

newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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Steve Norman, member at large, leads a discussion on tenure and relations at the presidents' summer conference at Naramata.

Hot debate at Naramata

Reorganization plan endorsed

The BCTF executive has given approval in principle to a proposal for reorganizing the management structure of the federation, in spite of vigorous opposition from three executive members.

The decision was taken during a day-long debate Aug. 25 when the executive met in Naramata after the presidents' summer conference. (For an outline of the proposal, see page 4.)

The approval moves the federation a step toward what the plan's proponents believe will be a more functional deployment of the federation's human, material and financial resources.

In the eyes of the critics, this may instead be a step in the wrong direction.

Whatever the proposal's weaknesses, it is an attempt to overcome some long-standing problems that hamper the federation in pursuit of its objectives: overlapping and sometimes conflicting assignments, staff overload, inadequate co-ordination.

Even the plan's critics on the executive committee — first vice-president Al Blakey and members-at-large Larry Kuehn and Steve Norman — concede that problems exist. But they say the plan tries to tackle them wrong way round. They say the federation should first decide what it wants to do, then design a structure to do the job.

Blakey, Kuehn and Norman attacked the proposal when it was considered by the new executive committee at its planning sessions, and again in a joint position paper before the Naramata meeting.

That analysis produced a response from General Secretary Bob Buzza who argued that many of their statements actually seemed to support the rationale for the proposed reorganization.

At Naramata Blakey called Buzza's response "dumfounding" and "facile, at best." That was a "cheap shot," replied past president Bill Broadley.

The Naramata debate centred on three issues:

- The question of whether the executive has sole responsibility for organization of the federation's staff or whether it needs advice or direction from the membership, through the Representative Assembly;
- Executive members'

varying perceptions of the proposal (Does it mean better service at the local level or does it concentrate power in executive and management hands? Do the lines on the new organization chart mean better links with the membership or are they really roadblocks?); and

(Continued on page 4)

Summer meet rated success

Local association presidents attending this year's summer conference at Naramata rated it a success.

Of 65 conference evaluation forms completed, 14 rated the conference excellent; 37 rated it good; 13 fair; 1 poor.

The four-day training session taught the presidents skills they will need to lead their associations, and acquainted them with the major issues facing the BCTF this year.

A new session this year was rated tops by the presidents. Called Speaking for Teachers, the session used programmed instruction, audio tapes and simulations to teach presidents how to respond to questions from the media.

The session was made even more realistic than planned by the arrival of a film crew from television station CHBC in Kelowna. Al Singer, president of the Shuswap association and Rolli Cacchioni, president of the Kelowna association, were able to put the skills they had just learned to good use, and appeared on the TV news the same evening.

The most common complaint from presidents was that there was too much to learn in just four days.

Call it 'Fairtax'

Plan would aid local taxpayer

The BCTF executive committee has unanimously adopted a proposal for a fairer sharing of school costs between the provincial government and local taxpayers.

"Proposition Fairtax" is the federation's response to taxpayer resistance which has become increasingly evident in B.C. since the passage of Proposition 13 in California. But whereas Proposition 13 sought massive tax cuts, Proposition Fairtax seeks to distribute the tax burden more equitably while maintaining financial security for education.

Essentially the Fairtax proposal calls for four steps:

- Reduction of the uniform provincial education tax (the

basic levy for school purposes) to 39 mills in 1979. (This year it stands at 39.75.)

- Increases in the homeowner grant to reduce or eliminate the burden of school taxation for most homeowners. The BCTF wants the grant for those over 65 raised to \$520 (it's now \$480), and the grant for all others hiked to \$350 to cover inflation (it's been set at \$280 for two years).

- A minimum school tax of \$1 for all; it's now \$50 for those under 65.

- Implementation of the 1977 Provincial Colleges and Institutions Act to transfer the costs of post-secondary education from the local taxpayer to the provincial treasury.

Now it's up to locals

The Fairtax proposal was drafted by the learning conditions work group and was largely based on an analysis of school taxation by Norm Ornes, chairman of the federation's education finance committee and Dennis Rankin of the BCTF staff.

