

newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

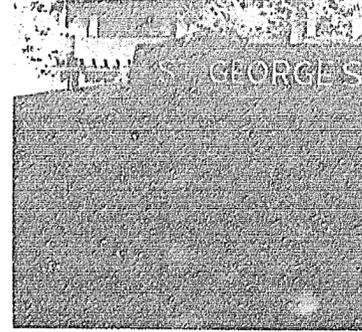
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APRIL 21, 1977

Bill 33 given first reading

Government to fund private schools



The Independent Schools Support Act Bill 33, will establish three new levels of government funding to private and sectarian schools.

These new levels are: non-instructional support grants; instructional support grants; local support grants.

All schools applying for funding under this act must meet three basic conditions. The first condition requires that no program be in existence or be proposed at the school that would promote or foster racial or ethnic superiority, or religious intolerance or persecution, or social change through violent action.

The second requires that the school's buildings be adequate and the third requires that the school have been in operation for at least five years.

The first level of funding, the non-instructional support grant, is designed to cover operating costs in the non-teaching area.

The second level of funding, the instructional support grant, will provide for the payment of teachers' salaries. To receive this grant a school must meet the basic requirements plus requirements in the areas of curriculum, evaluation and teacher certification.

The third level of funding is

the local support grant. This grant will permit the locally elected school board to authorize the provincial government to pay a percentage of the per pupil operating cost of the school.

To receive a local support grant a non-public school must show the local school board that it is providing a special educational service to the community that is not being provided by the public school system.

The minister of finance is designated in the act to pay the grants.

The bill may get second reading when the house reconvenes later this month.

President asks for debate

BCTF president Bill Broadley proved his point during a news conference last week that the potential for divisive conflict over funding separate schools is great.

Sparks flew when one reporter forcefully put forward a case for funding separate schools.

Broadley had called the press conference to express concern that a tradition of 105 years of not providing public funds to separate schools was being changed without information going to the public.

'The public should have information and should know the implications of funding private schools,' he said. 'Yet, at the moment, there has been little or no public debate.'

After the debate with the reporter subsided the presi-

dent continued with the BCTF position.

'The strength of the public school system has always been as a unifying force, integrating children of many cultures, ethnic and racial backgrounds into the B.C. population. British Columbia has been well served by the public schools as an integrating force.'

'We view education as a process of opening minds, not indoctrination.'

We recognize the right of parents to provide religious training for their children. But no parent should ask other citizens to pay for this training and thereby to help promulgate religious teachings through compulsory taxation.

Broadley said that the argument put out by the Federation of Independent Schools that parents of students who attend independent schools have to pay twice is a 'phony argument'. 'Many of us pay for services we don't use,' he said. 'I help pay for the bus system in Vancouver and never use it. The choice is there.'

You often will hear arguments that funding non-denominational private schools will provide competition for public schools, Broadley said. No studies can be cited to support this argument, mainly because there are no effective links between public and private schools.

'We have questions regarding funding of private schools. A principle of government funding is equalizing spending among school districts.'

Four school districts, Kitimat, Lillooet, Gulf Islands, and Vancouver Island West receive no operating costs from government because they can pay from local taxation.

Will the government pay operating costs for private schools in these districts when it does not pay operating costs for schools in the public school system?'

'If many private schools already have smaller classes than public schools because they charge a high tuition fee that only a few can afford, will taxpayers be helping to pay for schools where they cannot afford to send their own children? Will public funds be additional to the parents' fees enabling private schools to provide a far better service than the public school system can afford?'

'For a hundred years public funding of the schools has been based on a recognized single school system with a curriculum, teaching force, administrative system and school buildings, all controlled by the public through their duly elected representatives. The result has been a reasonably uniform quality and standard of schooling carried on in a climate which is non-partisan, non-denominational and egalitarian.'

'Funding is provided on the basis of a foundation program. The government attempts, through their central taxing authority, to take monies from citizens in accordance with their ability to pay and makes funds available to provide schooling of adequate and uniform standards for children in all parts of the province.'

