

newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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TEACHERS' FEDERATION



ANNUAL MEETING



AGM '75 heeds call for militancy

Delegates to the 59th Annual General Meeting of the BCTF made a clear decision for teachers to become more socially involved and accept social responsibility.

The range of resolutions adopted and the officers elected to guide the Federation in the coming year clearly show strong support for outgoing President Jim MacFarlan's call for continued teacher militancy.

Opening the convention, MacFarlan stressed that while the issues were different, the struggle must go on, especially against an oppressive school system that can't be renovated but should be torn down and

replaced. (A full reprint of MacFarlan's text is contained elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

Teachers generally gave strong endorsement to such programs as learning conditions, status of women and a Teaching Profession Act. All three were supposed to be controversial but it was noticeable that delegates at the microphones were asking questions of a technical nature rather than questions of whether or not the programs should be continued or abandoned.

In the same manner, delegates generally went for a more militant position in the election of an Executive for

this year. While they elected a moderate president, delegates supported candidates who advocated a more militant and socially responsible position for the BCTF.

There were eight sessions from Monday morning to Wednesday evening, with better than 500 delegates still remaining for the eighth and final session Wednesday evening that ended at midnight.

Many resolutions and recommendations, however, had to be referred to the spring Representative Assembly that takes place May 22, 23 and 24.

One issue that must still be resolved, according to

President Jim MacFarlan, is that of picket lines in a strike by public employees, something, he says, we are likely to see more and more.

In his speech MacFarlan branded BCTF policy which allowed teachers to cross picket lines during the recent strikes by maintenance workers as a policy 'totally unconscionable' and called for its reversal.

Resolution 17, from the East Kootenay Teachers' Association, wants statement 45.04 deleted, saying teachers do not have the legal right to strike, therefore to withdraw services is a breach of contract.

The Policies and Procedures Committee however has suggested that 45.04 be amended to read: 'That a local association may, in the event of a strike of other school board employees, take the position that its members are justified in refusing to work if paid or volunteer strike breakers assume duties normally undertaken by the employees who are on strike.'

This decision, they say, should be the responsibility of the local association concerned.

The whole matter of strike picket lines was referred to the Labor Liaison Task Force for a recommendation.

Class size issue

Teachers want smaller classes

B.C.'s teachers are determined to keep the pressure on the provincial government for continued reduction in class sizes.

Delegates to the AGM overwhelmingly approved a motion calling for reduction in the average pupil-teacher ratio to 18.5 by this September and to 17.0 by September 1976.

The resolution was part of a phased strategy plan on improving learning conditions endorsed by the Executive Committee.

It also urged the government to adopt procedures to encourage school boards to take advantage of their opportunity to obtain supplementary grants for class size reduction and that the government enter discussions with the BCTF and others to develop a fiscal policy and authority-responsibility structures for continued growth and improvement in the education system.

Last year, the provincial government committed itself to a three-year hiring program to reduce the ratio from 21.5 to 17 pupils per teacher, but this February Education Minister Eileen Dailly backed away from this commitment due, she said, to pressures of inflation.

Under the strategy plan, the BCTF will continue to make representation to the Minister of Education and MLAs, and to publicize the importance of smaller classes. The Executive will review progress of the plan at the January-February 1976 Representative Assembly, at which point any needed further action will be considered.

Delegates in the Monday afternoon session broke into small groups — a first for an AGM — to discuss learning conditions, particularly school

criteria. (See Newsletter, February 1975 and Reports and Resolutions, Book 1, pp. 11-17)

Under the proposed school staffing formula, the school is recognized as the basic unit which allows for staff committees to deal with school staffing policies.

It was generally agreed that the small group sessions held Monday afternoon proved invaluable for helping delegates sort out the lengthy LC recommendations. In addition, delegates from large urban locals learned about problems of small schools and vice versa. In short, the group sessions, according to participants, provided opportunity for them to share understandings with each other on common problems.

Among other decisions, the AGM also approved a resolution calling for school staffs to be fully involved in the hiring of teachers and that the staff give beginning teachers orientation sessions, adequate guidance, lighter class loads and assignments appropriate to their training and expertise.

A motion calling for any report made on any teacher or substitute teacher to be given in writing and a copy given to the teacher concerned was overwhelmingly adopted, as was a recommendation that no student be required to be absent from home for more than eight hours a day as a result of school time tables, shifts, extended days or bus schedules.

Delegates approved by a considerably smaller majority a resolution calling for the salary differential between classroom teachers and administrators to be "much

smaller and therefore more realistic."

The following are the minimum sizes for the purpose of regularly scheduled classes.

- 20 Kindergarten
- 25 Grades 1, 2 or 3
- 32 Any class
- 130 Average daily pupil load

Elementary and secondary classes should not be segregated on the basis of sex.

Delegates broke into small groups to discuss learning conditions criteria on Monday afternoon.



Teaching Profession Act solidly passed

The Teaching Profession Act, once the center of controversy across the province, received strong endorsement from the teachers of the province at the Annual General Meeting.

Observers estimate no more than three to five negative votes against endorsement of the act.

Members of the task force, Sue Granger, Bob Reilly, Ken Douglas, Barry Jones, Bob Mitchell, Don Creamer, Jim MacFarlan and Bill Broadley, co-chairpersons, stressed that they would continue to make themselves available to local associations and their sub-groups for discussions.

Meetings with other interested groups have been arranged, at the initiative of the task force, including the

Joint Board of Teacher Education and representatives of the superintendents' association.

Meetings have been arranged with local associations and local boards over the next two months, Jim MacFarlan told the AGM, and contact on eight separate occasions with the BCSTA.

We have made overtures to meet with representatives of

the BCSTA, MacFarlan said. It is not through lack of trying on our part that no meeting has taken place.

He said that teachers wanted to meet with trustee representatives before the BCSTA AGM takes place in May because members of the task force believe that discussions prior to the BCSTA taking a position would be a more productive procedure.

Sick leave

'In service of the board'

The Public Schools Act, Section 132, governs the minimum number of days of paid sick leave available to teachers. (One day per month taught in the service of the Board prior to April 1968 and 1.5 days per month taught in the service of the board after April 1968.)

The words 'in the service of the Board' are important in that broken service with the same board does not eliminate

the previous accumulation of sick leave credits.

For example, assuming no use of sick leave, service with Board X from September 1966 to June 1968 would generate 21.5 days of sick leave credits. If the teacher resigned from Board X and subsequently returned to employment with this same Board in September 1974, the teacher would start off with 21.5 days of accumulated sick leave credits.

Fergusson winner

Top honors to Art Creelman

A North Vancouver teacher, Arthur Creelman, was honored for his outstanding contribution to education by B.C.'s teachers as this year's recipient of the Fergusson Memorial Award established 40 years ago to honor the memory of a great teacher and Federation leader, G.A. Fergusson.

Arthur Creelman, following in the Fergusson tradition, has done outstanding work that has made his name well known as an innovator in the teaching of science. 'The father of modern science teaching in B.C.', he's called by his colleagues.

'No teacher has done more to revitalize and update science education in this province,' says D.A. Black, president of the B.C. Science Teachers Association.

Creelman believes that science should be taught in a laboratory and learned from actual observation, a concept that he submitted in a brief to the 1958 Chant Commission. Since then, Creelman has had a major influence on science teaching in B.C., writing and editing texts, lab manuals and serving as a consultant for Department of Education revision committees.

John Meredith, Department of Education, says Creelman is one of the most remarkable people in the teaching profession whose wise advice was invaluable in curriculum development.

