



Typical scene around the province. Left to right, grade 12 student D'Arcy Furness, Social Studies teacher Murray Bowman and parent Dolores Wallace study the ministry's core curriculum booklet at Point Grey Secondary School's parent meeting held February 16.

Mixed reaction over core curriculum

By Annette Croucher

Core curriculum? Acceptance and confusion seems best to sum up feelings across the province.

The Newsletter polled a number of locals to find out what the general feeling in their area was with regard to the core curriculum.

We expect the ministry to release the results of the core curriculum meetings when these have been analysed.

Lake Cowichan's John Clark said people have a feeling that core is a political gimmick, with the government waiting to take credit for something that's already happening. Others see core as a pendulum swing back to the basics. Clark reported 'poor turnout, with very little interest and more teachers than parents attending.

George Duerksen, Cranbrook, said their meetings have been very well attended. Parents feel there is room for a core curriculum and can find nothing to quarrel with as far as the booklet goes. Duerksen said teachers are taking a 'wait and see' attitude. 'Some think the BCTF is making too much of the situation. They don't want to spend a great deal of money opposing the government.' Duerksen said he is against a province-wide testing program. He said it will mean going backwards and teaching to one textbook. However, he said, some teachers and parents in his area think testing is a good idea.

North Thompson's Bob Craig reported a poor turnout for meetings. The general feeling

was one of 'we are already teaching all these things.' The teacher and parents are curious and want to find out what core is. They feel the booklet is very 'vague.'

Doug Cousins, Campbell River, said his area didn't show much interest in core curriculum until it found out the BCTF was spending \$65,000 on advertising. He said there is no strong feeling for or against the program, however, there is concern about its direction.

It doesn't say much and what it does say is already being taught. Cousins said while he feels it's a good idea for core curriculum to stress skills, there is still a responsibility for passing on our cultural heritage, such as music and art. We are 'missing out' if we don't, he said.

Delta's Gordon Eddy, said parent reaction to the program was one of acceptance and confusion. Teacher reaction was the same. However, teachers were also concerned about the assessment part of the program. Eddy feels the booklet just restates what is already being taught.

Parents and teachers did want such courses added as family life, labor and management, economics.

Castlegar's Alan Sheppard said the general feeling of parents and teachers was that the goals are not extensive enough, that what is omitted is more important than what is included. Plus, the areas that core does cover, are not well

(Continued on page 3)

Trail teachers

Fed up with the board

By John Hardy

Trail district teachers are good and fed up with the board's refusal to negotiate according to local president Peter Moll.

Trail school district was declared in dispute this month because local trustees have refused to have any meaningful negotiation, conciliation and are now obstructing the arbitration process.

Trail trustees have used a dormant part of the Arbitration Act that sets a fee of \$40 a day for an arbitration board chairman. As a result, both teachers and the minister of labour, who has also been involved in the dispute, have

been unable to find anyone willing to serve as board chairman, despite the minister's best efforts to mediate.

Teachers' objectives, says Peter Moll, are to reach a salary agreement for 1977 through the process of negotiation or arbitration. 'It is our position that the process of setting salaries unilaterally is unacceptable.'

Moll says the teachers have stepped up the in dispute tactic by stating that no teaching position shall change in the district, there will be no transfers, no promotions and no expansion of services.

'We are hoping to have

meaningful discussions with the board but if this doesn't take place, we are prepared to take a firmer stand and seek other alternatives.'

Meanwhile Basil McDonnell, chairman of the Trail board, has written what Moll calls an 'incredible letter' in which McDonnell states 'I hope that you will recognize that the reason that arbitration did not occur was that a chairman was not appointed, and that the matter was entirely out of the hands of the board.'

Please do not persist in declaring that a chairman could not be obtained for \$40 per day and expenses.'

It's a working paper

The working paper entitled *Essential Educational Experiences* is not the official position of the BCTF or the Executive Committee.

At its February 12 meeting the Executive Committee passed unanimously four motions, all designed to make clear the fact that the working paper is nothing more than that — a working paper.

The Executive instructed that 'the membership be again informed that (the paper) is a working paper only, and that it has been distributed to the membership with a view to promoting discussion, debate and reactions, to the end that a BCTF position be developed on essential educational experiences.'

Local associations will be asked to respond in time to allow the Executive Committee to present an amended paper and make recommendations to the May meeting of the Representative Assembly.