'There have been opportunities for some school districts to exceed these standards of service and local taxpayers have had to bear the costs. But at no time did the public schools have the opportunity to make changes in the school or to get additional funds without the approval of the community at large and the Ministry of Education.'

'It seems that Bill 33 makes funding available to groups who reject the foundation concept and has the government use tax monies to promote inequalities and differences in the educational services of the province.'

Excerpts from the "Province"

What price independence?

The Province, Vancouver's morning newspaper, raised some questions in an editorial Saturday, April 16 that are reprinted for your consideration:

Whether a less enlightened government might interpret independent schools run by particular religious persuasions as promoting religious "intolerance" may become a very tricky question. If a school were, for instance, to teach its students that abortion is immoral when abortion is permitted by the law of the land, could it be called intolerant? It would depend on how the issue was handled. No school, private or public, should shy from dealing with moral issues in an objective, teaching way. But could a Catholic school treat abortion as anything but an issue of religious principle? The public school system has

already come face to face with a close enough parallel to be worth examining.

Disenchantment among many parents with what they perceived as a lack of moral direction and firm leadership in the schools gave rise a few years ago to the value school movement. Some school boards tried to set up or designate special value schools rather than change the whole system. Just such a move was made in Surrey by school trustees who ran for office on a value school platform.

Their designated school was to teach on the basis of the "Judeo-Christian heritage." But many parents objected that that could imply cultural and racial discrimination. The value school was disallowed by the provincial education department on the ground that Surrey had overstepped its bounds in trying to establish "a

school differing from the public school in purpose, goals or objectives."

If schools in the public system aren't allowed to teach on the basis of Judeo-Christian ethics, should a government offer public funds to a private school to do so? If a private school were to give up its religious principles to get the money, wouldn't it be giving up a value it prizes in return for a few pieces of silver?

While the government is trying to find out what the people want to do about independent schools, it should realize that it is moving into an area which provincial governments for the last 110 years have considered the most treacherous quicksand. And most of them have tried to avoid it.

Indeed all parties in British Columbia since it joined the union have tacitly agreed not

(Continued on page 2)

A question of high principle

Ten years ago the issue of funding for separate schools shook the B.C. Legislature. Here's how the Vancouver Sun reported it:

VICTORIA — Premier W. A. C. Bennett defended B.C.'s public school policy against an attack led by one of his own backbenchers Thursday.

The premier was visibly angered when Herb Capozzi (SC — Vancouver Centre) accused the government of doing almost nothing for the 25,000 Roman Catholic school children in the province.

Capozzi's request that the government contribute something to B.C. separate schools was taken up by Dr. Pat

McGeer (Lib. — Vancouver Point Grey).

He charged those who oppose public support for separate schools with 'outright bigotry.'

At these words Bennett jumped up to defend government policy as a matter of 'high principle.'

'I will stand or fall on this issue,' he declared.

Bennett is quoted further in the news release as saying:

'As far as government policy is concerned this is not a question of finance but of high principle.'

'All around the world today the question is integration or segregation,' the premier added. He stated that dif-

ferences of opinion at all levels result, 'because people don't sit together.'

He pointed out that an integrated school system in B.C. is a result of opposition, not to Roman Catholics, but to Anglicans who wanted the Church of England to be the state church in B.C. when the province was joining Confederation.

But the British people in the Crown colony themselves said no to this idea, he added.

'It is easy to stay silent on this issue, but this is a matter of great policy and as long as I am premier, I for one will stand or fall on this issue.'



Small classes, like this one at York House are the norm in private schools. Probably the public sees private schools as the model for public schools to emulate.

Giving a little assistance is like being a little pregnant

By Betty Griffin

Let's get the facts straight about this business of freedom of choice, responsibility and accountability Betty Griffin wrote in the BC Teacher, November 1975.