In 1967 his work was acknowledged by the National Science Teachers' Association in the presentation of a Cen-

tennial Science Education Award for outstanding leadership in science education.

In 1974, Creelman travelled to Washington, D.C. to advise the American Council on Education where they say his advice was 'invaluable' and that B.C. has the best science program in North America.

West Vancouver teacher J.G. London says, 'in all my years of teaching experience I have never known anyone who could match Art Creelman for dedication to educational causes,' particularly he notes, the revision of the entire junior science curriculum. 'In North Vancouver, he did much to see that outmoded labs were modernized and that when new ones were built they were based on the best ideas available.'

W.B. Fromson, North Vancouver deputy superintendent of schools, says Creelman is a 'teacher par excellence' whose concerns for students as people, for curriculum as experiences, and for methodology as a means to an end have made him an outstanding contributor to B.C. education.

A former student, now a teacher, Maureen Murphy who is on staff at North Vancouver Secondary says Art Creelman 'thinks young.'

She recalls, as a student in Creelman's classes that he showed knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. 'He impressed me as a teacher genuinely interested in the welfare of his students — never

too busy to give help after school or to arrange extra work for those who could benefit from it.'

Another student, now teaching at North Vancouver Secondary, Elizabeth A. Frith, has equally high praise for Creelman, saying 'a great many young people have built fine careers in science on the sound foundation they established in his classroom.'

Also, she says, no teacher on staff contributes more to co-operation and morale. Other colleagues praise Creelman for his 'astounding capacity to improve people,' for the way he is 'always available to help people in any way he can' and for his 'ability to inspire students and colleagues.'

Adam Robertson, BCTF past president, presented the Fergusson Award to Art Creelman at the teachers' Annual General Meeting.

'It speaks well for the Federation,' Robertson remarked, 'during this era of social ferment when the motto appears to be "out with the old, in with the new" that we continue through this long established tradition to recognize, respect, and honor those who have fostered and promoted the cause of education in the classrooms and through our professional organization.'

All people in education—students, parents, teachers, Robertson said, would lose a valued friend this year when Arthur Creelman retires, but his influence will live on.



Art Creelman with his wife Ursula received the Fergusson Award from past president Adam Robertson.

All activities open regardless of sex

B.C. teachers have overwhelmingly called for an end to sexual discrimination in the schools.

Eight precedent-making resolutions, the result of a year's work by the Task Force on the Status of Women, were approved with little dissent by the Annual General Meeting.

The essential thrust of the resolutions is to call for an opening up of all school programs and activities to participation by students of both sexes and for the provincial government to develop an affirmative action plan to lead to full equality between men and women in the teaching profession.

Representatives of the task force were gratified with the way the voting went.

'It's a real indication of the success of the program and how people's consciousness has been raised concerning sex discrimination in the schools,' said Gale Neuberger, task force chairperson. 'It also indicates that teachers have begun to look at the whole area of social responsibility. This is the first major program that has dealt with social responsibility and educational opportunity. It's a gateway opening for a whole new direction for the teachers' Federation.'

Perhaps in keeping with International Women's Year, the participation by women teachers was significantly higher at this AGM: in 1974 there were 94 women delegates; this year estimates are that about half the delegates were women.

One of the few resolutions which generated significant debate was one which recommended that, in accordance with the B.C. Human Rights Code, all courses, programs, activities and clubs sponsored by schools be open to all students regardless of sex. This raised the question as

to what would happen if girls wanted to try out for what has traditionally been male sports, such as rugby, and, if fact, what would be the future of girls' teams.

One male delegate suggested that: 'If we're going to allow boys on girls' teams, pretty soon there's not going to be any girls' teams.'

But Ann Fall, North Vancouver, countered: 'By saying that all the programs must be open to all the sexes, we're not saying that they all must participate. We're not saying that everything must be integrated, we're just saying that the opportunities must be there.'

Dorothy Glass said that the resolution, if adopted, would lead to a reduction in elitism in school athletics and to the opening up of sports to participation by a broader number of students. The resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

Some concern was also registered with a resolution which urged that counsellors not be assigned to students on the basis of sex. One Vancouver delegate said this was too prescriptive and that it could lead to the staffing of schools with counsellors of only one sex to the detriment, in some cases, of students. As amended and adopted, the resolution proposed that counsellors shall not be assigned to students on the basis of sex but that counsellors of both sex shall be available.

After some concern over vagueness, which was satisfactorily resolved by an amendment, the AGM adopted a resolution which called for the provincial government to pass affirmative action legislation which would lead to full equality between men and women in all aspects of education and employment.

Ed. Finance Committee

Gov't called on to ease cost burden

The provincial government will be officially requested by the BCTF to progressively assume a greater share of elementary and secondary education costs so that by 1980 it will be paying 80 percent of the total.

This was one of the major decisions coming out of AGM discussion of a series of education finance resolutions aimed essentially at equalizing the education cost burden and lightening the load on homeowners. Recommended by the Executive Committee, the resolutions were based on the work of an education finance committee established in May, 1973.

In terms of equity, two basic recommendations were approved, one calling for the government to achieve "complete equalization of assessment throughout the province" and the other calling for the government to modify the education finance formula to make provisions for variations in needs and costs among school districts resulting from differences in socio-economic, geographic and staff qualification factors.

There was considerable discussion of the merits of taxing or not taxing churches and the residential parts of family farms, but delegates eventually passed a two-part resolution unchanged. It recommended that application of the property tax be expanded to "include all

currently exempt property, including church and government property" and that the property tax should be removed from all residential property, including the residential part of family farms.

The AGM also adopted finance resolutions urging that:

- the provincial education finance formula provide adequate funds for in-service staff training, curriculum development and research;
- the government consider

regionalization of basic services as an alternative to further school district consolidation;

• school boards be allowed to plan on the basis of five-year projections and assemble land prior to actual need;

• the federal government assume a greater responsibility for financing post-secondary education.

Members of the finance committee were Betty Griffin, Tim Hewison, Leo Hubner, Norm Ornes, Jack Tearne and Frank Roemer, chairperson.

Income security strongly endorsed

Each active member of the Federation will pay in addition to the fee for the operation of the Federation a fee equal to 0.2 percent of salary for an income security package that was approved at the AGM.

The AGM fixed the maximum salary for calculating the 2 percent SIF fee allocation and benefits at \$30,000.

Last October the BCTF Executive Committee appointed five members to form an Income Security Committee to develop a sick leave, salary indemnity and salary continuation package. The January RA requested the

committee to get actuarial advice on their proposal, then take it to the AGM.

Their proposal, given actuarial support, should provide a year of security at approximately 60 percent of salary for an average cost to members of \$3.00 per month.

The Executive Committee will now adopt rules for the operation of the fund and the BCTF will help local associations renegotiate existing salary continuation contracts with insurance companies toward reducing premiums commensurate with the extended elimination period.

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Develop a social remediation school system

B.C.'s teachers are strongly opposed to reintroduction of corporal punishment in the schools and determined to develop alternate means of class and school control.

This was made clear at the AGM when delegates soundly defeated a resolution calling for return of corporal punishment and generally spoke in favor of an interim task force report on alternatives to corporal punishment.

"The task force is unanimously agreed that a better school system can be built without corporal punishment than with it," said chairperson Don Handfield, in reviewing the report of the task force. "This does not mean that the school system should not be a controlled system. It does mean that there must be some philosophical changes to achieve that control."