The motions followed objections from Don Walmsley, Al Blakey, Julia Goulden, and Ross Regan to the President's releasing draft five of the working paper to the press and to the Minister of Education without the Executive Committee's authorization to do so.

Bill Broadley replied that he had acted to ensure that everyone realized that the paper was only a working paper, and not the position of the BCTF at this time.

He contended that documents distributed as widely as the working paper inevitably get to the press and the Ministry of Education, and he had given copies of the paper to the press and to the Minister deliberately so that all would know the paper was merely a working paper distributed for membership reaction.

Saying, 'I believe I did the right thing,' Broadley invited a motion of censure, but no motion was made.

Article disrupts Exec. meeting

By Ken Aitchison

A page six Vancouver Sun article quoting President Bill Broadley caused First Vice-President Don Walmsley to walk out of the February 12 meeting of the Executive Committee.

The article, written by Doug Collins, appeared in the Sun on the day of the executive meeting.

It dealt with the Professional Development Advisory Committee's working paper entitled *'Essential Educational Experiences'*, describing it as 'an extraordinary, simple-minded, radically left-wing draft policy paper.'

Walmsley took exception to several of Broadley's statements in the article. Visibly angry, Walmsley asked the president, for each statement, whether or not the quotation was a reasonable reflection of what he had said. Broadley confirmed the accuracy of each quotation. Walmsley was particularly

upset by a statement in the article that the Executive Committee could adopt the working paper as policy prior to the AGM. When Broadley replied that the statement was simply a statement of fact, Walmsley shouted that if that were a statement of fact, he could see no point in remaining in the meeting, and left the room.

Julia Goulden was infuriated by two statements in the article attributed to senior members of the staff.

One was quoted as saying, 'If sexism and racism didn't exist, they'd invent them. These people have to have something to complain about.'

Another staff member was alleged to have said that the paper was a classic instance of democratic centralism — governing in the name of the people without consulting the people.

Goulden angrily denounced the statements as 'an act of

sabotage, no different from the act of sabotaging our tapes.'

This was a reference to the erasure from a tape recording of some comments made by Broadley at last year's AGM.

'I don't want these people in the federation! I'm just furious to think we hire staff people who would do such a thing!' Goulden continued.

The Executive Committee instructed the general secretary to determine which staff members had apparently communicated the statements to Collins.

The comments occurred early in the evening session of the executive meeting. Walmsley, Goulden and Broadley were the only executive members who participated in the highly charged discussion. Al Blakey, Jim MacFarlan and Gale Neuberger could not attend the evening session. Nina Green missed the meeting because of a medical problem.

Parental involvement just a hoax

By KAY WHITING, "The Enterprise", Coquitlam
One of the biggest hoaxes of the decade will have to be the current call for parents to congregate in their nearest school and discuss the 'core curriculum' and being led to believe that what they have to say matters.

It has already been announced it will be introduced when school starts in September. One would have to be very naive to think that any, or all, of the deliberations that may be forthcoming can be received in March, considered and discussed and be included to meet this deadline. In fact, reliable sources reveal that the whole thing has already been finalized. All the money invested in printing thousands of the booklet 'What Should Our Children be Learning?' would have been better spent on library books.

LOCAL AUTONOMY
The present government campaigned on 'decentralization' of the school system. What a hoax this was! Here we have the Ministry of Education setting out explicitly now what our child must learn at school. It is all very well to add what should be learned and may be learned but when? We can be sure that students and teachers will be so preoccupied with what the government says they have to do that the school day will not be long

enough for anything else. So there goes local autonomy and just when our school district was developing some exciting, innovative new courses.

MORE DECEPTION

We can expect yet another trick to be played on us. While there has been a reluctance to announce there will be standardized testing of this core curriculum there have been leaks about tests and exams already being prepared. So we will be reverting back to a system of 'passes' and 'failures.' Labels will be attached to young people on these blasted tests without any regard or consideration of learning disabilities, individuality, economic factors that effect learning outside of the school, geographical and other environmental upsets or even home motivation.

It is also a hoax to think the discussion on the whole thing has been free and open. The Ministry of Education issued a directive to local school superintendents as to exactly how these public forums were to be handled. There was no invitation to question. Unless there are parents present who really understand the ramifications of this whole thing it becomes a motherhood issue. Moreover the hour or two allotted for review of the booklet is only sufficient to go through one page at the most.

