

Behind the News

Picket Line



By Conrad—Reprinted with the permission of the Denver Post.

Bargaining Ends Doctors' Strike

By JOAN MEHAN
Associate Editor

Strikes have become a familiar business in our society. Unions strike for higher wages and long range fringe benefits. Workers in unsettled countries strike in protest of a new government. However, strikes by professionals have been quite uncommon.

Therefore, when the 625 practicing doctors of Saskatchewan province in Canada went on strike in protest of a medicare act, the world watched in awe. Some called the strike heroic in that the doctors were standing up for their principles. Some called the strike immoral because the doctors left the province with only emergency services. And some called the strike undemocratic because the doctors were defying a law duly passed by the Saskatchewan legislature.

All these views were loudly voiced as the 23-day strike dragged on. Some people demonstrated to "Keep Our Doctors," while others wrote threatening letters to both striking doctors and government officials.

Name Calling Flourished
Also under threat were the handful of Saskatchewan doctors who agreed to practice under the new government act. These "scabs" as they are called in other strikes were hanging in the middle and rumors of retaliation threats made by striking doctors ran high.

Although the strike was called by the Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons, the medical association of the province, it had all the name calling and threats on both sides that characterize most labor union strikes. The doctors voiced views that the government couldn't be trusted and that it was autocratic and unfair. The government spokesmen said that the doctors were defying the law passed by elected officials. Both held their ground. The doctors wanted the law suspended and the government refused.

The compulsory medical act put into effect on July 1 provides payment for most medical services for almost all of the province's citizens. According to the plan, a government commission would decide how the doctors would be paid and

how much they would get. The act also gives the commission the power to decide the terms and conditions under which the doctors would work. Saskatchewan's premier, Woodrow S. Lloyd, said that the government has the right to assume this power since most of the \$21 million a year needed to finance the plan is met by taxes.

Emergency Care
However, the college refused to accept the law. The doctors set up free emergency medical stations manned by about 200 doctors and discontinued normal practice. The college officials said that the stations were adequate to take care of the medical needs of the 928,000 provincial citizens. The government said they were not and started to recruit doctors, primarily from Great Britain, to man free government clinics. This only added more fuel to the fire and the deadlock continued.

The college refused mediation saying that it wanted to deal directly with the government. The government officials said that they would take the doctor's objections into account in drafting new legislation if the doctors would go back to work. The college, however, was leery of accepting this promise. When the original socialized medicine proposals were drawn up, the objections of the three doctors on the 12-man committee were ignored by the government, although the then premier, T. C. Douglas, had promised that the program would be "acceptable both to those providing the service and those receiving it." The government stood firm on its offer and the college still demanded suspension of the act before the doctors would resume their duties. Many doctors took holidays, left the province permanently or looked around for positions outside Saskatchewan.

Taylor Mediates Dispute
The key step in breaking the deadlock came when the government imported Britain's Lord Taylor, who was instrumental in establishing the British National Health Service. Brought in as a government advisor, Taylor found himself as the mediator between the

opposing parties. Through a few days of collective bargaining, Taylor finally managed to negotiate an agreement and put an end to the strike. The plan calls for:
● An increase in the size of the Medical Care Commission from seven members to ten to provide seats for three more doctors on the commission. This would give the doctors and laymen equal representation.

● Allowance for doctors to practice either under or outside the medical care act.
● Continuation of the private health insurance plans that now cover about two-thirds of Saskatchewan's residents. The government will subsidize these plans by allowing residents to pay premiums directly to the private plans rather than to the government and, by paying claims to the plans.

● An agreement to negotiate, mediate or arbitrate any disputes arising in future years over fee schedules.

● Adoption of amendments to the medicare act reducing the powers of the commission which administers the act.

The government agreed to call the legislature into special session to amend the act to meet the doctor's main objections and the college is now attempting to call back the doctors who are out of the province. In about a week Saskatchewan will have its doctors back.

Reverse of U.S.
However, this strike should not be taken lightly. A professional group that does not usually get involved in the messy business of politics got into the thick of it and struck to have its voice heard. In Canada where lobbying is a dirty word, this group hasn't had much voice in government but in this instance it certainly made its presence felt.

In the United States the first step in a medicare program—medical aid for the aged—was recently defeated by the Congress. However, we have many lobbying groups, such as the American Medical Association, which effect our legislation. The procedure in Saskatchewan seems somewhat reversed. The doctors there acted after the act was passed.

Miller Honored for Contributions By Institute of Arts and Letters

E. Willard Miller, head of the Department of Geography, was elected a fellow member by the International Institute of Arts and Letters earlier this year for his international contributions in the field of arts and letters.

The institute, consisting of 1,760 members, aims to promote worldwide cooperation in cultivating and contributing to arts, letters and sciences for human progress.

The honorary organization, which has its headquarters in Switzerland, publishes books and intellectual magazines and creates museum displays.

MILLER has worked at the University since 1945. In addition, he has written several magazine articles and is editor of the magazine "Global Geography" and co-editor of "The World's Nations: An Economic and Regional Geography." Miller is also president of the

Pennsylvania Council for Geography Education. He was president of the American Society for Professional Geographers and head of the Penn State chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

Miller was chosen for life-time membership along with 23 other Americans, such as William Steinberg, director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Society, Aldous Huxley, author of "Brave New World," Thornton Wilder, playwright of "Our Town," and Walter G. Langsam, president of the University of Cincinnati.

Ten Student Paintings Selected for Awards

Ten paintings were selected by two juries for awards at the exhibition of work by students of Hobson Pittman which will continue through Sunday in the Hetzel Union gallery.

The professional jury, composed of Francis E. Hyslop, Jr., professor of history of art and architecture, Paul Edmonston, associate professor of art education, and Pittman, chose for honorable mention the works of David Smith, exploding firecrackers outside a residence hall July 5. A counselor in the area observed the "suspicious actions" of the student and reported the incident by John Murphy, Poultney, Vt.

Discipline—

(Continued from page one)

IN THE OTHER case, a 7th term student in engineering was placed on suspended suspension until the end of the fall term this year for exploding firecrackers outside a residence hall July 5.

A counselor in the area observed the "suspicious actions" of the student and reported the incident

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