

Teachers are mobilizing for political action

Teachers across the province this week are mobilizing. Although the call for the provincial election came suddenly, there had been discussions within the BCTF at all levels of the organization for some months on political action.

A planning committee com-

posed of table officers and staff members has been developing a political action program since the summer. The Representative Assembly in October broke into groups to discuss political action.

Ten regional meetings will be held November 17 and 18 where local teachers will

discuss the two major issues of the campaign: education finance and scope of bargaining. Purpose is to arouse teacher awareness of party postures toward education.

Expanding the scope of bargaining is a long-standing issue in the Federation. Teachers

remain the only occupational group in the province excluded from negotiating for working conditions.

Another recurring issue that was mentioned in the RA groups is education finance with reference to class size and pupil-teacher ratio, to property

taxes, the level of school costs, the quality of education, and inequities in the school system.

In accordance with both Executive and RA recommendations BCTF involvement in the forthcoming provincial election will be non-partisan and concentrated at the local level.

Election 75



**What
can
you
do?**

Bill Broadley, president

Teachers played a significant role in the 1972 provincial election. Teachers will play a significant role in 1975. That role will be different, however.

The 1972 election brought together a rare coalition of forces. Teachers of different parties worked in support of the candidate most likely to defeat a government candidate.

A similar coalition of forces does not exist today. Nevertheless, the goals of teachers remain the same; we want a government that supports quality education.

Although the BCTF role is non-partisan, your action as an individual citizen and voter can only be partisan. Work and vote for the candidate of your choice.

The BCTF Newsletter will provide you with information on party records and policies in education. Through regional meetings, local presidents have been given other information on how you can get involved in the campaign to be an effective campaign worker. Ask for it.

What can you do:

1. Know the record in education of each party. And know what they promise.
2. Volunteer to work on behalf of a candidate.
3. Inform the candidate about key issues in education and seek commitments in support of them.
4. Encourage other teachers to work with you.
5. Get your local to support an all candidates meeting.
6. If feasible, organize a group of teachers and others interested in education to work for a candidate — a political action committee outside your association.
7. Ensure that the candidate knows that teachers played a significant role in the campaign.
8. Convince your relatives and friends to support your candidate.
9. Vote on December 11. Get your relatives and friends to vote also.
10. Maintain contact with the successful candidate after December 11.

A winter election does make it difficult to work in the campaign. But you cannot afford the luxury of being politically inactive between now and December 11.

If you don't become active in the next three weeks, you may regret it for the next five years, regardless of which party wins. There must be evidence that teachers once again made a difference.

Let's get out and work!

Independent review panel for Language B.C.

The Department of Education requests teacher representatives to an independent review panel to examine draft reports of the Language B.C. survey.

Teachers interested in serving on the panel are requested to phone the BCTF Professional Development Division immediately as the first meeting is scheduled for December (2 or 3 meetings are expected).

newsletter

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Minister guarantees fiscal autonomy

In a telegram to BCTF President Bill Broadley, Education Minister Dailly stated that the following message has been sent to all secretaries of school boards 'I am aware that you are at present preparing your provisional budgets for the coming fiscal year. I wish to inform you that in the preparation of these budgets only the federal salary and wage guidelines must be incorporated. There are no other restrictions, other than the normal fiscal arrangements, which would set a particular level of expenditure in any district.'

The provincial government intends to retain responsibility for overseeing school board budgets. This message was clear at a meeting of BCTF of-

ficers with government, November 5.

Broadley interprets this to mean meeting educational needs in school districts will not be restricted by the guidelines.

'Present programs can be maintained and essential new ones begun' he said.

Other matters relating to the guidelines however are still

clouded. The provincial government at this stage has no more answers than we have.

It was recognized by all at the meeting that the federal program is full of anomalies.

'Teachers will not be exempt from the guidelines, the problem being the specific application of these guidelines to teachers in B.C. is still unclear,' Broadley explained.

Teachers oppose inequities, not guidelines

A review of the vote taken by teachers on wage and price controls shows that it is the inequities that are being opposed, not the guidelines.

That was the message that emerged from teachers' associations general meetings across the province, held at the request of the BCTF Executive Committee on the program of wage and price controls.

The reactions of teachers at the local level reiterated the position the BCTF Executive Committee had taken. Teachers are fair-minded people, Bill Broadley said, who would agree that action is needed to sort out our economic problems, but think such action should affect all Canadians equally.

A box score from the 73 associations indicates 16 endorsed the Executive resolution; 24 defeated it; 57 amended or passed an alternative that accepts wage and price controls but disagrees with inequities (includes 20 of 24 defeating and 4 of 16 endorsing the first Executive resolution).



Executive committee members heard a report from the Agreements Committee then called for a sounding of the membership on the guidelines.



All five Vancouver locals packed John Oliver auditorium October 22 to review the Executive motions on guidelines.

Votes by party

October 25, 1972 Bill No. 7
Removal of 108% ceiling and
free collective bargaining

All NDP voted for
All Socred against
All Liberals and Tories for

November 1973 Bill 114

All parties agreed to restore
automatic membership
except
Scott Wallace, Conservative

November, 1974 Bill No. 173

All NDP voted for
All Socred against
All Liberals and Tories for
Extending the deadline for
negotiated agreements.

Track record of two governments in the field of education

Social Credit

1. School Construction

Freeze in 1966-68, 1970, 1971. As a result overcrowding, double scheduling and shifts became common. \$164 million of school construction approved 1970-1972. (During 1969-71, enrollment increased by 21,143.)

2. Education Finance

Finance Formula Change in 1968
Introduced Education Finance Formula, 1968, limiting school boards to spending no more than 110% of a "Basic Educational Program", a minimal program based on average costs of the previous year. Boards could exceed this 110% limitation if a majority of municipal council approved or ratepayers passed a referendum (60% majority required).

Finance Formula Change in 1971
Deleted section whereby a majority of municipal council could approve a budget in excess of the "110%".

Finance Formula Change in Spring 1972
Required a referendum even when local ratepayers did not petition for one. (In the period 1969-1972, 22 out of 27 referenda were defeated in B.C. school districts.) Reduced 110% ceiling to 108%.