Following are excerpts of the key arguments she presented against funding separate schools:

Because public schools are supported by public money, every child has the right to attend. If parents object to some feature in our schools, they have a right to raise it with a publicly elected school board or department of education. If it is a vital issue and is not resolved, the question will be decided at the polls.

On the other hand, independent schools can limit the entrance of pupils, get rid of them as they please, and are accountable to no public body for what they spend, how they operate, or whom they hire to teach. They are independent because they do not have to be accountable or responsible to the public at large because they do not use public money.

In other words, responsibility for education was given to the provinces, but if any province joining Canada had previously provided by law, financial assistance to any religious school, such assistance could not be revoked. Similarly, if such financial assistance was provided after

joining Canada, the province would be in trouble if it attempted to revoke it. If such a situation occurred, the federal government had — and still has — the right to step in and overrule the provincial government.

This is what the Manitoba School Act battle of 1890 was all about, a battle that brought down the Conservative government in Ottawa.

So what's wrong with a little assistance? Well, giving a little assistance is like being a little pregnant — it doesn't stop at a little.

John Prior, a most respected educator in this province and a past president of the Canadian

Teachers' Federation, warned before he died a few years ago: 'The problem of "creeping assistance" to parochial schools should be fully comprehended in terms of the BNA Act. Once aid is given to separate (parochial) schools, an appeal may be made to the federal government to prevent provincial decision to reduce or eliminate such aid. Thus the decisions of a province in the financing of education could be decided outside the province by a federal cabinet composed of people from provinces where separate school systems are a historic fact.'

One could continue province by province to show that where the school system is fragmented, the result is a multiplicity of small schools, staggering school costs, poor attendance, grossly inadequate programs, supplies and equipment. But worst of all — the performance of students is grossly inferior and their chances of a decent job virtually nil. It is indeed strange and terrifying to see the campaign in B.C. to fragment our

school system, when it is the envy of the other provinces.

This, I believe, is the warning to parents by the B.C. Teachers' Federation: we must keep public funds for public education if we are to maintain a nonsectarian school system.

The warning to the independent schools of this province should also be clear. The moment you accept public funds will be the moment you lose your independence. I, for one, shall demand access to your budgets and operating procedures. I shall demand that you have fully qualified and certificated teachers with the right to collective bargaining. I shall demand all those rights I now exercise with our present public school system — a system I help to pay for, but which I help to control at the polls.

And finally, a warning to any government of British Columbia that threatens the basic principle upon which our school system is founded — separation of church and state — it takes only a little spark to set off a catastrophic conflagration.'

From Page One

What price?

to make an issue of independent school funding because of its potential for creating divisions among the people. Former premier W.A.C. Bennett, throughout his 20

years in Victoria, was consistently unequivocal in his opposition to financial support of any kind from the public purse. He was simply in no doubt that there would be more debit than credit for the province in such funding.

Why? Because public funding for separate schools would raise all sorts of other issues involving Canadian attitudes about ethnic or religious purity or superiority which have, or should have, nothing to do with education as such. There are enough divisions emerging in Canadian life at present. Governments, in particular, should not run the risk of encouraging more.

It may be constitutionally possible for the B.C. government to repeal the proposed legislation if it finds it inappropriate through experience. We are not constitutional experts. But it would be very hard morally and politically for any government to remove legislation establishing the principle that private schools are entitled to public money. Mr. Barrett is probably right when he says it would be "politically irrevocable."

Generate rancor

The Fleischmann Report, N.Y. 1973

Religious liberty in America, it seems to us, means not only the right to free exercise of one's religious beliefs, but freedom from compulsion to help foster the religious beliefs of others.

To those who assert that sectarian schools can and do separate secular and religious teaching, we respond that the government must assure itself, for the sake of the religious liberty of its citizens, that such separation is in fact maintained. And any steps which the government may take in this regard to determine just what it is that sectarian schools are doing with money derived from public revenues involve surveillance that is likely to generate rancor and ill-will between church and state.