The proposal was vetted by the education finance and learning conditions committees and the task force on declining enrolment.

After being adopted at the Aug. 20 executive meeting it was scrutinized by local presidents attending the summer conference in Naramata and by local LC chairpersons at their Vernon short course.

Response to the Fairtax analysis, strategy and operational timetable has been consistently supportive.

Now it's up to local associations to generate support for the proposition in their own communities. Widespread public acceptance is needed to persuade the provincial government to modify its education-finance policies which have been moving in the opposite direction — shifting more of the burden from Victoria to the local taxpayer.

Ornes and the LC group calculate Fairtax would lift \$110 million in school taxes off the local taxpayer. They say the government can easily compensate for this by using its increased revenues, which Finance Minister Evan Wolfe estimated in April would amount to \$450 million in the next year, and by using the extra \$44 million in provincial revenues generated by this year's increase in property assessments.

"There is too much reliance on property tax as a source of revenue for education in B.C.," BCTF President Pat Brady told the local presidents at Naramata. In 1975 local taxes comprised nearly 42 per cent of school board revenues in B.C., according to Statistics Canada; the average for Canada was 35 per cent.

Brady pointed out that the cost of education in B.C. is not high in comparison to other provinces. Statistics Canada figures show that between 1960 and 1976 expenditures per student have risen 6.09 per cent (in constant 1971 dollars) for Canada as a whole and only 4.96 per cent for B.C. Other public service costs have risen more rapidly.

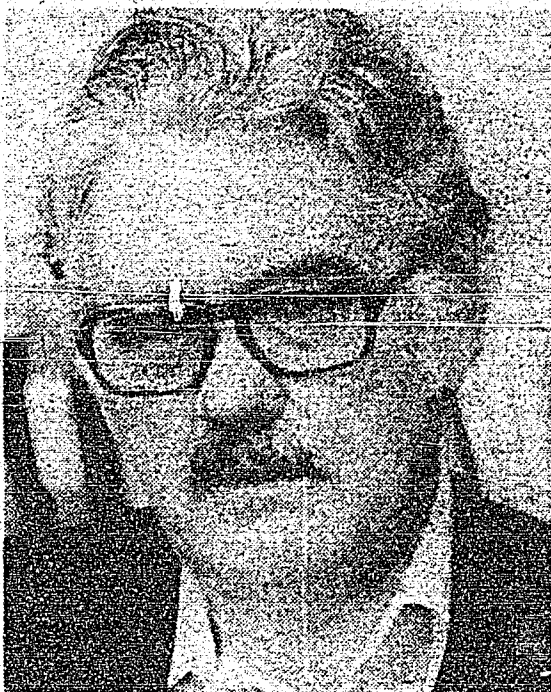
North badly hurt

George North, a key staff member of the BCTF's learning conditions program, is in serious condition in St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver following a car accident last week.

North was driving from Prince George to Vancouver with his 11-year-old son George Jr., on Tuesday night, August 29, when his car was struck by another vehicle.

North Sr. suffered broken ribs, a punctured lung and lacerations and is in the intensive care unit. George Jr. required 42 stitches to his forehead and also suffered a badly bruised leg. He was released from hospital and will be able to return to school next week.

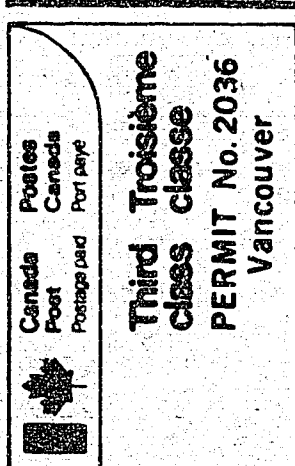
George North Sr. subsequently developed a staph infection and has been placed in isolation in the intensive care unit. Up to press time only his wife was permitted to visit and



George North

he is not expected to be released from intensive care for at least 10 days.

The accident occurred about 60 miles south of Williams Lake. The two Norths were first taken to hospital in Williams Lake and were flown to hospital in Vancouver next morning.