Government Expenditure on Elementary-Secondary Education in 1972 \$286 million
Average District Mill Rate in 1972 32.4 mills

Homeowner Grant in 1972: \$185
School Property Tax Removal Grant in 1972: nil

Supplementary and Special Aid Grants to School Districts to Reduce Pupil / Teacher Ratio and Relieve Local Taxpayers: nil

3. Salary Bargaining

In 1972 required ratepayer approval for salary increases above a limit set by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Districts permitted to opt into zonal bargaining.

4. Federation Membership

Removed compulsory membership in BCTF.

5. Teacher Tenure

Changed automatic probationary appointment to initial continuing appointment.

6. Bargaining for Learning, Working Conditions

Scope restricted by Public Schools Act.

7. Pupil / Teacher Ratio

In 1972, B.C. pupil / teacher ratio was 22.68, second highest in Canada.

8. Class Size

Average Class Size in September 1972 — kindergarten 26.0; primary (1, 2, 3) 28.5; intermediate (4-7) 31.8; secondary (8-12) 26.1.

Proportion of Large Classes in September 1972 — 48.6% of kindergarten classes over 25; 37.6% of primary classes over 30; 69.7% of intermediate classes over 30; 30.8% of secondary classes over 30.

2 — NOVEMBER 13, 1975

New Democrats

Expanded school construction programs. \$295 million of school construction approved 1973-1975. (During 1972-74 enrollment increased by 16,013.)

Note 1: As of Oct. 31, 1975 \$281 million approved. An additional 14 to 19 million is projected by Dec. 31, 1975.

Finance Formula Change in Fall 1972
Raised allowable limits from 108% to 110%.

Changed requirement of a ratepayer referendum to a two-thirds majority vote of the school board for any amounts above 110%.

Government Expenditure on Elementary-Secondary Education in 1975: \$462 million
Average District Mill Rate in 1975: 40.5 mills

Homeowner Grant in 1975: \$200
School Property Tax Removal Grant in 1975: 40% of each taxpayer's local school taxes to a maximum of \$80 are paid by government.

Supplementary and Special Aid Grants to School Districts to Reduce Pupil / Teacher Ratio and Relieve Local Taxpayers: October 1972 — \$634,000 emergency aid to 28 districts applying. 1974 — \$21 million; 1975 — \$25.5 million.

Deleted this requirement.
Zones established by Minister and Districts permitted to opt out.

Restored compulsory membership in BCTF.

No change.

Scope restricted by Public Schools Act.

In 1974, B.C. pupil / teacher ratio was 19.82. The reduction in pupil / teacher ratio from 22.68 in 1972 required an additional 3300 teachers and a total increase in annual operating costs of about \$65 million.

Average Class Size in September 1974: kindergarten 20.2; primary (1, 2, 3) 25.0; intermediate (4-7) 29.1; secondary (8-12) 24.8.

Proportion of Large Classes in September 1974: 9.2% of kindergarten classes over 25; 7.9% of primary classes over 30; 35.3% of intermediate classes over 30; 21.1% of secondary classes over 30.

Social Credit

9. Special Education

Special Education Approvals in 1972 — 1258
In 1972, each special class approval was 75% of an instructional unit value.

10. Kindergartens

Boards were permitted, but not required, to establish kindergarten classes. Minimum 25 children. Kindergarten services available in some districts. In 1972 there were 839 kindergarten classes enrolling 22,718.

11. Libraries

September 1972
Most libraries failed to meet 1964 standards recommended by Frank Levors of 10 titles per student.

12. Other Educational Policies

Corporal Punishment
Permitted by Public Schools Act.
Textbook Rental Fee
Charged to parents.
School Fire Insurance Cost
Charged to district.
School Board Autonomy
Department of Education appointment of all superintendents (except Vancouver).

New Democrats

Special Education Approvals in 1974 1841
From 1973, each special class approval was raised to 80% of an instructional unit value.

Boards obliged to establish kindergarten classes — minimum 10 children. Kindergarten services available in all districts. In 1974 there were 1727 kindergarten classes enrolling 35,532.

September 1975
\$7 million in grants over two years will bring school library standards up to minimum of 10 titles per elementary, 15 per secondary student. Reductions in pupil / teacher ratio led to hiring of more teacher librarians.

Prohibited by Public Schools Act.
Charge eliminated.
Cost assumed by government.

Local appointment of superintendents in districts with over 20,000 pupils.

Source of Data:
Department of Education,
Budget Speeches
B.C. School Trustees'
BCTF Surveys

... and for pensions

Social Credit

Rate of Calculation

Full rate available to those:
(a) age 65
(b) with age plus service — 90
(c) with 40 years of service
Reduced approximately 7% per annum to those:
(a) at age 60 and under
(b) at age 60 retiring before age plus service equals 90

Vesting

Those who resigned before age 60 required 20 years minimum service. Those who retired at or after 60 required 10 years.

Maintenance of Purchasing Power

No increase — 1970
7% increase with \$21 Maximum (1971)
No increase (1972)

Purchase of War-Time Service

Granted in 1971, effective for career teachers at age 65, 50/50 cost-sharing.

Portability

No portability within public service of B.C. except from teacher to public service. No portability with federal public service. Some reciprocal agreements with other provincial governments.

Highest Average Salary

Reduced from 10 years to 7 years. \$12,500 salary limit removed (not retroactively.).

New Democrats

Full rate available to those:
(a) age 60
(b) with 35 years of service
Reduced 5% per year to those:
(a) at age 55-59
(b) retiring with less than 35 years.

10 years of service. Retroactive increase of 3% annually, 1950-1971, to a maximum of 66% (1973). Quarterly adjustments in line with consumer price index (1974).