WHY CHANGE

It is also a hoax to lead people to believe that we need to change the whole philosophy of our education system in this province. The recent evaluation of grade four classes in the Language Arts showed performances well over what should be expected. However this is not sensational news that gets a lot of headlines or hotline calls. It is much more politic to believe the schools are producing a new generation of illiterates.

Everyone expects to learn to read and write and get some mathematical skills out of the education system and it is ludicrous to think this is not being done. To improve performance in these areas does not require a whole new compulsory rule book.

MANY OPINIONS

It is also a fallacy to think everyone wants the same education for their children or that each student requires the same thing. This has been debated through the ages and in an age of democracy we have to demand a choice. It is disconcerting, to say the least, that political forces that campaign on the premise that government should not interfere with an individual can, on the other hand, take complete state control over what children must learn at school

Core meetings

Continued from Page 1

done. Teachers feel that if they's all there is to it, then they only have about a month's work. Sheppard feels this is only part of a bigger program, that the next step is teacher evaluation and teacher improvement.

'I've already got four people evaluating me. I don't want any more.' Sheppard feels the program is a political move out of the Social Credit caucus, rather than anything to do with educational planning. He also pointed out that there is no signs of the provincial government funding the program.

Dawn Hilborn, New Westminster, said there was no feeling one way or the other about core. Her local supports the philosophy of the core curriculum as it feels this is al-

ready being taught in the schools. A survey by teacher Judy Poulton revealed a 'generally positive' reaction towards the program. Some parents, though, want French, music, art and PE added.

Charlie Wyse, Williams Lake, said the booklet is 'cumbersome' to deal with. Meetings in his area have not been well attended. Wyse said his local has rejected the BCTF's stand on CORE/PLAP. He feels that core is a 'non-issue' and that the BCTF would have been better off just to ignore it. Basically, he said, teachers are favorable to core.

Quesnel's Mike Stevens said attendance at the meetings ranged from very good in the small rural schools to 'pathetic' in the larger town

schools. Most people felt the meetings a waste of time. They felt that the ministry has already made the decision to implement the program in September and that it was 'frivolous activity' to be attending meetings for something that has already gone to the printer. Parents would like to see more standard structure and a return to the basic English skills.

In the secondary schools, they want to see more discipline and respect, something not in the booklet. Some parents were surprised that French was not included. A big concern is with the Provincial Learning Assessment Program, that it might lead to a lock-step thing and teachers are afraid of losing teaching autonomy. They fear it will be used, particularly by superintendents, to assess the quality of a teacher's teaching. Teachers are also concerned

that they will have to teach to the test rather than to the student.
Steve Norman, Vancouver Elementary, said the teachers feel frustrated and incensed by the process of the meetings. They feel the booklet is not strong enough to agree or disagree with. As far as I am concerned, said Norman, it's only the 'tip of the iceberg.' Meeting attendance in his area ranged from fairly good to poor.

Prince George's Owen Corcoran, said parent reaction seemed to be one of 'you're the professionals, you tell us what core curriculum does or doesn't contain.' Parents input has mainly been in the area of cultural subjects. They also want a core of subjects that children should have to memorize. Teachers are not against core, rather, they see it as a small nucleus around which they have to operate and build what may and should be taught. They disagree with

PDAC's idea of it being inflexible. The major criticism is that while the minister asks for input, it looks like he is a ready going to implement core in September. How is he going to even have time to utilize all that input, asked Corcoran. Corcoran said he thinks we can work and build around core.

Walt Kitley, Victoria, said teachers are basically supportive of core, however, there are some fears expressed similar to those of Bill Broadley. Turnouts to the meetings have been very good. Teachers welcome parental involvement, he said, and favor the principle of core but there is concern that the information gathered may be used politically. He said parents and teachers are 'sore' about the BCTF ads and feel that the federation is 'doing nothing and is against everything.' They are not happy with the extreme position the federation seems to be taking in this matter.

Members' voice

VSTA

The Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association is pleased that the BCTF executive and the RA responded to our motion to reduce fees by recommending to the AGM that the federation return to the .91% formula for the year 1977-78.

We are still concerned, however, about the disposition of the \$960,000 that will have been collected this year, for what was euphemistically called a Quality Education Fund.

In point of fact, we all know that this was a fund for financing political action.

In the first place, last year's AGM action to establish this fund

was in direct contravention to Policies 14.H.02 and 14.H.04 (p. 47) Members' Guide — which read, respectively, as follows:

That resolutions that involve major changes in financial policy be made available to local associations for comprehensive study through Reports and Resolutions prior to the AGM at which a decision on them must be made, such resolutions to be accompanied by detailed briefs explaining their background and implications.