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

We need public support for public education

The BCTF must focus its efforts in 1978-79 on building public support for public education, federation president Pat Brady told local association presidents attending their summer conference at Naramata Aug. 20-24.

And the job will require the individual and collective efforts of every member of the federation, he said.

"We . . . must answer the

widespread criticism of schools and teachers," Brady said. "Who else will?"

"How do we counter the erosion of public confidence in both schools and teachers? What do we say to teachers who expect financial cutbacks, with implications for job satisfaction, employment security, learning and working conditions, professional development, enrolment fluctuations?

"How do we reach our members and explain the seriousness of statements by politicians in respect to the funding of education?"

These are tasks that can best be undertaken by local presidents and their executives and other committees, with support and help from the central federation, he suggested. The federation is looking for "stronger initiatives" from the presidents.

"The individual teachers in your locals must be apprised of the problems that can affect the educational system, and each one of those members," Brady went on. "They must become involved and, through them, the public in general."

Public support is vital, he said. Pronouncements from the Ministry of Education, which "purport to light up the way," often turn out to be like

fireworks displays, Brady said: "A whoosh, a big bang, and some firepoints which slowly sink in the gloom of administration."

But sometimes, he said, those firepoints can touch off brush fires that educators have to stamp out, and there is always the danger of a serious forest fire. "Our biggest ally in putting out the flames, of course, is the public."

'Teachers need ethical base; trying times ahead' - Zlotnik

Teachers need to develop an ethical base to sustain them in the trying times ahead, Mike Zlotnik, BCTF director of professional development, warned local presidents at the Naramata conference.

The teaching profession and the school system are under attack by politicians and others operating on a too-simple diagnosis of society's ills, he said.

That diagnosis: Too much government, too much growth in the public sector, too-high taxes. Too much red tape and too little incentive for private enterprise. Workers are unproductive, unions are too powerful, the unemployed are ripping off the system. Schools are costly and inefficient, teachers give their students too much freedom, self-expression and frills and too little discipline and basic skills.

That kind of diagnosis, Zlotnik said, leads to a political platform that calls for cutting public-sector spending, welfare and unemployment insurance benefits, cutting taxes, cutting municipal, hospital and school budgets. This kind of political thinking flourishes because "the liberal dream that governed our affairs for some 30 years has lost its potency."

The liberal/reform platform that sustained Canada and many other countries through the first three postwar decades was based on a belief in government intervention in the economy to damp the historic boom-and-bust cycle, a gradual redistribution of wealth and power among social groups, a raising of the floor for incomes and a substantial investment in the "public household" of education, health and welfare mechanisms.

This platform was held together, Zlotnik said, by the glue of economic growth. Now that platform is coming unstuck. Many Canadians believe that sustained economic



Zlotnik at Naramata

growth is no longer either feasible or desirable.

In the changed economic and political climate, Zlotnik said, teachers "had better find some ethical base."

"Teachers are very powerful people," he said. "They have a profound impact on their students: they serve as models of ethical behavior."

"Teachers are the major determinant of what ideas students will think about at school and what thinking skills they will use."

"Teachers have a powerful impact on student values. Teachers determine whether education will be directed to domesticating or liberating the student, to transmitting the culture to students or to assisting them in reconstructing the culture, to maintaining present injustices into the future or to improving the human condition."

"Teachers have the power to make reality more comprehensible to their students or to pull down a veil of mystification."

"Teachers have Canada's future in their hands. If Canada's future citizenry is to be able to control its destiny, they must unveil some of the mystification that befuddles our generation. They must have powerful thinking and

communications skills so that they can carry out their action programs effectively.

"So there is an ethical imperative for teachers to assist students to demystify their perceptions of reality. This does not mean to correct error and replace it by truth. Truth is a quest and not an answer that any of us has to disseminate. "The basic attitude required . . . is to question and to treat as problematic the common-sense, taken-for-granted notions of our culture, the advice of experts and the 'truths' of the 'true believers.'"

Zlotnik offered these professional goals for the presidents' consideration:

- To develop a powerful professional body of teachers with substantial control over certification and the quality of teacher practice.
- To encourage and help teachers to act like professionals.
- To defeat the cost-cutters and win additional resources for education.
- To free teachers from the demands on their time that curtail their professional effectiveness.

