

# JOIN US!



In August of 1976 the employees at a Vancouver branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce joined SORWUC (Service Office & Retail Workers Union of Canada) and applied to the Canada Labour Relations Board (CLRB) for union certification. Since then hundreds of bank employees across B.C. have joined the union. And on June 14, 1977, we received word from the CLRB that a branch of a chartered bank is an appropriate bargaining unit. This means if the majority of employees in a branch join the union, the union will be certified and the Bank will be required to negotiate with us.

We joined SORWUC for very specific reasons. SORWUC is a democratic and independent union. As bank employees in SORWUC we will be responsible for our own contract. We ourselves will decide and vote on the issues we think are important for our collective agreement. We will elect our own representatives from among bank employees to represent us in negotiations with the banks.

At a recent general membership meeting of bank employees we decided to launch a province-wide union drive. A provincial union drive means that you can join the union as a branch or as an individual. The sooner we get together the sooner we will have a collective agreement that provides us with the wages and working conditions we deserve. If you think we need a union in the banks, the time to join is now!

# some of the issues...

## WAGES

In 1891, the average wage for women was approximately 50% of the average wage for men. After almost a century of progress, that figure has risen to 56%. As bank employees, our starting wage is barely more than half the B.C. average wage of \$270 per week (February 1977, Statistics Canada). And there are often unfair discrepancies between employees' wages. As employees of some of the richest companies in Canada, we deserve wages that recognize our skill, responsibility and seniority.

## JOB POSTINGS AND PROMOTION

Advancement in the banks is arbitrary and often dependent on the "personality factor". Job vacancies should be posted. Employees should have recourse to a grievance procedure if they feel they have been unfairly passed over for promotion.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

Often branches are understaffed. People aren't replaced when they take vacations or sick leave. Working conditions vary, and a union contract can cover specific problems - regular coffee breaks, poor equipment, overcrowding, lighting, noise, staff rooms.

## OVERTIME

Again, the problem often lies in understaffing. Many of SORWUC's contracts provide double pay for overtime, and the right to refuse overtime. Our wages should be good enough that we won't need to work overtime to make ends meet.

## BASIC UNION BENEFITS

According to one analyst quoted in the Financial Times, although the banks have been considering dental plans for some time, "the pressure of the union spurred their implementation." We also need better vacations, sick leave, more say over the pension plan and the extension of benefits to cover part-time employees.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A union grievance procedure provides recourse to employees who feel they have been improperly treated. It will ensure equal and fair treatment for all bank workers.

# some of the questions...

## IF I JOIN THE UNION WILL MY EMPLOYER KNOW?

Absolutely not, unless you tell her/him. Nowhere in a union certification process does an employer ever see a list of who joined and who didn't. We treat union membership in the strictest confidence. The only people who will know that you are a union member are those you want to know.

## WHAT CAN MY EMPLOYER DO TO STOP THE UNION?

It is illegal for management to interfere in any way with a union drive, even by expressing an opinion. The union has a good lawyer and will back any employee who is harassed by management. However, we find that in most cases the tactic of the banks is to swamp employees with sudden kindness - the resolution of outstanding grievances, hiring new staff, new equipment, and the dental plan!

## HOW MUCH SAY WILL I HAVE IN A UNION CONTRACT?

The normal practice in our union is that union members in the workplace elect their negotiating team, and vote on all contract proposals before they go to the bargaining table. The members must approve any contract negotiated with the banks before it is signed.

## WILL WE LOSE BENEFITS IF THE BANKS 'GO UNION'?

We are surprised how often this question is asked. We've never heard of employees losing benefits when they unionize. It's almost impossible to get a job at a unionized company because the conditions are so good and everybody wants a job there.

## HOW ABOUT STRIKES?

How about them? It's up to you - no members of a bargaining unit can strike unless they themselves vote to do so in a secret ballot vote. Hopefully we will be creative enough to think of all sorts of ways to influence the banks to agree to a good contract. Our chances will increase enormously the more bank workers we have in the union.

## CAN PART-TIME EMPLOYEES JOIN AND PARTICIPATE IN THE UNION?

YES! Part-time employees are an important and growing section of the banks' work force, and are presently denied benefits. Part-time workers will only achieve benefits like sick leave, medical and dental, vacations, etc., by working together through the union.

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Bank workers like jobs  
they want decent wages

# BANK UNIONS

When they finally come,  
you can expect big changes

Bank employees  
at data centre  
want a union

Establishing bargaining unit key issue

Working women's wages are a necessity

Bank, union lawyers  
play at tug-of-war

*Union says*

CLRB sets aside a week

bank union hearings

Bank local is formed

Stop bank's  
lie-detector  
testing

union rep due  
in town tomorrow

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## how to get in touch with us:

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The time to join is now if you think that we need a union in the banks. Or if you have any questions about unionization please get in touch with us.

You can either fill in the form below or call us at the Union Office, collect if you live outside of Vancouver.

To: United Bank Workers, SORWUC,  
#1116-207 W. Hastings St.  
Vancouver. 681-2811 or 684-2834

I would like further information. \_\_\_\_\_  
I would like to join. \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ WORKPLACE \_\_\_\_\_

(All replies in strictest confidence.)