That any proposal for extension or initiation of BCTF services be accompanied by a responsible

estimate of costs involved — immediate and long-term — and that this estimate accompany the original proposal.

Since this money has never been properly budgeted by the membership to any one of our specific programs, it is therefore at the disposal of the almost unilateral decision (or whim) of the executive, who might be tempted to search for a 'cause', which otherwise would never be recognized, on which to spend it.

It is my opinion, therefore, that the membership should advise its delegates at the coming AGM to move that all but \$100,000 of what remains in the Quality Education Fund be credited to our Reserve Fund.

There it can be properly controlled through the RA or AGM by a wider representation of the will of the membership. Also, placing it in the Reserve Fund will bring us nearer the day when it reaches the 25% limit of the annual operating expenses, when our fees can be further reduced by the 5% annual contribution that we now allocate to the fund.

Charles Frizell,
President, VSTA

Broadley

What is happening in our federation? A page six article in the February 12th Vancouver Sun was an extreme example of poor judgment.

Is President Broadley trying to destroy the BCTF? I can't think of a better way to encourage self destruction than for our president to complain in the public media about a draft proposal which still is the subject of an on-going internal debate. The AGM, not the public press, is the proper forum for such discussions.

It is bad enough when some trustees suggest that the BCTF has become too powerful a vehicle for educational change; but when the BCTF president goes outside the federation to echo those complaints, he must realize that for any personal or political satisfaction he has gained, he has encouraged disunity and initiated a practice, which if continued, would bring disaster to our organization.

The damages done were then compounded by the references to the statements allegedly made by senior staff members. These anonymous references have placed all of our administrative staff under a cloud of suspicion.

If any staff member betrays the committees he or she serves, by

anonymously reporting to the newspapers, the confidence which all of our membership should have in our employees is eroded.

As a long serving committee member, one of those hundreds of teachers who volunteer their time and their services, I have the right to expect open discussion and positive leadership.

For the president of the BCTF to seem to agree in committee, and then to disagree in the public press, has been the worst sort of betrayal.

Gordon Sanborn,
Nanaimo

EEE

Having read the working paper toward identifying Essential Educational Experiences, I must commend the executive and PDAC for their constructive approach for dealing with the matter of a core curriculum. In identifying an alternative to a Core, the paper projects a sensitivity to student needs and the learning process, providing a real opportunity for all those involved in education to determine realistic goals.

Particularly I appreciate the effort being made to ensure that all teachers have an opportunity to become involved in developing the BCTF position before it is finalized. The discussion of the paper at the winter RA was valuable to me, and I hope similar discussion will take place at the school level now. Every teacher should grasp this chance to carefully read the working paper, discuss it with colleagues, and relate any questions or concerns to the executive and PDAC. The final paper should then truly represent the BCTF position.

Keep it up! This type of encouragement for individual members to take part in the development of BCTF position papers is essential to maintaining a unified federation.

Les Phillips,
Coquitlam.

MacFarlan

I believe that Jim MacFarlan deserves censuring for his vilification of our presidents through the 50s and the 60s. I will not accept that these people betrayed our interests and those of the students of the time either deliberately or with forethought. Such men as Adam Robertson, Bob Buzza, Tom Hutchison and those who went before them deserve our thanks, not our brickbats, for their efforts on our behalf.

Ray Bell,
Vanderhoof

GR disappointed

As a GR I was disappointed with the three days of meetings of the BCTF Representative Assembly recently held.

I had hoped that the members would be given sufficient opportunity to prepare at least a preliminary BCTF position on CORE and PLAP and also to share some responses on the BCTF working draft on Essential Education Experiences (EEE).

Only one hour out of 21 hours of scheduled agenda was allotted to discuss EEE and none to CORE and PLAP. In fairness it must be pointed out that the other twenty hours plus were, of course, necessary to attend to federation's business. But, is this leadership?

In my view, the major priorities of the federation, adequately supported by resources, have to be at this time, the economic welfare of the teachers and the development of educational directions.

We have produced five working drafts on EEE and a pamphlet explaining why CORE and PLAP are bad for children. This is a negative approach. There are a lot of teachers who may indeed prefer some aspects of core curriculum.

Gyan Nath,
G.R.