Don Walmsley, Boston Bar

Pension survey set for fall

How well does the B.C. Teachers' Pension Plan provide for the ongoing income of retired teachers?

How much protection against inflation should be reasonably provided through the basic teacher pension plan, and is full indexing practical in the face of spiralling costs?

Many teachers have opinions about these questions but there isn't enough authentic information available to provide the answers.

Therefore, a survey designed by Paterson, Cook Limited, consultants of Vancouver, will be conducted this fall for the BCTF with the assistance of the Retired Teachers' Association. Its purpose will be to help determine whether the teachers' pension plan, combined with other retirement benefits, is meeting the needs of retired teachers as well as providing some protection against inflation.

Findings will be used as a basis for evaluating future proposals for change in basic retirement income including the teachers' pension plan, old age security, guaranteed income supplement and the Canada

Pension Plan, and will provide background material for BCTF briefs and submissions to government.

Approximately 400 retired teachers and a similar number of active teachers age 50 or over will be asked to participate in the survey by providing income and expenditure information.

They will be selected at random from computer lists of active and retired teachers grouped according to sex, age levels, age at retirement, income/salary level and geographic location.

Participants will be expected to keep a diary of their expenditures for a short period of time and provide other information about savings, investments and income.

Information will be kept in strict confidence. The replies of each survey participant will be combined with the replies of all other participants and only the aggregate results will be utilized. Members who participate will receive a summary of the survey results.

The survey will obtain, among other things, factual information on the spending patterns of pre-retired and re-

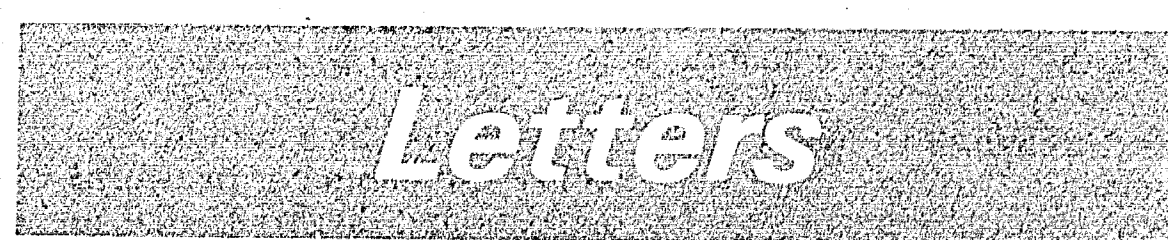
tired groups and will also obtain opinions of retired teachers on the adequacy of their pensions and total incomes.

It is expected that the survey will be of particular value to the participants themselves. It will require them to review their expenditures and assets and will help the pre-retired group in particular to assess their perceptions about retirement.

In addition the final report, which will be published early in 1979, will provide valuable information for others approaching retirement age or considering early retirement.

Volunteers from the B.C. Retired Teachers' Association will conduct the interviews, beginning in October. Those persons selected as possible participants will receive a notification letter in September and will be contacted shortly thereafter by an interviewer.

Bert Wales of the Retired Teachers' Association will be the survey co-ordinator, working in conjunction with the BCTF Economic Welfare staff and personnel from Paterson, Cook Limited.



'Incredulous' at reporting

I was incredulous at your reporting of the defeat of the BCTF Building proposal by the June Representative Assembly.

First, the article gives minimal space to the arguments in favor of defeating the proposal. Even then it doesn't quote an opponent of the proposal. Instead, it tells why a supporter believes that the proposal was opposed.

Second, the article implies that the building subcommittee always supported a new building. During my two years on that subcommittee I never endorsed a new building or the enlargement of the present one. I did, however, try to implement the decisions of the Representative Assembly.

Third, the article does not mention that the vote of each RA member was recorded. Why not? Does the editor believe that all of the facts would confuse the membership?

Don Walmsley, Boston Bar

Not amused by Collins

The executive of the Prince Rupert District Teachers' Association was not amused when we read John Collins' letter about his antiquated views on women and their place in society. We do not dispute his right to hold those views, but we certainly do not agree with them.

