



NATIONAL MUA VETERANS NEWS

"Retired from the workforce, not the struggle"

**REPORT BY NATIONAL SECRETARY
FRED KRAUSERT
ON
THE ILWU ANNUAL PACIFIC COAST
PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION
VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA
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INTERNATIONAL UNITY

Report from Vancouver ILWU Pensioners Conference and an overview of Social welfare System in Four Major U.S. Cities.

Comrades, Brothers, Sisters and Friends

Firstly I thank our ILWU Vancouver Branch and the U.S ILWU for inviting us to be part of a great conference, and the support in U.S.

Once again it demonstrates the need for the retired movement around the world to unite to combat the attacks on worker and communities. Workers have given their life work commitment to their country, only to be attacked when retired,- “SAD “a lot to say about our government and systems

The Conference once again highlighted the social conditions that were won many years ago, and are now being attacked in an attempt to erode those conditions. In all of our countries, there is absolutely no need for these attacks, if the Tax structure in all our countries was shared by all (corporates) there would be no bases for argument. On the position of funding, there are three main areas of concern, private operators see the profit to be made from our health systems, not the social need, which should be the prime concern

Each of our countries have a different pension structure where in Canada’s Health system is very much like Australia but the U.S. system is being run on the Private/charities structure and the pension is being based on companies. Australia we have the aged pension or part aged pension and super or only super. There is a vast difference in our pension and social structure, in regards to lifestyle due to climatic differences those living on high bracket self-funded payments or just government pensions, which in Australia is under attack due to the cut backs, and the demand by external forces, i.e.

Trans National Corporates (TNC) International Monetary Fund and the attitude that private can run the system better. In conclusion I urge the need for international solidarity, for education, exchange of ideas is the way forward for all of us to put a future in place for future generations

An Overview of Social Welfare in Four Major U.S. Cities

This is not a criticism of the welfare or non -welfare system in the Cities that I visited. My assessment was made by addressing the social and working condition; living traveling and fuel cost, those concerns were addressed with workers in the four cities. This is to help me understand how we in Australia can avoid being put into that position if we sit back and allow the erosion of what we have at the costs of both parties when either party is in government allowing the private sector to run the country. My respect and admiration for the American people can never be questioned, but to allow twenty percent to control all the wealth is never right in any country, this indicates to me that there is no will by any party in government to address the people’s needs, there is always a cost, that is understood, and understanding that a proper gauged tax system in

place brings some type of equality to a country. Norway at this present time is the only country addressing their tax system by making the Oil companies pay the taxes required by the government

All governments should be involved in the employment structure of our countries.

The greatest challenge is yet to come, in the near future when oil reserves start to go down, how are these people able to fend for themselves?

There is no union coverage in most of the southern state, only seven per cent coverage in the whole U.S. and a divided position with two bodies of trade unions. The people I spoke to had no understanding of unions and their roles, a lot depended on the good will of the employer. Casual workers have no regulated hours or any coverage and no understanding of their rights, different states have a different approach to labor coverage.

In New York you could walk from 60th Av to Time Square and not hear a word of English spoken, with mass import of workers, from South America and Asia. The hospitality industry the workers are mostly Asian based and are not able to communicate, it is an easy way for employer groups to control their work force, employer groups do not care that there is long hours travelling to and from work and workers living long distances from the main city centers because of high rent in city areas workers have to travel, no different in Australia.

The increase of volume of street people in U.S. as Australia, and Canada has increased, this in itself indicates how the welfare systems if any mostly charities are under stress and needs assistance.

From my observation I believe that until there is a mass movement to correct the welfare/profit system and address the position of expenditure overseas the U.S. will find hard time ahead when world economics are eroding at a fast pace. War is not the answer addressing need not greed on profit margins is part answers, the union bodies have to evaluate their direction, manufacture has to be addressed in all of our countries. No one country should hold the position of manufacture on a world base's, the loss of skills and economics to all our countries cannot be evaluated.

As you can see this is not a document but my evaluation of raising concerns of the imbalances that I saw, and knowing that if there was a greater union coverage there would be a great difference in life style for all workers. My major concerns is this what the world really wants or is it that twenty percent that don't want to pay their share taxes of the wealth made from the sweat of workers?

In conclusions I would like to express an opinion that if every worker in the U.S. revived three weeks annual leave how much more employment it would create and give workers a decent annual leave?



This is an edited version of part of an article by Bret Homes General secretary of the Midwives and Nurses Association of NSW it contains some figures that are very interesting. This union has been continually carrying on a campaign against the privatization of the health system and should be congratulated.

Every month The Lamp carries an editorial by Brett Holmes, General Secretary of the NSWNMA.

“This year our annual conference grappled with the multitude of difficult issues that now confront us.

The Abbott government’s first budget has put us on notice that we cannot assume the continued existence of Medicare as a universal health care system.

The proposal for a co-payment for GP visits, radiology and pathology plus increases in pharmaceutical co-payments are a significant first step towards the end of bulk billing.

The savage cuts to health spending set the scene for the public health system to fail and for the private sector to take over all save a safety net for the poor.

The Abbott government is paying incentives to state governments to privatise infrastructure. This could have grave consequences for our public hospitals which are now open to be taken over by private capital.

At the state level the Baird government has already revealed its zeal for privatising public hospitals with a decision on the new private operator of the new Northern Beaches hospital imminent and the strong possibility of the new Maitland and Byron Bay hospitals to follow suit.

This aggressive and radical policy agenda at the federal and state levels poses an enormous threat to a health system that has stood Australia well for many decades now.

Numerous prominent economists and economic commentators have demolished the weak and unconvincing arguments that have been put forward to justify these attacks.

At annual conference the much respected economics editor for the Age, Peter Martin, outlined the sheer dishonesty of the hysterical scaremongering by treasurer Joe Hockey and federal health minister Peter Dutton about health spending (see pp 24).

Peter Dutton has been loudly claiming that in the 10 years between 2002 and 2012 the cost of Medicare benefits has increased by 124%, the cost of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme has increased by 90% and the cost of public hospitals by 83%. They are big numbers. They are numbers that are meant to scare. They are numbers that are being cynically used to proclaim the unsustainability of Medicare and to justify the vicious attacks on public health.

The number that Peter Dutton doesn’t dare whisper, as pointed out to us by Peter Martin, is that the economy has grown by 94% in that same timeframe. So the PBS and public hospitals are costing us LESS as a proportion of the economy while Medicare is costing us marginally more.

This dissembling about our health system is unconscionable.”