

Judge rules for BC Carpenters in court case

The International has lost another round in its latest lawsuit against the BC Carpenters Union.

The UBCJA unsuccessfully applied to the court to stop BC Carpenters from making certain references to General President Douglas McCarron's "potential for self-dealing" in an amendment to their statement of defence in the case involving 13 Local Unions and several Councils' refusal to contribute to an American Pension Plan for elected officers. The amendments were to include two paragraphs that referred to McCarron's relationship with Union Labor Life Insurance Company (Ullico).

Ullico is a union operated insurance company that has been called Labour's Enron in the press recently as members of the board of direc-

tors enriched themselves to the tune of \$6 million at the expense of Union pension funds. Zenith Administrators, the body used by McCarron to oversee most of the restructured Carpenters Pension Plans in North America, is wholly owned by Ullico.

In dismissing the International's application and allowing the amendments, Madam Justice Martinson referred to Madam Justice Brown's earlier decision that found McCarron acted in bad faith.

To further rub it in, the judge awarded the BC Carpenters with a special order of *costs in any event of the cause*, which means that regardless of whether we win or lose the main

case next January, the International must pay our costs for this application.

Usually, when costs are awarded for an application in the middle of a proceeding, they are given to the winner as *costs in the cause* after the main trial is over. In this case, BC Carpenters will have this portion of their costs paid for by the UBCJA regardless of the outcome of the main trial.

In her reasons for awarding costs to the BC Carpenters, she referred to the "political" nature of the dispute between the International and the defendants.

Madam Justice Martinson is slated to be the presiding judge at the main trial in January, 2004.



Consolidation just first step

Autonomy equates with organizing successes

by Doug McCorquodale

The closer we get to achieving our autonomy the more non-union contractors are approaching and talking with us about signing collective agreements. It is becoming patently obvious that achieving autonomy is a necessary prerequisite to moving the construction industry back to the union sector.

While many non-union contractors are ideologically opposed to unions and will resist unionization no matter what the cost, others take a practical approach and are prepared to do business with the union if their concerns are addressed. The major concern of these non-union contractors is the cronyism of the Building Trades and their jurisdictional disputes. The Jurisdictional Assignment Plan does not satisfy their concerns. They desire the flexibility of all-employee or wall-to-wall bargaining units. The pay rates are not the issue. The wrangling over who does what job on a construction site is the issue. The Building Trades are in serious decline. Their capacity to work for a solution is doomed because of their commitment to maintain the status quo.

Their assessment of the PCL and Farmer Construction application for consolidation of bargaining units is that it is the end for them if the application is successful.

Last year Farmer and later PCL filed an application for consolidation of their bargaining units. Consolidation means that an employer has multiple bargaining units and is seeking to have them merge into one. This means that the union members in each bargaining unit, through a vote, pick a single union to represent them.

The Building Trades are incorrect in their thinking that this will be the end of them if the Board renders a decision allowing consolidation with PCL and Farmer. In fact the Building Trades will continue to limp along a generally declining slope to obscurity whatever the Board decides. The deathblow was dealt many years ago to the building trades, starting with Bill 19 and followed by the Cicuto decision of the Board in the 1980s. Bill 19 made it extremely easy to decertify in construction and Cicuto legitimized wall-to-wall or all-employee units in construction. All-employee or wall-to-wall bargaining units means just one union per employer. The craft structure was fatally weakened at this point, if not before.

The PCL and Farmer applications for consolidation are stalled in preliminary wrangling at the Labour Relations Board. It will be quite some time before this issue is sorted out. One thing is certain, PCL and Farmer will achieve consolidation. The law in British Columbia allows it and the Board encourages it.

The Building Trades have been campaigning at the CLC to stop us getting our autonomy from the International. It will do them no good but, nevertheless, they are campaigning against us. They are no doubt frightened what their members will say to them when we get our autonomy.

Simultaneously, the BC Labour Relations Code Review Committee has made recommendations to the government for Labour Code changes that will aid us in preventing the International from interfering with our affairs if the government makes the revisions.

See BOARD page 2

A big win for organizing

Local 1995 signs large non-union contractors

Vancouver-New Westminster Carpenters Local 1995 President Randy Smith and BC Provincial Council President Len Embree are proud to announce that together they have signed Dominion Fairmile Structures Inc. to a project agreement.

The large general construction company has been organized into an all-employee agreement that will provide jobs for over 40 union carpenters for more than nine months.

Paying union rates and full-benefits, the project is construction of more than \$40 million of student residences at SFU in Burnaby.

"We are successfully organizing more work for our members," said Smith, president of the Local whose members will be on the job. The organizing victory comes on the heels of the union signing Pac-Alta earlier this year—another all-employee agreement that has provided good work for over 30 carpenters at UBC.

"The more we organize, the stronger we become and the more power we have to set things straight in the construction industry," said Smith.

Dominion Fairmile is one of the busiest non-union contractors in British Columbia.

The project is slated to start next month, according to Smith.



Local 1995 President Randy Smith reports on organizing tactics to BCPCC Convention

60th Convention welcomes FTQ delegates

Nearly 100 BC Carpenters Union Convention delegates from around the province stood in a rousing ovation for Quebec Carpenters Yves Mercure and Yves Ouellet who brought fraternal greetings and pledges of friendship and solidarity from the Fédération des Travailleurs et Travailleuses du Québec (FTQ). FTQ to the Convention held from April 10-12, 2003.

The two Yves are the presidents, respectively, of the independent and autonomous Carpenters Unions Local 9 (Carpenters) and Local 2366 (Interior Systems and Floorlayers) in la belle province.

Mercure talked of how his Local had only 39 members signed to their original charter when they broke from the International in 1981 and now they are the largest Carpenter Local in Canada with over 12,000 members. The two locals work closely together in the Fraternité National, sharing offices, resources and staff under a joint council.

Please see Convention Coverage page 4-5

INSIDE

Bursary form	p 2
Local news	p 3
School Boards	p 3
Eligible but not...	p 3
Retired members	p 3
WCB win	p 3
60 th Convention	p 4-5
Benefit Plan Options	p 6
PharmaCare form	p 6
Pension Questions	p 6
Council Comment	p 7
Organizing Report	p 7
CLC Catch-22	p 8
MSP billings	p 8
President's message	p 8

Post-secondary bursaries set at \$500 this year

BC Carpenters Union continues student bursaries

The BC Provincial Council Education Committee is pleased to continue offering some small financial assistance to members, or their immediate family, who are taking post secondary education or training. The provincial bursary program, established in 1992, will make available two \$500 bursaries for each of the six District Council areas this year for a total of 12 bursaries possible for the province (see EDUCATION REPORT in Convention coverage page 4).

