



AN ICE CREAM SALESMAN'S LOT can be a happy one on a hot summer's day in Vancouver, and 14-year-old Eric Vandereerden

appreciates the advantages of his job as he makes a sale to Judi Kumpula, left, and Marnie Kennedy on English Bay beach.

B.C. Pen prisoners secretly sign up to form own union

By ROBERT SARTI

A former B.C. Penitentiary prisoner who claims to have witnessed some of the events surrounding the death of Mary Steinhauser said Monday the vast majority of inmates have decided they must work outside established channels for Pen improvements.

Keith Curtis Baker, 36, who was released on parole during the weekend after five years in prison, revealed that more than 85 per cent of eligible prisoners formed a prisoners' union and have signed forms authorizing it to negotiate with Pen authorities.

As proof, Baker produced the 300 forms during an interview with The Vancouver Sun and explained they were smuggled out of the Pen last week by a "member of the custodial (guard) staff who is sympathetic to the aims and goals of the prisoners' union."

"There's a great deal of tension right now in the institution," said Baker, who was imprisoned on a charge of possessing heroin for the purpose of trafficking.

"Inmates are slashing themselves in the hole (solitary confinement), just so they can get out of the hole and into the hospital. The pressure is on because the authorities are trying to clamp the lid down after Mary's death."

Baker said the inmates intend to demand the right to bargain collectively and to hold meetings and elect their representatives.

"The Dragon (pen warden Dragan Ceretic) has been trying to get us to form the same old, toothless grievance committees, but there is virtually unanimous agreement among the inmates that we need to have some meaningful input into the decisions that are being made.

"When we saw the way Mary Steinhauser was killed, we realized the danger and the spot we were in. We need strength in numbers and organization because we can't survive as individuals."

Baker said the authorization forms were passed around by a group of inmates during recreation periods and at other times over a weekend.

"Don't ask me how many were in the prisoners' group, because I don't know. We were set up in a cell structure, with each person only knowing one other person."

"If anybody says he knows everybody else he's a damned liar."

Baker said 300 prisoners of a total of 45 in the Pen signed the forms authorizing the prisoners' union to represent them. The union would be the first in a Canadian penal institution.

Of those who did not sign, about 75 were in protective custody or in the hospital and, therefore, out-of-bounds to the other prisoners.

"About 20 other inmates were 'fish' — new inmates who had come in within the past two weeks and were unknown to us and so not approached.

"The rest, about 30, wouldn't sign because they said they didn't have enough knowledge of the situation. Only one person didn't want to get involved — he was afraid of repression and he didn't think it would do any good."

Baker said he was lodged in a cell just a short distance from the building where Miss Steinhauser and 14 other hostages were being held by three prisoners from June 9 to 11. He said he was in a position to see and hear some of the events during which Miss Steinhauser was shot and killed by attacking officers as they stormed in to free the other hostages.

In a sworn affidavit released through the Prisoners Union Committee and given to the Farris commission, Baker said he heard three gunshots at approximately 1 a.m. Then, he continued:



KEITH BAKER
... wants to testify

"I did also hear, immediately following the gunshots, a loud male voice scream. I did further hear the words 'Don't shoot, don't shoot,' screamed out by a female voice which I recognized as that of Mary Steinhauser."

Baker said affidavits sworn by two other inmates, Phil Jackson and Ralph Cochrane, give eyewitness evidence that Miss Steinhauser was shot after inmate Andy Bruce had been shot.

"We have asked, through PUC, to be allowed to give our evidence to the commission. So far, we have not even been given a reply."

Baker was also one of eight inmates who launched a class action in the Federal Court of Canada in 1974 to have "the hole" declared cruel and unusual punishment.

The suit, which was held up when the court refused on the grounds of security to allow the eight plaintiffs to appear together, is scheduled to proceed on Sept. 22.

"In one year, I spent eight months in the hole on three different occasions," said Baker. "I never got a hearing or even a formal charge against me."

"The keepers have arbitrary power to throw people in the hole for an indefinite period of time on no evidence, but merely for suspicion."

Baker said prison regulations require that each case involving the hole be reviewed every 30 days, but this was hardly ever done until after the eight inmates launched their suit.

