

In Concert with Construction

The most recent addition to the Victoria skyline is the \$20 million 240 room Marriott Hotel, built across from the Convention Centre in Victoria's downtown core, owned by Concert Properties. Concert Properties was launched in 1989 with \$27 million from the city of Vancouver, province of BC, union and management pension funds and private investors. Today, the real estate corporation is funded 100% by union pension funds. It has completed \$750 million worth of developments and has assets in excess of \$500 million.

The Marriott was built completely union, and it seemed fitting that the first major event taking place in the Hotel would be the British Columbia Yukon Territory (BCYT) Building Trades Convention. This year's 36th annual convention focused on two issues; the 2010 Olympic Games and Provincial politics. We heard from John Furlong CEO, and Gibby Jacobs from the Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC). Tony Webb, author of the 2000 Sydney, Australia "Collaborative Games - The Story behind the Spectacle", who described a successful experience. In contrast Stewart Acuff, Director of Organizing AFL-CIO gave us an overview of the Atlanta Games in that right to work (for less) State. On the political front we heard from Victoria City Counselor Rob Flemming, BC Minister of Labour, Graham Bruce, past BC Premier, Dave Barrett, and New Democratic Party Leader, Carol James. We were briefed on the Federal Elections by Canadian Labour Congress Representative Dan Mallet giving us an overview of the Better Choice campaign, (the scratch and win cards used in this campaign were included in your last newsletter). Over 70 Business Agents spent one morning lobbying 48 MLA's on 3 topics: Cuts to WCB and the effects, over the past decade an average of 28 construction workers lost their lives per year, last year 44 construction workers died on the job. Meanwhile, orders issued by Prevention Officers has fell by over 44%, warning letters issued decreased by 59%, and penalties levied decreased by 71%, this trend has many of us in the construction industry concerned for worker safety; Skills Development Training in the new system which is replacing TRAC, and the Safety Systems Act (see page 2) and; Labour Stability which we believe is needed over the next decade to help with the amount of upcoming work in our Industry. Amongst the Resolutions passed was a one cent increase in the per capita payment to the BCYT.

Concert Properties has committed to building a residential tower, the Astoria a 164 unit 20 story condominium next door to the Marriott, and is currently applying for a building permit for another residential building on the same lot. Concert has also indicated to me they are also looking at several other sites in the Victoria and Nanaimo areas, for further commercial and residential projects and I say, "bring it on".



Delegates to the 36th Annual Building Trades Convention

Summer 2004 *Inside This Quarterly*

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News/Notes:

- Labour Day Picnics: Sept. 6th - 11am
 Victoria - South Island Ranger Station
 Ladysmith - Transfer Beach
- Marine and electronics unit exchange dates
 Beginning October 2004, the marine unit meeting second Wednesday, electronics second Thursday

Business Managers Report



Philip M. Venoit - Business Manager/Financial Secretary

It has been a very interesting past three (3) months with Negotiations, Strikes and the very real threat of the Provincial Government sending new BC Ferry Construction Offshore.

We have wrapped up a majority of our Local's negotiations as listed in the Sector Report although I'll expand a little on our Construction Section negotiations; the Building Trades bargaining council met with the Construction Labour Relations Association (CLRA), our employer's bargaining association, on June 30th at the University of British Columbia. At this meeting we managed to reach the same stalemate we experienced in the last set of negotiations; that is, do we begin at the big table or the small table? Big table discussions are saved for items that affect ALL trades such as starting times, grievance procedure, etc. and small table items would typically only affect one trade, for example our tool list or wages. We have forwarded a complete set of proposals but the stalemate has proceeded to the BC Labour Relations Board for a determination of where we are to begin. I believe that will be decided quickly and we will resume negotiations soon.

The Provincial Health Care workers strike ended quickly with the BC Liberals ordering our members back to work. When the workers on mass refused to recognize this Board Order and proceeded to the position, this became a political protest protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Meanwhile, the BC Liberals enacted Bill 37 rolling back our members by 15%. We have floated the concept of separating the trades' workers away from the rest of Health Care workers and if this is not acceptable, we have requested to group them in with the Health Sciences

Association Agreement. However, the HEU has taken the rollbacks for various classifications including trades workers to Arbitration and until that is decided; the Provincial Government will not make any decisions on the fate of our members. This Province for the 2nd time in 25 years came within hours of a general strike and I was very proud of our members' willingness to take that next step and your patience as well.

In a recent Supreme Court unanimous decision against biotech giant Monsanto Canada Inc., laid off employees were awarded an entitlement to the surplus in the pension plan. This important ruling should favour the outcome of our Dockyard members claim to the surplus which existed in their superannuation plan.