Any member, or the immediate family of a member, of any Local of the BC Carpenters' Union is eligible to apply for a bursary. This includes spouses, children and grandchildren of members. Bursaries are not limited to academic institutions, but are also available for commercial, technical, vocational or art school programs.

A selection committee of impartial community leaders decides the winners based on a 500 to 1000 word essay on some aspect of trade unionism in history, politics, economics or social reform. Academic student essays will be judged on proper essay style so should include references and bibliographies. These will not be calculated in the final word count. Non-academic essays can be more personal and anecdotal but should also have some attribution or reference if articles or books are quoted or ideas or facts are borrowed from someone else.

The deadline for applications to be received in the Provincial Council office is September 2, 2003. Applicants are welcome to apply for successive bursaries even if they applied or won previously.

BC Carpenters' Union
Bursary Application



2003

Deadline for applications is September 2, 2003

RULES:

1. A \$500 bursary shall be awarded to a maximum of 12 students representing the six geographical regions of British Columbia (District Council areas).
2. The awards will be presented to successful applicants after entrance to a recognized vocational institution, Canadian university or affiliated college, art school, or other place of training acceptable to the Carpenters' Union Education Committee.
3. **Eligibility** - to be eligible for the bursary, the student must be:
 - a) a member of an affiliated Local Union of the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters; or an immediate family member of an active, retired or deceased member (spouse, child, grandchild), and —
 - b) able to meet the requirements for entering the educational institution chosen.
4. Applicants will be judged on the basis of need, ability and a double-spaced, **typewritten** essay of 500 to 1000 words on some aspect of trade unionism in relation to politics, economics, social reform, history, personal experience, etc. Proper essay style (including references) is expected for academic papers and would be appreciated but is not required for **non-academic** students (i.e. vocational, technical, fine arts).

Completed applications and essays should be forwarded to the Provincial Council Education Committee, 305 - 2806 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC, V5R 5T5. Applications must be received no later than **September 2, 2003**. Phone (604)437-0471; Fax (604)437-1110.

Selection will be made before the end of October and winners notified by their Local Union office.

Please print clearly

Applicant's Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Birthdate _____

Are you a (check one)

member Union Local number _____

immediate family Relationship _____
of member

Member's name _____ Local _____

Specify your immediate educational plans (academic, technical, vocational) and institution and program applied for:

Signature of applicant _____

Signature of sponsoring member _____



Deadline for applications is September 2, 2003

OPEIU15

Code review recommends change Board can make policy amendments

Cont'd from page 1

Union members, according to policy and law of the Labour Relations Board can only switch union affiliation with a majority vote, providing the national or international constitution does not prohibit an affiliation change. The Code Review Committee pointed out that the Board can change its policy and eliminate the national or international constitution provision as a consideration for a change in union affiliation.

The Code Review Committee has presented their report to the provincial government. It remains to be seen if there will be any change.

Make the Internet connection

Internet news and views of interest to Carpenter Union members can be reached through the union friendly website run by Local 2300 member Dave Livingston at:
<http://www.carpentersunionbc.com>

Other sites of interest include:

BC Federation of Labour	www.bcfed.com
CLC home page	www.clc-ctc.ca
Canadian Autoworkers	www.caw.ca/index.asp
CUPE BC	www.cupe.bc.ca
Labour Start (labour news)	www.labourstart.org/canada/
Straight Goods (news)	www.straightgoods.com/
Working TV	www.workingtv.com/index.html
Carpentry Workers Plans:	www.cwbp.ca/index.shtml
MSP forms	www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp
Fair Pharmacare	http://pharmacare.moh.hnet.bc.ca
David Shreck (analysis)	www.StrategicThoughts.com/
Parenting with Dignity	www2.parentingwithdignity.com



ON THE LEVEL

Is dedicated to representing Carpenters Union members' views and news and reporting on social issues of interest to working people in British Columbia.

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Advocate finds specialists

WCB appeal reinstates injured worker

Noreen Hall, the WCB Advocate for the BC Carpenters Union, has recently won an important appeal for a union member poisoned by his workplace in Trail.

Local 2300 member Carey Bagg was among 65 workers exposed to the toxic heavy metal thallium when they worked inside a boiler at Teck Cominco lead-zinc smelter in trail in 2001.

Bagg, who had the highest exposure to the poison, which was once a popular rat poison, has suffered neurological damage symptoms ever since. WCB terminated his coverage based on the opinion of one Alberta doctor who admitted he knew little about thallium poisoning. He attributed Bagg's chronic fatigue, muscle aches and stomach disor-

ders to deconditioning (being out of shape).

Bagg, previously a vigorous, energetic worker, suffers muscle spasms, fatigue, headaches and sleep loss. On some days, he can hardly climb a set of stairs and knows there is no way he could complete a heavy day's work.

Hall handled Bagg's appeal, finding and interviewing three medical specialists who concluded Bagg clearly suffers the effects of thallium poisoning.

Local 2300 Business Agent Paul Nedelec said Hall has done a great job. "It would have been impossible to win this case without her help," he said.

"If Bagg didn't have the help of Hall and the union the first doctor's report would have been the end of it for him," he explained. "Noreen researched the problem, found doctors with the expertise to diagnose the problem and pushed the paperwork through. No injured worker could have done it on his own."

Teck Cominco was fined \$270,000 by the WCB for not properly notifying the workers of the dangers of working in the boiler. This money will be allocated toward setting up a long-term health study of the Trail workers. Hall is slated to sit on the advisory committee that will guide the study which will be funded by WCB.



BC Carpenters Union WCB Advocate Noreen Hall



Tony Heisterkamp presents Anthonius DeJonge with his 45-year pin



Tony Heisterkamp presents Hank Sommerey with his 35-year pin



Paul Ravlo receives his Red Seal Certificate from Tony Heisterkamp

Vernon Local Pin night celebrated

The Vernon Local Union 1346 presented longservice pins to several members at a Local meeting recently.

Anthonius DeJonge was presented with his 45-year pin and Clarence Paluck and Hank Sommerey received 35-year pins.

Rob Merz got a 20-year pin and Paul Ravlo was presented with his Journeyman Certificate (Red Seal).