Abolition of the hole is one of the main demands being put forward by the prisoners at the Pen — just as it was by prisoners at Oakalla Regional Correctional Center who staged a peaceful mass sitdown three weeks ago and subsequently formed their own prisoners' union.

Other specific grievances of the Pen inmates include the arbitrary powers of the national parole board and of the prison board that categorizes prisoners into maximum, medium and minimum security risks; lack of due process in the "warden's court," where infractions of prison discipline are dealt with; unsatisfactory visiting and correspondence privileges; "racism" on the part of guards and administration directed at native people; and inadequate food, medical and recreational facilities.

ICBC strikers demonstrate after negotiations bog down

More than 100 striking employees demonstrated outside Insurance Corporation of B.C. headquarters today after renewed negotiations aimed at ending their two-month strike bogged down.

At the same time, a motorcade of about 50 cars circled the block containing ICBC offices in the Royal Centre, tying up late-morning traffic.

The negotiations stalled Monday on the question of wages, with union spokesmen claiming the government insurance corporation is refusing to budge from its original position.

ICBC public information officer Barry Jarvis said today he believes the government's unwillingness to negotiate with the strikers stems from its determination to set an example of firmness to the rest of the B.C. labor movement.

He estimated 25 per cent of ICBC employees have left for other jobs since the strike began.

The demonstrators carried signs proclaiming: "ICBC talks stricken with Strachan," "I.C. Nothing Happening in B.C.," and "B.S. Bob Strachan The Initials Tell It All."

Transport and Communications Minister Strachan is the minister responsible for ICBC.

Drivers of cars in the motorcade blew their horns continuously.

Ten police motorcycle units, two inspectors and 20 police officers were trying to untangle the traffic.

But a spokesman said: "The traffic situation is so bad that even police supervision is not helping the situation."

The demonstration ended at noon.

Fred Trotter, president of the Office and Technical Employees Union, Local 378, said corporation negotiators are still refusing to budge from their original wage offer providing a 14-per-cent hike plus two cost-of-living adjustments over 20 months.

He said a union membership meeting will be held Wednesday to consider the situation and members will likely be given a chance to indicate whether they support the appointment of an industrial inquiry commissioner.

ICBC has asked the provincial government for such a move but the union has so far resisted the idea.

However, Trotter said it is becoming evident there will be no movement on monetary items by the government corporation during direct negotiations.

"I was kind of optimistic for a while. We have managed to get quite a few minor issues out of the way," he said, "but we have just come down to a complete dead-lock on wages."

An estimated 1,800 ICBC employees have been on strike for a first contract since May 20.

Bacteria shut Sunset Beach

Sunset Beach was ordered closed indefinitely today after pollution checks disclosed unacceptable coliform counts.

City medical health officer Dr. Gerald Bonham said today False Creek appears to be the source of the pollution and the beach will remain closed to swimmers

until the bacteria sources can be eliminated.

High bacteria counts forced a closure of the beach from August, 1973, to July 1974.

Checks this year showed pollution increasing through June and July and the beach was ordered closed when the fecal coliform count passed 200 per 100 millilitres of water.

Dr. Bonham said live-aboard boats without sewage facilities may be one source of the creek bacteria and "there is no point in fooling around" until the pollution is eliminated.

PAUL St. PIERRE
ON HOLIDAY

TWO BOYS BLAMED FOR FIRE

Sun Staff Reporter

OLIVER — Two boys who were smoking cigarettes in a shed behind the coffee shop, which was destroyed, one of them threw a match into a box, igniting a pile of rubbish. The two boys left the shed, thinking they had put out the flames, but the fire in the box flared up after they left.

An RCMP spokesman said the boys, aged 11 and 14, were apprehended before the fire was brought under control. The boys have been turned over to a probation officer who will recommend what action should be taken.

The boys told police they were smoking cigarettes in a shed behind the coffee shop, which was destroyed. One of them threw a match into a box, igniting a pile of rubbish. The two boys left the shed, thinking they had put out the flames, but the fire in the box flared up after they left.

Firemen from Oliver, Osoyoos, Okanagan Falls and Penticton worked for six hours to bring the blaze under control.



Allan
FOTHERINGHAM

Laurier LaPierre, the Montreal broadcaster-academic, is visiting in town for a few days and contributes this guest column.

