

AUCE Local 2

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#### WHAT'S MY JOB - THE LIBRARY HASSLE

On Tuesday, April 24, 1979, after a 6 week strike, AUCE 2 workers returned to work. The library workers had been locked out 4 days prior to the all-out strike. They, like the rest of the workers at SFU, expected to return to their normal jobs, as stated in the Return to Work Appendix of the Industrial Inquiry Memorandum of Agreement.

However, as the library assistants entered the library, they were abruptly informed by library management that many of them were to report to the Loans Supervisor in charge of the stacks, rather than to their normal jobs. They were told that there were two reasons for this unprecedented move: 1) the Collections librarians (regular supervisors for many of the affected workers) had been given the week off; and 2) the backlog of unshelved books had to be quickly cleared up.

Just a few days earlier, the AUCE 2 Contract Committee had been negotiating the Agreement, and were presented with a proposal from the University which included a clause that employees would accept temporary adjustments to their job duties and schedules until a return to normal operations. The Contract Committee refused to entertain this proposal and gave as a specific example of problems with it the possibility of the University forcing workers at the Grade 8 & 9 levels doing the shelving in the library. The Union was assured by the University that that was not their intention, but that they could see the Union's objection, and agreed to remove all references to any adjustment of job duties. This exchange made the subsequent library hassle even more shocking.

Our first attempt to resolve this problem occurred at the Labour/Management level at 10 AM that day. The Union

stated that the violations concerned the articles on job descriptions in the contract, the fact that temps who normally shelve books were available, and that the library assistants had not been allowed to return to their normal jobs. The University maintained that the books needed to be re-shelved immediately. The meeting adjourned at noon without resolution of these grievances.

At an emergency Library Division meeting, the following motion was passed by 98%:

-in response to the University's violation of the Return to Work Appendix, the Library Division is walking off the job at 3 PM and until the University agrees to act in accordance with the intent and terms of that Agreement.

The wildcat did not occur that afternoon because an emergency meeting had been arranged at the Labour Relations Board between the Union, the University, and Ron Bone, Vice Chair and Registrar of the LRB. Mr. Bone spent 4 hours negotiating with the parties, and was very sympathetic to the Union's position, recommending the route of an unfair labour practice when the University remained recalcitrant.

Library workers set up pickets around the library at 7:15 AM on Wednesday. After numerous contacts from the University, a meeting was arranged for 5 PM that day. At that meeting the University capitulated entirely and a Letter of Agreement was signed allowing workers to return to their regular jobs on Thursday morning.

The library workers are proud of their action. By not conceding, by not abandoning their rights, the library workers won, not just for themselves, but also for their fellow union members, the right to do their jobs. Once again we learn that the University does not respond to a statement of principle, or any concept of justice, or indeed the legality of their position, and will push any situation until the Union takes strong action..