That Collins' article

By Bill Broadley, BCTF President

At the dinner break at the Executive Committee meeting of February 12, members took a particular interest in the page six story headed, 'Who Shall, Run the Schools? Radical Teachers or the Public?' The story quoted extensively from the paper, 'Essential Educational Experiences.' It included some comments from me about the paper. Those attributed to me are quite consistent with remarks I made to Doug Collins earlier that week.

The paper would not exist if it were not for the majority enjoyed by the radical left and its sympathizers on the BCTF Executive Committee and the consequent influence on staff and other committee members.

I am one of the Executive Committee members who wants the widest possible circulation amongst BCTF members of the document. I want members to be aware of the issues so that they will become more involved in their federation.

If the majority of BCTF members want to adopt the position in the paper, 'Essential Educational Experiences,' that's fair enough. However, I'm going to debate against such a decision. Further, I believe that most federation members will reject the paper. But whatever the decision, it will be debated in the open.

BCTF structures are healthy and democratic. But a healthy democratic structure doesn't guarantee the good health of an organization. The behavior of members determines such health — from active participation to benign apathy. If apathy prevails, the few who do go to meetings will make policy for the many as well as elect delegates to the AGM who elect the BCTF Executive Committee.

Every member has the right to stand as an AGM delegate. All members have the right to attend the meeting and to vote for the delegates of their choice. By now, most associations have elected their delegates for 1977. You can still advise them of your views, however.

An organization with 29,000 members cannot retain its credibility with either public or government if members are divided from their leaders on important issues.

Look at October 14!
Look at Executive Committee decisions about making submissions to the AIB!

And now look at Essential Educational Experiences! Is it the same thing all over again? Or do I detect an unexpected rush to disown the paper?

We need to come together, we need to know where we've been. Ideologies have got in our way. We need to emphasize, once again, those areas in which we share a unity of purpose.

We need leaders who are in the mainstream of teachers' thinking.

Too many crucial issues face us to allow the luxury of a divided organization. Otherwise we may not get together. The necessary openness will be missing.

Some believe that unity is maintained by keeping differences internal to an organization. With 29,000 members such differences don't remain internal for long. And besides, we have nothing to fear by being open.

The BCTF is in good hands — your hands. But only if you use them. Please do.

Letters from members on Core

The federation has received a great many letters from members and from the public in response to the CORE/PLAP brochure and advertisement. All letters are going to the president, then to John Church and Ralph Sundry in the Professional Development Division for evaluation and reporting back to the membership.

While it is not possible at this time to give a breakdown of the letters pro and con, it is possible to give a few of the opinions being expressed by people. Also, you should keep in mind that a number of letters have been written by school staffs and collectively signed so often we would be talking not about individual opinions but the opinions of a group.

From David Lloyd George Elementary School in Vancouver, for example, comes a statement 'we hold the opinion that a core curriculum will be a reality with or without our blessing. Further, we think that teachers generally support the idea of a core curriculum.'

The paper, 'Essential Educational Experiences,' does everything they say but focus 'our intention on the problems related to the minister's proposal for a core curriculum. We fail to understand why, when some of the issues are so clear and would probably receive some enthusiastic support, they are cloaked in an abundance of argumentative and ideological comment. How could PDAC be so naive as to expect that teachers would accept and/or support the ideological frame work within which EEE is written?'

From John Barsby Junior Secondary School in Nanaimo, comes this comment 'the BCTF has made a \$65,000 zig when it should be doing a determined szg.' Our educational system, the teachers says, has become so devoid of minimal standards and basic skills that most teachers and students would benefit from a reasonable core curriculum.

Exec. amends budget

The BCTF Executive Committee has amended the Labor Liaison program budget, as decided by the RA, to include an amount 'to carry out a referendum in regard to proposed membership in the Public Sector Employees' Coordinating Council, this amount to include sufficient money to provide information to the membership to make them knowledgeable.'

April 15 is the date set for mailing referendum ballots to

From a teacher in Nechako: 'Instead of wasting my money in voice through the BCTF to try to undermine what a government is trying to do, we should be leading not hindering exploration study in learning abilities teaching procedures . . .'

One local association disassociates itself from the Essential Educational Experiences paper and suggests that the paper be replaced with a 'succinct statement representing our members' professional opinions on the concept of core curriculum including its determination and content.'