The Metal Trades met with the President, Vice-President & CEO of the Washington Marine Group (WMG) to discuss our overall strategy to stall the decision to accept 1 of the 3 offshore bids (Korea, Finland or Germany) to build 2, possibly 3 "c" class ferries to the tune of 1/2 a billion dollars. BC shipbuilders can be competitive on this work and it means about 75 of our members working year round for 3 years but we only need the chance to bid. The Provincial Liberals swept the last election by bruising BC's Shipbuilding Industry. They realize they can't turn around and promote this Industry which would look like more political flip flop and they can't attack it any further, so they distanced themselves from it by creating this so-called "private" identity to do their dirty work. The facts are simple. BC shipyards have already been low on 2 previous bids. The BC Liberals (through BC Ferry Services) cannot apply for the 25% (about \$125 million) Federal tax exemption on new Ferry work unless they can prove no Canadian shipbuilders could do the job so they disqualified the only Canadian shipbuilder before any real bids are made! Korea was cut from the bid list; I believe Finland has now dropped out and this leaves Germany. WMG is willing to spend \$1 million dollars of their money just to put the bid together because they are confident they can win this work. You can help, please visit www.bcshipyardworkers.com and let your MLA know we strongly oppose giving away BC jobs and investment (to our detriment) in foreign countries.

The Safety Systems Act

The Safety Systems Act/Regulations and Safety Systems Authority took effect on April 1, 2004. The Safety Systems Act (SSA) and Regulations will supersede existing safety acts including the Electrical Safety Act, Power Engineers and Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, Elevator Devices Act and Gas Safety Act and their accompanying Regulations. These Acts allow for the privatization and self-regulation of inspection services on construction safety systems in buildings and infrastructure across the Province.

Other contentious parts of the Act are:

- New designated Field Safety Officers (FSO)
- Equivalency Standard Agreements
- No definition of qualifications (Red Seal Certification)

Deputized Field Safety Officers will inspect new construction for compliance with the SSA and Regulations. Nothing in the Act stops a conflict of interest between the FSO and the inspected company or business. In small town BC, it could also be likely the inspector will know or be even related to the business or company being inspected.

Equivalency Standard Agreements allow for variances to the current safety regulations. Ratios of helpers to "qualified" workers are set only in the electrical section, allowing two (2) apprentice "trainees" to one qualified Journeyman, but on lower circuitry usually associated with residential work, the number increases by another two (2) helpers or "individuals". Variances to the current Acts will gradually establish a patchwork of regulations that will oversee the installation of safety systems construction components in the province.

Qualification standards are not set out in the Act. Throughout the Safety Systems Act and Regulations employers are required to ensure that "qualified" people are doing the work, but with the changes to the apprenticeship system, there are no longer any compulsory trades and certification is no longer tied to Red Seal Inter-Provincial certification. The word "qualified" has no standard. I will continue to keep you up to date on any changes that continue to come at us on this issue.

**Remember
to submit all
members' dues
to the Victoria
office only.**

Organizing Is Our Only Way Ahead

An old rank and file brother recently asked me to remind the membership of some of our policies on the practice of "salting" (working non-union). I will provide some history as we have a substantial number of new members in the construction industry. Through the 1950's, 60's and 70's, the Building Trades Unions along with the IBEW controlled a majority of the market and therefore could elevate our standard of living and working conditions through negotiations with our union employers. We enjoyed a pretty good life. In the early 1980's, we felt the effects of the Business Round Table who decided it was costing them too much to have their maintenance and construction work done and then they set out to undermine the Building Trades Unions. Working hand in glove with right-wing governments, these two groups made it more difficult for Trade Unions to retain their market share; wage and benefit settlements dwindled into fractional percentage increases (if not rollbacks) and became the norm. The IBEW

recognized this attack and the result; we were losing a large portion of our market share due to a growing non-union sector willing to work for less. We created an education program called Construction Organizing Member Education Training or COMET. Local 230 started out organizing our jurisdiction in the mid 90's and we saw many success's throughout the later half of the nineties, resulting in regaining a good portion of our construction market share. We went from 350 members on our out of work list to 150 over the most recent years (while initiating 100 new members into the Local).