The task force indicated in its report that each student must be encouraged to accept more responsibility for his/her own behavior, but that there will be times when compulsion will be needed to control students.

Over the past year, the task force considered three alternative systems: the authoritarian system; the elitist system and the social remediation system. In an authoritarian system, an authority figure sets and maintains behavior standards and in an elitist system those who do not conform are ejected. The task force concluded that our school system has been a combination of authoritarian and elitist, but that the authoritarian system has been weakened by elimination of corporal punishment.

In its interim report, the task force proposed that the school system adopt a system that includes social remediation without resorting to ejection or the infliction of physical pain on students.

The task force pointed out that under existing BCTF policy (12.01) schools are to aim to foster development of individuals so that "he/she will become and be a self-reliant, self-disciplined, participating member with a sense of social responsibility within a democratic society."

This policy, Handfield said later in an interview, indicates that social competence on the part of students is something that schools should be attempting to teach.

Remedial classes are offered students having difficulties in mathematics and language arts and he said the task force suggests establishment of a system to provide remediation for students having difficulties in the social areas.

The task force, composed of chairperson Handfield, Mike Campbell of Abbotsford, Jerry Joyce of Lake Cowichan, and Al Singer of Shuswap, intends to develop a more precise statement of its proposed social remediation system for presentation to the Executive Committee and Representative Assembly.

Considerable lively debate was provoked by a resolution proposed by the Abbotsford and Hope teachers associations urging that the Public Schools Act regulations be amended to "permit the kind, firm and judicious use of corporal punishment by teachers" and to specify that in each case a letter be sent to the parent, with a copy to the superintendent, giving reasons for the punishment.

One delegate suggested that the resolution "expresses the frustrations of a number of over-worked teachers" with large classes who, with removal of the strap, now have no alternative for managing difficult students.

"The alternatives have not been clearly explained or explored," he said. "There's

been complete inertia on the part of government and district superintendents in developing means of dealing with a difficult minority of students."

Another delegate, speaking for the resolution, said: "Many times problems can be solved by a pat on the back or a pat on the behind. Our district is in favour of reintroducing corporal punishment provided there are sufficient guidelines. Teachers now are indulging in psychological punishment instead of physical punishment and I question which is worse."

Opposing the resolution, a delegate from McBride

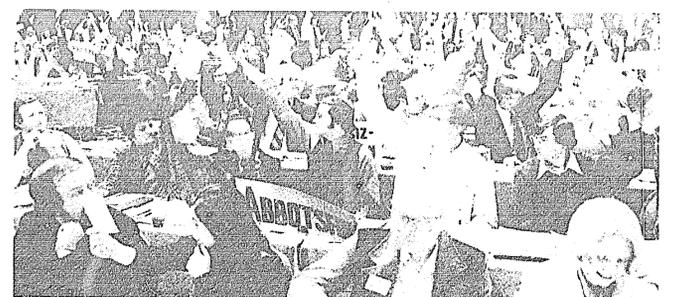
countered: "I don't believe that a cold-blooded strap across the hand — after assessment of witnesses and facts of the case — is a kind and judicious act on any child."

Frank Murphy, Nanaimo, said the task force report, which contained a survey of corporal punishment practices from 1971-72 in a number of schools, was the best possible argument justifying continued abolition of corporal punishment.

"If you look at some of the reasons why schools were administering corporal punishment, they included such

things as 'lateness,' 'truancy,' 'discourtesy,' 'swearing' and even throwing pancakes out the god damn window. See, I'm a candidate for corporal punishment myself."

While this comment drew loud laughter from delegates, Murphy went on to recommend that the BCTF develop the social remediation system of class control.



Broadley calls for better communication

BCTF President-elect, Bill Broadley, said his major concern will be better communications within the Federation for the coming year.

"Many of you have no way of knowing how many hours colleagues work on your behalf and many members do not really believe the work is being done on their behalf," Broadley told delegates in his acceptance speech, and therefore he had found much alienation as he talked with teachers around the province.

The First Vice-President for the past two years, Broadley won the Presidency in a narrow vote on the second ballot by 324 to 314 over Don

Walmsley. He is a Victoria teacher who has served on numerous local and provincial committees, including co-chairperson of TPAC in 1972.

A member of the B.C. Liberal Party, Broadley says he will remain in it, 'but will subdue the role I would otherwise play in that party — my objective has to be to represent all members.'

"I have credibility with members of each caucus in government and I don't intend to let that be destroyed."

Earlier Broadley told delegates the strength of the BCTF is that each member has the full right to participate in BCTF activities at the school, local association and

provincial levels. 'Each member should use that right.'

He told delegates that the Federation should work toward ensuring that no child is denied access to quality education 'that this province can well afford.'

'Factors such as culture, race, religion, sex, economic background, geographical location, social status, should not be permitted to determine the quality of education available to a single child in B.C.'

Teachers he has talked to everywhere in the province are frustrated, he says, because they know there's much more they could do. Financial resources commensurate with

the wealth of this province need to be made available to the public school, he said.

Collegiality? I believe in it. As one committed to collegial decision-making I trust my colleagues to make wise decisions for the children they teach. And the decisions need to be made at the school level.

'The purpose of education is to equip people to continually review and question so that society may evolve beyond what it is, so that schools are not agents of any specific doctrine or point of view. Schools should reflect a humanistic philosophy that not only tolerates, but positively encourages a plurality of ways of looking at the world.'



Bill Broadley president-elect

'I prefer meaningful dialogue to confrontation, but if meaningful dialogue becomes impossible, I have never avoided confrontation in my work for better schools.'

Eileen Daily says:

Control of schools an issue

Education Minister Eileen Daily in her speech this year to the AGM said that we are in a period of intense struggle for the control of public education with several levels of the educational community frequently at odds as to the direction which education reform should proceed.

'I have come to the conclusion that simply changing the structure of the so-called hierarchy within our individual school, school board administrations and the Department is not the answer in itself to educational reform.'

While teachers are pleased with decentralization, and the opportunity for more input into the programs and curricula of their schools, she says they are not in the final analysis asking for control.

According to the Minister, the question of control accounts for virtually all of the conflicts not embroiling public school education.

Whatever system emerges, she said, it must be flexible to meet varied needs and involve all interested parties in a partnership in major policy decisions. Not to involve all parties could result in an elitist system.

Daily reiterated her government's achievements since coming to office:

- restored collective bargaining and automatic membership
- increased government contributions from 8 to 22 million dollars for superannuation
- improved liability coverage for teachers conveying pupils in their own cars
- decentralization of local curriculum
- increased the BEP over 19 percent
- increased direct provincial government grants 80.5 percent to a present 340 million dollars

She said that public attacks on internal personnel matters in her Department 'do not serve the cause of education.'

While the Federation has a right and a responsibility to make its case public, she said, the teachers' concerns must be presented in a responsible manner to avoid undermining public confidence in education itself, resulting in a public backlash which could undo the gains made in the last three years.

'For example, public attacks

upon internal personnel matters within the Department of Education do not serve the cause of education anymore than if I, as Minister of Education, took it upon myself to publicly denounce the internal personnel decisions made by the BCTF. Furthermore, the Federation must ensure that when it brings its case to the government that it truly reflects the views of the majority of its own members.'

(Jim MacFarlan replied after the speech: 'I want to assure the Minister that we are prepared to accept her challenge to continue the debate and dialogue which she began today.'

And I want also to assure her that the representatives that we send to meet with the Department officials represent the entire membership of this Federation for they are elected persons elected by 50, 60, 70 or 80 percent majorities of the delegates.'