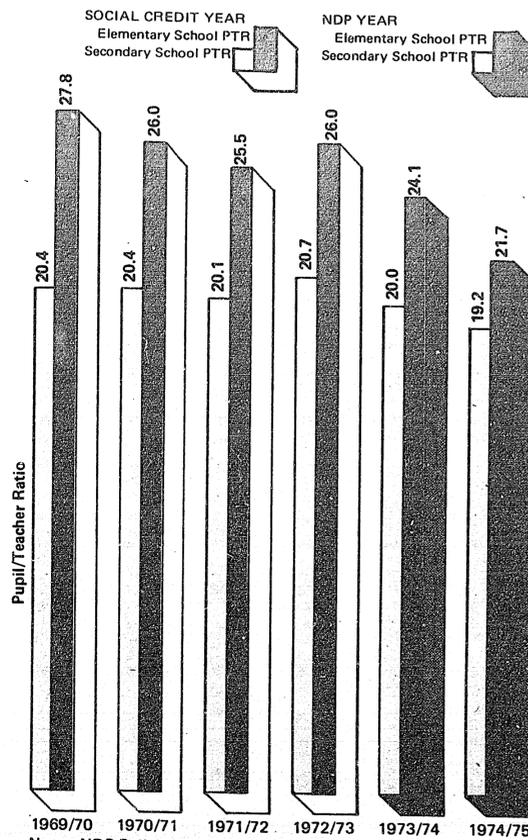
Continued but made available for those who qualify at age 55 or later. 50/50 cost-sharing.

Full portability with other public services of B.C.
Full portability with federal public service.
Policy continued to other provinces.

Reduced from 7 years to 5 years.

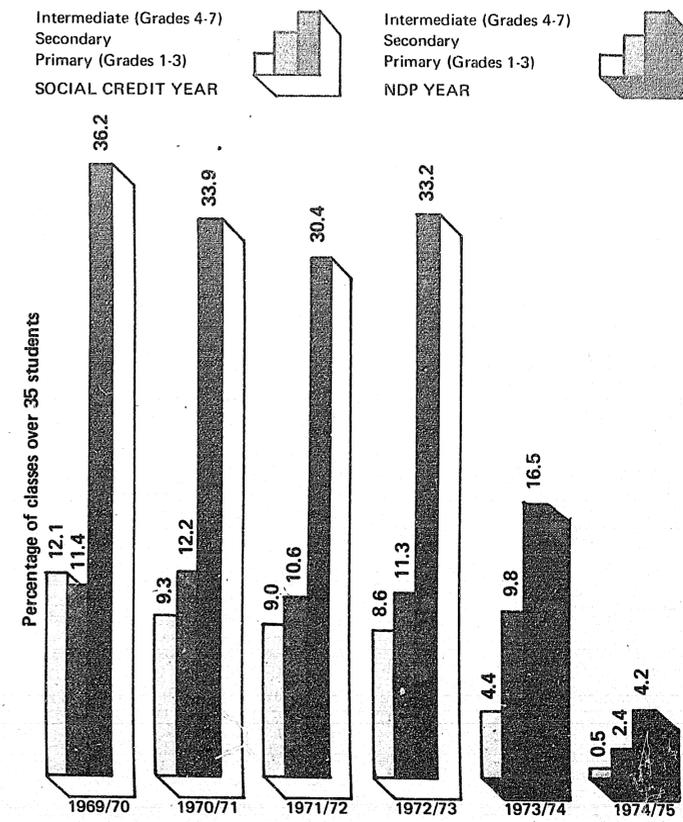
More track record

School pupil/teacher ratios



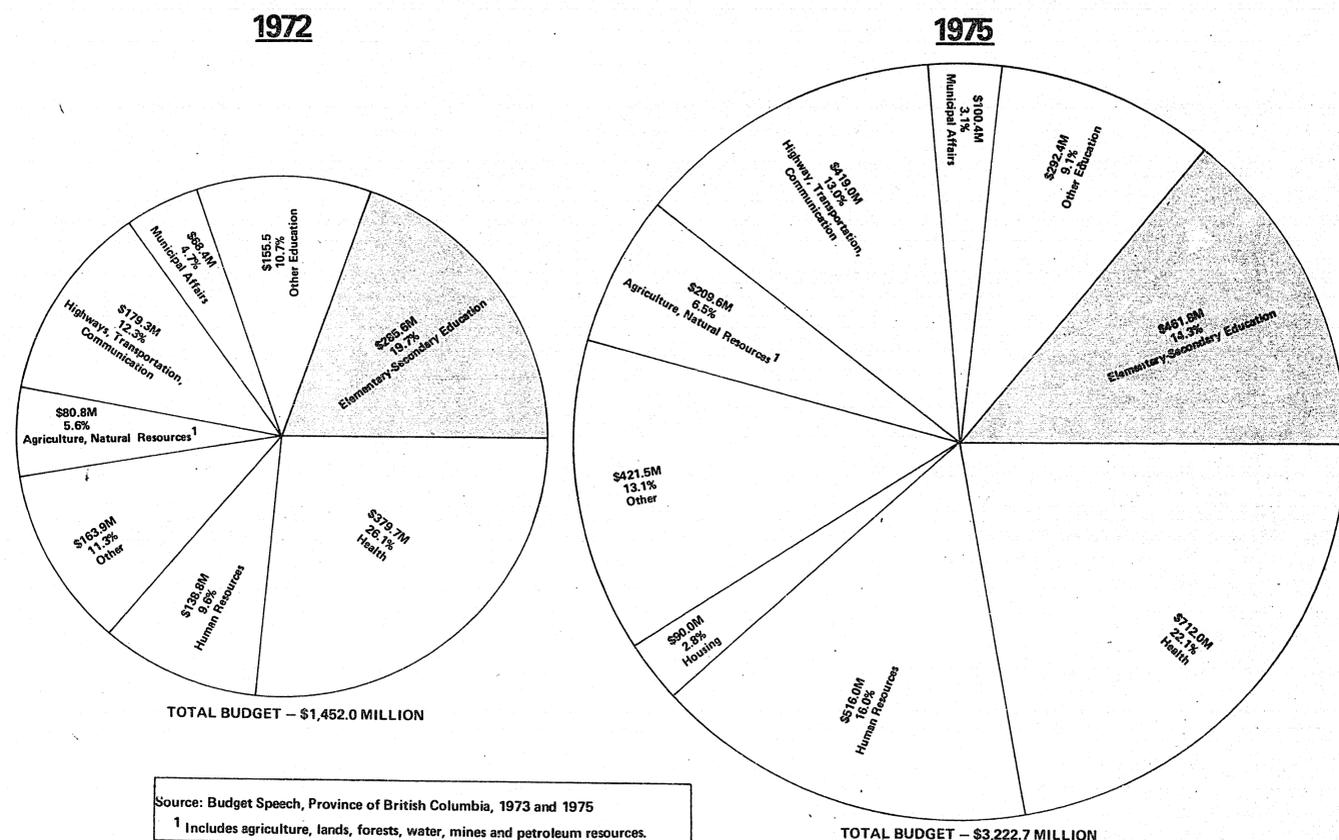
Note: NDP Policies took effect in 1973/74.

