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## Negotiations Dead

A contract dispute between the Students' Union and the Canadian Union of Public Employees 1368 is now entering its sixth month and shows no signs of ending soon.

Negotiations have been at a stand-still since July 18 when the Students' Union rejected CUPE's last proposal.

CUPE, which represents 38 full time employees of the Students' Union, was kicked out by the S.U. management team led by general manager Harry Goldberg and resident Jay Spark on July 7.

Management justified the lockout by claiming it would avert a possible strike in the fall when CUPE could possess some bargaining power. Several articles of agreement were settled during the two weeks after the lockout, but negotiations broke down July 18 and have yet to resume. Management unlocked the doors August 15 and permitted employees to return to work.

Despite the fact employees received no wages for five weeks and could be short of money, CUPE representative Vern Bartee acknowledged the possibility of a strike still exists.

CUPE scored another victory against management last week when they were certified as a bargaining agent for part-time student union employees. This boosts their membership from 38 to nearly 180 and gives them a substantial increase in bargaining power. The full implications of this development are not yet evident. Negotiations could begin within the next two weeks and could start from square one.

The two groups remain firm on proposals formulated in July.

Money, however, is not a major point of contention. S.U. offered a \$90 across the board increase for the first year of a two year contract. This figure converts to an 11 per cent average increase. In the second year employees would receive an average increase of 10.1 per cent.

CUPE's last proposal requested a 14.2 per cent average increase for a 12 month term of agreement. They based this on a new wage schedule and it is this point which the Students' Union has refused to recognize.

As the schedule now stands, the employees are paid according to their position on a five grid scale. An individual's wage is dependent on his skill, tenure and willingness to work. This is judged by management.

Management claims the five grid system is necessary as it provides the incentive of higher wages to new employees and encourages them to develop skills quickly. A worker can progress along the scale as quickly as he gains proficiency, Harry Goldberg, SU general manager said. This could take practically no time — a skilled person could begin work and be paid fourth grid wages. In any case he receives maximum pay after three years.

CUPE says the grid system keeps wages artificially low. Some jobs take only a few months to master, said Mr. Bartee. "It's not fair to wait as long as three years to receive the full wage."

When negotiators reconvene sometime within the next few weeks this article will likely remain a major obstacle on the way to a settlement.

## Board Decision Favors CUPE

A decision handed down August 26 by the Board of Industrial Relations has severely reduced Students' Union bargaining power with the Canadian Union of Public Employees local 1368.

The decision places as many as 150 part-time Students' Union employees within the union. Previously CUPE 1368 represented only the 48 full-time employees.

Harry Goldberg, SU general manager, said the decision will affect three areas of SU — administration, finance and political power.

He said more people will have to be hired to deal with the logistics of administering a more complex pay role system and estimated the cost of extra wages at \$300,000. Fees could rise \$15 per student as the result, he said.

The political implications, however, are what Mr. Goldberg fears most.

He is worried about the potential for organizing the part-

time employees, most of whom are students, into a powerful anti-management group.

"They could beat us to death at the bargaining table," he said.

The implications of the decision are certain to further complicate CUPE and management negotiations for a 77-78 term contract. The two sides presently are deadlocked on three major articles of agreement. This situation has existed since July 18.

CUPE applied for certification May 3 in reaction to a management request to the board for the removal of seven members from the previous bargaining unit. The Board granted three be removed.

Vern Bartee, CUPE representative, acknowledged the difficulty the decision will cause the Students' Union, but said his group felt they needed more power to deal with "a management team which has been bargaining in bad faith."

During the hearing the Board rejected management's claim that full-time employees were career persons and hence did not share the same community of interests as the part-time student employees.

Management also argued the union was using the support of full-time employees to organize part-time employees.

The board said it did not condone this approach but was satisfied the majority of members in the existing bargaining unit supported the application for certification. While stating the majority of those in the existing unit is the proper criteria for deciding the issue, the board said it finds some relief from the situation by looking to the other provisions of the Alberta Labour Act dealing with revocation.

The full implications of CUPE's certification are still unknown. Management and union negotiators will meet within the next two weeks to renew collective bargaining and at that time the consequences of the board's decision will be more evident.

## Government Ignores Housing

The Alberta government has no intention of helping post secondary institutions overcome the present housing shortage.

Brian Mason, executive officer for the Federation of Alberta Students, at an August 5 press conference said the government is aware of the problem students encounter seeking accommodation, knows it is constantly recurring, but intends no action due to fiscal restraints.

A preliminary study commissioned by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower last year and leaked to the press by FAS expressed the views of several post secondary schools.

All four Alberta universities expressed the need for student housing; a need expressed by the boards of governors, the staff, and the students' unions.

Regarding the six regional colleges the study says "Staff at all institutions acknowledge a need for more student housing, especially since most communities have a limited capacity to absorb students. They do not anticipate that the community housing shortage will be alleviated in the near future."

Of primary concern to nearly all post secondary schools is the need for married and single parent housing.

Mason said the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, Dr. Bert Hohol, directed changes in the final, public report which eliminated passages underscoring the need for housing in particular universities, colleges, and technical schools. Mason said Hohol justified the changes for the purpose of "readability."

While stating the student housing problem is part of a larger, more general provincial housing problem, Mason suggested three avenues of change

First, the government immediately end the freeze on capital construction of on-campus housing.

Second, the government recognize students as a low-income group, and, in doing so, make students eligible for Alberta Housing Corporation financing. This would mean the university would not depend solely on the Department of Advanced Education for housing grants.

Third, the government build apartments off campus which would be shared by students and other low income groups. In the case of declining enrolment the housing would not go unused.

The Federation of Alberta Students represents approximately 90 per cent of Alberta's post-secondary students, or nearly 40,000 people.

Although the housing shortage is acute in Edmonton, Mason said this area is not suffering as greatly as others

He named the University of Calgary, SAIT, Mount Royal College, the University of Lethbridge, and Lethbridge Community College as those experiencing the most difficulty accommodating students.

In these institutions students are forced to drop their enrolment. "They are being denied an education, simply because they have no place to stay," Mason said.