The PTR, she said, has been reduced by almost three and last year exceeded the target of a 1.5 reduction to an average of 19.82. 'We have put over 3700 new teachers into the public school system. To have continued at the same pace for the coming year would have meant injecting at least another 2,000

new teachers into the public school system.'

One positive step taken this year, she said, is the encouragement given to the school boards of this province to have teachers sit in with them in the preparation of their budgets and to sit in with them on the final review of the school board budgets by the Department of Education review team.

'I congratulate the boards of the province who have moved in this direction of participation with their teachers and regret very much that some boards have not seen fit at this time to include their teachers in the final review.'

Daily also revealed that a pilot project in reading and writing skills has been established for the 1975 calendar year to confront 'the whole matter of functional literacy.'

It should be made clear that the intent of any tested program which we initiate is designed to create a broad program evaluation, rather than the diagnostic assessment of individual students. Teacher questionnaires will be going out in May and the whole program will be made available to all teachers in the matter of two weeks, she said.

Teacher has responsibility

School teaching staffs must have full control over the employment and functions of auxiliary school personnel to ensure that they are used in an appropriate supportive role and do not infringe on teacher responsibilities.

This is the basic intent of a new detailed policy statement approved by the AGM, the result of a year's work by the school staffing committee.

It prescribes that the teacher has prime responsibility for diagnosing learning needs and prescribing, implementing and evaluating learning activities. The classroom teacher has the right to determine what supportive services he/she needs. School staffs are to have the right to request, select and assign the duties of auxiliary school personnel.

Auxiliary school personnel assisting in the classroom must do so under supervision of a teacher and those with general supportive duties must

be under supervision of the school staff.

The new policy states that auxiliary school personnel may be used for clerical duties, general housekeeping, preparing teacher aides or supervising pupils on playgrounds and field trips, but they shall not infringe in any way on the responsibilities of a teacher, assume any instructional responsibilities in the absence of a teacher, tutor or instruct on a one-to-one basis or provide any form of remedial instruction.

The policy statement also stipulates the criteria under which innovative or research projects in school staffing may be carried out with BCTF support.

Members of the school staffing committee were Eleanor Cadden, Frank Frigon, Doris Fuller, Lynne Napper, Frances Worledge and co-chairpersons Sylvia Rayer and Tom Krall.

4 new members elected to office

There's some new faces on the Executive Committee for 1975-76.

Four of the seven members-at-large, Al Blakey, Pat Brady, Don Kelley and Gale Neuberger will serve the second year of a two year term. They will be joined this year by Sue Granger, Nina Green and Ross Regan.

Table officers are Bill Broadley, president, Don Walmsley, first vice-president, Mavis De Girolamo, second vice-president, and Jim MacFarlan, past president.

Following is a summary of what those elected told delegates.

ROSS REGAN
Victoria teacher, Ross Regan, is well-known provincially for his work in curriculum. He has served six years on the BCTF PD & C Committee, two as chairperson, as well as being a BCTF member on the Department Rules and Regulations Committee for Decentralization.

He compared education to a train, moving swiftly, but the public keeps asking 'who is the engineer?' Where are we going, how are we going to get there, how will we know when we've arrived? he asked.

Regan called for strengthening PSAs at a local

level to enable them to give leadership in the areas of curriculum planning since schools, he said, will increasingly be taking more authority in this area.

NINA GREEN
Nina Green, currently a president in Kelowna, said she was pleased with the support being shown for the Federation's assuming more social responsibility.

'As professionals, indeed as human beings, I don't think we can avoid responsibility for translating into action our concern for social injustices, particularly when these injustices concern children as inequality of educational opportunity, racism and sexual stereotyping so obviously do.'

As professionals, she said, teachers wanted the Department and administrators to social listen to them. And parents and students should also have a way of expressing their choices.

She deplored the 48 steps school boards must now take to get new constructions approved.

SUE GRANGER
Currently vice-principal of Ogden Senior Secondary, 100 Mile House, Sue Granger has been active in the BCTF as a GR and president of Delta teachers.

A main concern for teachers this past while, she said, has been increased responsibilities, 'a feeling of being swamped' by responsibilities generated within part by the Federation. She listed responsibilities for curriculum, program planning, budget planning, collegial action, all 'piled on the basic responsibility of teaching students.'

We need assistance to meet these new responsibilities, she said, through in-service and professional development resources, with decentralization of these services to classroom teachers.

MAVIS DE GIROLAMO

'One year ago our President challenged us to develop a social conscience to make schools a catalyst for social change, to fundamentally reform the school system — I believe that we have done very little to meet Jim's challenge,' said Mavis De Girolamo, newly-elected Second Vice-President.

There's not enough being done, she said, to raise the level of awareness in teachers to recognize that there's even a problem in areas such as inner city schools, sex discrimination and native education. Unless we have socially

aware teachers committed in classrooms, she said, we will continue to provide an education which will enable students to become models of an imperfect society and which allows failure to happen at an increasing rate. 'I am committed toward a goal of social change.'

Currently president of the Victoria Teachers' Association, and contact person for status of women, Mavis De Girolamo has served as a GR and was a local chairperson of TPAC in 1972.

DON WALMSLEY

Narrowly defeated by 10 votes in his bid for the Presidency, Don Walmsley took the First Vice-President position on the first ballot with 364 votes, topping Dorothy Glass and Jack Tearne. As a full-time First Vice-President, he joins Bill Broadley next year in the BCTF office. Walmsley, a principal and teacher in Boston Bar Elementary-Junior Secondary School, has served on the BCTF Executive Committee 1973-75.

Our number one priority, he told delegates, must be learning conditions, including more resources and a full-time LC chairperson if necessary. The BCTF membership

needs to 'make the same commitment to smaller classes that they made to better pensions, he said. 'If 27,000 teachers had marched on Victoria we would have gotten the pupil-teacher ratio reduction we were promised earlier.'

Walmsley called for more social involvement and more social responsibility on the part of the BCTF. Some students, he said, must be given greater resources to have an equal chance in the school system. He also called for a redirection of the PD division to complement the class size campaign.

Teachers, he said, must be able to practice democracy in their schools if they are going to practice it in their classrooms.

Walmsley said delegates had asked him if the BCTF should criticize the government. 'I have answered yes, because the BCTF is non-partisan and therefore supports government actions that support education and condemn government actions that do not.'

'How can we be consistent and keep our integrity if we are not prepared to look elsewhere when any government starts backing away from its commitments?'

Daycare a success

Castlegar teacher Sally Walters at the 1973 AGM arrived with an infant son and husband who became 'a captive babysitter, confined to barracks in the Hotel Vancouver for the duration of the convention.'

At the 1975 AGM, by contrast, her two children enjoyed well-supervised, interesting activities at the child care center sponsored by the BCTF.

Barbara Ellum looked after about 12 children ranging from six months to five years old above the convention floor at the Hyatt. 'It would be helpful,'

she says, 'if hotels would build destruction-proof daycare rooms in their convention centers rather than having to use the existing swish rooms.' But it will come, she thinks, as the need is demonstrated.

Burnaby teacher Terry-Ann Motiuk said, 'My son couldn't wait to get back today — and he'd want to come tomorrow, too — but this is the last day of the convention!'

The daycare center, she says, is 'tremendous, super' and she hopes it will attract more people next year.