David Doran presents a 20-year pin to Local 1346 member Rob Merz



David Doran presents a 35-year pin to Local 1346 member Clarence Paluck

75-day rule limits appeals

Clearly indicate status on WCB forms advises WCB Advocate

BC Carpenters Union WCB Advocate Noreen Hall advises that any worker filing a WCB claim should be sure to clearly indicate their job classification where appropriate, especially apprentices. Apprentices should be paid benefits based on a class average for their trade group, not their actual previous 12-month earnings history. "But this can only happen if you clearly indicate your status as apprentice on your application," she said. The difference between an apprentice's actual earnings and the trades class average can be considerable. Once WCB has made a decision about a claim, it cannot be changed after 75 days have passed. There is no way to change the rate set (up or down) after the 75-day period has expired.

School Board Report

School negotiations may drag out again

On June 30, three School Board bargaining units have their agreement expire. Quesnel School Board Local Union 2545, Hope-Agassiz School Board Local Union 2423, and Dawson Creek School Board Local Union 1237 are facing negotiations with the June 30 expiry.

The massive cuts in education by the provincial government, which has seen local schools closing, lay-offs, and reduced pay, does not bode well for the future of education in this province. This also means that collective bargaining will be difficult. The provincial government's wage freeze for the next three years will obviously make it a long, hard process.

The CUPE Locals in the School Board districts throughout the province have, for the most part, made no attempt to commence early bargaining. It is not yet clear whether bargaining will even start this fall in the CUPE School Board districts. The CUPE collective agreements expire June 30, 2003.

In the last round of negotiations, some Locals were hung out to dry for over a year past their agreement expiry date without a settlement. It is entirely possible for things to drag out for a similar time this turn as well.

Retired members

The following BC Carpenter Union members have recently taken normal, early or disability retirement and are eligible to receive a Carpentry Workers Pension

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Artuso, Silvano | Grigoletto, Raffaele | Plumb, Robert |
| Bertlin, Karl | Hansen, John | Soltvedt, K |
| Doove, John | Hempell, Malcolm | Tardif, G |
| Firenze, Calgero | Jamieson, Kenneth | Todd, Raymond |
| Frey, Gunter | Klein, Ernest | Wickens, Patrick |
| Fuchs, Dieter | Koloska, Kurt | Zettl, Adolph |

Eligible but not enrolled

Carpenter Union members listed below have not enrolled in the Carpentry Workers Plan and as a result may not be earning pension or Benefit coverage. They should contact their Local Union and complete the necessary Enrollment Form. Once the proper Enrollment Form has been completed and filed with the Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plans office, in accordance with the Plan rules and Trust Deed, the enrollment date can be back-dated a maximum of six months.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| No Local assigned | Local 1370 | Local 1719 | Bridges, Paul N | Rosner, Richard N |
| Andrew, Luke S | Bothe, Kristopher D | Babiak, John N | Calvert, Jeremiah N | Thomas, Ronald K |
| Loberg, Monty N | Bradley, John P | Crofton, D.Jaice J | Campbell, Bruce D | Thomas, Baron E |
| Local 513 | Sherstobitoff, Barry M | Johnston, Brian N | Capuani, Peter N | Local 2068 |
| Madsen, J C | Van Dusen, Leslie D | Opperman, Cory N | Charbonneau, Jean Luc | Bowes, Don N |
| Local 527 | Local 1460 | Smith, Dwight N | Grant, Chris N | Clarke, Greg P |
| Amson, Charles L | Fast, Malcolm A | Local 1735 | Hutchinson, Dave H | Local 2300 |
| Dilworth, S N | Local 1598 | Buhr, Steven N | Hynninen, Antero N | Andrews, D C |
| Dorman, Mark N | Aldinger, Christopher J | Grier, Shawn A | Kirkpatrick, Harvey N | Dawson, Eric F |
| Forrester, William N | Arseneault, Gary J | Mckay, Lorne N | Makela, Brian W | Ennila, R T |
| Lafleur, Marc J | Barry, Jay N | Sunduk, Laverne A | Menunzio, Wayne G | Kinakin, Alex N |
| Mccurdy, Daren J | Chorney, Lonnie D | Local 1812 | Mitri, Rafer N | Lucht, Gordon E |
| Wick, John C | Coulson, Craig N | Baldwyn, Mike C | Montgomery, Glenn D | Moro, Jeff N |
| Local 1237 | Handford, Tom N | Local 1907 | Nagla, Hamir R | Torra, Todd N |
| Beaudoin, Maurice N | Hitchen, Terry S | Baldwin, Robert A | Needham, Jamie L | Local 2736 |
| Goulet, D N | Little, A N | Hammond, Robert A | Nosper, Rudi N | Anderson, G N |
| Local 1325 | Mchenry, Mark W | Maki, Ronald E | Saulnier, Cam J | Taylor, Kevin N |
| Machula, I N | Rody, Ryan N | Swain, Rob L | Seo, Sukwon N | Local 9736 |
| Poirier, Bradley N | Ross, Dean G | Turner, Bruce N | Siozos, Thomas N | Braulin, K N |
| Torfs, Dennis N | Scroggs, D N | Local 1989 | Sweeney, John N | Foulkes, J N |
| Local 1346 | Stock, Devin N | Fauteux, David N | Valade, Tommy H | Giorgianni, P N |
| Blue, Jason N | Urquhart, D N | Legault, James D | Webster, Kim C | Holm, T Ht N |
| Clery, Tom N | | Strachan, Michael W | Local 1998 | Jensen, Cliff N |
| Menard, Lucien J | | Local 1995 | Done, Ron T | Johnson, T N |
| Ratchliffe, Douglas J | | Anderson, Ken S | Lachapelle, Martin P | Knight, D N |
| Stevens, Ryan N | | Antinozzi, Ronald J | Patrick, Rodney C | Osmond, Russell N |
| | | Bendsen, Douglas N | Proulx, Kirk N | |

Education Committee report to Convention

'You do make a difference'

The Education Committee report to the 60th Convention of the BC Carpenters Union was quite lengthy this year, as it presented a fairly detailed analysis of the problems of organization, communications and membership participation in the democratic process of union governance.

It asked the questions: Why don't members participate? What should be done to encourage participation and how do we increase our organizing efforts?

The report suggested that members need to be listened to and included in decision making. It is the right and duty of members to participate at all levels of their organization.

