

# BUILD THE BOYCOTT!

If you can help picket, leaflet, poster,  
contact the *working women's workshop* of  
Vancouver Women's Caucus, 511 Carrall St.  
684-0523.

If you belong to any other organizations, especially  
trade unions, ask your local to support the campaign  
and help publicize it. Please send copies of motions,  
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possible) donations to the campaign to  
Women's Caucus.

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# boycott cunninghams

SOLIDARITY  
with the  
HOSKEN  
STRIKE



C.H. Hosken, owned by Cunningham Drugs, has hired  
scabs to attempt to break the strike of its 12 employees.  
The women are striking for a union agreement; the right to  
bargain collectively, a voice in firing and promotions, job  
security, and decent wages. Their union (Retail, Wholesale  
& Dept. Store Union) is legally certified, but the company  
refuses to bargain seriously.

## FOR JOB SECURITY

Their struggle affects all of us. 85% of working women in BC are without any union protection. We can be hired, promoted, or fired, strictly on the whim of the boss – whether he likes the way we dress or talk – regardless of qualifications or seniority.

Women at work are always regarded as “temporary”. Since society says our primary role is that of wife and mother, we are assumed to be working for “pin money”. Historically, women in Canada have been pushed back and forth between the work force and the home according to the needs of the corporations that employ us.

## FOR DECENT WAGES

The women at C.H. Hosken are demanding wage parity with Western Wholesale Drugs, also owned by Cunninghams, which has a union contract. They do essentially the same work, but the company's only offer amounted to about \$1 per hour less for most job categories. For example, a janitoress at Western Wholesale Drug makes \$2.90, at Hosken they were offered \$2.00; a packer at Western Wholesale Drug makes \$3.45, at Hosken they were offered \$1.87 to start, \$2.00 after 3 months, \$2.13 after 6 months.

So long as women workers are not organized, we can be used by employers as cheap labor, to keep all wages down. Today, the average woman earns 40% of the wages of a man with the same education. We are told that this is “natural” – since a “feminine” woman is one who is economically dependent on a man and therefore doesn't need equal pay. In fact, there is nothing “natural” about it – but it is extremely profitable for companies that employ women.

## WHO ARE CUNNINGHAMS?

Cunninghams is a multi-million dollar company – the second largest wholesale-retail corporation in the drug business in Canada. They own Western Wholesale Drugs,

C.H. Hosken, and retail stores under the following names: Cunninghams, Tobans, Savers, Reliable, Woolworth Drug (Chilliwack) and Merry Mart variety stores. As well, Western Wholesale Drug provides all the merchandising, marketing, financial and planning services for 60 “independently owned” Western Drug stores.

It is also rather special in terms of its emphasis on public relations. Two members of the board of Cunninghams have important media connections. J.S. Mackay is president of Selkirk Holdings which owns All Canada Radio & TV and 26% of BC Television (CHAN and CHEK). John MacD. Lecky is a director of Sun Publishing Company. Perhaps this is one reason for the lack of coverage of the Hosken strike in the local media.

Right now, Ralph Cunningham (son of the founder, and chairman of the board, of Cunninghams) is calling on all of us to support the United Appeal. His actions are a good example of the hypocrisy of that campaign. The businessmen of Vancouver who profit off unemployment and low wages are asking the working people of the city to donate money to the poor. Cunninghams asks you and I to give money for “those less fortunate” while he expects us to work for him for \$2 per hour with no job security.

## SOLIDARITY

Women will win the right to organize only if we act together. Solidarity is a basic idea of the women's liberation movement. We must reject the image of women which tells us to compete with one another for the favors of men; which tells us that trade unionism is something *men* do; which tells us that it isn't lady-like to stand up for your rights.

Together we can win. Cunninghams has hired scabs to replace the Hosken strikers, but how will they replace thousands of consumers?

Defeat for the strikers at Hosken would make it harder for other women to organize. A victory there will be a victory for all of us.