetings, though.

AUCE: They work...

BCGEU: They work on a regular job.

AUCE: I'm curious, how a contract, how many contract proposals would be drawn up by the bargaining unit itself? Do they draw up their own, or are they decided at the component level?

BCGEU: Well, that depends on whether you're bargaining in the public service or whether you're outside of that direct public service. The membership of Okanagan College will offer their own proposals; somebody in Vancouver doesn't sit down and say 'these are what you're going to propose when you get down to negotiations'.

AUCE: And it would be similar for the components, in terms of the Master Agreement and the other -

BCGEU: Yeah, OK, now in the public service, things are somewhat different. The Master Agreement is the bargaining conference's priority, well while they're there. Component agreements become less and less important because the delicacy of the... it started under the AIB, where we were restricted in bargaining, and we simply made a decision that we were not going to have one component taking more than their slice of the pie. We must remember those percentages that the AIB allowed were due a work 'force'. And it had nothing to do with anything, else, and so we were not prepared to say go in, you see under the AIB, one would get 12% and the next one would have to take less.

AUCE: I want to ask you a question about the internal affairs, I want to make clear that's an internal question. I know that there's a 'Caucus', a democratic caucus, I think it's called, and I was wondering what the union's attitude is toward an organisation of that kind, within the union, and why there are those kinds of groups within the union?

BCGEU: Well, I'm not aware of a caucus called the 'Democratic Caucus', you may be right. The only group that we're aware of at this point in time, is an 'In Struggle' group. And if you want my views on that, I'll give them to you. We will fight them, our Executive intends to fight them to a standstill, we are not prepared to allow them / significant offices of our organisation.
to hold any

AUCE: Well, a lot of unions have so-called caucuses of one kind or another within the organisation, what would be the union's attitude toward that - would there be disciplinary procedures which you might apply against some people who were organising in some fashion, other than within the ...

BCGEU: Well, it's never happened yet and I don't see any reason for that to happen in the future, as long as they stay within the guidelines established in the Constitution. In answer, would we penalise somebody because they belonged to an organisation which the union might not agree with?

AUCE: Well, I know, say they were actively organising for example, say they were trying to run the elections or a re-call of a steward for example -

BCGEU: Ah, no, that's their democratic right. However, if we were being raided, for example, and they were assisting the raiding union, then we'd probably nail them to the cross. OK? You understand, that as long as they're working within the union, they can exercise their democratic rights. If they want to go, if they want to assist another union in a raid, that's another matter entirely.

AUCE: How are decisions, about discipline within the union, what's the, where is the decision going once it's been decided?

BCGEU: Our Executive, would take it to the CLC Executive.

AUCE: Do you have a 'charge' system in the union?

BCGEU: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. We have a provision in it, that on a temporary basis the Table Officers of a union can suspend an officer right up to an appeal. They can't do anything else with them, they can't be penalised - take away their unions cards and sign away their jobs ... Now, but they can (on a temporary basis) suspend them from office until an appeal of the Provincial Executive.

AUCE: If it's an Executive member who has a charge, who is the appeal body?

BCGEU: It would, if it's an Executive member it would still be the Provincial Executive who would be the body that would hear the case. Because an Executive couldn't step to another completely different body. The standard procedure and, I think according to the rules, is that the senior elected body of the union makes the decision and I think that a major concern, and if you have a concern in that area is how the appeal system works. Who makes the decision is one thing, but how that high appeal deals with that member and how that appeal works, are in my, I would advise of the importance. So under our system there is an appeal procedure, for every decision made by an exect'v body, up to and including the CLC, which would put it as high as the Provincial could go. Decisions made on a grievance are made by the grievor, and when you make up an appeal to a special instruction committee, at least this appeals committee. Now, they have ahve the final ... they're just not going to keep grievances alive that long, there is no use in repeating a grievance, with time limits that have elapsed. So, when you're talking about a 'contract grievances' and appeal procedure, you've got to cut it off. YOU have no choice. But, even there you have an appeal procedure. Do you have an appeal procedure, for grievances?

AUCE: Yes, yes.

BCGEU: Well, who do you appeal with, if you're not happy with they've handled your grievance?

AUCE: In local 1 @ UBC, our membership decides whether to proceed to arbitration on each case.

BCGEU: Yes, but if I'm a member and I don't like a decision of the G/Cttee, how

BCGEU continued...how do I appeal?

AUCE: The membership is the ultimate authority.

BCGEU: Ah, that's not worth a damn. You should have an appeal above that, I do you know I would go to the Labour Relations Board. We do have an appeal above that, that's what I'm saying, there should be an appeal, but anyways...

AUCE: Just one final thing, when you mentioned your position in regard to "In Struggle", that you would oppose them holding offices within the union

BCGEU: HM, hmm

AUCE: What would happen if one of the membership guys from in the union elected someone.

BCGEU: Then they would serve out their term I suppose

AUCE: There is no mechanism for...

BCGEU: Nobody would be deprived of their offices simply because they, because of a political thing of that nature, you misinterpreted what I said, what I said was the union philosophically will oppose that kind of ideology every step. We simply will oppose it. When I say we, I mean the union, that's a decision made by our executive which I certainly endorse. We are not prepared to have the force of the extreme (end of side of tape)

AUCE: ya, ok, you said that was your political stand

BCGEU: OK, ya, but I'm saying in a small sense.

AUCE: What do you mean?