The mandate, then, of the Education Committee should be to:

- Establish and maintain personal contact with members.
- Promote and teach courses on: Union matters; Community involvement; Political Action; and Personal Development.
- Involve members in governance of the union and union restructure discussion and activities.
- Develop leaders.
- Collect and Provide information for use by: Organizers; Officers/Leadership; and Members.
- Devise and promote an organizational plan that facilitates membership participation/control in all aspects of the union



Charlie Scaling, Local 1995 Vancouver New-Westminster served on the Benefit and Pension Committee, the Constitution Committee, and the Standard Agreement Committee

Union education must be a continuum that starts from initial contact — even before sign up — and continues through retirement. Union membership should be beneficial both financially and personally if we are to actively keep the interest and participation of the membership over the years.

Personal contact is crucial to recruiting and maintaining membership. The organizers depend on personal contact to encourage potential members to sign cards. They depend on personal contact to maintain a union presence on the site and they need personal contact to develop a negotiating strategy to achieve a collective agreement.

To make an active difference in our union, education must be accepted and promoted. This requires a personal and financial commitment from the membership as well as the leaders of our organization. It is recommended that the BC Carpenters Union investigate and establish procedures to adequately finance a thorough and well planned educational program — tied directly to organizing — with the ultimate aim of generating a committed, dedicated, loyal membership in the Carpenters Union. Strength is gained through membership participation. Our slogan could be: You do make a difference. You do count.



Bill Duck, Local 1995 Vancouver - New Westminister served on the Apprenticeship Committee, Constitution Committee, and the Standard Agreements Committee as well as serving as a Trustee

Concert reports good year—better to come

David Podmore told the delegates that Concert Properties, which he heads, is one of the three largest real estate companies in British Columbia. Now owning or managing over 3,000,000 square feet of industrial and commercial property and building and owning 1,500,000 square feet of residential rental property, Concert is doing very well. Predicting a significant bump in the share price of the company based on a bottom line of over \$10,000,000 last year, Podmore said, "I think that's something you can be particularly proud of."



David Podmore, Concert CEO

Report of the 60th Convention

Delegates to the 60th Convention of the BC Carpenters Union reiterated the demand of Local members from around the province that the Union must continue its struggle for autonomy and membership democracy. The predominant emotion was "get on with the job" of resolving our struggle for democracy and autonomy from the International. Welcoming two fraternal delegates from Québec, the delegates rousing endorsed a special emergency resolution pledging fraternal ties with the FTQ affiliated Carpenters and Interior Systems-Floorlayers Locals.

Emergency Resolution No. 1 – Fraternal Ties with Québec Union

WHEREAS: The Fraternité Nationale is a union with similar principles and goals as the British Columbia Provincial Council of Carpenters: and

WHEREAS: The Fraternité Nationale represents carpenters, lathers, floorlayers, and other trades in Québec; and

WHEREAS: The Fraternité Nationale is the dominant civil construction union in Québec, with members working union for companies that are operating non-union in BC; and

WHEREAS: The Fraternité Nationale left the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in 1981, and as an autonomous union has organized over 13,000 new members in Québec; and

WHEREAS: The Fraternité Nationale is looking to form cooperative relationships with other unions across Canada that are not controlled by international unions; and

WHEREAS: The BC Provincial Council of Carpenters needs to form alliances with like-minded unions across Canada that can assist us in organizing, political lobbying at the federal level, and other issues:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention empower the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters' Executive Board to establish a fraternal relationship with Fraternité Nationale Local Unions 2366 and 9; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That this relationship shall be built upon equality, mutual respect, and complete and full organizational autonomy; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: That this relationship is not about organizational affiliations or mergers, but rather is about uniting like-minded workers across Canada for the purpose of increasing our collective strength.

Some representative resolutions passed at convention:

Political Action (M-1)

WHEREAS: The relentless attacks on the people of British Columbia by Gordon Campbell and his BC Liberal lemmings have set out province back 30 years:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters and its affiliated Local Unions actively promote an anti-Liberal campaign, utilizing resources such as *On the Level*, posters, bumper stickers, and hard hat decals, and continue this campaign into the next provincial election, in 2005.



Quebec fraternal delegates bring warm greetings of solidarity and friendship

BCPCC President Len Embree welcomes Yves Mercure, President of Local 9 (the largest Carpenters Union in Canada with 12,000 members, which broke away from the International in 1981 and joined the FTQ) and Yves Ouellet (seated) President of Local 2366 Interior Systems and Floorlayers which is also affiliated to the FTQ. Mercure said that BC Carpenters' claims against the International are, "Carbon copies of our claims at the end of the 1970s ... autonomy ... reasonable per capita ... and a democratic structure." Ouellet said he is proud to wear the BC Carpenters T-shirt because of the two messages on it: "Constructing the Future," because that's exactly what we are doing today, and "Canadian Autonomy" because, "We are sure that it's the best way to achieve the goal of the first message."

Ellen
V a n
West
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Comm
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... of the BC Carpenters Union

Other resolutions dealt with the issues of autonomy, opposition to the war in Iraq, proposed Labour Code changes, Softwood Lumber and establishment of a provincial Lather Local. Only the resolves are printed here. For the entire resolution, please refer to the actual convention documents available at your Local Union office.

M-3 SOFTWOOD LUMBER

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention condemn the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America for not reversing their position on softwood lumber duties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That we send this message loud and clear to Kenneth Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, who seems to be siding with the Americans on this issue that is so crucial for Canadian workers.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: That this body lobby the provincial government to cease exporting of raw timber out of this country for processing by non-Canadians.

M-6 LABOUR CODE SECTION 37 AMENDMENTS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention urge the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters to continue to lobby the provincial government to legislate the proposed amendment to Section 37 into the Labour Code, as follows:

1. If trade unions wish to merge, amalgamate or transfer jurisdiction and are certified or voluntarily recognized as the bargaining agent for a unit, the board may, without approval of the trade union's national or international affiliate in a proceeding before the board or on application by the trade union concerned, (a) declare that the successor has, or has not, acquired its predecessor's rights, privileges and duties under this Code, or (b) dismiss the application.

M-9 PROPOSED MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters write a letter to Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien opposing Canada's military involvement in Iraq.

M--7 LABOUR CODE SECTION 150 AMENDMENTS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention urge the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters to continue to lobby the provincial government to legislate this amendment, as follows:

150 (3) A provincial, national, or international trade union must not assume supervision or control over a subordinate trade union except for just and reasonable cause.

M-14 IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTITUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention instruct the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters Executive Board to commence implementation of the new stand-alone constitution.