Classes of more than 34 students



Note: NDP Policies took effect in 1973/74.

B.C. Government expenditure by department in millions of dollars and as a percent of budget



Source: Budget Speech, Province of British Columbia, 1973 and 1975

1 Includes agriculture, lands, forests, water, mines and petroleum resources.



Buses

Ring the school bell in the Cariboo-Chilcotin

It's true. There is a moccasin telegraph in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. An early morning October snowfall and by 8 a.m. the word has spread through the area. Some buses will be two hours late. The school day is rescheduled. With 50 to 75 percent of all school children in School District 27 being bused to school, it becomes a case of the tail wagging the dog.

Good natured teachers in B.C.'s second largest school district are used to it. Just as they are used to playing a leadership role in organizations in their community; giving parent-teacher interviews while making a bank deposit; driving 60 to 300 miles for a local meeting; designing courses that will most the school children of that vast, isolated land, where they're at.

And the family circumstances of each child is as familiar to them as the subjects they teach. A strong, energetic, hospitable, caring lot are the teachers of the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

Ogden — 100 Mile House

At Ogden Senior Secondary School at 100 Mile House students in Ken Melville's Foxfire class have: skinned out a bear • gutted a bear • cut up a bear • cut up a moose and made jerkey • built a smoke house • are building two log cabins out of peeler cores • learned to cook on an old wood burning stove • learned to make bannock, preserve foods, dry foods and can.

Melville also conducts classes in agriculture and forestry. Emphasis in the agriculture classes, which boast 32 to 35 students a semester, is on food production in the Cariboo. Says Melville: "There're a lot of young people now who have this back to the land urge, but they have absolutely no skills. They can do English, French and math, but they can't do what they need to do to make even a weak attempt at really returning to a very simple way of life."

The kids aren't the only ones taking the classes — the land rush in the Cariboo has produced scores of families with small acreages, trying to live off the land. Frustrated adults have found Melville's ag. classes one answer to their problems.

Forestry is probably the most popular of the three classes — being plugged with 41 students. Many of the students will work in the forest industry of the area when they finish school.

No discrimination here. Half the Foxfire classes are girls. The ratio in agriculture is 60-40 and five girls are taking forestry.



This gal isn't chopping wood for the fire place. She's a student at Ogden's Foxfire class and is carefully chopping a log that will be dovetailed into another in craftsmanlike fashion, for one of two cabins being built on the school grounds. 4 — NOVEMBER 13, 1975

All three courses were written by Melville himself — Foxfire being a refined version of the U.S. English-oriented program.

All three meet the children of the Cariboo where they're at.

"Previously we shoved an academic program at youngsters that really didn't give them what they needed, that had nothing to do with the way they lived or their aspirations or their life style. Now there seems to be a feeling in the Cariboo that 'no, this has been the wrong way to go. We must be realistic about what they want in life.' I feel we have been very much unrealistic in education because we've lost a lot of our fundamental purposes for doing things."

some 20 miles northeast of 100 Mile House it means nothing — at least in terms of BCTF policy.

When you have a class of 30 children and 11 are small Indian children from a nearby reserve the numbers game just doesn't work.

The special attention that must be given those 11 children, to whom time and work habits are unknown quantities, just to ensure they cover one year in two, is time robbed from children who would normally whiz through their grades effortlessly with average teacher attention.

This is the way principal Garth Gibson-Bull, a transplanted Englishman who teaches the kindergarten class, puts it.



In all Melville's classes volunteers from the community contribute of their expertise in the basic skills of the land and as he puts it "Suddenly the public says, 'Gee, that is my school. I taught in it.'"

Forest Grove

What does class size mean to teachers whose school population is 40 percent native Indian?

Particularly when those children are K-6?

At Forest Grove Elementary School

"I need more teachers and more classrooms," he says solemnly.

His dedicated and hard worked teachers live in daily frustration about conditions over which they have no control. Two of them used their own time to videotape life on the Canim Reserve (where the Indian students come from) to use as orientation material for new teachers.

To bring the Indian children up to the level of their counterparts, several special programs have been initiated. Several, unfortunately, have been cut because of lack of funds. Most programs are very basic.

Photos by teachers Joe Varesi, Williams Lake; Bill Robertson and Craig MacCulloch, 100 Mile House. Story by Pat Denhoff.



Happiness is getting care and attention from those you trust — which is like being an Indian student at Forest Grove School.

Language programs, hygiene courses, community orientation and hot lunches to compensate for nutritional deficiencies. The Indian children are bused to school from the reserve and must eat lunch at school. Many arrive without lunches. A hot lunch program was instituted last year. This year it was cut because of lack of funds.

Efforts have been made to integrate a program on the Shuswap people into the social studies program at the Grade 4 level. A member of the Canim Reserve band was retained to teach a program in language and beadwork from December to June last year. The class was held only spasmodically.

Each week Patsy Daniels, a volunteer worker, comes to Forest Grove to give each Indian child a shower and check for any hygiene problems needing attention.

The school has one learning assistant, who spends half-time on special learning problems and half-time relieving Gibson-Bull in the kindergarten.

Some eight to 10 volunteers from the community assist in the classroom, either reading or helping at a station. Two volunteers come each day, one of whom is Indian.

To help Indian children work toward self-sufficiency, Gibson-Bull would like to see classes with a ratio of 20 white children to five Indian children. This means more teachers, more classrooms and teacher aides.

108 Mile House

You think you've got problems in your school?

Here's one that tops them all.

Brent Rutherford, principal of 108 Mile elementary school is responsible for 186 youngsters, grades 1-6 inclusive, housed in seven portables, three of which have toilets.

