

Meeting of the representatives of AUCE Local #1 with Len Guy and John Squire of the B.C. Federation of Labour - 3 Dec. 1975 - B.C. Fed. Office.

Guy/ The BC Fed is in business to hold up not hinder strike efforts, but we do get extremely concerned when the co-ordination of strike efforts is not planned with those people who are going to be asked to put their pay on the line for your settlement. Our affiliates expect us to co-ordinate efforts, including those of unaffiliated people. All unions in the province have dealt with and attempted to follow our policy on picketing. We must protect the weapon we have built. The sanctity of the picket line is stronger here in B.C. than anywhere else. We think your union used the atom bomb on day one of the strike and this has caused nothing but problems. We have had about 150 calls concerning this matter and this problem arose because of insufficient planning. You have a city out there and people normally picket their places of operation. You have created a total effort from day one which is an extreme danger. One of the biggest groups probably cannot hold their members beyond Sunday and we cannot have the picket line destroyed. We ask you to give really serious consideration to removing the picket line on Sunday and picket the way we say. We would use all the tools in our power to get you a settlement. We have told the university management they will be in trouble with the entire labour movement if a settlement is not reached. We can arrange meetings immediately for you and you must take a realistic position at these meetings. Don't maintain the kind of picket lines we cannot enforce. We cannot stop CUPE from crossing your picket lines unless it is done with us. We don't want you to destroy our tools, which we feel you are doing. Every union that goes on strike wants to beat back the whole world on the first day and we are liable to get hit with back-to-work legislation if their strikes are not successful.

Ian/ I did recommend your point of view to the executive and we discussed picketing individual buildings.

Nancy/ If we picket individual buildings we would pick out the most important buildings - those receiving the greatest use, i.e., the library. There is a concern that we shouldn't make any more trouble for CUPE than we are presently. With individual buildings being picketed, some of their people may get paid and others must honour the picket lines and not be paid.

Ian/ Please clarify your objections to the present picketing.

Guy/ You are going to have a maximum effort until Sunday night. After Sunday we have a problem as we don't want picket lines around the entire operation. Hopefully we may be able to avoid that by getting you back to the bargaining table.

Squire/ Pickets would be at the actual place where your members are on strike next week - where employees are employed. Once you go beyond this area to picketing operations where you do not have any members it is more confused.

Guy/ This way there would be no problem in us handling the other unions.

Squire/ The problem is where there are no striking members employed. This could go on into next year if there is not an early settlement. We are going to have a problem in getting CUPE to honour the picket lines even under the terms we have suggested.

Guy/ You have a legal and moral right to picket buildings where you work and if CUPE people work there as well, they are going to have to honour your lines but they want the right to share and plan the picketing. They have agreed reluctantly to go along until Sunday night only.

Russ/ It was also CUPE's idea to picket pretty much in the same locations as we have now. He was saying there is a lot of problems internally in CUPE because of the passes being given to some people. We would be causing more problems if we picket individual buildings. We must live with these people long after this event.

Squire/ CUPE came here requesting that you remove those lines so they could have a meeting and I have a strong feeling that some are going over the hill on it and we are going to have some real dog fights. Your position is stronger if you are just picketing areas where you have members. Andrews is going to holler no matter where your pickets are. If you can justify keeping them out we have a chance to do this. They are looking for an excuse to run that line.

Guy/ It doesn't do anyone any good if they do this.

Nancy/ We looked at other unions when planning the strike and they picket their employers. The university employs us, not particular departments and we followed this example, picketing the University of British Columbia. This is another reason why we didn't picket individual buildings.

Guy/ We understand this. This happens in every dispute. The alternative is that thousands of people are putting their pay check on the line to help your strike. That is why this organization is used as a co-ordinator. You don't have the moral right to ask people to sacrifice their money to get you a settlement on day one because you have not tried other ways and if they don't respect your picket lines, your weapon is gone.

Squire/ A very short time ago unions were crossing picket lines of other unions and 15 years ago this was par for the course. All kinds of deals had to be made before you could ensure a solid picket line. Andrews was saying he was going to cross and if we give anyone an opportunity to do that we are crazy and your organization is crazy to allow this to happen.

Guy/ With the pulp and forest workers we had to get involved in the picketing. The alternative is indiscriminate picketing and people crossing the lines, which is the situation in other provinces and in the states.

Squire/ Even picketing does not win a settlement sometimes anyway.

Guy/ We plan them together and that is why the picket line means something. The people in other provinces do not win strikes.

Squire/ In some areas it is considered a win just to get back to work and in some places people take a loss to get back to work and it is because they failed to get the support of the other workers. The most effective time in any bargaining is the 11th and 12th hours prior to a strike. There is no such thing as a short strike any more. There are

very few employers who are taking short strikes. When you depend on other unions to support your strike for a long time you must work with them. There are criticisms from affiliates of your organization in not responding to our suggestions. I would suggest that you use them to the best of your ability to win the dispute.