M-19 AUTONOMY

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That forthwith, the Executive Board of the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters be instructed to negotiate an interim affiliation agreement with a large Canadian union that will provide for the following:

- Protection from the International
- Influence with the Canadian Labour Congress
- Retention of our name, logos, assets, bargaining rights, and constitution
- An expiry date coinciding with the date our autonomy is secure

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the proposed agreement be taken to the entire membership in a secret ballot referendum vote as soon as constitutionally possible.

M-23 AUTONOMY

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters' Executive Board, in consultation with School Board Local Unions, implement a strategy to secure a representative to service full-time, the public sector affiliates of our union; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters' Executive Board explore immediately any and all options, including but not limited to affiliation with another union, and report those results to the members and arrange for a final referendum to rid ourselves of the International as soon as constitutionally possible.

M-28 LATHERS LOCALS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention affirm the British Columbia Provincial Council of Carpenters' Executive Board's authority to establish and charter Lather Local Unions in accordance with the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters' Constitution.

Hearts and minds the key

Complementing BC Carpenters for taking the first step toward autonomy, Edmonton carpenter and Northern Alberta Regional Council delegate Roger Kennedy said, "The primary function (of any union leader) is to win the hearts and minds of men and women. If we win the hearts and minds of every man and woman in this country, we do not need to worry about government; we are the bloody government!"



Roger Kennedy Local 1325

President's remarks

Trustees 'Courageous'

In his remarks to the Convention, President Len Embree thanked the Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plan Trustees for the terrific job they have done to rescue the Plans.

"I think they've been absolutely courageous in doing what had to be done to meet the two problems that presented themselves to them. And that was, especially with the Pension Plan, to save the Plan, and secondly to amend it so that the majority of our people were looked after and got benefits," he said.

Embree said that the recent court victories over the International will affect Canadian inter-union relations from now on. "And that's a win for every union member in an international union in Canada," he said.

Embree said the only thing the International has left in its arsenal is to keep trying to beat us up in court. "We welcome them to keep that up, because it makes us stronger. We're stronger than we were six years ago, and we'll be stronger still next year. We're going to win this fight. We're not going away. And we're not going to betray the trust of our members," he concluded.

He said the way is clear, that the resolutions from the convention are very specific. "I'm very proud of them," he said. "I take Roger Kennedy's remarks to heart. And if anyone thinks that we don't represent the greater majority of the membership, then I say the same thing to them: have a bloody vote."

CEP pledges solidarity

CEP president Brian Payne, promised BC Carpenters Union Convention delegates that, "No matter what happens down the road that you are heading, you can count on the solidarity of the 150,000 members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada."

In his speech, Payne outlined the social activism of his union in campaigns supporting public healthcare, in the fight for peace and against the war in Iraq, in the battle against privatization of BC and Ontario Hydro, in support of the Kyoto Accord on the environment, but especially the crusade against BC Premier Campbell's appeasement of the Americans with his "close to treason" forest legislation.

Pledging solidarity, Payne said he has the greatest respect for the Carpenters Union in British Columbia and its commitment to progressive social unionism.



Brian Payne CEP



Pond, Local 1995 C o u v e r - N e w Westminster, who served on Health & Safety Committee, questions the Pension Plan report team about recent changes to the Plans



BC Carpenters Union Trustees report

Bill Duck, Local 1995 Vancouver-New Westminster (left); Brian Zdrilic, Local 2736 Millwrights (middle); Dave Sewell, Local 2106 Prince George School Board (right)



Resolution Committee deliberates

Dave Sewell, Local 2106 Prince George School Board (left), Brian Zdrilic, Local 2736 Millwrights and Eugenio Zanolto Local 1995 Vancouver-New Westminster (right)

CWBP changes to be introduced

New Benefit Plan options coming soon

In the ongoing rebuilding of the Benefit Plan and the quest to bring the most suitable benefits to our individual members, the Trustees have agreed to introduce an alternative benefit package. This was done after lengthy discussions with our benefit consultant on the cost implications of introducing a second option. While details still need to be worked out, the following is the basic idea.

Members in the Employer Full-Paid and Major Self-Pay packages will be offered a choice. They may continue with their Benefit package without MSP—this came into effect on May 1, 2003 (we'll call it Type 1 in this article). Alternatively, they may switch to a plan that pays Medical Services Plan and some other benefit or benefits (we'll call it Type 2). We expect to send you information about these choices this summer, with implementation in the fall. If you don't reply with a choice before the deadline, you will stay in a Type 1 plan so please be sure to keep us up to date with your address.

It's important that you make your decision carefully, because once you choose, you can't change your mind for four years unless you have what is called a life-event change. Examples of life-event changes are marriage, divorce, birth of a child or loss of your spouse's benefit coverage. If you change between a Type 1 and Type 2 because of a life-event change, you are locked in to that new plan for two years, even if you have another life-event change before the two years are up.

Locking-in rules are required for choice (sometimes called "flex") plans to keep costs predictable. If members could hop back and forth between plans depending on what their expenses were each month, they would end up costing the plan a lot more money than they do now. Our benefits consultant has told us that these proposed lock-ins are strict enough that extra costs from members switching between plans should be very small.

At this time, no changes to the Mini Package or Retired Package are planned. A Member going from the Mini Package to the Employer Paid Full Package will choose whether they want to go into Type 1 or Type 2 at that time. Then they'll be locked into that option for four years (unless they have a life-event change). Switching back and forth between Employer Paid, Major and Mini Plans will not give a person extra chances to switch between Type 1 and 2 plans.

These changes do not apply to the Industrial Carpenters' Benefit Plan.

Q&A Questions about the Carpenters Pension Plan Reductions on July 1, 2003

Since the pension reduction and rule changes were announced in April, we've had a lot of calls and letters. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions. Active members will receive a Plan booklet showing the new rules in late September with their Annual Member Statement.

Q. In the pamphlet I got in the mail, it says you can receive a pension without a reduction if you retire on or after your 62nd birthday with 10 years of pension credit. I retired at age 65. Why did the statement you mailed me say I will have a 35 per cent reduction?

A. Every member (retired or not) and surviving spouse, big pension or small, is having their pension reduced by the 35 per cent across the board reduction. The sections in the pamphlet on *Early Retirement Subsidy Reduction* and *Early Retirement Subsidy Reduction For Recent Retirees* are talking about reductions *above* the 35 per cent across the board reduction.