Some of the children at the daycare center



Don Walmsley



Mavis De Girolamo



Sue Granger



Ross Regan



Nina Green

System produces repressed people

Chairperson, Colleagues and Guests:

Five years ago when I first ran for office as a member-at-large of the BCTF Executive Committee, I spoke of the need for teachers to exert their power — their collective power, collective will, collective strength — to bring about changes in an education system that was incapable of meeting the needs of thousands of students, perhaps even a majority of students. I urged teachers to use their collective muscle to protect their economic and civil rights. I spoke about the changes, the reforms that could be won through collective action.

Today, after having served for five years on that Executive Committee, including four years in the two highest offices of the Federation, First Vice-President and President, I am certain that that call for teacher militancy and teacher power is as necessary today as at any time in our history. The issues may be different today, but the struggle is the same.

Schools oppress the majority

The education system is an enormous and complex structure. It is a bureaucracy with over a hundred years of modern history and countless centuries before that which have helped develop it into one of the most successful forms yet devised by man for the repression of whole sections of society. Our modern school system, like the corporations and the factory system on which it is modeled, helps to oppress the vast majority of our society for the benefit of the powerful affluent minority who control all of the social, cultural, political and economic institutions of our nation. As long as we, as teachers, participate in that system without challenging it, without attempting to change it, we are guilty of complicity in the process of repression. Yes, repression, not liberation, is the product of our schools.

Authority and responsibility

For more than a year now teachers have been actively discussing the White Paper on Education. Perhaps no part of that document has elicited more concern and more hostility than the section dealing with authority and responsibility. Why is it that this topic has aroused the concern of so many of our colleagues?

Perhaps it relates back to that question of oppression and liberation. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire said, "The fear of freedom which afflicts the oppressed, a fear which may equally well lead them to desire the role of oppressor, or bind them to the role of oppressed, should be examined. This fear of freedom is obviously to be found in the oppressors, though obviously in a different form. The oppressed are afraid to embrace freedom, the oppressors are afraid of losing the 'freedom to oppress'."

My, how clearly Freire's comments apply to teachers. We, who ourselves are oppressed by a hierarchical system in which our creative talents, our desire to participate in the decision-making process and our desires to find new ways to help our clients, are frustrated by level after level of administrators who oppress us and who in turn are oppressed by even more strata.

The psychology of oppression is a vertical one. Those who feel oppressed, and are in fact oppressed, in turn become instruments of oppression of those who are farther down the line. As classroom teachers we become instruments serving the masters of our society, who want a school system that produces a complacent ideologically-controlled labor force. The school system is an incredibly efficient socialization device that causes the majority of people to accept the strata at which they find themselves placed. Even when they begin to struggle for their own emancipation, those within the education system seldom recognize the same rights for others.

Shared decision-making

During the past year we have had considerable success in promoting the concept of staff committees. We are effectively challenging the right of our principal colleagues to tell us what to do. We are insisting on the right to be included in the decision-making process at the local, at the district and at the provincial level. That is a very big advance for teachers; yet the marks of the old system still show very clearly on us.

Few of our colleagues are prepared to recognize the rights of the student and the rights of the community to be involved in making decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their children. Even in schools in which staff committees make the major decisions, even there we seldom hear the voice of the student. Most of our progressive community schools are really examples of community use of schools, not community control of schools.

Have you ever sat down and seriously considered why so many of our principal colleagues are opposed to the development of effective staff committees? Have you ever really thought why the district superintendent feels compelled to issue directives and orders — yes, and put people on blacklists? Have you ever wondered why the Department of Education officials seem so resistant to change? Well, think of it this way. Think of each of those groups as being an insecure social group, social group whose job satisfaction, income, ego satisfaction and the satisfaction of the desire for power (which like cancer in the body grows insidiously within every hierarchy), all depend on an ability to exert control over a lower level.

In a stratified educational system every group — from the teachers through to the Department of Education — will strive to protect those aspects of the system over which it is given power. Mere tinkering with the system, the rearrangement of bureaucracies and bureaucrats, a token replacement here, a token addition there, the inclusion of that lovely word "consultation" — all of these

are but sops to the liberal reformers whose real objective is not fundamental change, but is the improvement in and the humanization of a system that is fundamentally bad. The present structure of authority and responsibility can't be renovated, it must be torn down and replaced.

Let's take two or three examples. Policy decisions at the school level should be made by a group representing the community, the students and the professionals. Strategies for implementing the school's goals, or decisions on organization, teaching styles and evaluation are professional matters that should be decided by all of the professionals in the school. Principals should become co-ordinators and facilitators. We don't need a boss in a school. We can use a consultant, a co-ordinator, a person who brings forth new ideas for the staff and the community to respond to. I believe that teachers should be involved in selecting these people.

I don't believe principals should be given a life-long sinecure. Although I may offend some of our members, I believe we should pioneer proposals for term appointments to ensure that there is a continual flow of new ideas from the classroom to the principal's office and vice versa. Perhaps it is even time we challenged the whole myth of educational administration as a separate discipline. We might even suggest that a PhD in Educational Administration from the University of Chicago or some other noted foreign institute is in fact a liability, rather than an asset, in helping to meet the needs of the students of this province.

District superintendents

The district superintendent is another source of authority within the school system. I question whether, in the majority of cases, superintendents have any particular expertise that qualifies them for the position. I congratulate the handful who do and who use their authority wisely. But we can't depend upon the luck of the draw in finding such people.

The role of superintendents as laid out in the Public Schools Act should be redefined. The new role would be that of leaders of the teaching team in the district. Their traditional, hierarchical authority would be removed. They should serve as the chief educational officers in the districts. Their appointments should be for three-year terms, with the possibility of renewal for an additional three-year term. After a maximum six-year term as superintendent in one district or after two three-year terms in two districts, the individual should return to a regular teaching position. The superintendency should never be a career.

The role of administration should be to facilitate classroom teaching. When it becomes an end in itself, with a possibility of advancement from vice-principal through to superintendent or even Departmental official, the process becomes counter-productive in terms of children's needs.

Staff committees

While I am dealing with the matter of authority and responsibility, let me take a minute or two to speak about staff committees. When you get back to the classroom a week from today, you should make it your priority to organize an effective staff committee. Some of you may find that your principal doesn't like the idea. Well, work on him/her. Try to convince him/her. If that doesn't work, set it up anyway. Once you start making decisions in the school, he/she will soon get the message.

The staff committee should be the basic unit of organization of every local association. Without staff committees, collegiality, peer evaluation, community involvement and democratization of the school system will all remain empty words and phrases. Remember, it's all about power. When you've got a staff committee, you can have power. When you stand alone, you're just another one of the oppressed who will inevitably turn to oppression as you become more and more frustrated and alienated by the process.

A teaching profession act

The proposed Teaching Profession Act offers a real challenge to all of us. If this document becomes law, it will place new responsibilities on the staff. It will make the collective group responsible for many of the duties formerly carried out by the principal. It will provide the profession and the community at large with some means of controlling entry into the teaching profession. It will allow teachers to give guidance to the universities with regard to the types of teacher education programs that should be completed by prospective teachers. It proposes to broaden the scope of bargaining to cover all of those matters of learning and working conditions that concern our members and our clients.

Far from being a radical or revolutionary document, the proposed Act is in fact a carefully worded summary of nearly 20 years of BCTF policies. Some have suggested that the proposed Act was the brainchild of the Executive Committee. Nonsense. The basic proposal was adopted by the Annual General Meeting in 1973. Some have challenged the process by which the proposed Act was adopted. The executive of the principals' PSA even suggested that secrecy was involved.