DAY ONE —

Flying always makes me wonder if I will ever touch land again. Do I really want to land? The screeching of the wheels as they hit the tarmac suspends me between life and death. Since I am afraid to die, I don't like to land. However, I don't have much choice.

Approaching Vancouver — by day or by night — is quite an experience. It is a sort of discovery that there is something after all the way "over there." One feels quite relieved to realize that. You see, there is really nothing 10 miles outside of Toronto until you reach Vancouver.

Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and what they now call Thunder Bay (what was wrong with Fort William and Port Arthur? Surely if it was good enough for C. D. Howe and Douglas Fisher ...) pass under unnoticed. Up there in the plane — on what June Callwood calls "this cloud of champagne" — I am untouched by what the people who live there do. (Of course, there is no difference when I am on the ground!)

At 39,000 feet, even the oil of Alberta and the new opulence of these Arabians of Canada are unreal. I find it difficult to

feel "my country" stretching under me; acre upon acre of rich farm land, ton upon ton of coveted mineral wealth, gallon upon gallon of energy fluid. And the people? What do they have in common with me? (Why is the onus on them to have something in common with me?)

All the old clichés of Canada go through my head: a people without an exciting history; a nation without a culture; an economy that belongs to the American foreigners; a sectional fervor that makes a mockery of nationalism; and antipathy for and an ignorance of the people to whom I belong.

And yet! And yet! I must write about that someday. Suffice it to say for now that I thought I had gotten this country out of my system. I don't seem to have, I don't seem to want to. Or am I being just a romantic?

I have been in Vancouver only three hours and already I am tangling with the law. My car was "impounded." (I wonder what Tilden will think of that.)

At 4:28 p.m. (or 16:28 in this era of that ridiculous Celsius) my car was in the street. Three minutes later the immense machine of some private gin-runner has swallowed it up and ran away with it. But where?

I call the police. Oddly enough, they don't have a record of it. Why not? Who told this private practitioner to seize my car? Since it was illegally parked, surely only the police. Ordinary citizens just don't go around indiscriminately picking up the cars of private citizens. Yet the police have no record. Somewhat disturbed by my righteous indignation (which appears emotional to them), they inform me that I can pick up the car at such and such a pound (just like a dog).

I take a cab and go there to discover that it is not there. After some emotional irritation on my part, the nice young man, who sits in his shell protected by three-inch plate glass, condescends to telephone a colleague of his who performs the same duties in yet another pound. (How many of them are there? What happens if my car is not there? I may be condemned to staying in British Columbia for all eternity hunting for my impounded auto!)

Oh, goodness. The car is there. He summons me another cab and off I go into the sunset. The new lords of my automotive destiny search their record books, and finally acknowledge being in possession of the rented car. Without a hearing in court, I pay a fine of some \$12 to private enterprise. Strange experience. I feel somewhat deprived of some inalienable right — but can't think which one it is.

DAY TWO —

I do not go out. Too afraid to park my car and see it disappear. Must get over that. It must happen every day.

DAY THREE —

In a beautiful and excellent restaurant

called La Cantina (the owner interrupts everybody's eating at one moment to inform us that this infernal impounding machine is at work again — safe this time) some exquisite child recommends parsley for my indigestion — an indigestion caused not by the food but by my confused state of mind . . . or is it the girl with the exquisite green eyes at the next table (later I discover she speaks French!). Be that as it may, the parsley works; the green eyes continue to haunt me. I wonder if parsley helps hangovers. I must return to ask.

We who live in the East dismiss British Columbia as a lotus land, filled with pedestrians who have unlimited liberty to annoy drivers and surrounded by a scenery which is quite exaggerated. In fact "exaggeration" is an excellent word to sum up our Eastern feelings about British Columbia. After all, can the political life of this province be described another way than by the word "exaggerated"?

Surely the foolish fling of municipal administrators to cope with the freedom the environment creates through an orgy of law and order regulations can only be a British Columbia exaggeration. The power of radio hot-lines, the need for them, and the acceptance of those who animate them as oracles and prophets and sages seem all out of proportion with the depth and intelligence and knowledge these hotliners display.

To my dismay, I discover that even the hallucinations of British Columbians are exaggerated. A senior journalist of some important medium tells me she has not taken a bath since she saw Jaws. Just imagine the size of her bathtub, not to speak of her intellect.