Q. When I retired I signed a contract that my pension would be for both my and my wife's lifetimes at \$357.53. You've broken that contract. As the contract is broken, can I change to a type of pension that doesn't provide for my wife after my death so I'll get a little more each month? I really need the money.

A. Unfortunately, no. Our Plan rules say that you cannot change your type of pension after you have received your first payment. This is a standard clause in pension plans that is due to Federal Income Tax rules. Registered pension plans are not permitted to change pension amounts because a member wants to switch from one option to another after the pension has started.

Please note that when you applied for your pension, your application did not create a "contract." The payment of a pension is a promise (not a contract or a guarantee) that will be fulfilled as long as the Pension Plan's financial position permits. As a promise, the pension may be reduced if the Pension Plan runs into financial problems (as it did) or increased if the Pension Plan does well.

See Q&A page 8

REMINDER: Healthcare claims due June 30

All Carpentry Workers Benefit Plan claims including Dental/Optical/Hearing Aid and Travel Assistance expenses for 2002 must be received in the CWBP office 300 - 2806 Kingsway, Vancouver BC, V5R 5V1 by June 30, 2003. Call 604 438-2434 or toll free 1-877-411-2806 for information.

Extended Health claims for prescriptions, drugs, hospital room, physiotherapy, chiropractic, podiatrist, massage practitioner or naturopath expenses must be submitted to: Pacific Blue Cross, PO Box 7000, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4E1 Call 604-419-2600 or toll free 1-888-275-4672

Carpentry Workers claim forms may be downloaded from the website at: www.cwbp.ca

Deductible can be as high as \$10,000

Fair PharmaCare initiated May 1

The new Fair PharmaCare Program, introduced by the BC Government, came into effect on May 1, 2003.

Previously, all residents in BC were covered under the government's PharmaCare program which had a deductible of \$1,000 per year. Once an individual/family reached \$1,000 in eligible drug claims, PharmaCare covered 70 per cent of any further eligible drug costs until a maximum out-of-pocket expense of \$2,000 per year was reached; after which PharmaCare paid 100 per cent for the balance of the year. Seniors paid \$25 per prescription up to \$275 per year.

As of **May 1, 2003**, the Fair PharmaCare Program initiated an income based deductible, where the deductible and out-of-pocket maximum are based on net annual family income (line 236 of your income tax return). The Fair PharmaCare deductibles and payments are set out below.

Registration is no longer automatic. You must register for Fair PharmaCare to be eligible for benefits. It is not too late to register, even though the stated effective date for the program has passed. If individuals or families do not register, their

amounts will default to a deductible of \$10,000 per year.

Because PharmaCare is going to reimburse less than it used to overall, our Benefit Plan costs are going to go up. To keep that increase as small as possible, it is important that PharmaCare pay every dollar it should, so that those unclaimed costs don't get passed along to our Benefit Plan. While fewer than one-quarter of BC residents will actually receive a benefit through PharmaCare, **it is very important that all of our benefit plan members who might receive a PharmaCare benefit register promptly.**

To help us monitor this, Pacific Blue Cross will send a letter to each plan member when claims for eligible PharmaCare drugs reach \$1,000, requesting you confirm that you are registered for Fair PharmaCare. They will provide you with a Declaration of Registration form which you need to complete and return. If you do not respond, a second letter will be issued when claims for eligible PharmaCare drugs reach \$1,750 advising you that any future claims for PharmaCare drugs will not be paid until notification of registration is received.

To register with fair PharmaCare

- Phone 1-800-387-4977 (7 days a week, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.)
- Fax registration form to 1-250-952-1461
- Internet: www.gov.bc.ca/healthservices (click on "Register for Fair PharmaCare" on the upper left hand of page).
- Mail registration form – a copy of the registration form is available on the government website at:
<http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharmer/outgoing/fairregistration.pdf>
- The mailing address is: P.O. Box 9659, Station Prov. Government, Victoria, BC, V8W 9P1

To register, you will need to give the following information:

- Personal Healthcare Number
- Social Insurance Number
- Date of birth
- Net income as reported on line 236 of your 2001 income tax return
- Same information for spouse if applicable
- Personal Healthcare Number and dates of birth for dependents
- Address update if required

Once you have registered, you will receive a registration number and will be asked for your consent to allow PharmaCare to receive income information from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. PharmaCare will mail you a consent form for completion. If you don't return this form to them in time, your registration will be cancelled.

Fair PharmaCare Program – Non Seniors

Net Annual Family Income	Family Deductible	Portion PharmaCare Pays (once deductible reached)	Family Maximum (after which 100% of costs are covered)
Less than \$15,000	None (government assists with your drug costs immediately)	70% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 2% of your net income
Between \$15,000 & \$30,000	Equal to 2% of your net income	70% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 3% of your net income
Over \$30,000	Equal to 3% of your net income	70% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 4% of your net income

Seniors' Fair PharmaCare Program

Net Annual Family Income	Family Deductible	Portion PharmaCare Pays (once deductible reached)	Family Maximum (after which 100% of costs are covered)
Less than \$33,000	None (government assists with your drug costs immediately)	75% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 1.25% of your net income
Between \$33,000 & \$50,000	Equal to 1% of your net income	75% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 2% of your net income
Over \$50,000	Equal to 2% of your net income	75% of prescription drug costs	Equal to 3% of your net income

To qualify for the Seniors' Fair PharmaCare program, you or your spouse must have been born in 1939 or earlier.

Members want their autonomy

BC membership patience is running thin

closure demanded on struggle that has gone on far too long



The 60th Convention of the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters was held April 10 through 12 at the Holiday Inn in Vancouver. Delegates from Local Unions and District Councils from all over British Columbia came together to review the events of the past year and to set down the direction they want their union to take in the coming year.

With most conventions a theme quickly develops, as delegates rise to speak on those issues they feel are most important. Consistent with the past several years, the issue that rose to prominence this year was once again the struggle for autonomy from the International. It was made abundantly clear by the delegates that the patience of the membership in BC is running thin. They want closure on this struggle that has gone on far too long; and they want their autonomy.

Resolutions were passed directing the Provincial Council to begin implementing the stand-alone constitution that was approved by referendum vote of the membership. The Council was also instructed to negotiate an affiliation agreement with a large Canadian Union that would provide protection from the International, as well as the autonomy we seek. The expectation expressed by the delegates was that this agreement should be reached quickly, and that it be taken to a referendum vote of the membership as soon as possible.