The youngsters have been housed in portables for 18 months.

There is:

- no staff room
- no supply area
- no medical area
- no room for a learning assistant
- 31 kindergarten students, and 13 more expected from 100 Mile House, housed in 3/4 of a portable, the other quarter of which serves as the principal's office and staff room
- no communication system between portables
- no storage space in any portable
- no playground
- area between portables narrow and hazardous to both children and teachers in winter when iced over
- no space for science equipment or art supplies
- split classes
- primary classes all at 26
- responsibility for seeing all 186 primary youngsters get on buses leaving school in the afternoon over an hour and a half period.

Parents and teachers alike have been waiting a year for the promised new school. A referendum was passed in November 1973, and tenders were let this fall, but there is doubt that the school will actually be ready for use by next fall. In the meantime rumor has it that with inflation there is now a \$120,000 shortage in funds for the new construction.



Principal Brent Rutherford in makeshift office-staff room at 108 Mile House.



Semi-weekly noon hour guitar lessons are a special dividend for children at Horsefly K-10 school, 50 miles southeast of Williams Lake.

Horsefly

When rural parents in School District 27, the second largest in area in B.C., complained that the long distances their secondary school children had to travel by bus — in some cases up to 40 to 50 miles each way a day — were contributing to the high drop out rate, trustees and education staff proposed to the Department of Education that an experimental program to extend the instructional program in five schools to include Grade 9 and eventually Grade 10 be set up.

Development of the project was initially funded by the Department during the 1974-75 school year, with the local board beginning to assume normal operating costs on January 1, 1975.

Horsefly Elementary-Junior Secondary, originally built in 1965 as a three-room school, has now expanded to four rooms and two portables.

Lying some 50 miles southeast of Williams Lake over curving roads, only part of which are paved, the Horsefly project, now in its second year and including Grade 10, has 35 students of the total school enrollment of 135, in grades 8, 9 and 10.

These are students who, according to principal Peter McCulloch, would otherwise be spending up to four hours each day being bused to and from Williams Lake.

How is it working? Just fine, according to McCulloch.

His students, most from ranches in the surrounding area, are more comfortable in the slow paced, open spaced, rural setting than they would be at junior secondary level in the more sophisticated and fast moving setting of Williams Lake.

Programs, which, in addition to emphasizing the present core of basic courses, reflect local priorities, needs and facilities, make students more content to stay in school and proceed to the next level. Intercollegiate

sports, which take them into Williams Lake regularly to compete, give them the taste of the larger school situation that will pave the way for an easier transition from rural to town life.

Several courses have been especially written for project schools in science, social studies and English by local teachers in the school district. A top rated social studies program was written by Joe Varesi, Williams Lake Junior Secondary, who took many of the pictures that appear in this feature.

Several electives are offered the students, according to the facilities of the school and the community resource people available. Community resource people have provided classes in clothing, textiles, drafting, woodwork, welding, power mechanics and typing — the last being taught by the chairman of the school board, Carol Funk, who volunteers her services.

The library has been improved and the services of a librarian are used one hour a day, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Art classes are given to junior secondary students twice a week and during noon hour guitar classes are taught to 15 students by teacher Gerry Farquharson semi-weekly.

Although 70 percent of the students are still bused — the longest ride for a few who live 20 miles away is an hour's drive.

Enthusiastic teachers who are giving extra classes at noon in sports, music etc., feel it's all worth it.

Even the split classes — in every room but kindergarten.

A few years ago many of them were teaching three or four grades in one room.

Glendale

Community schools may be a relatively new concept in Greater Vancouver where Queen Mary was the first established some five years ago. But for Hazel Huckvale, principal of Glendale Community School just outside Williams Lake, it's old hat.

Her school — and it is HER school — was officially designated a Community School 10 years ago and in the intervening years she has turned into Canadian citizens new Canadian children from 32 different ethnic backgrounds, the latest being Punjabi.

Her school operates 300 days of the year, Monday through Sunday, and the great emphasis in the community shared education program is on recreation.

Says Huckvale: "We found our new Canadians can learn to speak English faster in play situations than they can in book situations."

Volunteers, who in earlier years were themselves oriented to the Canadian way in Huckvale's school, are now teaching Punjabi mothers to speak English and orient themselves to the Canadian community.

Since Huckvale took the school over 16 years ago two-thirds of the school population have been New Canadians — their parents attracted to the community by the seven mills in the surrounding area and the copper mine.

NITEP — Robertson

Liz Robertson, well known Williams Lake teacher has been seconded by UBC to co-ordinate the Native Indian Teacher Education Program at Williams Lake. The program is one of four in the province that began in September 1974 in response to needs expressed by Indian people throughout B.C. for a more effective and relevant program for native Indians.

When Robertson started the program in Williams Lake last year she enrolled 13 students. Seven completed the course. Six re-appeared for their second year.

For Robertson it isn't just a matter of teaching the Indian students to be teachers. In most cases she must also find them billeting — and in Williams Lake this can be a problem. Too often a student answers an ad only to hear the words, 'Sorry the place has been taken.' Smelling discrimination, Robertson craftily overcomes the problem by having a friend apply for billeting at the residence. When it is determined that the place is available a sign is exchanged. Robertson rushes in, her Indian would-be student in tow.

The teacher-students range in age from 18 to 30 and vary from those who speak little English to those who are completely bilingual.

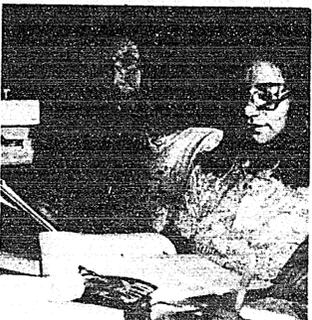
Half their time is spent in the classroom — in Williams Lake primarily, but also in rural schools, where they observe and do some basic instruction.

Most have jumped the hurdle from native village life to a small urban community — but not without great sacrifices and great loneliness. Their greatest fear is the jump to the isolation of university life and the anonymity of a big city.

Williams Lake

What makes Williams Lake Junior Secondary unique? According to teachers Charlie Wyse and Joe Varesi it is the wide number of electives offered in the school and the heavy emphasis on the sports program. Principal Ken Rogers talks of six cookery classes, each with 24 students — 114 boys taking cooking!