Says a teacher 'you are not privileged to make political decisions that are purported to reflect the attitudes of all teachers. You are not at liberty to use the BCTF funds for the purpose of establishing a political atmosphere relative to any topic.' Says another 'do we really need to spend thousands of dollars to put the executive foot into the collective mouth?'

Says another 'I do not agree that the core curriculum violates the individualization of teaching methods. This is not the first time that the BCTF has publicly expressed opinions that are not those of the majority of its members.'

'I especially like your statement and if (the BCTF) opposes central determination processes which cannot adequately involve those whom the educational system most directly affects. Why not heed your own advice?'

Other comments are: 'My wife and I attended a meeting to discuss the core curriculum with teachers and other parents. The teachers I spoke to were not violently opposed to the intended changes but mainly confused as to the actual implementation of proposed changes.'

'Section D, the school and society, seems to be full of phraseology such as 'working class,' 'hierarchical structure,' 'middle class,' 'workers and owners,' which smacks of Marxist literature. What

is the purpose of this? Are beings being urged to revolt? This document does not speak for me nor for many of the province's good teachers. I strongly object to it.'

And for comments against the core curriculum: 'Would like to commend your stand on the core curriculum. Congratulations on an excellent advertising campaign.'

'I have just read your excellent commercial article and I want to thank you for its wonderful message.'

'I feel that the province-wide tests for all children will be taking away the individuality of each child.'

'I read with utter despair your advertisement in the Columbian paper. What is this government trying to do to my child? If this goes into effect, I will not only have a child with learning disability but also an emotional problem.'

'While I wholeheartedly support any attempt to raise the quality of education in our schools, I doubt that this can be achieved by an imposed curriculum.'

'Let's compete in how to make beautiful, caring, loving human beings. Eliminate all grading and replace it with an evaluation of the student's capabilities by method of close liaison between parent, teacher and student.'

Human Rights

Educating for Human Rights and Responsibilities. Sponsored by the Public Schools Legal Education Project and the B.C. Human Rights Commission.

Sheraton Villa, Burnaby, B.C.
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
March 11 and 12, 1977

Speakers:
Carol Geller, Director, Human Rights Commission, Saskatchewan.
Kathleen Ruff, Director, Human Rights Branch, British Columbia.

Workshops on racism, sexism, teachers responsibilities in human rights, native rights.

Talk about how to deal with problems in the classroom related to human rights.

Contact person is Gene Errington, 224-0065 or 872-2250.

FEBRUARY 24, 1977 — 3

Great-West benefits up

Faced with the prospect of the BCTF running its own long-term disability benefit plan, Great-West Life Insurance Company has offered to cut its premiums and increase benefits for almost 17,000 members covered by their policy.

Insurance company representatives made the following proposal to the Income Security Committee at its meeting February 9: increase the benefit level from 50% to 60% for existent claimants and future claimants effective January 1, 1977, at a premium of 0.42%; introduce a one-year 'own occupation' clause for members disabled as a result of mental illness; introduce a new and improved interest crediting arrangement which would provide for the crediting of interest on cash flow.

'This sudden move by the insurance company only strengthens my belief that such benefit schemes can be provided at lower costs than we were paying,' reported co-chairperson Betty Griffin to the Executive Committee meeting February 12.

'However since the immediate affect of the offer is to reduce cost to the members, which was one of the main objectives of our proposed plan, our committee feels that actions at this AGM should be deferred so that we can make a more exhaustive study to determine exactly the lowest possible cost at the least risk for the membership.'

This could involve detailed discussions with such organizations as the teachers' credit union, the teachers' co-operative whose interests are primarily concerned with the welfare of teachers.'

The Executive Committee unanimously endorsed the Income Security Committee's two recommendations on the Great-West Life Policy and also agreed to ask for the elimination of the 'pre-existing condition' clause in the present policy.

Based on the company offer actual savings and premiums to those teachers paying .5% of salary for 60% benefit, there will be \$12 a year on \$15,000 salary of \$16 a year saving on a \$20,000 salary.

In districts where the contracts call for a cost-sharing between the board and teachers there could be a board saving for 1977 of about \$6,500 per 1,000 teachers based on an average salary of \$16,000. Some districts have already negotiated tentative agreements that any saving would go toward such items as MSA, Dental or Life Insurance Plan; others are directing it to professional development. Burnaby last year arranged to have 100% payment of all such costs as MSA paid on behalf of all members while in receipt of BCTF salary indemnity benefits, an arrangement most payroll clerks would welcome.