Ian/ This has to be a short strike. Our membership will not go out on strike through December as there would be no reason for a settlement during the Christmas break. This has to be settled in the next week, one way or the other.

Guy/ That is so erroneous. If management realizes that there could be only a short strike they would have no pressure to settle.

Ian/ Our membership will have to go back.

Guy/ If you are going to involve the whole labour movement in this you must stay out and not play games. You made a decision to have everyone make a sacrifice.

Dick/ You are criticizing us for our picketing policy. We have laid the sanctity of our whole union on the line. The university knows what position we are in. They are negotiating in bad faith and we must do everything we can at this time to force a settlement.

Guy/ The only time the university is going to move realistically is when they realize they are involved in a real war.

Squire/ No one is being critical of what you are attempting to do. Obviously the university was not going to bargain with you until it got down to the nitty gritty. The only incentive you can give them is the withdrawal of your services. When you go into a strike which involves other trade unionists and other labour organizations, this requires a certain amount of consideration for the problems they have and that is not that they should have the right to work and cross your picket lines. It is commonsense because if this support is not attained, they will cross your lines.

Dale/ It was my understanding that the Fed was dedicated to opposing the federal wage and price controls. This dispute is not so much with the university as it is with the federal government. The university believes it is illegal to settle above the guidelines and it is time to get together over this.

Squire/ It is a fair chance that you are going to be hit with the controls.

Dale/ The federal government cannot enact legislation to cover provincial institutions.

Guy/ Don't hide behind that. That is just a matter of making the moves. It will be done. The name of the game is negotiate the best contract you can and not say anything to check whether they are monitoring the settlement.

Frances/ The problem there is that the university's proposal is contingent on prior application to the Board.

Squire/ That is going on everywhere right now. You cannot sign a contract anywhere in the country. For a union to go out on strike after the legislation was introduced is questionable.

Dale/ The university is working on Declarations of Intent and there is no basis in fact for them to take this stance.

Guy/ We understand that we are getting screwed as a labour movement, but we must face the practical problems. You are not going to take them on legally because they just put through legislation.

Squire/ - or terminate your strike, such as was done with the food workers.

Joan/ If we do call it off on Sunday night how are you going to help us?

Guy/ We will start accelerating the strike until the entire labour movement is behind you. We are trying to get it back to square one. You must slowly involve all the affiliates. Tomorrow, if you are willing, I think the Fed is prepared to approach both groups to get bargaining going again through the mediator. Are you willing to start bargaining?

Nancy/ (emphatically) Yes. We have sent a brief to the Board of Governors illustrating our eagerness to meet with the Board. This also outlines the articles left outstanding and reasons for each. We have not heard from them yet about a meeting. We know some of the members of the Board are anxious to meet with us.

Squire/ Normally you would have to have a third party involved in this.

Frances/ We do not need the services of a third person any more. We have been with the mediator for weeks and didn't get anything until the strike vote. We will call them up tomorrow and ask them to come to the table.

Guy/ It would then be them answering your request. If they asked for a meeting you would assume they wanted a quick settlement.

Dale/ We have heard that the Board of Governors wants to hear from us because they think they are not hearing the whole story. I don't think there is such a very great problem with the university, the problem is with the legislation and their interpretation of it.

Squire/ I suspect they will turn you down.

Guy/ It would be unthinkable of them to come to this meeting.

Frances/ The Labour Committee members have always said that they are the delegates of the Board of Governors, who is our employer and we have every right to meet with our employer, who is the Board of Governors.

Guy/ There is probably more pressure on them now as compared to before the break-off. It is not normal to ask for such a meeting and get it because this would imply that the negotiating team is left out. Is it not of prime importance that you get a quick resolution and does it not make sense that you should be continuing negotiations? Are you going to wait for the Board to get together for a meeting? Is not this saying that we want to meet with you to get a quick settlement? If they approached you would you not say - ah hah, we have got them -? Don't you feel there should be a third party to support this?

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Ian/ At the meeting on Sunday we will have to recommend that the strike continue on the same basis or stop at that point. If we were to take the position of picketing just buildings it would be weakening the strike so much we might as well call it off. We could win this strike this way only if it is a prolonger strike. Our membership will be forced to go back to work before Christmas, either winning or losing. We cannot recommend that the strike be reduced as you suggest. This would ensure just as many problems as presently because approximately 1/3 of the workers in another union would have to honour our picket lines and not get paid while the rest would work and be paid.

Guy/ We are not going to allow you to destroy the picket line. Before we are going to allow a wholesale crossing of the picket line we will remove them. We are not going to have people crossing picket lines.

Squire/ You had CUPE's position this morning. It is very difficult to impose your position on another organization. The meeting with the affiliates came out as we have said.

Guy/ I would suggest that if you are going to live in this labour movement you must grow up and stop behaving like children. We are not going to let you destroy the weapon we have built up over many years and in which you have little to do with the building.