Ensing queries BCTF stand on funding of private schools

By Gerry Ensing

No public funds for private schools. That statement summarizes BCTF policy. It seems simple and straightforward, but as with most slogans, it is ambiguous and misleading.

If 'private' means exclusive and self-serving, then the FISA and the BCTF agree. The independent schools, however, are not private in the above sense. Like the public schools, they meet the requirements of compulsory education laws in British Columbia, and strive to develop good citizens, so serving the public purposes of compulsory education.

The slogan could be much improved by having it say, 'Public funds only for public service.'

The following questions must be raised: Will the public have choices? Who is the public? Is there only one public? What determines whether the public is served?

PUBLIC CHOICE

There are many who wish to restrict the public to a choice between public schools. The main contention of those favoring only one public system is that the public school system is open to all. But actually the system is open only to those members of the public who wish to have their children educated in that system with its particular educational philosophy, determined by the state. Perhaps they would be better described as state schools.

On the same basis, the independent schools are also public schools that are open to all members of the public who wish their children educated according to their particular educational philosophy, determined by the parents. The independent public schools are therefore as open to the public as the system legally designated as the Public School System.

Independent and public schools complement each other in serving to educate the public. When seen in this context, independent schools provide for the expression of the diversity which exists in a healthy democracy.

To say that divisiveness or separatism may be promoted is tantamount to defending the risk on the other end of the scale, the specter of conformity, with state dictated goals and values for future society.

DICTATORSHIP BY THE MAJORITY?

It is frequently argued that many independent schools are religiously biased schools which further the cause of a particular private religion. They are, therefore, labelled private schools.

But no one conversant with the education process will claim that the public schools teach 'neutral values.' The words are mutually exclusive.

What is FISA?

Separate schools seek autonomy, and money from state

By John Hardy

Why has the government decided to fund private schools at this time?

The main reason is political pressure from a well-oiled, lobby that is called FISA, The Federation of Independent Schools Associations.

As the tables show, there are 12 non-denominational schools in FISA, the rest are sectarian.

But are these sectarian schools really independent?

The 12 elite private schools would quite easily satisfy the government inspector on matters of standards and curriculum, as would the Catholic schools.

Wealthy families long ago recognized that they could improve their child's chances by providing high quality school services based on intensive staff/student ratios, small schools and small classes. A high PTR for a private school would be 15:1; most have a PTR of 12:1; most have enrollments under 600.

Allan Brown, principal of St. George's School for boys, says the school is not hurting financially and could raise the fees if necessary. 'The only reason we would accept government support is to bring in children from among those who are less able to pay the fees.'

The NUCS group is educationally alone in FISA on a number of points. In curriculum, for example, NUCS insists on the right to build its own curriculum and inject Christian values.

They explain in one of their papers the position of the Catholic schools stating that Catholics would recognize a body of knowledge that 'all men, Christian

or not, should be taught.' But they reject this idea. They also reject government inspectors because they say it would not be fair for a department inspector to assess Christian schools in public school terms. And they are unhappy about provincial assessment programs.

They are very wary of government grants that might threaten the independence of their schools. FISA has taken these fears into account in a brief to the Minister of Education in which they reject the local public school board umbrella concept. A public school board's objectives would be at variance with those of the separate schools and the opportunity for parental input and control would be severely curtailed, they say.

Instead, FISA proposes a council concept, an umbrella for all independent schools in B.C. directly responsible to the Minister, comprised of at least nine members.

FISA does not explain how this council, operating at a provincial level remote from parents, can possibly give parents more input.

While FISA wants public funds, it wants each separate school to establish its own admission policy, to establish a curriculum, and to be evaluated by criteria established by the council.

Each school, FISA says, shall develop standards of qualification for teachers, principals, consultants, supervisors and superintendents and make these available to the council, which will then determine whether these standards are educationally responsible.