Four full-time physical education teachers are on staff, using locally developed courses in sports and recreation. The school board recently allocated \$50,000 for redevelopment of the track, which is in constant use not only by students of the school, but also for inter-collegiate sports throughout the area. Parents are closely involved in school activities and the playing field is as common a meeting place for the community as the Chilcotin Inn.



Loneliness is the greatest hurdle for Indian student teachers in the NITEP at Williams Lake.

Surrey hosts 'extravaganza'

The theme of the conference was 'A Child's World'. Everybody came, in spite of the rain.

And everybody loved it. It was the annual Primary Teachers' Association conference October 17 and 18, hosted by the Surrey Chapter and aided by many teachers in the district.

Attendance at Queen Elizabeth Secondary School hit the proposed 1500 mark, not counting the hundreds who registered too late for inclusion.

The Surrey teachers had organized what Lorna Robb,

Publicity Coordinator for the Association, called, 'An extravaganza in primary in-service.'

She praised the teachers for their imagination in organizing such a conference and said, 'Participants have returned to their districts, schools and classrooms with many new ideas and a revitalized enthusiasm.'

In spite of rain and some overcrowding, evaluation of the conference was positive.

'There is so much here, I feel frustrated in trying to absorb everything,' one young teacher said.

Jack Evans, District Superintendent of Surrey Schools was intrigued by the event.

At the opening ceremony Friday he commented, 'The primary teachers have turned this school into a fairland. Everywhere at all times there are displays, demonstrations, consultations and congeniality.'

The core committee of the conference was chaired by Sheila Langhaugh and Elizabeth Varley in Surrey assisted by Elinor Brown and Florence Brooks from the provincial executive.



Above: Valerie Corbett demonstrates the art of finger painting.

Right: Teachers pick up new ideas from the variety of art-in-action demonstrations.



Language Survey — pros and cons

The Language B.C. survey, the first of the Department of Education's provincial assessment programs, appears to have been adjusted to meet most of the main criticism advanced by BCTF staff members John Church and Wes Knapp. But the program was not endorsed by the Executive Committee meeting Saturday, November 1.

John Church and Wes Knapp, you may recall, first

sounded alarms over the program last May thus performing a function of BCTF staff to evaluate and make known concerns over these matters. This was followed by a rash of letters from teachers angrily denouncing their criticism.

Subsequently, Department official Jerry Mussio, has written to explain that the Department has made adjustments and satisfied most of the

BCTF concerns. The following points Mussio makes are extracted from his letter.

The intent of the new program is toward broad program evaluation rather than the assessment of individual students, which is the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

He says the Joint Committee is very much aware of the strong correlation between the socio-economic background of a pupil and his/her ability to learn in school. 'It would be highly misleading to report assessment data so that teachers might be identified. I want to reiterate that the Department has assured the anonymity of all individuals

and we have planned our sampling strategy so that it will be impossible to identify individual teachers or students. Schools also will not be identified in any report as the lowest reporting unit will be the district.'

There is no assumption that this study will necessarily be a model.

No-one has assumed that the use of questionnaires, furthermore, is the way of soliciting valid data or that using only trustees in obtaining public input is entirely acceptable. (For this year the Joint Committee had recommended school trustees be used in the first attempt to get public input in the assessment model.)

And a final point by Mussio. He notes that teachers have been involved in all phases of the assessment and have been represented on the management committee responsible for the progress of the work. But, 'I agree that the extent of involvement could be much greater... more release time should be provided for actual work on instrumentation...'

A lot of the concerns, according to John Church, have now been met but some remain that need to be overcome. In a paper to the Executive Committee on the Provincial Learning Assessment Program, Church outlined these

(Continued on page 7)

de Girolamo, Bowman named to joint board

Two BCTF representatives have been appointed to the re-organized Joint Board of Teacher Education.

Mavis de Girolamo, second vice-president and Jim Bowman, assistant director, Division of Professional Development joined six other new members on the 1975/76 Board recently.

The Board, which for many years had no permanent office, is now located at 805 West Broadway, Vancouver. It serves as a clearing house for information on teacher education in British Columbia.

Other changes include a reduction in the number of members, and the appointment of an Executive Director.

One of the major reasons for establishing a permanent office and engaging an executive director was to ensure the public are better informed on

the work of the Board. They are inviting inquiries or comments from individuals or groups and anybody who wishes to be placed on their mailing list.

Terry Mullen, new Executive Director, has a varied background in public school teaching and teacher education. He has co-ordinated a program for gifted children in Prince George, offered in-service courses in Fiji and served as chairperson on the BCTF Teacher Education Committee.

The Board is represented by BCTF, the three universities, B.C. School Trustees' Association, the Department and the public at large. They advise the Minister of Education on all aspects of teacher education and continuing education, and continually review teacher education policies and procedures.

Leo new director of Indian Education

First priority of the recently appointed director of Indian Education for the B.C. Department of Education is to encourage involvement and participation among Indian people in the education system.

For Jacqueline Leo, who prior to her recent appointment was district manager for the Kawakweth district council in Campbell River, the priority will have her visiting school districts, reserves and Indian communities throughout the province, almost continuously between now and next June.

Her mission is to find out what the native people of B.C. want from an educational system, and to set up the mechanism by which the In-

dian people can articulate their priorities and assist the Department in implementing them.

She points out that 1½ million dollars has been given by the provincial government in Indian Approvals to School Districts in the province. Her job is to find out what the school boards are doing with the dollars; what programs have been developed in one district that might be used successfully in another area; and assessing the input from the Indian people themselves into the programs.

She will work with the Minister of Education's committee on Indian education in the development, implementation, co-ordination and assess-

ment of educational programs for Indian students within the public school system.

Edmonton-born Leo came to B.C. in 1962 and taught at schools in Smithers, North Vancouver, Chemainus Bay, and Kyuquot until 1968. Later she became band manager and later chief counsellor of the Kyuquot Band in Kyuquot, B.C.

In 1973 Mrs. Leo worked in the community family life program for the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. In January of 1974 she became district manager of the Kawakweth District Council, Campbell River.