Special guests to this year's convention, Brothers Yves Mercure and Yves Oulette from Fraternité Nationale in Quebec, spoke to the delegates about their union's struggle with the International and their ultimate victory—the establishment of a very successful independent

union. Their union now represents the overwhelming majority of carpenters, lathers and floor layers in the province of Quebec. Following Brother Mercure's and Oulette's presentation the convention delegates solidly supported a resolution empowering the Provincial Council to establish a fraternal relationship with the Fraternité Nationale for the purpose of increasing our collective strength.

With all the difficulties that the Carpentry Workers Pension Plan and Benefit Plan have faced over recent times, the Plan Trustees report was also the subject of considerable debate. Given the hard decisions the Trustees have had to make with respect to reducing the benefits in both the Pension and Benefit Plans, the debate was often emotional, and sometimes critical. But the discussion was also generally constructive and,

ultimately, very supportive of the Trustees and the staff. The delegates expressed a very sincere thank you to the staff and Trustees of the Pension and Benefit Plans for all of the hard work they have done in order to get the Plans back on stable footing.

A little out of the ordinary this year were two resolutions submitted by Local 2545, Quesnel School Board Employees, thanking the Provincial Council Executive Board and the real unsung heroes of our

organization, the Provincial Council staff, for all their hard work throughout a very trying year. On a personal note I would like to thank, not just Local 2545 for submitting the resolutions and the delegates at convention who supported them, but the entire membership from around the province. You have been tremendously supportive of your union through some very difficult struggles, and through that support have made any accomplishments we have attained possible.

May 1 wage increase

On May 9, the Provincial Council Negotiating Committee finally reached an agreement with Construction Labour Relations on the allocation of the negotiated increases in the Carpenters Standard Agreement effective May 1, 2003. The Commercial/Institutional wage package was increased by 50 cents on jobs tendered after May 1, with 35 cents allocated to the Benefit Plan and 15 cents allocated to wages and holiday pay. All area framework rates for enabled projects were also increased by 15 cents for projects tendered after May 1.

On Industrial projects the wage package was increased by 75 cents, with 35 cents allocated to Benefits and 40 cents allocated to wages and holiday pay.

Spotlight on organizing

by Josh Coles, provincial organizer

UBCJA Canada is a House of Cards

The International continues to repeat the refrain that restructuring is all about increasing membership and organizing. The funny thing is that, since restructuring, the UBCJA in Canada has experienced a record net loss of membership outside of BC and Alberta. Over 9,000 members have left the UBCJA, most to other unions, since 1996.

Of course, this is not the official line out of International headquarters in Washington, DC. They will insist that restructuring in Canada has increased membership, even though they officially report to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) that they only have 26,000 members in Canada now, compared to over 50,000 in 1996.

Outside of BC and Alberta, the UBCJA is in steep decline. In fact, the UBCJA in Canada has lost so many members that it has reached a point of severe dysfunction. The Provincial Council is in contact with numerous members and union officials from across Canada and it is clear that the present-day UBCJA is nothing short of a House-of-Cards.

Consider: Over 12 industrial plants of the UBCJA have been raided by other unions in the past seven years, most to the Steelworkers and the IWA. Over 3,000 industrial members

have switched to other unions since 1996. Organizers from other unions report that the biggest issues for disgruntled UBCJA members are a lack of Canadian autonomy, little membership democracy, and unfair union representation.

One of these raided plants, KML Homes, is actually partly owned by the Ontario carpenter union pension funds. Jim Smith, the UBCJA Vice-President for Canada, sat on the company Board of Directors while the 100+ employees switched from carpenter union representation to the IWA last year.

And the bleeding continues in the industrial sector of the UBCJA. The Nova Scotia Labour Board confirmed that there is presently an application for decertification being processed by the 125 UBCJA members of Swedwood Canada Inc. (an Ikea furniture manufacturer) in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

While such losses should not be celebrated, they are understandable. According to sources connected to Swedwood, the members calculated that decertifying away from the UBCJA was the first step towards eventually gaining representation from a democratic Canadian union.

The story in the "restructured" construction sector of the International is even worse.

Since 1996, the Universal

Workers Union Local 183 (UWU), an autonomous affiliate of the Labourers union, has been so successful in its raiding of the UBCJA in Ontario that there are now more carpenters in the UWU in Ontario than there are in the Carpenters Union.

UWU is based on an all-employee model of organizing and representation, and was a minor player up until the UBCJA started its restructuring in 1996. Since then, the UWU has signed up over 5,000 carpenters and now performs most low-rise/high-rise residential formwork and highway bridge work in Southern Ontario, paying higher rates than the UBCJA. The Toronto-area UBCJA locals have a combined total of 13,000 members while the UWU has 31,000

construction members.

It has also been confirmed that UBCJA Local 675 of Toronto, the largest UBCJA local in Canada, was put into trusteeship by the International in April, and that most of its leadership has been fired. Apparently, the trusteeship was prompted by a membership resolution instructing the Local to spend up to \$1 million fighting the International in ongoing internal disputes. A key clash is that the local, which represents wall and ceiling members, has been in merger/affiliations negotiations with the UWU. If this happens, the UWU will cement itself as the de facto construction union in Ontario, a trophy the UBCJA proudly held before General President Doug McCarron started his destructive

restructuring.

Again, this potential loss of over 3,500 to the labourers is not something to celebrate. But it helps others to understand why BC members have concluded, time and time again, that the UBCJA is a poison and our only antidote is Canadian autonomy.

The Provincial Council doesn't claim to be perfect, nor do we have all the answers about organizing. But in recent months we signed up more members and new contractors than we have in preceding years. The tide is turning our way.

The International UBCJA's loss of membership in Canada proves that McCarron's American-style restructuring is bad for organizing. We need to go up, not down.

Need help with Alcohol, Drug or Family Problems?

The Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan can assist you with any substance abuse problems you may be experiencing. Confidentiality is guaranteed. In no case will your name or circumstance be made public. In most situations we can offer full or partial financial assistance.

We at the PLAN are here for you and your family — Confidential and Caring. If you are experiencing any problems with substance abuse, please:

Call the Plan Our number is 604-521-8611 toll free 1-888-521-8611



BC Carpenters committed to autonomy vote

International is still confused on justification issue

What a whopper! The world according to Jim Smith



Just back from a few days off and wondering what to write in this column, when the latest masterpiece of misinformation from UBCJA Canadian Vice-President James Smith came across my desk. Usually I don't bother reading any of the International's propaganda, but I was in need of some comic relief. I wasn't disappointed. What a whopper! The world, according to Jim Smith – not only his world, of course; now, he purports to speak for John Shields, Ken Georgetti, and the entire Canadian Labour Congress. Suffice it to say that Jim Smith remains confused as to the facts of the issue.