Funding, they say, should be through per capita grants equivalent to that provided in the

Many attempts are made, however, to picture the public schools as a system where the value judgments made are reasonably acceptable to the majority of B.C. residents. They are therefore labelled public schools.

Obviously such homogeneity of opinion is impossible to arrive at, even if it were desirable. That is evident by the existence of several independent school systems, at least four political parties, and a great number and variety of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations.

Surely the number of persons embracing the educational philosophy of a particular educational system does not determine the public or private status of that system. Surely in a democracy the majority must not foist their values on the minority under the guise that minority beliefs are private and majority beliefs are public. If one labels independent schools as biased schools, one must in fairness also label public schools as biased schools, as both advance the values of their respective supporters.

However desirable some may consider the existence of a public educational philosophy, and however vigorously they may contend that secular humanism or non-sectarianism is such a public value, the truth is that all educational philosophies are as private or as public as one another. The state violates its role in education when it uses public tax dollars to finance one view of education and refuses to finance other views.

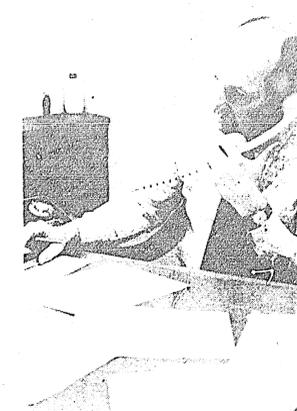
So far this has been the case in British Columbia. Successive governments have refused to finance the education of one in twenty students, even though the educational services provided by the independent schools meet the intent and requirements of compulsory education laws in the province.

With Bill 33 the government proposes to end 165 years of injustice. The action deserves your support.

ECONOMIC FAIRNESS AND SENSE

The government has the responsibility to ensure that everyone has equal educational opportunity, and that tax funds collected regardless of race, creed or color, are also distributed the same way on the basis of justice and need. The funding of a public education service comprising both independent and public schools is the most equitable and effective way to give the public a real choice, without economic hardship.

Furthermore, to support independent schools makes good economic sense. Even with partial funding, independent schools continue to be a bargain for the taxpayers because they do not have to pay the full public school cost of students attending these schools, while increasing the opportunity for people on the lower end of the economic scale to make use of the schools of their choice.



Gerry Ensing is Executive Director of FISA

Some would say that funding would increase educational inequalities, or, in other words, it would subsidize the rich. Our answer is that freedom of choice should not be denied to all citizens simply because an insignificant number of the rich would also benefit, as they do now when they attend public schools, completely at the expense of the public.

Economic disparities that do exist surely can be solved by more equitable taxation and should not affect the educational opportunities of the young, no matter who they are.

MOSAIC OR MELTING POT

Practical and reasonable alternatives that do not infringe the rights of others need equal opportunities if society is to remain democratic.

Educational services absorbing one-third of our provincial wealth have until now failed to guard the freedom of parents and students to choose, but instead force them to accept public schools, regardless of their needs.

How can we pride ourselves on the rich cultural diversity of the Canadian mosaic, and at the same time ensure its destruction through the application of 'melting pot' education.

Finally, the advantages ought to be mentioned of the opportunities which, under this proposed legislation, will become available to members of the teaching profession who wish to explore other teaching environments and methods. Perhaps writing your MLA in support of Bill 33 is not such a bad idea.

Bill Melville says:

We have good system, teachers

We should stop kicking the education system and start looking at it positively.

This was the advice given by Bill Melville, principal of Coquitlam's Centennial School, to the BC Council for Leadership in Education conference, Friday, March 11.

Melville disagreed with conference guest speaker Dr. Robert B. Howsam's remark that 'teachers stink.'

'I happen to think we have a good system and good teachers,' he told the some 250 administrators, superintendents, school trustees and other administrative personnel who gathered for the three-day meeting at Vancouver's Hyatt Regency.

Melville believes the fast-changing political ideology in BC is a contributing factor to the confusion in education.

However, he said, we should take a good look at what we have in B.C.