In this position she administered social service, community development and other programs for the council.



Dr. Ron Faris, acting superintendent of communications, Department of Education, announcing the six million dollar book entitlement at the BCSLA's spring conference. To provide guidelines for using the funds a three-day conference for librarians was held recently at Yellowpoint.

Librarians provide grant guidelines

It's been an unexpectedly rewarding year for school libraries across the province. One of the highlights was the Department of Education's announcement in April that a six million dollar book entitlement grant would be made available to school districts.

Angela Thacker, president of the B.C. School Librarians' Association (BCSLA) says, 'The Department's allocation of funds shows a concerned response on the part of the government to an area of education neglected for too long.' To provide guidelines for using the funds and to discuss library needs the Department also sponsored a three-day conference for librarians at Yellowpoint recently. A list of recommended guidelines are now being reviewed by the Department.

It is the responsibility of local school districts to ensure that the funds are strictly allocated according to the prescribed wishes of the Department. These are that book collections should be upgraded to ten volumes per elementary student and 15 volumes per secondary student. The funds

are to be used only for books — 'Any variation of funds will not be an acceptable funding method for this allowance.'

Thacker says there is a concern that Boards will reduce the money usually budgeted for school libraries because of the additional funds.

'If this is allowed to happen, it could seriously reduce the impact of the grant. In fact most districts will need to place more money in their budgets for staff, book processing, shelving and space.'

The Department is sponsoring five workshops coordinated by BCSLA to help in the selection of learning resources and have published a list of selection aids compiled by BCSLA member Nancy MacLean.

The workshops are being held during October and November in Kitimat (October 24-25), Fort St. John (October 31-November 1), Nelson (November 7-8), Kelowna (November 7-8), Campbell River (November 14-15).

Several other workshops are being arranged for areas requesting them.

From page 6

Language survey controversy

concerns and gave some suggestions for their resolution: (1) The concern that the Language B.C. survey may become the prototype for subsequent provincial learning assessment programs simply because it is the first one.

He sees some resolution if there are Departmental assurances that goals assessment will henceforth precede outcomes assessment and be open-ended. From now on, practising teachers and the public should be involved in the design.

(2) The concern that the PLAP will cover only a limited and restricted number of the goals.

'Many outcomes of assessment may focus on... confining kinds of thinking skills.'

Church offers no real resolution to this particular problem but does put forward ideas on the limited and restricted number of goals. 'Many outcomes assessment may focus on the convergent and confining kinds of thinking skills when it has been repeatedly demonstrated that what is needed today are evidences of divergent, unconventional, creative, dynamic kinds of thinking. Many outcomes assessments may focus on memory, but if the acquisition of knowledge is an important goal then it may be argued that a focus on memory is indeed legitimate.'

Church suggests it would be legitimate to add survival skills, individual and group. And he raises a fear that the test will focus on the three R's whereas the goals have been expanded to embrace 'respect' and 'responsibility.'

'Focus on the three R's will supercede goals of 'respect' and 'responsibility.'

(3) The concern that the anonymity of the student, teacher and the school may not be protected.

'It is only at the provincial level that an unprincipled and/or misguided official or individual could have sufficient information to make it worthwhile to leak that information (which when taken out of its proper perspective could cause irreparable damage) to non-educational, sensation-starved reporters,' Church says.

(4) The concern that PLAP may reinforce the demands of those advocates of the reinstatement of district-wide and even province-wide written examinations of students.

Church answers this concern by saying, 'The advocates can be shown that PLAP can produce relevant, significant data which could be used to improve the quality of education. The results obtained from district-wide examinations do not yield such information. Instead, they encourage competition, and even cheating among students. While a minority of students may be made happy, the vast majority may become sullen and resent-

ful and nurtur feelings of deprivation and inadequacy.'

However, sharp differences of opinion emerged on Language B.C. at the Executive table over the question of endorsing or not endorsing the program.

Frances Worledge, representing the Professional Development and Advisory Committee, argued Friday evening and again Saturday that Language B.C. would be the straw that would break the backs of teachers.

The assessment program, she argued, would cause more concern among teachers than any other program on the horizon. Teachers attempting to decentralize curriculum are, at the same time, having this centralized testing foisted on them for years to come. Another objection lay with the instrument itself.

'Even a clever child would have difficulty with it,' she said after reading out one part to show that it was ambiguous in meaning. In total, therefore, she argued that the BCTF should not endorse the program and instruct teachers not to co-operate with it.

'I showed the test to some grade four teachers and they were aghast.'

Ross Regan offered some insight into what had gone wrong with PLAP before urging non-endorsement of the program. University people on the joint committee had been adamant on test items and would make only minor changes, he said. 'I showed the test to some grade four teachers and they were aghast.'

Jerry Mussio of the Department had been co-operative, Regan said, but several individuals in the university group who were so 'dominant' in the discussions were reluctant to change the test.

Continued non-endorsement will indicate that we are still unhappy at the composition of the exam, Regan concluded. 'If we have to administer it, fine, but it is against our will.' He said it should be recognized that teachers can't say no forever to assessment exams but the federation must reflect members opinion in Victoria.

Bill Broadley, BCTF president, said, 'I don't know in all my years with the federation when a Department official has responded in the way Mussio has to our concerns. There's been a high degree of co-operation.'

While we can recognize that it is not a perfect instrument, he said, there seems to be some 'magic' in saying that teacher representatives on the committee are better when they are chosen by the federation than by the others.

And he was critical of statements that said the test would result in a severe loss of instructional time. 'One hour in a year?' Or statements that said there would be an added time burden for teachers: 'How much of a burden for a school that has flexibility?'

A bias is bound to occur once you know what you are

seeking, Broadley continued, but the strength of the program is that it will answer where we need to place additional resources so that teaching can improve over the years. 'The two important points are that an analysis is made of the results and that we have an opportunity to improve any further assessment instruments that may be used.'

He said that the federation's objectives are to ensure that any of the instruments are properly prepared regarding goals, outcomes, discrepancy analysis. 'It would be far more productive for this organization to co-operate and to encourage members to respond. 'Let us not endorse the statement.'