"Salting" is the term we gave our members who took up the challenge of working non-union and reporting back to the Local Union their experiences and findings with their non-union employer. This included wages paid, any benefits, how those benefits are paid, number of qualified Journeymen, number of apprentices and number of helpers or unqualified workers, what other work they have now and coming up, do they

cheat on job specs, etc. All of this information helps us understand our competition. To think the non-union employers don't have copies of our collective agreements would be naive. The IBEW Constitution is clear: Article 25, Section 1(f), working for an employer whose position is adverse or detrimental to the IBEW, is a recognized offence which could and has historically resulted in charges and fines of those members. The way to ensure this doesn't happen to you is contacting the Office and letting us know what you are doing. In this regard, honesty is the best policy. Remember to regain our Industry, market share and bargaining strength we need every member who is willing to help; with your support we can again secure a livelihood for all electrical workers. So when offered, attend a new member orientation course and COMET class, these courses are designed to explain your rights and responsibilities as a member of the Local. Our future as a local union depends on all of our members pitching in and helping where they can.

Sector Report

We have recently wrapped up many of our different group negotiations and I'm happy to relay the results;

Appliance Repair - Our members at the Canadian Appliance Manufacture Company (CAMCO) in Victoria recently settled a 3 year agreement with 3% into wages, 2% into pension, and 6% in lump sums towards their RRSP. Remember if you are in need of home appliances drop by their Burnside Road location and get GE products at wholesale prices.

Cablevision - CRTV has recently contracted a sizable job from School District #72 to Vicar Electric to string fibre optic cable, networking all the Secondary Schools in Campbell River. We are also working out problems stemming from a recent "job share agreement".

Construction - Industrial - this sector remains slow other than a small shut down at Harmac in Nanaimo in June and a recent fire in Elk Falls.

Commercial/Residential - South Island: Canem Systems has picked up the Longwood Station TD Canada Trust, Esquimalt McDonalds, James Bay Lodge conversion, Sandringham Hospital, Victoria Airport, University of Victoria computer science engineering building; Emery Electric has picked up the Bear Mountain Condos and Clubhouse; Houle has picked up the Astoria residential tower, and a BCBC lighting retrofit. Mid Island: Canem has picked up the Ocean Village Resort in Parksville, the Gardens a five

storey assisted living complex in Qualicum and Extra Foods and Gas Bar in Port Alberni. North Island: Canem has picked the London Drugs in Courtenay and Houle has picked up the Winners Store, Radio Shack and Extra Foods in Comox.

Federal Government Dockyard - Our members with the Dockyard Trades and Labour Council have voted to accept a new 3 year Agreement, with a 2.5%, 2%, & 2% increase into their wages.

Motor Winders - Our members at Duncan Electric Motor & Beaver Machinery Electric have ratified a 2 year agreement with 3% into wages each of the 2 years, with a \$0.15 increase into their retirement funds.

Municipal Government - Our members at the City of Victoria have been busy with traffic signal upgrades.

Private Marine - see letter to Premier Campbell on page 4.

Provincial Health Care - First I would like to congratulate our members for standing up to their regressive employer and standing together over the week long strike and protest against this Provincial Liberal Government who seem hell bent on fighting with the working people of British Columbia. With the implementation of Bill 37, our members are awaiting their fate as tradesworkers which has been put to an Arbitrator to test the



Appliance Repair Technician Doug Dysart from CAMCO

application of the 11% wage reduction. At the same time we have written the Provincial Minister of Labour requesting we be opted out of the master facilities health care Agreement and into a separate "Trades Agreement" which would provide better representation for skilled craft workers.

Railway - With the loss of freight from their main customer, the E&N Railway have seen a negative operating ratio over the last couple of years and continue to undergo some restructuring. The employees covered by the Railway Council voted to accept a 3 year agreement with a 0% increase in the first year, with possible wage re-openers in the following 2 years however we were able to secure some better language in the agreement.

Wholesale - Remember Westburne in Nanaimo and Port Alberni are both IBEW and our service and construction members should be using these locations when possible.

Dispatcher/Training Coordinator Report



Leonard J. Rousseau

I will start this report by discussing some apprenticeship issues which have arisen repeatedly. Some apprentices still do not realize that they have the responsibility to register for their schooling. To register remember you must

have your Apprenticeship and Trade Worker ID Numbers and no one can register for you. To qualify for your Bursary you must attend four (4) Unit Meetings in the previous year and provide the Victoria Office with a list of the dates of those meetings. The last and most important item is to keep track of your hours worked in the trade. The hours worked in the trade determine what term you are at in your apprenticeship and when you become a journeyman after completing fourth year and passing the Interprovincial Exam. If you are unsure of any of these issues contact me in the Victoria Office.