This attitude continues to be the main stumbling block to

any meaningful dialogue between the International and us. Our position remains clear. Our membership has demonstrated by majority vote, through both convention resolution and referendum, their wish for autonomy.

In May, representatives from the CLC attended our Provincial Council Executive Board meeting and received from our union's entire Executive Board an expression of unequivocal, unanimous support for our position of requesting a justification vote. Jim Smith can peddle all the nonsense he wants – it's not going to change that fact.

The Provincial Council remains committed to the CLC justification process, but I wish

to say to our members that we appreciate your frustration over the time that has passed in pursuing this approach. I also would like to assure you that everyone involved accepts that a conclusion has to be reached in the near future (see inset below).

Convention

Once again, we experienced a very positive convention. Good, healthy debate took place on all the issues that were presented.

I was very impressed with the dialogue around the presentation and acceptance of the Carpentry Workers' Benefit and Pension Plan annual report. For some time, the International

and their supporters have attempted to make this an issue in the autonomy debate. It was obvious after the report's acceptance that this attempt has failed. This is not to say that anyone is happy with the circumstances we find ourselves in with our benefit and pension plans, but our members figured out pretty quickly that the problems we faced were larger than an individual or individual's decision. Much to the chagrin, I'm sure, of the International's supporters.

The Board of Trustees has a recovery plan in place; the Pension Plan is registered according to the legislation and everything the Trustees have done has been sanctioned by the Provincial Director of Pensions. The work that these individuals have done and the load they have carried over the last three years has been tremendous. They certainly deserve our thanks and respect for what they have accomplished.

Another high point of the convention was the attendance of several guest speakers. Dave Podmore of Concert Properties was quite optimistic in his forecast for upcoming work in the next year. Brian Payne, President of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, was very reassuring in his expression of solidarity in our struggle for autonomy. Two brothers from the FTQ in Québec, Yves Mercure and Yves Ouellet, were somewhat of a special treat this year. Their message of support and their sharing of the history of their struggle with the International, to which they were once

affiliated, was especially moving for the delegates. It was quite obvious that there is an ideological as well as a fraternal connection with these brothers. I look forward to strengthening our ties with their organization. Indeed, delegates adopted a resolution instructing the Provincial Council to move in this direction.

I have to commend the beleaguered Local Union 1995 delegates who rose to the challenge and were able to converse with Yves and Yves in the French language. I continue to be impressed by the considerable resources we have within our membership.

Local union elections

Elections are being held for Local Union executive committees and business agents. I would like to compliment all the candidates who have made a commitment to run for office in our union. It is neither the easiest nor the most popular time to be a trade union activist in our province. The time and effort required is considerable. All that being said, membership control of our union has been the very backbone of our existence and our struggle for autonomy. I urge all our members to exercise their democratic right to vote in these elections.

Referendum

There is a good possibility that we will be conducting a referendum vote over the summer months, and I look forward to meeting as many members as possible at their Local Union meetings.

Canadian Labour Congress Catch-22

The CLC justification procedure is close to impasse. President Georgetti will not process our application in accordance with the CLC constitution, claiming that we do not fall under that procedure. We disagree. The CLC has been trying to arrange a deal between the International and the BC Carpenters to have a vote. However, this has not been possible because of the International's intransigence. Why would the International ever agree to a vote when they know that they will lose?

The recent Provincial Council convention gave us authority to affiliate to a Canadian Union subject to approval by the membership. This is another option if the CLC procedure fails. However, what is required here is the Canadian union risking being thrown out of the CLC for taking us as an affiliate. The CLC would do this by charging this Canadian union with "raiding."

The perfect Catch 22. We can't affiliate to any body directly without CLC permission. The CLC denies permission by saying we are not eligible. However, if we proceed, "raiding" charges will be applied as if we never asked for permission in the first place!

Q&A Questions about the Carpenters Pension Plan reductions

—Cont'd from page 6

Q. I am still working. Does the pension reduction apply just to the pension I've already earned, or to the pension I will earn in the future too?

A. The reduction applies to both. Your Annual Member Statement will show the change to the pension you have earned so far. From now on, for each 350 hours up to 1750, you will earn \$14.63 instead of \$22.50. 1750 hours will earn \$73.15 of pension instead of \$112.50. We hope that over time, we will be able to restore all of your pension to today's level.

Q. I haven't retired yet but plan to retire at 55. I have more than 10 years of pension credit. My reduction will be limited to 45 per cent, right?

A. Unfortunately, no. The 45 per cent limit applies only to those already retired. After the 35 per cent reduction, you would have another 42 per cent (seven years x six per cent) taken off.

It is to bring some measure of equity between those facing retirement now, and those who retired early when the most generous early retirement rules were in place, that the Early Retirement Subsidy Reductions of up to an additional 10 per cent will be implemented.

Q. Why are you still taking tax off? My pension is so small now.

A. We are taking off the same percentage of income tax that we were before. If you want to make a change, we need new signed federal and provincial Personal Tax Credit Return (TD1) forms from you. These are available on our website at www.cwbp.ca (see the Forms section) or give us a call and we'll mail them to you.

Q. My pension has been cut 45 per cent and I don't think we can live on that. What happens to my pension if I return to covered employment?

A. Your pension is stopped while you are back to work at covered employment. Then when you re-retire, your pension is enhanced by the additional credit you earned while working.

Correction and Apology

In our April Notice to Pension Plan members, we listed pension plans that we described as having seen major cuts to their pension plans. It was not accurate to describe the Bricklayers that way. In 1993, they had a five per cent cut and changes to their early retirement rules, and have kept their pension plan in good financial health since that time. We apologize for our error.

Carpentry Workers Pension Plan of BC

Your Bill From Medical Services Plan

Medical Services Plan has been slow to send the bills for May 1 coverage out to our members. They have asked us to reassure you that it is all right to go to the doctor before you get your bill. They say they will send the bills May 27. If you haven't received your bill by the end of June, give us a call at 604-438-2434 or toll-free at 1-877-411-2806 and we'll look into it for you.

Medical Services will bill you retroactively to May 1, so it is a good idea to keep the money aside to cover your premium.

This change does not apply to members of the Industrial Carpenters' Benefit Plan.