However, the Executive voted three to three on non-endorsement of the year 4 reading survey which effectively left the federation in the position adopted August 22 that the reading assessment program not be endorsed.

They voted unanimously, six to 0, that teachers be requested to respond to the BCTF suggestions for a subsequent improvement of the assessment instruments and that all local associations be requested to send to the BCTF suggestions for improving the assessment instruments to the end that the BCTF can present recommendations for change.

Teachers are encouraged to send in to the BCTF a copy of their comments that they will be sending to the department on the tear-off sheets.

Labor backs smaller class sizes in B.C.

The B.C. Federation of Labor has unanimously endorsed a resolution backing efforts of B.C. teachers 'to achieve smaller class sizes and other steps to improve the quality of education in British Columbia.'

The resolution, aptly numbered K 12, originated from Vancouver Local 3910 of the United Steelworkers of America.

A number of resolutions indicated dissatisfaction with the apparent vacuum in public school curricula in regard to labor — specifically the history of the labor movement.

Resolutions on the subject included a call from the Office and Technical Employees Union for texts to carry a historical account of the building of the labor movement and its relationship to the living standards of the people in general, with data to come from the research departments of unions.

A branch of the B.C. Government Employees Union, after pointing out that unions play a key part in the lives of students entering the work force, and claiming confusion in the media in regard to unions, called for a brief to the Premier and Minister of Education 'outlining the necessity of including in the school curriculum a course in union education, including a history of the labor movement.'

Women have come a long way since 1929 when His Majesty's Privy Council officially recognized them as Persons in a period when status was just a matter of whether you belonged to a father or a husband.

But the struggle for liberation still goes on as Linda Shuto told Status of Women delegates recently. 'We are probably going to be working against sex discrimination for the rest of our lives. You can't pull out after six years of effort and think it will all be over.'

The delegates had come from all over the province to take part in the 2nd annual Contacts Conference in Vancouver October 24, 25, 26.

They came together to acquire some of the information, skills and support they will need in their challenging role as Status of Women contact persons.

Shuto, former executive assistant on the BCTF Status of Women group, said she rejects the notion that women are trying to take over from men. Her concern is that hierarchies in society are unfair because they are traditionally male dominated. 'Women are definitely at the bottom,' she said. 'But so are a lot of other people — ethnic minorities, poor people and blacks. Our



Connie Broatch, second left, talks about book on sexism she helped compile for the BCTF.

struggles are related to their struggles.'

Stating that all institutions in society are hierarchical, Shuto went on to explain that delegates could help change this at the school district level by forming staff committees and involving others in decision making.

The theme of struggling for equality in a society built on inequitable structures recurred throughout the conference.

It was reiterated in Wes Knapp's statement that there was evidence of sexism in

schools but as school districts wouldn't acknowledge it nothing was done. 'You can help by organizing projects in your own schools,' he told delegates, giving them specific examples.

Popo Chudnovsky, coordinator of the BCTF International Women's Year Project, spoke at length on the necessity for community involvement in schools.

'Changes are only going to happen in the school system when parents, teachers, and students get together to work on problems in education.' She

invited one more district to participate in the IWY project.

Delegates worked in groups discussing their district needs and problems. They were given support and advice on how to set up programs and initiate community involvement by many people including BCTF staffpersons, Ralph Sundby, Wes Knapp, Nora Grove and Don Walmsley.

The insights and creative ideas flowed from speakers and were reflected in the audience as delegates re-identified problems and gained strength from a common motive.

Julia Goulden, recently appointed by the Department of Education as Special Advisor On Sex Discrimination in B.C. Schools, spoke about desegregation.

'We are trying to open doors but not necessarily bring about a situation where we want to force a distinctive amount of people into an activity. You people are going to need a number of arguments to sell a program of desegregation,' she told delegates.

Marg Savage, assistant professor of kinesiology at SFU, talked about the physical differences between sexes competing in sports. She said there was much more diversity in strength among boys than between girls and boys, and therefore a large percentage of overlap.'

Another issue simmering for some time, the Women's Studies Course, was given an update by Status of Women task force member Heather Knapp. She explained that the course had been extensively revised after initial rejection by the Minister.

Knapp said in her opinion the Minister would probably accept it now.

Delegates were asked to circulate a petition supporting the course, for presentation to the Minister.

Contacts Conference '75



left: Heather Knapp, Status of Women task force member, giving delegates an update on the controversial Womens Studies course.



right: Former Status of Women Executive Assistant Linda Shuto jokes with a friend during a coffee break.

'A growing sense of solidarity' Nora Grove comments

It was an exciting conference! Almost every district in the province was represented which is a remarkable feat in itself. All but one of the evaluation forms rated the conference excellent or good.

But for me the most satisfying experience was the growing sense of solidarity and commitment that developed over the two days.

Isolation

Women who had sometimes felt isolated and put down by a few of their colleagues who do not yet recognize the seriousness of sex discrimination, left the conference with a renewed sense of confidence and commitment.

Many delegates left with a greater awareness of the complexities of the educational system in which we work and of the need to become 'politic-

ally' active if we ever hope to make positive changes. Rosemary Brown, in her keynote address on Friday evening, stated:

As a professional group teachers have succeeded in educating the government of the presence of sexism in the educational system. As a government we accept the importance of desegregation in the classroom, the elimination of sexist textbooks . . . we accept the opening up of clubs and activities, athletic or otherwise to students of both sexes.

Challenge

A member of the audience challenged Rosemary to spell out what legislation or leadership we could expect from the government on these issues. Rosemary tossed the ball back to us citing 'local school board autonomy' and the need for us to muster 'grassroots' and community support. This



Nora Grove, Status of Women Executive Assistant, BCTF.

dialogue prompted many delegates to recognize the enormous amount of work that must be done at the local level all over the province. This will take energy, courage and a strong sense of social responsibility on the part of the contacts and local committees. But far from being discouraged by the job to be done most contacts were excited by the challenge and encouraged by the fine work that has already been done in so many districts.

Assistance

The only regret I have about the conference is that there was not enough time for me to meet and talk with each contact person individually. But I hope to be hearing from each one soon to invite me to their districts and to assist with their local programs in whatever way I can.

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