The majority of these attempts to discredit the document have not dealt with the substance of the proposed Act. Why not? Because the critics are afraid to tackle the substantive portions of the document, because they know that it is the embodiment of Federation policy and has the support of the overwhelming majority of our members. I have been to local after local after local to discuss the Act and to answer questions and receive suggestions for change. I have challenged the critics time and again, but we have yet to receive a proposal for



Jim MacFarlan

substantive change in one of the major sections of the document. Once again, the real issue is power. Some people feel threatened and they want to preserve their positions of power.

On a positive note, I want to congratulate a number of local associations and individual schools that have made constructive suggestions for change in the document. One school in Kamloops sent me a long list of very thought-provoking questions, which indicated to me that the committee that was studying the document had really done its homework. The proposals were constructive and as co-chairperson of the committee, I shall ensure that a number of the comments are discussed at the next committee meeting.

Professional development

One of our greatest needs at the present time is for a comprehensive program of professional development. While many of our members toil long and hard on local and provincial professional development committees and in PSAs, we nevertheless have a professional development program in most local associations that can best be described as ad hoc. We operate on a year-to-year basis and the effectiveness of the program frequently depends on the strength and ability of the chairperson of the committee.

I believe that we need a new comprehensive plan for professional development. That plan should be based on the assumption that our first responsibility is to meet the needs of each and every child in the classroom, and that to accomplish this we must ensure that our teachers have all the skills necessary to meet those needs.

I believe we should begin with a comprehensive assessment of student needs based on social class, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, physical, emotional and skill differences. The assessment should be on a district-by-district basis. It should be the result of co-operative planning between our Professional Development and Curriculum Committee, local associations, local school boards and the Department of Education. The funding should come from the provincial government. Such an assessment could well take six months to a year to complete.

In-service education

The second phase would involve a careful study of teacher skills required to meet the student needs determined in the initial part of the study. Once again this should be on a district basis with the local association and the Professional Development and Curriculum Committee responsible for conducting the study.

Once we have completed these two assessments — student needs and teacher skills necessary to meet these needs — we should begin to develop a comprehensive local in-service program on a district or regional basis. The program should be designed by the local association in co-operation with the Professional Development and Curriculum Committee, universities, the boards and the Department. It should be a comprehensive long- and short-term program. It could make provision for courses to be run during school hours, after school, in the evenings and in the summers.

Boards must be prepared to provide release time substitutes and long- and short-term educational leave. The universities must be prepared to assist in the design of the program and to offer credits for completion of programs. A plan of this kind could cover a time span of three to five years or more. It could be regularly evaluated and altered as the assessments of student needs and teacher requirements were regularly updated.

There can be no doubt that such a program would be costly. There can also be no doubt that the benefit would be enormous. We simply must find a better system for delivery of professional development services. The annual conference, the occasional workshop, the summer

"System must be torn down, replaced"

school courses, the conference outside the district — all of these may be of use from time-to-time. But without that overall framework based on student needs and teacher requirements to meet those needs, our professional development programs will continue to be costly, ad hoc, and often ineffective.

An example

I think I can give you a particular example of how my model would operate to meet the needs of students in one area in one district. At the present time the elementary teachers in the northeast corner of Vancouver are examining the problems confronting them every day as they attempt to overcome massive social problems that affect the way in which children learn. Their concerns have gone beyond the classroom. They recognize that nutrition, housing, recreation facilities, library facilities and other essential social services are inadequate. They recognize that this has a detrimental effect on children. They want to do something about it.

A comprehensive program of professional development could assist them. The initial assessment of student needs would give an indication of particular problems in the area.

Programs could be developed in conjunction with the community and with various government agencies to meet these problems. Short courses and workshops dealing with social, economic, cultural and linguistic problems could be developed. A careful examination of the class structure of the Vancouver school system, a discussion of the myth of equality of educational opportunity and a careful study of the socio-economic data — which clearly show the class discrimination in our society — would be useful topics for consideration.

Further discussions in workshops with social workers, community planners, trade union leaders and leaders of the various ethnic organizations could promote a better understanding of the community. Courses in group process and community school development might also be encouraged. All of these could be carefully planned over a period of several years. I believe that the results would be dramatic. We might even find that such a program began to produce equality of educational output.

Certainly professional development alone will not overcome the problems of the northeast sector of Vancouver. Professional development programs can't eliminate the basic inequality of our class system. Nor can we depend on that silly old phrase about the provision of equality of educational opportunity.

In a city such as Vancouver, if you provide the same quality of schools and the same quality of teachers and the same quality of supplies and materials on the east and west sides of the city, you will not have produced equality. You will simply have reinforced the decades-old discrimination against students whose class and ethnic origins place them at a disadvantage. And schools on the east side of Vancouver are not the only ones in our province that require special consideration.

Learning conditions criteria

The school-based learning conditions criteria you will be asked to consider at this Annual General Meeting reflect a philosophy that says that to provide equity in the school system there must be an uneven distribution of resources. We are not looking for equality of educational opportunity; we should be looking for equality of educational output. Schools must be staffed to meet special needs. The requirements of all students are not the same. I fully endorse the proposed criteria for learning conditions. We must maintain our minimum criteria for class size in any one classroom, but we must also promote and enforce overall criteria for school staffing.

During the past year we have had significant successes in the learning conditions area. The number of violations of our minimum criteria was approximately the same for 1974-75 as for 1973-74. However, when you consider that the base figures for the criteria were significantly better this year than last, you will realize the improvement we have made in staffing.

Those who several years ago looked on the learning conditions program with disinterest or scorn should bite their tongues today. Our collective decision to make learning conditions the number one priority of the organization has resulted in the creation of a significantly better learning environment in thousands of classes throughout the province.

The government's commitment

Our present anger at the government for its failure to meet its commitment to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio by 1½ for the coming year does not stem from any sense of frustration over the failure of our learning conditions program. Rather, it stems from the success of that program. We know today that what we believed to be true several years ago has been proven in fact.

Smaller classes do result in the use of better teaching styles by teachers and have important results in terms of educational output. We are not arguing with the government or the Minister simply to be bothersome or simply to flex our muscles. We sincerely believe that the government's commitment to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio by 1½ per year for each of three years was a highly progressive forward step.

I can recall a personal discussion with the Premier and the Minister in which I congratulated the government for its decision. I was proud of the role the Federation — and in particular our colleagues from Surrey — played in encouraging the government to make that decision. I felt a good deal of resentment when I heard the Minister's statement in Prince George that it would be fiscally irresponsible to expect the government to meet its commitment in a period of rapid inflation.

I believed then, as I believe now, that a commitment is a commitment. To break campaign promises seems to be a part of the parliamentary tradition. To break a com-

mitment made in the House to the public of British Columbia is quite another thing. It was particularly difficult for me to understand the Minister's announcement when only a few days later the Minister of Finance introduced a provincial budget that provided for increases of 48 percent over the previous year's estimates. The fiscally responsible statement seemed just a little hollow. A pessimist might even suggest that education was not quite the number one priority of this government.

Our anger and frustration are further compounded by the fact that the government has, according to our analysis, budgeted for supplementary grants that if applied in total to pupil-teacher ratio reduction, would allow us to reach the promised 18.5 pupil-teacher ratio for next year.

I should like to ask the Minister the following questions. Does the budget contain a large enough sum for supplementary grants to enable us to achieve an average provincial pupil-teacher ratio of 18.5 in the coming year? If so, will you state today that you believe that boards should apply for those grants and use them to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio?