Fred Busch, President, PRDTA

Keep a register for memories

May I send you a suggestion that will help all teachers who try it?

At the end of each school year, teachers should make a detailed copy of the register names — and keep it. It provides all kinds of memories for retirement. We forget too easily.

Una G. Robertson, retired, Enderby.

The case we're taking to the bargaining table

By JURD KIRBY

Director, Economic Welfare

As a result of some huge and far-reaching changes in the balance of trade within the industrial nations of the world, Canadians now find themselves in a new kind of economic climate. One where more than ever the economic well-being of the country depends on what happens within the economies of Canada's major trading partners.

As a country we export 25 per cent of our Gross National Product to markets of the USA, Japan, the European economic community and others. Exports through B.C. ports are largely to:

USA	50% of total
Japan	25% of total
Europe	15% of total

Since B.C. depends more heavily on export trade than does Canada as a whole, the economic status of British Columbians reacts even more sensitively to change in these three major market areas.

Whether or not there is an increase in disposable wealth to spread around to workers, to investors, to government revenues depends on the state of our trade with those major markets. Increases in purchasing power for employee groups should then be determined by looking first at what the market can support and second at what is an appropriate method of sharing profits from that trade. If the market for Canadian goods is strong, then productivity should increase and this should be the signal that more goods and services are available for Canadians.

While it was true that the wage and profit spiral of



Jurd Kirby

1973-75 was threatening our ability to compete in world markets and this trend had to be stopped, that was not the only cause nor the most important cause of inflation. As proof of this we note that government-imposed controls on these two items have failed to halt inflation, and indeed price indexes are now starting to reach double-digit figures again at a time when wage increases are the lowest in over a decade.

It must be obvious by now to those who think about the problem at all that in an economy that uses energy and capital investment intensively, sizeable six-monthly increases in energy prices will put costs up more rapidly than any wage increases coming every one or two years. Similarly, continued high interest rates on investment capital will also create very significant cost increases right across the industrial base.

Until the August announcement by the federal government of cutbacks in spending to reduce its huge projected

annual deficit of \$11.5 billion, and of a tax reduction on oil to offset the next regular staged increase in the price of that basic commodity, we thought government would never admit to these two items as the major causes of inflation in Canada. We thought, rather, that wages were still to be the villain in the economic melodrama called the Anti-Inflation Program that played its surprise opening show on Oct. 15, 1975. Perhaps we finally are witnessing a knowledge breakthrough on the part of our political leaders and the next political act on the economic stage will get better reviews.

Just maybe, and at last, the various governments that supported the Ottawa scenario of that political/economic farce have come to grips with the real marketplace we all work in and receive remuneration from.

Our reading of the daily newspapers indicates their reporters and editorial writers have arrived at an awareness of the real overall economic problem. We suggest all teachers cut out the appropriate articles on the current economic state of Canadian markets and the various facets of the Canadian economy from your local newspaper and send them to your MP or MLA just to make sure that they don't again blunder into a half-formed, poorly-thought-out program of interference in the marketplace.

Teachers, in common with other employee groups, this year may be able to look forward to using a tried and proven wage-setting process in an economy where enlightened self-discipline and rational thought prevail.

Protection against inflation plus a little more buying power

At the last Annual General Meeting the provincial agreements committee recommended: "That teachers seek improvements in contracts that will protect the purchasing power of salaries and will provide a measure of real gain, i.e., basic protection of inflation plus a share of productivity growth."

We have traditionally looked to other major employee groups in B.C. — groups involved in directly generating wealth for the province — as an indicator of the sort of increases which might be needed to cover those two factors in the coming year. Wage-rate increases in the major producer of B.C. wealth, the forest industry, have been used most often as the guide.

Since the woodworkers were not brought under the federal government's Anti-Inflation Program until 1977, we are faced this year with wage trends distorted by a wage-control program which caused teachers to take smaller increases than forest industry workers for two of its three years' duration. Yet we can expect to have that low increase received by woodworkers during the third year of the program held up as a reasonable indicator of what

teachers' salary increases should be for 1979. In fact, in the third year of the program a government-imposed limit, which did not conform to the wage rationale described in the program, further reduced real wages not only for woodworkers and teachers but for all major employee groups.

