

I feel very strongly that the membership is being asked to make an irrevocable decision based on a complete lack of any concrete information on what CUPE is offering us. There are only vague indications that "we will receive special assistance until the end of 1987" and that the Executive has asked "that CUPE give priority consideration to placing a National Rep. full-time on the campus..." and that this matter is being seriously considered by CUPE National".

It has always been the intention that these above mentioned matters would be negotiated before affiliation occurred. Indeed, our National Rep has been made aware many times, particularly by Ted Byrne and myself, over the last year that these would be demands made by us. During the last Executive meeting that I chaired before leaving office I raised the concern that I had as to who, given the coincidental - by virtue of our election occurring in the beginning of 1987 - change in the Executive of our local, would negotiate the terms of our affiliation. I suggested at the time that a negotiating committee be struck from the Executive and the membership to deal with this issue. Our CUPE Rep. suggested that the new President would be the logical person to take on this role - this would tend to support my contention that negotiations would take place. A representative from the National Office of CUPE was to come out here "to make us an offer". It is now being maintained that there was never any discussion with regards to the approaching "negotiations". Mr. Cam Masse did come to Vancouver on February 5th. What was his offer? If he did not come out here to negotiate, what was the purpose of his visit? I now have no choice but to assume that due to the change in the makeup of the Executive, and perhaps because of their lack of awareness of the complexities of the situation, that CUPE no longer felt they needed to offer us anything. This certainly smacks of opportunism on CUPE's part, if not bad faith and does not bode well for the future. If we can't negotiate terms before a vote on affiliation, it is going to be more difficult, if not impossible, to do so afterwards. Even the vague 'promises' mentioned in the information packet sent out to the membership are apparently not in writing.

I am also troubled by the existence of glaring errors in the financial material sent out. On the sheet headed: "It Will Cost Us Less If We Join CUPE", a comparison is made using several areas of expense between 1983 (before the service contract) and 1986 (during the service contract) with the intention of making the point that our expenses have been drastically reduced due to our contract with CUPE. I question the figures listed under 1986. For instance under Courses/Conferences the 1986 figures show 0. This is either serious oversight or misrepresentation. I can think of a number of expenses accrued in this area: We sent a delegate to the CLC Convention in Toronto, we sent someone to a course at Naramata (a CUPE run school, yes, but we still pay), I attended a Library Conference along with four other people, two Executive members were sent to the CUPE BC Convention in Vernon, three people attended a Continuing Legal Education two-day seminar, stewards attended courses at Capilano College. Under Legal/Professional again there is a 0. There were legal expenses in 1986. They may have been 'extraordinary', but then it seems to me legal expenses are always extraordinary. This particular listing leaves one with the very clear impression that if we join CUPE this type of expense will not exist. This is simply not true. For instance I spoke with representatives of two other CUPE locals recently who informed me that last year one spent around \$15,000 on legal/arbitration

expenses and the other spent \$5-6,000 on lawyers and a considerably larger sum of \$20,000 on the Trade Union Research Bureau (this expense - related to job evaluation - raises a question in my mind: if this is a resource available through CUPE - which it is - why was CUPE not used?). We will still have to pay for many services ourselves. CUPE has in the past made it clear to us that they would provide a lawyer if the issue has either national or regional ramifications, otherwise we pay. I would hate to think that we won't have that choice due to the lack of funds.

I was given the impression at the Feb. 26th General Membership Meeting that some people feel we now owe it to CUPE to join - after all they have taken care of us for the past two years. Don't forget, the majority of that assistance came out of our office, from our people and that will have to continue. We have paid on average something like \$13,000 per month in dues to CUPE over the last two years. Rest assured some of that money has been spent on us (especially the research and report on Ritchie & Assoc. where CUPE probably spent around \$10,000, but then we probably spent close to that ourselves) but not \$13,000 per month's worth. To a certain extent we are paying for protection - clout at the bargaining table, the financial feasibility of going on strike if necessary. And maybe, in the end, that's enough. Our need for vigilance will increase upon joining CUPE not decrease, which I fear is the mistaken notion some members may have. CUPE will not be coming in to take care of everything for us, nor should we want them to.

Before voting on affiliation we should know very clearly what we can expect from CUPE. CUPE is aware how financially difficult it is for us to join and are also aware of the need (due to the size of the collective membership of CUPE locals on campus of approximately 4,000 people) for a National Rep to be situated full-time on the campus. If a Rep services 8 locals - as ours does - how good can the service be?

What distresses me most is that we could have - and should have - gotten a better deal. We are a large local (3rd or 4th largest in B.C.), we are not without the power to make demands. And as it stands today, it appears we will be handing ourselves over at a bargain basement price.

Kitty Byrne  
Past President