

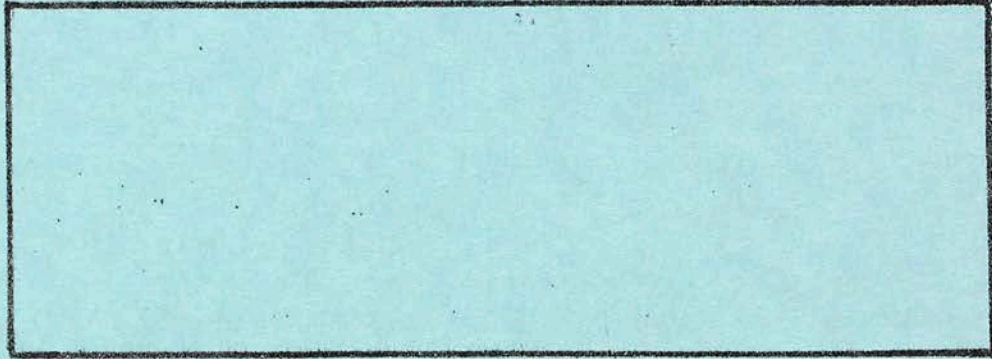
Association of University and College Employees

LOCAL No. 1 (U.B.C.)

June 12, 1978.

BULLETIN 7

FROM THE CONTRACT COMMITTEE



-8 negotiating sessions to date and precious little to report concerning substantial progress. One minor re-wording proposed by the University and revised by the Union has been signed (Article 31.04(a) - Reclassification).

-but, there have been a few significant developments:

1. No University wage proposal has been placed on the table for Union consideration. Strudwick informed the Contract Committee that this was a typical management tactic or ploy and that the wage package would be introduced at the most opportune time for the University. Our arguments to the effect that this process had not been followed in the past by the University negotiating teams left Strudwick unmoved, as did our suggestions that the process was counter-productive - essentially since the Union's proposals had been in the University's hands since February 28, 1978.

2. At the May 30th session, Strudwick stated that we had been "able to gain a rich agreement" in the past. She continued: "You have gained as many advances as you can in the last three agreements." It was now time to "consolidate". What is the University's concept of "consolidation"? For the answer we must look to their proposals for some guidance.

If you have read the University's proposals as circulated in Bulletin #6 you can only be struck by one overriding impression - that the University's proposals are invariably aimed at undermining or restricting present rights as outlined in our present collective agreement. Their re-wordings are not mere housekeeping items, as they attempt to maintain, but attempts to fundamentally alter and emasculate many of our rights.

Examples abound - from their first proposal to change the process by which a temporary employee becomes a continuing part-time or full-time employee (their proposal is to change the process from 66 accumulated days to 66 consecutive days of service) to their final proposal whose thrust is to slap time limits on the processing of grievances. Sandwiched in between are several other proposals, two of which outline their stated desire to terminate employees who accept gainful employment during either a leave of absence or vacation. And, how is the University to police such a provision? Apparently by word of mouth.

From the first session the Contract Committee has repeatedly stated that the Union - hence the membership - would not entertain proposals whose intent was to take away or undermine previously negotiated rights and benefits. We have listened to Strudwick's rationalizations for the University's proposals, but we have been generally unimpressed.

3. The more things change, at times, the more they remain the same. A common thread of mistrust, hinging on dislike, even contempt, has spanned four years of negotiations with the University. The faces of their negotiators change - as do ours - but thematic links remain. During the May 30th session, Strudwick waxed vitriolic about the "sixteen instances" in our agreement which allowed or encouraged employees every opportunity possible not to work for the University. She stated that leaves of absences were going to be restricted in the future. "Everything is on the increase and we've got to stop." And, to put the icing on the cake, she indicated that compassionate leave was one of the "sixteen instances".

4. The procedure followed during this course of negotiations - a short span of time to date - has been to present a brief rationale for each suggested revision. That has been followed by

a more detailed explanation and exchange of questions. Invariably, the University's responses to our proposals have been negative - from a stated desire to retain the wording in the present agreement to "we will resist that very strongly" to "I have a big 'No!' written beside that one" and onto "a very definite 'no'" and then to "a big no".

The procedure proved to be frustrating after a couple of passes, so much so that the Contract Committee decided to try to accelerate the process of negotiations. At the May 31st session we presented a total package or approach to all the proposals on the table. The Contract Committee outlined and presented 3 proposals for possible agreement and 5 revised Union proposals. We dropped 11 of our proposals and remained with the wording of 12 of our original proposals. We informed the University that they had promised to come back with alternative wording on 4 proposals, while the Union would respond to another 3. Furthermore, the Committee suggested returning to the wording in the present agreement on 17 of the University's proposals. We stated that, to date, the University had provided no justification, compelling of otherwise, for any re-wording of those items. Finally, we indicated verbally another area for possible settlement.

The approach apparently caught Strudwick by surprise and the meeting was adjourned quickly to permit the University an opportunity to peruse our proposals. What the Contract Committee had done was to jettison a number of proposals which can easily find their way back to the bargaining table in the future - proposals which, although logical, the Contract Committee did not feel to be vital issues. What remained were important re-wordings, union security items, and the monetary proposals.

We had expected that the following session might witness some movement on the part of the University. Instead, Strudwick merely stated that some of our proposals were unacceptable. She asked for some clarifications and signed the first article to date. In response to a query, we stated that our positions in regards to the University's proposals had not changed over the past 24 hours. Before departing, Strudwick concurred with the Contract Committee that the time was approaching when the University's wage proposal would be on the table.

5. The June 8th session had been "scheduled" to begin at 1:00 pm., but it did not get under way until 1:15 pm. The session opened with the Contract Committee expressing concern about the slow pace of negotiations and about the lack of regular meetings - an all-day session had been planned for the 8th, but it was truncated by Strudwick who changed it to a two hour meeting. The Committee then responded to a few of the issues arising from the previous session.

For the first time the University Negotiating Committee had arrived at a session en masse - even though they were 15 minutes late. Such a display of discipline we had not witnessed in the previous 7 sessions. The Contract Committee had not expected the session to last more than 15 minutes and we were not disappointed by our prognostication. The Committee had indulged in further speculation prior to the meeting and had come to the conclusion that the University might deliver their package (containing wages) at either this meeting or the next one.

Strudwick also expressed concern about the pace of negotiations. She then reviewed some of our proposals at the end of which she stated that the next meeting would include a package proposal - replete with a wage offer - "to bring these negotiations to a head". Furthermore, she said that the University was not willing to give up all of their proposals, conveniently overlooking the fact that she had responded negatively to the vast majority of our proposals. She indicated that she was able "to foresee some heavy bargaining...hopefully."

The next meeting is to take place on Thursday, June 15th. By that time the Contract Committee will have had the opportunity to speculate as to the contents of the University's package offer and to develop some further approaches in an effort to resolve these negotiations as quickly as possible. The course of negotiations - and their success - now rests on your shoulders. If we are to resist the attempted inroads and to negotiate some necessary gains and to arrive at an acceptable wage increase, then you - the membership - must be equal to the challenge.

Bulletin #8 will follow shortly on the heels of the University's "package". Our apologies for the delay in distributing this Bulletin.