These arbitrary restraints on wages are not restricting growth in prices to anywhere near the rate they were touted to do. The current situation is that the consumer price index is again rising (9.8 per cent) more rapidly than wages (6 per cent).

Numbers wrong in Calendar

When the Teachers' Appointment Calendar was printed this summer, errors were made in listing the addresses and telephone numbers of the Victoria and Nanaimo branches of the Teachers' Investment and Housing Co-operative and in the new address of Ventra Travel.

We apologize to the Co-op for the errors, and ask all members to note the following corrections in their calendars:

- Page 65: The address of the Victoria branch of the Co-op should be 3960 Quadra

Street, Victoria V8X 4A3. The telephone number should be 479-9302. Please make the telephone number correction on page 2 also.

- Page 65: The address of the Nanaimo branch of the Co-op should be 777 Poplar Street, Nanaimo V9S 2H7. The telephone number is correct as printed.

- Page 69: The address of Ventra Travel Services Ltd. should be 5915 West Boulevard. The rest of the address and the telephone number are correct as printed.

Isn't this a year for a real raise?

We all feel the effects of inflation. When we drive up to a gas tank it takes more dollars to "fill'er up" than it used to. In the supermarket our weekly grocery allotment fills fewer bags.

Obviously Ottawa's Anti-Inflation Program has failed. Inflation has continued throughout the three years of the program.

But what has happened to the purchasing power of teachers' salaries during this time? Have we gained, fallen behind or just held our own?

If we were to take as our base the value of the dollar in goods and services in 1970, and deflate the value of that dollar by the amount of the annual rise in the Consumer Price Index, and then apply that to the average teacher's salary, we would get a pretty accurate estimate of what has happened to teachers' purchasing power in the '70s. We can see clearly how we fared during the Anti-Inflation Program:

	Average B.C. Teacher's Salary	
	In Current Dollars	In Constant Dollars
1970	\$ 9,503	
1975	16,157	\$11,418
1976	17,861	11,852
1977	19,548	11,963
1978	20,916 ¹	11,770 ¹

¹ Estimated

Teachers will lead the way this year

Teachers have traditionally been followers of wage trends set by other workers. This year they may well be the trend-setters.

For three years wage increases in Canada have been largely dictated by a third party, the federal Anti-Inflation Board. We're now getting back to collective bargaining between employees and employer as a means of setting wages.

When teachers go to the bargaining table on Sept. 20 they will be the largest group opening negotiations in the post-controls period. Their demands for 1979 wage increases, and their success in achieving their goals, will be watched with great interest.

There are many contracts now in effect that provide increases for 1978 and part of 1979 that were determined according to Anti-Inflation Board regulations. Without exception these will not be real increases but rather regulated decreases in purchasing power.

This would not have been the case had not the federal government abandoned the rationale behind its original anti-inflation guidelines and established a new limit of 6 per cent. This meant that nobody could get more than 6 per cent and some whose contracts by fortuitous timing escaped the first years of controls would get as little as 4 per cent. In the latter group are workers in the forest industry and provincial government employees.

Under the rationale for the original guidelines, teachers would have got an 8.4-per-cent increase in 1978; the original guidelines would have allowed 6.4 per cent as partial protection against inflation, plus 2 per cent as a share of the country's increased productivity. Under the new rules, of course, teachers got only 6 per cent.

Few of the traditional trend-setting groups in B.C. now have agreements made outside

of the anti-inflation program. However, two major industries have now signed contracts for the post-control period. They are the construction industry, covering 40,000 workers in 17 trades, and the fishing industry with 5,000 shareworkers and tendermen.

The construction unions have accepted increases amounting to 6 per cent for each of two years. The fishing industry granted an increase of 9.5 per cent for the 1978-79 fishing season.

The difference between the two settlements reflects conditions of the respective industries' markets. The construction industry is suffering from a severe and prolonged drop in business while the fishing industry is showing a continued high level of success.