'We're always getting all this advice from English and American intellectuals. They tell us how terrible their system is and how we should run ours.'

Melville does not believe the problems in education are all that bad or all that important.

He said a new degree should be established—Doctorate of Hypocrisy. 'We've got one part of the education system kicking at the other with the end result being the public losing confidence.'

'We condemn the school system and then expect the public to give us \$6 million. People won't put their money into something that everyone says is no good.'

'If this keeps up, people are going to abandon the public schools as they have done in the U.S.,' Melville warned.

'We must encourage teachers, tell them we have

confidence in them. Let's not let the universities and colleges take over. Educators should agree to work together with statesmanship and integrity,' Melville said.

'What we really need is a war or a disaster then you wouldn't hear anything about standards. It's not as important as we sometimes think it is,' Melville said.

Melville was replying to Dr. Robert (Dean Bob) Howsam, who is Dean of Education, University of Houston, Texas.

Howsam spoke to the conference March 10 on Standards in Education.

Using the American education system as a reference, he correlated worldwide and Canadian educational problems.

He told the conference that worldwide educational standards are declining. He said the problem seems to be deep-seated in modern society and due in part to the economic situation.

'You don't notice the poorer societies complaining about standards,' he said.

Howsam warned that going back-to-the-basics would be a real mistake. 'We must teach according to time and place and not by what used to be. What our parents were taught is no longer valid to children nowadays. They communicate through different means,' he said.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
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Newsletter

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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 here-in reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF.



B.C. teacher looks at growth industry

By Bernie Holt

ACE is a commercial, tax-paying enterprise (a) preparing and distributing programmed instructional materials;

(b) selling a format for the use of the programmed instruction materials in private schools from the Grade 1 to the Grade 14 level.

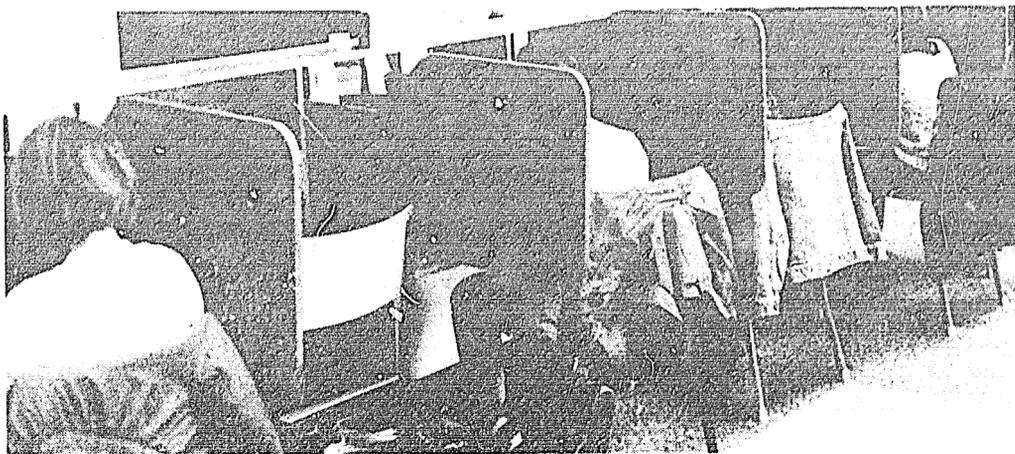
On an 80 acre site outside of Lewisville, Texas, the company has a relatively large staff engaged in the writing of curriculum in English, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science. Attached to the center is a sixty pupil 'Laboratory School' which serves as both a model school and a curriculum testing area.

The customers are almost entirely fundamentalist Christians, 65% of them Baptists. Other denominations include the Church of God. As the Director of Instruction, Dr. Johnson, explained it, there is presently an emphasis in the States on the local church. The passage of homosexual laws in some American states caused a wave of revulsion and increased the determination of fundamentalists to train the next generation in a way that would support and maintain their religious convictions. ACE, with its strong religious orientation, and its potential for a cheap substitute to the public schools offers a tempting substitute. In six years, ACE has grown from one school to 1500, ranging in size from eight students to 550 students. There are 120 schools in Texas; 106 in Pennsylvania, 60 in Florida and seven in B.C.