BCGEU: OK, a union has to have a structure for collective bargaining it also has to have a structure for representation. Our structure for both political and collective bargaining is approximately the same, that's not true in every union, there quite different in CUPE, there is no parallel, that's all.

AUCE: So you mean that...

BCGEU: When I say political I mean small^p union politics, I mean how people are elected, how they run for office etc.,

AUCE: OK, The last question is I wonder if you could outline and you have sort of touched on this in a number of ways, exactly where you stand in local jurisdiction and stuff, I think a lot of people's questions have been oriented towards who has authority here and who has authority there, what do these larger bodies do... and I would just like to get a sense of what exactly the locals do, It seems to me that you mentioned several times that they are responsible except for the public service or, uhmm, or negotiations.....what other kind of areas to the locals and the committee's participate in?

BCGEU: Just about anything, resolutions to convention for example I don't know ah, the usual work and stuff of a local union, but once again, our local unions don't have, I don't think cause I don't know your structure that well the same type of autonomy, that yours do, they don't have autonomy (?)

AUCE: I, you mentioned something about raiding, you expressed it quite strongly that if someone...that if they were like, giving out cards on campus

BCGEU: Well I was trying to use an example that everyone would understand... We have not been raided for a while and never successfully so...

AUCE: OK, my question is uhmm right now because AUCE is going through the process of completing its various investigations there are alot of rumours floating around about people being signed up into various unions including the BCGEU and I was wondering if the BCGEU has a policy on whether any union cards be distributed while AUCE is going through this process?

BCGEU: No, we don't have a policy at all, well on whether or not a card can be distributed, but first of all, ah, it would be pointless to distribute cards, there is only two ways, well one, one is we could raid you in the seventh or eighth month of your collective agreement each year, that's the only time we could pass out cards and the other way is we go through a decertification where no cards are necessary, so every member of AUCE could sign a card today and unless its the seventh and eighth month of the agreement its meaningless, so if there are any cards being distributed it would be, I don't know even know what the expiry dates of your agreements are but if, I'm sure it isn't the seventh and eighth, because you were on strike not long ago.

AUCE: It's very helpful for us to hear that from someone who isn't going to report it back to other people and sort of...

BCGEU: I didn't say we wouldn't raid you, I didn't say we would, we haven't made any plans, we haven't even thought about it, what I'm saying in a technical sense anybody who is distributing cards would be immediatly, I do know the law that's my job I'm in charge of organising, I do know how to do it, I know how to raid too ha, ha, ha, we, we have no intention of raiding you no, no plans to release... sort of

AUCE: Again, I mean this fraternally or sororially, uhmm, has the BCGEU ever raided anyone?

BCGEU: Sure

AUCE: What are the reasons you would do this?

BCGEU: ^{We} Raided the Merchant Service Guild, & we raided the, ... hopefully, and we... uh, lets leave it at the Canadian Merchant Service Guild, ah, we believe it was our jurisdiction and we don't believe they were giving the people very good representation, and they obviously agreed with us because they signed our cards. When I say we raided them and they charged us with raiding, we beat the charge its a little more complicated than that uhmm (ya we went back and forth on that) You have to understand in the public service because it covers such a wide area of jobs and uh, many other unions that they should have some jurisdiction....

that

believe

BCGEU CON'T : (audio was impossible to understand, coughing etc.) We haven't raided anybody lately. Ah, I should say something, I hope you understand something, I don't care, I will give you all the answers to as many questions as possible but don't be under any mis-apprehension we haven't made any decision that we would take you if you if you applied. I know you have a serious problem; you have had some serious problems and we are not sure we want those problems. So, uhmm you know if you ever decide to come to us there is going to be some serious talks about it. We certainly haven't made up our minds that we are prepared to accept you, you've got some real tight cases to get out of but uhmm, that's your business, but you understand.

AUCE: The last question, hmm, can you just briefly sort of outline how do you see GEU's role its relationship and its role in the Fed, and the CLC like CUPE plans at this point it seems ah to be some kind of ah---undecipherable... I wondered how BCGEU saw its role I guess more within the BC Federation
-----undecipherable-----

BCGEU: Well ^{we are} ~~in the~~ larger scheme in BC so of course we have some..undecipherable well anyhow ah, we believe and I think its a fair comment to say that the majority of the trade unions in Canada would agree that we are the most effective public service union in Canada irrespective of size, because of that we have more influence in the councils of labour than alot of other unions do who might be much larger. Uhm, John Fryer on behalf of the BCGEU probably has a lot more influence in the house of labour in Canada than other representative people do and their are alot of people, and (undecipherable) but we have a reputation of being a very effective organization we do quite a good job for the members and thats not true of very many unions in the public camp or the private sector these days. That may be a hard-one for you to swallow but we feel that is exactly right. John is a Vice-President of the CLC and he has been a vice-president for quite some time and he was elected form the BCGEU and not from NUPGE, very few vice-presidents come from the unions in our time.

AUCE: I would like to wrap it up, are there any questions you would like to ask the affiliation committee?

BCGEU: Not really , I would like to just give you a piece of unmasked for advice, I think you must find a home and uh, go through this affiliation process whatever decision you might make that's yours to make but for goodness sake I don't think you can go through some of those traumatic experiences you have gone through in the last couple of years what will happen is you will have reached raiding or going through , or having some of your own members going through this decertification process and whether there is acceptance or not it is completely demoralising and uh, you should find yourselves a home. Where ever you decide to go make your decision as quickly as possible and do it, what-ever.

End of interview/ V.G., S.P., M.M., B.I., J.S.

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