There are a few courses in the planning stages for this Fall/Winter with seats still available. They are Electrical Code, Fire Alarms and Data Cabling. To register for any of these courses contact me in the Victoria Office.

On June 19th I attended the Miner's Memorial Day in Cumberland and laid a wreath on behalf of our Local. It was an amazing day highlighted by a speech from "Ginger" Goodwin's niece who made

the trip from England to attend the ceremony.

I recently attended a Whole Body Vibration and Heavy Equipment Ergonomics course which explained the effects on the human body of operating assorted types of equipment such as Forklifts, ergonomic design of the cab and access to the equipment for operating and maintenance purposes. This course is designed so I can better assist members with their wcb complaints.

I will conclude my report by pointing out that it is the member's obligation to report when they have been laid off by their employer and that will be the date the member is placed back on the out of work list. There has been some confusion around this issue. The employer has no obligation to notify the Union Office of lay offs although some employers do so as a courtesy. To avoid missing calls for work assure you inform us as soon as you are laid off.

Leonard J. Rousseau
Business Representative

BC Ferry: New Construction

An open letter to the Premier:

Dear Mr. Campbell:
Re: BC Ferry New Construction

I am writing you with great concern over the recent developments in the bid process of BC Ferry new construction work. The recent disclosure that no British Columbia Shipbuilder was short listed for the tender of new spirit "c" class ferry construction is disturbing.

For over a century the shipbuilding/repair industry has provided the very reason for some BC community's existence. On southern Vancouver Island, the township of Esquimalt is home to the second largest graving dock on the West Coast of this Continent an asset provided by the Federal Government.

Since the birth of BC Ferries under a Social Credit Government, all new BC Ferry vessel construction has been performed in BC communities like Esquimalt, providing for a fantastic industrial tax base for those communities and many jobs for local residents. When the BC Liberals made the decision to allow for other countries to bid BC Ferry work many thought we would not be able to compete due to the relaxation of some countries environmental, labour, health and safety laws compounded by the practice of some of those countries to provide for large subsidies in shipbuilding (a practice Canadian Shipbuilders are not afforded). However, we were wrong. It turned out BC shipyard workers could be competitive even though they had higher standards demanded of them. The result

in the first two (2) tenders of an extensive vessel replacement program resulted in a BC shipbuilding firm providing the lowest bid for both, proving BC shipyards and workers were up to the challenge and could be competitive in the global marketplace. It is important to note that most anywhere you go in the World, British Columbia skilled trades marine workers are recognized as the best in the Industry; a status we should all be proud of.

Our understanding is that the only Canadian bidder on this latest of tenders was the Washington Marine Group. This BC Shipbuilder was disqualified under the tender documents or rules, leaving three (3) other bidders from other countries. It astounds every British Columbian that I speak to, that a BC Shipbuilder bidding in this process would be disqualified without any ability to correct whatever measures disqualified them. As in the past, they may prove AGAIN to be the lowest bidder in the process saving British Columbians tens or hundreds of thousands of tax dollars. At the same time putting British Columbians to work and bringing young workers into the skilled trades; the very same skilled trades we keep hearing there is a shortage of real jobs for a skilled trades shortage. Now that sounds worthwhile. Training workers for this Province which we apparently need now and the same skilled workforce we will be looking for in the future when the off-shore gas industry starts up.

Further, on behalf of the Electrical Workers and speaking as someone with some familiarity with this Industry as I have worked extensively on new marine construction, I cannot convey strongly enough the differences in electrical equipment,

practices and even technologies in those countries now considered as "short listed" to build our ferries. In the simplest of layman's terms, this Government is preparing to plug their North American razor into a European outlet. A mistake of tantamount proportion and one I find highly ironic considering the last time our Provincial Government decided they would do something different with BC Ferry construction it proved devastating. If you look toward the East Coast, the Terra Nova project, a Floating Production, Storage and Offloading Vessel purchased in South Korea, cost millions of dollars more in remedial work once brought back into Canada, as the differences and technologies were so non-compatible and were not up to Canadian Standards. This is not uncommon when Canadian companies or corporations seek the apparent advantage of subsidized vessel construction offshore. Keeping ferry construction work in British Columbia will result in approximately 1500 jobs and the spin-off revenue will stimulate the local economy and businesses. We view this economic stimulus as an important function of government.

We are formally requesting that you seriously consider directing Commissioner, Martin Crilly to allow British Columbian Shipbuilders the ability to bid on the Spirit Class construction so BC Employer's and workers, both paying taxes to the BC Government, be given the ability to bid this work.

Sincerely,

Philip M Venoit
Business Manager/Financial Secretary