It may be that some bargaining units currently on strike or locked out, may strike a balance between these two settlements. However, there will be great interest in the bargaining success of B.C.'s 30,000 teachers.

UBC changes affect NTEP

Counsellors in high schools where there are native Indian students should be aware that recent changes in admission requirements by the University of B.C. will affect regular admissions to the Native Indian Teacher Education Program.

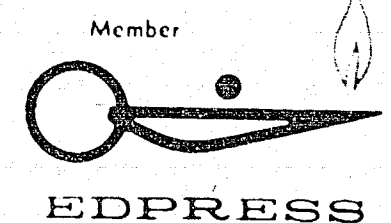
The university now requires successful completion of four academic Grade 12 subjects and an overall grade point average of 2.5.

Joan Collins, program co-ordinator for NTEP in the Faculty of Education at UBC would welcome inquiries from high schools planning career programs or from individuals or community groups seeking information on NTEP.

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 herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF.

New BCTF management plan still in embryo

The controversial proposal for restructuring the management and staff of the federation, the subject of hot debate at the executive committee's Aug. 25 meeting in Naramata, is still far from complete.

The proposal has been developed over a period of months by executive and staff members and management consultant John Witt.

Basically it calls for reorganization of the BCTF staff into four primary service divisions or work areas and two or three support service divisions.

The directors of these divisions, plus the general secretary and the federation's two full-time table officers, would constitute a management committee. This is "intended to complement the executive committee role and help ensure that executive committee decisions are based on adequate analysis and are acted and reported on."

The implications of this change are not yet entirely clear. Major questions, such as the reassignment of existing

staff and the possible need for additional staff, have not yet been decided.

The new structure would replace the present Divisions of Economic Welfare, Professional Development, and Communications, and the General Office or general secretary's division.

Economic Welfare would retain its present title and would be relatively unchanged. It would continue to focus on collective bargaining, salaries, working conditions, pensions, sick leave and other economic benefits to members.

Professional Development would be carved into two divisions: Professional Development/Social Action, and Learning Conditions. The first would concentrate on in-service training programs, curriculum development and issues of social responsibility such as racism and sexism. The second would work with local associations on learning-conditions issues such as class size, school staffing, libraries and school supplies; on strategies to cope with declin-

ing school enrolments; and on problems of education finance.

The fourth primary service division would be another new one known as Teacher Personnel Services. This would deal with such matters as the appointment, assignment and evaluation of teachers; suspensions and dismissals; grievances, contract problems, professional relations and similar matters.

The Communications Division would cease to exist as such. Its place would be taken by one or two support divisions responsible for "BCTF Government" and "Interagency Services."

BCTF Government would be responsible for seeing that alternative proposals are placed before the appropriate governing bodies of the federation in a form and sequence that facilitates decision-making, and then for follow-up action to ensure that decisions are acted on.

Interagency Services would include relations with the Ministry of Education and other external bodies, public relations and media relations.

The final support division, Finance and Administrative Services, would include all the logistical and technical ser-

vices that support the federation's operations.

"The reorganization proposal," says the executive's anecdotal comment, "is based on the concept that teachers' needs can best be met if direct service is provided when feasible at the local level."

"BCTF efforts must, therefore, be directed to working with and assisting local association representatives to provide such service."

Along with the reorganization proposal the executive adopted some ground rules for the appointment and dismissal of staff.



It was time out for fun when the kids had their sports day during the conference at Naramata.

From page one

Naramata debate

• The motivation of the critics in trying to block executive acceptance of the proposal.

Blakey initially moved that the executive suspend consideration of the plan and present it to the fall RA "for its direction." When others objected that federation bylaws make the executive responsible for such matters, Kuehn moved to change the word "direction" to "advice." His amendment was tabled and Blakey's original motion was defeated.

Blakey then offered a slightly different motion: that executive decisions on the proposal "not be acted upon until advice of the RA has been received." That motion was disposed of by a motion to postpone discussion of it.

