

Strike continues at Glades Nursing Home

by Charlene Sadler

The 72 striking workers of Glades Nursing Lodge, formerly Keddy's Nursing Home, have been picketing for thirteen months now. The picketing of the Progressive Conservative Convention February 4, 1984 was an attempt to publicly embarrass the government into intervening in the dispute.

Rita Eastman, secretary treasurer of local 1259 and also a striking worker, said the government subsidizes over half the money needed for the nursing home, and feels they should check out any labour dispute that arises, especially one that's been going on for over a year.

Both the government and employer's attitude are to blame for the length of the strike, said Fred Lutley, president of the Halifax-Dartmouth District Labour Council. When the strike began, Don Keddy had no intention of negotiating with the workers, he added.

In August and September of 1983, Will Beckwith, the employer's negotiator had negotiated all but two items, then left for Toronto for reasons unknown. He was replaced by Greg Norris, who ignored Beckwith's negotiations and declared that they were back to square one.

Mike McNeil, president of CUPE local 1259 agrees that the employer's attitude is to blame but sees other problems too. Unlike the Electricians and Sheet Metal Workers' strike, nothing is being tied up—not money or construction. "Scab" workers filled the positions of the strikers within two weeks so there was no shortage of labour, said McNeil.

"We're out of the way, stuck in the backwoods so we don't get much publicity," McNeil said. And unlike Keddy, who owned other enterprises the strikers could boycott, with the new owners, the Hussaines, there is nothing local to ostracize, he noted.

We hope picketing of the Progressive Conservative Convention put the message across that we think the government isn't moving fast enough, said McNeil. "After thirteen months you begin to get impatient." The government should also be more labour oriented, he said.

The striking workers aren't getting their hopes up about the strike being ended—progress is slow and there's been no word on negotiation yet, although Fred Lutley said there is hope for future negotiations.