Government accomplishments

Speaking of government, we continue to keep the balance sheet of its record. We've tallied up the good things the Minister of Education has accomplished. We know that the pupil-teacher ratio has come down by almost three since 1972. We remember the emergency aid in October 1972 to bail school boards out of the crisis brought on by the previous government. We appreciated the change in the elementary instructional unit from 30 to 25.

We applauded such moves as the removal of the 108 percent restriction, the abolition of capital and operating referenda, the assumption of 100 percent of the capital costs of community colleges, the increased transportation grant, the underwriting of fire insurance for all schools and the increased home-owner resource grant and school tax removal grants. We also commended the restoration of our collective bargaining and our compulsory membership. We greeted the improvement in teachers' pensions with enthusiasm.

The extension of kindergarten classes to every district in the province, an increase in special education programs, the employment of a consultant on sex discrimination, the establishment of the task force on small secondary schools and the investigation of conditions at Jericho School are more accomplishments.

There can be no doubt that there is a long and positive record of accomplishments of this government in the field of education. But there is also a substantial balance sheet on the negative side.

Other side of the balance sheet

We were promised major educational reforms. They just haven't taken place. The White Paper was tabled a year ago and virtually nothing has happened in terms of implementation. The public investigating committees promised in the White Paper and reiterated in a December press release of the Minister have not materialized. The structure of authority and responsibility remains intact. If anything, the central bureaucracy of the Department of Education has been substantially strengthened, with considerable power being placed in the hands of the management committee.

The school system is just as undemocratic as it was 2½ years ago. The students and the community at large

remain uninformed in the decision-making process. Instead of a guaranteed reduction of 1½ in the pupil-teacher ratio for the coming year, we have a broken promise and an indefinite pledge to continue the reduction at a somewhat slower pace.

We have seen the professional reputations of highly competent professionals threatened by cavalier dismissals on one-day's notice. Perhaps the Research and Development Division staff should be thankful that their firing didn't take place on television. I said at the time Dr. Knight was fired, and I repeated it when the five researchers were dismissed, that I believe the Minister of Education made a serious error of judgment. It seems a strange state of affairs indeed to set up a Research and Development Division to replace a fired commission only to fire the director of the newly created division and appoint a university team to investigate the research capability, then to fire all the researchers before the team could research the researchers. Someone has suggested that it is an Alice in Wonderland situation. It seems to me more like a "Grimm" fairy tale.

I make no apologies for the fact that I called for the resignation of the Minister of Education. While the list of accomplishments is impressive, the failure of the Minister and the government to bring real reform, the failure to change an education system that is class biased, sexist and even racist, the failure to reduce the power of administrators, at the school, the district and the provincial levels and, finally, the broken pupil-teacher ratio pledge — these things cannot be overlooked or ignored.

The blacklist

Before leaving matters related to the Department of Education, I must say a word or two about the infamous blacklist I made public several weeks ago. This list, which has been circulating in this province for heaven knows how long, may have damaged or destroyed the professional reputations of countless numbers of our colleagues. We know that there were 46 names on the list I obtained. We know that many of these people are teaching in the classrooms of our province with good to excellent reports. We know that others are no longer teaching, perhaps because their names appeared on this list.

Some superintendents have attempted to rationalize the list by suggesting that only the names of persons who were rated unsatisfactory appeared. Even if this were true, it is an indication of the mental set of people who would attempt to justify it on this basis. There can be no justification for the circulation of any list, letter or memo, or for the transmission of information by telephone other than that which is authorized in the Public Schools Act in the form of reports, or which is made available through a reference provided by the applicant.

I find blacklisting a disgusting practice and a crude violation of our civil rights. We have the Minister's assurance that it will stop. I insist, further, that the Minister order that all such records, lists, telegrams, letters, etc. in the files of district superintendents be destroyed. I further suggest that the Minister make it abundantly clear that any Departmental official or district superintendent who uses this device either in writing or by telephone will be subject to immediate dismissal.

Moreover, we believe the government should accept the principles in the UNESCO declaration, "The Rights of Teachers." You will note that these are contained in our proposed Teaching Profession Act.

Finally, I believe that those district superintendents



Ernie Lock meets Ernie Lock, the BCTF president of 50 years ago in a special presentation by this year's president Jim MacFarlan.

'I will never cross a workers' picket line'

who were responsible for placing the names of teachers on this list should be called to individual account. I suggest that the blacklist is a natural outgrowth of an hierarchical system in which people take orders even though they know the actions they are ordered to carry out are immoral, if not illegal. The rationale provided by some district superintendents is that they were simply doing what they were told. That argument just isn't good enough. But when you are brought up in a system in which you give and take orders without question, this is only one result.

Bargaining problems

I should be remiss if I did not make some mention of the bargaining problems we encountered last fall. Very simply stated the B.C. School Trustees Association believed it could trample on our historic right to local bargaining. The trustees were wrong. We hope they have learned their lesson and that the coming year's negotiations will be conducted at the local level where they properly belong.

Many trustees have now realized that provincial or zonal bargaining is a clear threat to the existence of local school boards. We hope that the Select Standing Committee of the Legislature will also recognize that local bargaining is an historically evolved process that a provincial government will disrupt only at its own peril. Provincial negotiations would mean government intervention. That does not seem to be a palatable alternative for any party intent on remaining the government.

Relationship with labor

During the past year we have had an increasingly difficult problem of relations between teachers and striking non-teaching employees. I should like to voice my own personal opinion, which I realize is at variance with existing Federation policy. Perhaps you should consider my remarks as a call for a significant change in that policy.

I believe that the closest allies teachers have are members of other trade unions. Remember that in the dark days of 1972 it was the other unions in the public sector who joined with us to collectively defend the bargaining rights of public employees. It was the B.C. Federation of Labour that helped TPAC to get off the ground with a substantial donation to assist us to print and mail our initial appeal to all BCTF members. Time and time again the B.C. Federation of Labour and independent unions have called upon various governments to place education as a major priority. We can certainly be critical that labor has not taken enough interest in education. Perhaps that failure is partly our fault for failing to develop the kind of liaison with the trade union movement that is possible. Our professional elitism has certainly been partly responsible for the lack of communication between ourselves and the labor movement.

At the present time our position is allegedly one of neutrality. We recognize the right of workers to strike, but when they exercise that right we maintain a hands-off policy. We say that the labor dispute is between the employer and the striking group. We have generally taken the view that as long as teachers do not perform the work of striking employees, they should go through picket lines. We even say that the local association is justified in refusing to work beside hired strike-breakers. But we further modify this wishy-washy position by agreeing that the local should decide whether or not it will work with scabs.

I find our policy totally unconscionable. Because I was brought up in a trade union family and taught to respect the right of workers to strike for their just demands, I cannot comprehend how my colleagues who are workers in the public sector, albeit professional workers, but workers nevertheless, can with a clear conscience go through a picket line. I have never crossed a workers' picket line. I never will.

The argument that teachers are observing neutrality by going through picket lines and teaching students is a convenient rationalization that allows us to transgress on the rights of other workers using the argument that it is essential for the welfare of our students. I don't accept that rationalization. The quickest way for teachers to help end a strike of non-teaching employees is to shut the schools down. Strikes in the public sector are won through political pressure, not through economic pressure. When the schools are shut down the pressure is on the employer. In our attempt to be neutral we are, in fact, taking the side of the boss. Just remember that in addition to the moral question there is a purely pragmatic one. Tomorrow we may need the support of those same workers whose picket lines we violate today.