An interesting aside is that three of the schools in B.C. were misplaced on the display map on the office wall. When I drew attention to this, Dr. Johnson commented that the centre really had to get a map of Canada.

ACE does not operate schools, other than its own Lab School. It does provide an organization for schools, a training plan for the pastors and teachers of schools and the curriculum materials to be used in the schools.

ACE insists that anyone subscribing to its service use its organization. This consists of a study carrel for each student, a check station and a testing area. At his carrel, the student works at a PACE (Package of Accelerated Christian Education). When he has completed all questions, he goes to the check station and compares his answers with the



A view of the carrels at the ACE school in Richmond.

correct one. After circling any wrong answers, the student returns to his carrel and redoes those questions. When he has them all correct, he is ready for a closely supervised test. If he gets 80% or more, he proceeds to the next PACE; if he does not, he redoes the entire PACE. Students proceed through the PACES at their own rate. New students are rested with both ability and diagnostic tests and placed on the appropriate PACE in each subject.

NOTE: there was no library in the classroom.

The program is based on the Five Laws of Learning:

(1) The pupil must be placed on the level of program on which he can perform. This is done by diagnostic and achievement testing.

(2) The pupil must, at the beginning, set reasonable goals for small periods of time and achieve them. Older students extend the range of their goals and set target dates for the tests that follow each PACE. All students come to see each daily assignment as progress toward a goal and while some need more time and more supervision than others, all see some gain.

(3) The pupil must be both controlled and motivated. The control comes from a monitor who checks constantly to see that the pupil has achieved the daily goals. If he has not, the supervisor gives extra help and attempts to diagnose the reasons for failure. If the reason is lack of interest or poor motivation, the supervisor both encourages and admonishes. Corporal punishment is used.

(4) The pupil's learning must be measurable. Each PACE has built in checks and self-tests so that the pupil can determine his own progress. At the end of each PACE, there is a test and if the student fails he must repeat the whole unit. At the end of each quarter, marks are transferred to the pupils report card. At the end of the first quarter, and at other quarters if necessary, there is a parents - supervisor interview.

(5) Learning must be rewarded. While learning is its own reward, recognition of achievement helps. The school gives congratulation slips, stars and special privileges (such as field trips) for good performance. Carrels are marked with:

A - 1½ PACES in a week, no more than 60 minutes in demerits, oral and written work, Bible memorization.

AC - 2 paces in week, no more than 30 minutes in demerits, more oral, written work, Bible memorization.

ACE - 2 paces in week, no demerits, the full quota of written work, oral presentation, Bible memorization.

Annual prime objective of the school is to train the child to live as a Christian. The pastor's goal is to help students achieve the maximum academically but this is secondary to a full religious development.

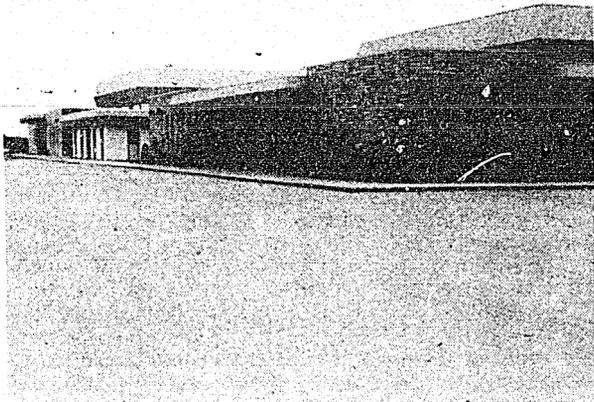
A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

When we arrived at the Lab School, most of the students were off on a field trip. There were half a dozen students working at carrels. There was no talking. Indeed in the demonstration film, it was apparent that this was the rule. If a student had a problem, he mounted a tiny American flag on the top of his carrel to call the supervisor. The atmosphere was, in my opinion, cold and sterile. Later, when I asked Dr. Johnson about opportunities for interchange of ideas between students, his answer indicated there was no real communication in the class situation. An exception was a religious period when by accident or design was 'the happy hour.'