Says Griffin, 'while the company offer affects the majority of our teachers, there are 6,000 members not covered by any disability plan. Members of such locals would be well advised to consider very seriously participating this year in our renegotiated Great-West Plan.' Committee co-chairperson Colin Forbes pointed out. 'Locals are also reminded that disability benefits are taxable if your employer shares the premium cost, but are tax-free if the employees pay the total cost of premium.'

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
105 - 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

Member

Editor
JOHN HARDY

Assistant
ANNETTE CROUCHER

EDPRESS

Letters to the editor must be signed by and bear the address of the writer. The Newsletter may edit letters for brevity, clarity, legality or taste. Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF.

Small locals meet

By Annette Croucher

Inadequate funds, lack of secretarial help, a feeling of having little or no say in BCTF affairs, lack of communication between locals and members were only a few of the mutual problems discussed at the Small Locals Conference held February 11 and 12 at the Broadway Holiday Inn.

Some 44 participants from 38 locals talked about possible solutions to their problems.

During the Saturday afternoon session, representatives from the ministry of education and from the Educational Research Institute of B.C. (ERIBC) arrived to outline

their unfinished study of small secondary schools.

Core curriculum came under fire from the teachers who took this opportunity to query the government program.

There were about 24 mutual problems raised at the conference.

The difficulty of communication within the small isolated locals was a big problem with many of the locals. The conference suggested this could be solved by allowing the local executive to have half-time off to contact all teachers in the district and disseminate information.

To the problem of not enough secretarial help, it was suggested that more secretarial time be paid by the board.

To rectify the lack of public information on educational needs, it was suggested that better public relations from the local association to the general public be encouraged.

Many of the teachers were also concerned that new executive members are expected to know everything at once. Suggested solutions to this situation were better use of BCTF staff, an effective Geographical Representative and attendance at the summer conference.

A sub committee will be formed to study these with some being sent as recommendations to the Annual General Meeting.

The results of the conference will also be given to the ERIBC



Some 44 participants from 38 locals gathered to discuss mutual problems at the Small Locals Conference held February 11 and 12 at the Holiday Inn. Left to right are Ray Pitt, South Okanagan; Fred Dunford, Burns Lake; Doreen Woodall, Burns Lake; Jim Cade, Nicola Valley.

to aid in its study of small secondary schools.

Teachers also expressed the desire to make the conference an annual event. They felt this would add to a feeling of participation in BCTF affairs.

Gordon Sanborn, Learning Conditions Committee, then outlined CORE/PLAP and suggested some questions locals should ask when it came time for their areas to hold core curriculum meetings.

Sanborn also spoke on grievances and stressed that the BCTF Executive Committee 'always backs up teachers' grievances.'

He told the teachers that even if a local had not passed the declaration (Declaration of Basic Learning and Working Conditions Rights, Prerogatives and Obligations), a teacher could still, on his/her own, file a grievance.

About one half of the locals attending the conference had passed the declaration.

It was decided that letters should be sent to those locals that have not yet passed the declaration in order to discover the reasons for the delays.

The ERIBC representative then outlined the partly finished 'Schools and Their Communities,' a study of small secondary schools.

Gil Johnston, ERIBC's Project Director for the study, said the study measures educational opportunities by using 'community bound measures.'

'This is much better than previous methods which relied on such school related measures as school size,' he said.

Johnston said he could not divulge too much information on the study due to its incomplete state.

Following the outline of the study, discussion became quite heated as teachers fired questions at the two ministry representatives regarding the

government's core curriculum program.

Donald Hartwig and Terry McBurney of the ministry were asked by the teachers if core is actually being made up now before the studies are in.

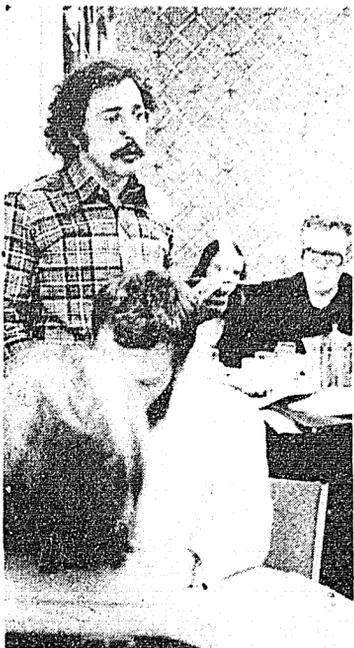
McBurney told teachers that 'curriculum revision is underway' but that this was begun before the introduction of core and that there is 'no core made up.'