The other portion of our policy, which suggests that we should decide whether or not to work beside scabs — and I include in this category — board, administrative and supervisory persons, as well as parent volunteers — this policy is so absurd, so equivocating, so reflective of the tenor of the organization in 1954, when the policy was adopted, that it deserves little comment other than to suggest that we should get it out of the policy book as quickly as possible.

Could I take a moment to congratulate the teachers of Nanaimo who also made a decision about neutrality in the strike? But their neutrality was a positive neutrality. When the board locked out its workers, the teachers said they wouldn't go through the picket lines. Congratulations to the teachers of Nanaimo! You lived up to the fine tradition of a trade union community whose history goes back to the strike of Indian miners who refused to work for low pay under unsafe conditions in the Dunsmuir collieries.

In summary, I think that our policy should be very clear. We accept the trade union principle of respect for picket lines. Let's stop using the legal argument about our contracts. Let's hear no more of the suggestion that we go through picket lines simply because we are dedicated to our students. Let's drop the neutrality nonsense. How come we are so neutral when it is someone else's strike and so angry when it is our own bargaining time? I always thought it was the same employer we were dealing with.

Financing education

During the course of the next two or three days you will have the opportunity to examine and discuss the recommendations of our Task Force on Education Finance. I hope you will carefully study the principles underlying the recommendations. They represent a significant change in Federation policy. The Executive Committee believes the principles and the recommendations are sound.

The whole matter of a new provincial education finance formula is now under study. It is time that restrictive and inequitable formula introduced by the Socreds was done away with. Perhaps a new finance formula will also help to redistribute the entire burden of taxation, which through sales tax, gasoline tax, income tax and a score of other hidden and concealed taxes places such a heavy financial burden on working people.

Economists I have spoken to feel that the current provincial budget will do nothing to shift that burden onto the wealthy and the corporate taxpayers where it belongs. As a matter of fact, they argue that the provincial government's new budget places a greater share of the burden on lower and middle income earners. Education should be a charge against the great corporations who exploit our province's resources. If it is to be partially financed by a charge against property, let that property be in the first instance non-residential property, and in the second instance, the residential property of the wealthy.

Status of women

Let me say a few words about a program I believe has had more impact on the Federation than any other single program save Learning Conditions. I am speaking of the Status of Women Program. In two years it has accomplished a remarkable transformation. Thousands of our members are now conscious of the need to fight sexism in textbooks, in the classroom, in our curriculum and within the organization itself. In almost every local association I have visited I have seen women playing an increasingly important part in the governance of the organization. And here I am speaking of large numbers of women who work on committees, speak at general meetings, act as contact persons for the status of women program and who, in total, represent a powerful new force in the Federation.

The critics of the program should continue to be critical if they wish, but they should also remember that two years ago their laughter, their sneers and their jeers were representative of a sizeable portion of our membership. Today their pleas to discontinue the program and implicitly, therefore, to return to the traditional sexism of the past, have little appeal to any reasonable people.

I was disappointed with the action of the Representative Assembly in suggesting that the Executive Committee should not post the staff position for the status of women program until after the Annual General Meeting. It is time we stopped singling this program out for special Annual General Meeting approval or disapproval and began to treat it in the same way in which we deal with all other programs. The fact that some people wanted to debate at this Annual General Meeting continuation of the status of women program and the full-time staff person's position is significant enough evidence of the need for the position and the program.

While it is not usual to single out individual staff

members for praise in the President's Report, I should like to deviate from this practice to give particular congratulations to Linda Shuto who will be leaving the Federation after serving a two-year term as a staff person working on the status of women program. She has accomplished a great deal. She has taught us a great deal.

Personal observations

I should like to close with a few personal comments about the four years during which I have served the Federation in a full-time capacity. I have found the experience a truly rich and rewarding one. I have met thousands of our colleagues in virtually every major community in the province and in many of the smaller ones. With many of those whom I met I have been able to share ideals and ideas. I have seen a great many classrooms in which education was an exciting experience. Unfortunately, I have also seen a few that failer my personal test, which is a rather simple one. Would I want my child to be in that classroom? But these are in the minority, for the majority of our members — in spite of adversity — are hard-working and dedicated people.

During those four years some of my political opponents both within and without the Federation have called me a militant, a socialist, a marxist, a radical. Well, although those terms were used by frightened people, sometimes politically-motivated frightened people, I have never attempted to deny those allegations because they are all true. I am proud of the fact that some of the most conservative and reactionary elements among our colleagues have chosen to criticize me on this basis. Nothing could be a higher accolade than to be criticized by those people.

Several days ago a reporter asked me what I felt was the single most significant accomplishment of four years in office. I replied to him that I didn't see the accomplishments of the Federation during the past few years as personal accomplishments. Rather, I was pleased to be part of a new spirit of teacher militancy and teacher power. I told him that I was especially pleased that this power and militancy was beginning to be used to further our total social responsibility.

I believe our Federation is now permanently and unalterably committed to the idea that we have a collective social responsibility. This means we are obliged to become involved in the political processes in our society. By political processes I am not necessarily referring to the electoral process, although we have been before and may again be involved in that part of the process. Rather, I am speaking about the political process in much more general terms.

Our Federation can become, and in fact, has become an agency for social change. When we work against sexism in the school system; when we seek to remove every vestige of racism from our curriculum; when we take the position as we have recently done that the last VHF television channel in the Vancouver area should not be turned over to private broadcasters; when we become involved with the community in the northeast sector of Vancouver and begin to discuss the relationship between poverty, poor housing, lack of recreation and failure in the education system; when we support the use of the Skagit Valley for educational and recreational purposes; when we suggest the need for better integration of health, human resources, and educational services to children — when we do these things we are taking part in the political process.

For many years the Federation stayed clear of issues like these because they were allegedly too political. I support the position taken by the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession at its international conference in Singapore last summer. The concluding resolution of that conference said in part:

"Teachers' organizations should:

"1. be aware that education is a political and social process in the broadest sense and therefore should:

"(a) be initiators and agents for change which are deemed appropriate and desirable whilst preserving proven values;

"(b) accept the notion that the highest standard of professionalism and the highest sign of social awareness is their active involvement in solving the problems of society;

"(c) publicize the fact that education alone cannot provide the solution to society's problems;

"(d) recognize the fact that a solution to their professional problems depends upon their participation in the process of social change.

"2. become more involved in educational transformations and innovations, including also exploration, involvement in social and economic changes for the purpose of furthering the effects on education of these changes.

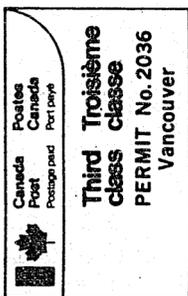
"3. involve themselves, as active participants in change, in their own right or in partnership with other social, political and economic groups which can be legitimately included."

I'm proud to say that I've been one of the participants who may have in some small way helped our organization to transform itself from a complacent, rather elitist and somewhat self-centered organization into a new and powerful force for educational and social change.

Conclusion

In closing, I should like to express my thanks to all of the members of the Federation staff who have been of so much assistance to me during the past four years. They have accepted my idiosyncrasies, my frequent lack of attention to detail, and the abhorrence of administrative trivia I share with my colleagues in the classroom.

Finally, let me say thank you to all of the delegates here and to the more than 27,000 members whom you represent for having given me the opportunity to serve you through four rich and rewarding years. I have been by far the greatest beneficiary of the relationship.



IF UNDELIVERED, return to 2235 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9