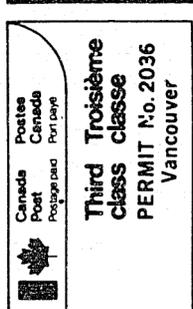
There was, as far as I could see, no school library. The pupils learned entirely from the programmed instruction material. This was, by Dr. Johnson's own statement designed to present one viewpoint and one viewpoint only — 'the Christian viewpoint.' I asked Dr. Johnson if the students had watched the inauguration of President Carter the day before. He said the parents were opposed to television. I commented that the school obviously had a strong patriot bias (all the male staff wore blue suits, white shirts, red vests and blue ties with an American flag motif; the students wore red, white and blue uniforms). He agreed. I asked him why, if this were so, the school did not deal with such an important current event. He evaded the question but obviously the students were not going to learn anything about the inauguration at school.

The school's intent, in my opinion, is to develop the students' basic skills and to indoctrinate the students in a particular way of life. In my opinion whether the way of life is good or bad is not important; what is important is not being able to examine issues and do independent thinking.

If financial support from the government were given to such schools, it would have a deleterious effect on the education of those students on which it was imposed. On this basis, I would oppose such support.



ACE school in Richmond. The facility belongs to the Mennonite Brethren.



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

Government proposing fragmentation of system

Burnaby principal Jack Gilmore asks some questions, and puts forward some views:

The Social Credit government of B.C. by introducing the Independent School Act is proposing to fragment the public school system which the people of this province have enjoyed for more than 100 years.

1. Children should not be separated in their formative years. Segregation has a great potential for developing intolerance of others.

2. Any support for religious schools is an indirect support of that religion.

3. Elitist schools should not receive tax support. Even with government assistance, the tuition fees will be beyond the means of the average taxpayer who will then be subsidizing the education of the children of the wealthy.

4. The 'double taxation' argument is not a valid one. All of us do not benefit directly from many

taxes imposed on us. Bachelors and childless couples do not benefit directly from their educational tax. Many auto drivers never use the bus system which they help to subsidize. Many radio listeners never tune in to CBC.

5. With our dropping school enrollment in most school districts, we already have many under-utilized schools built at considerable cost by B.C. taxpayers. Financing of private schools will only result in more and more empty classrooms in our public schools, particularly if our federal government continues its present immigration policies and new immigrants take advantage of publicly-financed religious schools.

6. At a time of general cutbacks in much-needed services for people, why is our provincial government proposing to spend a year (to start with) to finance private schools?

7. What is the cost going to be to the local taxpayer who pays on the

average about 50 per cent of school costs through his property tax?

8. Religious schools are created for one primary purpose: to teach the values of one religion to the

exclusion of all others. Is this not inevitably practising a form of discrimination?

J. W. GILMORE

What's it all about?

Public schools have an open admission policy. The proposed legislation will enable institutions that have limited enrollments and discriminatory entrance requirements to be supported by public funds.

How has it happened?

FISA has mounted a most effective lobby for years. Letters literally swamp MLAs; hot line shows are plugged with FISA members. A minority group has amplified itself.

What can you do?

First consider the arguments we've presented in this paper, and come to terms with the issue for yourself. You must make up your mind.

Next, discuss the issue with your colleagues, with your friends and neighbours. Visit your MLA, if possible, and write a letter.

And the next time you hear the issue on a hot line show, get in there and speak your mind.

What's the objective?

At very least, the public school side needs to be presented. The main objective, however, is to have government withdraw the bill before it becomes law.