One teacher asked what would happen to those difficult to teach children.

McBurney assured her that 'no one has suggested that provisions for exceptional children are going to be eliminated.'

In answer to a query about whether or not core would be brought into the schools in September, the ministry representatives said they could give no date as to when the program would be implemented.

They said it could take months or even years for implementation.



Mel Lehan, Vancouver Island North, reports on his group's solutions to some of the problems expressed at the conference.

Teachers discuss readin' and writin'

By Annette Croucher

Why should we teach reading, writing, or literature? With all the verbal means of communication such as radio, television and telephone, why bother with readin' and writin'? Besides, English teachers are out of fashion, aren't they?

Nearly 200 B.C. high school teachers, college instructors, university professors and various resource people gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel, February 4, to discuss those very questions and to point out that, yes, English teachers are still very much needed by all areas of education.

Brought together for first time

It was the first time ever that the three levels of English teaching have been brought together to discuss mutual problems.

The conference, 'Why We Teach English — 1977,' was sponsored by UBC's Centre for Continuing Education and the three-year-old B.C. English Teachers' Association.

Speakers included Dr. Geoffrey Durrant, UBC, Cyril Chave, retired English teacher, Joe Ranallo of Trail's J. Lloyd Crowe Secondary School, Melanie Fahlman, Capilano College and Michael Valpy, Vancouver Sun Associate Editor.

'Literature is power and magic,' said Dr. Geoffrey Durrant, UBC Professor of English.

Durrant feels that today's society is 'abandoning' this type of excellence, and learning only the shoddy. Young

people 'hunger' for excellence, he said.

'We are afraid of rote learning, but if it is rote learning of something of tremendous beauty and power, is it not complete compensation of the damage done to the child?'

'Besides, children are already being taught poetry by rote learning every day, he said, citing examples of the McDonald's advertisement jingles.

'Children could just as easily be taught Othello or the works of Milton,' he said.

Cyril Chave, retired English teacher from Prince of Wales Secondary School, said English teachers try to lead young people into 'coherent and graceful expression of the English language.'

'We must encourage even grades one and two (allowing for their age) to try to read the fine work of others with discrimination and an appreciation of the aesthetic values,' he said.

Both Chave and Durrant felt that repetition was necessary right from elementary school through to university, as people quickly forget what they have learned.

Chave said English teachers must insist that the teacher training institutions return to a curriculum of teaching English to those teachers going out to teach English.

He said teachers of 'other disciplines,' such as mathematics or biology, should be made to correct the spelling and grammar of their own students rather than relying on the English teacher who is already vastly overworked. 'This would give us more time to teach the core of English,' he said.

Chave spoke on the use of slang, saying that it is something we should not 'cut out' but rather teach youngsters how to discriminate between it and proper English.

'Vulgarisms' can't enhance status

He criticized the use of 'person' as the new suffix for such words as ombudsman and chairman, saying that the status of women cannot be enhanced by putting 'vulgarism' into the language.

'You can't downplay several hundred years of subjugation of women by changing the language,' he said.

He felt the term 'ladies' rather than 'women' ugly and de-sexed.

Chave told the conference that it is necessary to put content back into education.

We are so concerned about ideals, objectives, goals and values, he said. We seem to have the idea that it is not what we teach the child, but how.

Instead, we should be teaching children how to use the libraries, or how to memorize great poetry. The child must be given some information to work with rather than always being told to 'go find the answer for yourself.'

Chave said that, although he believes in a core curriculum, it should be a program somewhere between what the government wants and what the BCTF wants.

'If the proposed core curriculum is to take the place of the freedom of the teachers to use their own materials, it will defeat its own purpose,' he said.

Perhaps the present 'tug-of-war' between the ministry and the BCTF will result in 'something sensible,' Chave said.

Family violence

The Police and Family Violence, Child Abuse, Wife Battering, Family Violence and the Law, are the topics of a Symposium on Family Violence to be held March 9 through March 11 at Vancouver's Bayshore Inn.

The symposium is sponsored by the United Way of Greater Vancouver in Cooperation with the Vancouver Resources Board; the Non Medical Use of Drugs Directorate; the province of B.C.; and the Secretary of State — Canada.

Postes Canada Postage paid
Troisième classe
PERMIT No. 2036
Vancouver

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