President Pat Brady argued against taking the issue to the RA at this stage. He said he had campaigned twice on the need for reorganization and "I'm not prepared to sit back and pawn it off on any other body of the BCTF."

Member-at-large Gerry Retallick said the RA shouldn't be asked to do the executive's committee work.

Steve Norman argued that the plan was not developed in accord with "any generalized feeling of the membership." He said staff papers outlining organizational changes "indicate no clear understanding of the organization's problems" and do not address such major issues as decentralization of control. He said the plan would "introduce another level in the pyramidal structure" of the BCTF and make it impossible for teachers to get at staff.

Ken Smith countered that the executive could not become "a task force of the RA . . . If we're not in charge of management, who the hell is? If it's going to be the RA, then let's fold up our tents right now . . ."

Broadley said the proposal's "main purpose is to ensure that there is a greater opportunity for service to be made available to meet locals' needs," exactly what its critics claimed it would thwart.

Pauline Galinski, Tom Krall and other members agreed that the executive should take the proposal to the RA, but not until it is more completely developed. At the moment the plan is in "bits and pieces", said Krall. "The GRs don't want a pile of garbage," said Galinski.

Larry Kuehn said he, like other executive members, was concerned about making the federation's organization more effective. The difference between them lay in perceptions of how to do that.

The executive should examine more than one organizational model, and should seek wider membership involvement, perhaps through a task force.

General Secretary Bob Buzza said Kuehn, Blakey and Norman had raised legitimate concerns.

If the proposal was not supported by the membership, it could not be effective. Therefore it was critical that it go to the RA at the appropriate time. But, he said, the executive must first make its own decisions.

He said the staff want a chance to serve the membership as effectively as they can and to make sure that resources are in fact marshaled behind BCTF political objectives, "regardless of whether it's Blakey or Brady as president."

Later, Blakey said he was "not suggesting that (the advocates of the proposal) have nasty, mean or evil intentions . . . but the effect may be to move in an unintended direction."

Brady slams McGeer on pot issue

Education Minister Pat McGeer's warning that abstinence from the use of drugs will become part of the price of a teaching certificate has been condemned by BCTF President Pat Brady.

McGeer threatened, at a news conference Aug. 31, to revoke the certificate of any teacher who uses marijuana or other drugs, even if he or she is discharged by the courts without a conviction.

He added: "I can certainly tell you that the use of drugs will be one of the factors that will be considered in respect of licensing in the future."

Replied Brady: this would be an invasion of individual privacy and a violation of teachers' civil liberties.

He made it clear that "the BCTF does not condone the use

of illicit drugs by teachers, nor by students or anyone else, including cabinet ministers."

But, he said, the government "has no more right to impose this particular condition before granting a teaching certificate than it would have to insist on an oath of loyalty to the party in power."

McGeer's strictures on drug use followed the reinstatement of Coquitlam teacher Dennis Hilton, who had been under suspension since February when he was charged with possession of marijuana. Hilton admitted the charge in court but was given a conditional discharge — neither an acquittal nor a conviction.

The crown appealed the court's ruling and lost. The Coquitlam school board said then it had no choice but to re-

store Hilton to his job as auto mechanics teacher at Centennial School.

McGeer disagreed, strongly. He said the board still had the power to fire Hilton for misconduct, in spite of his discharge by the court. He said he wouldn't overrule the board's decision in this case, but he would in future cases.

If school boards don't accept responsibility for the moral conduct of their teachers, said McGeer, "we will take matters into our own hands."

"Anyone who breaks the law by using drugs must be prepared to face the legal consequences," Brady replied in a news release. "However, we do not believe that a teacher or anyone else who breaks the law should be placed in double jeopardy."

"The courts must be allowed to rule on these matters. If they consider an absolute or conditional discharge the appropriate judgment in a drug case involving a teacher, then that decision should be accepted by the school board involved and by the minister."

"No teacher should lose his or her job as a result of a drug charge unless the court sees fit to convict."

"We have faith in our court system. The minister has the same right as any citizen to disagree with a court's decision. But he has no more right than any other citizen to set himself in judgment on cases that have already been dealt with by the courts."

Labor committee resurrected

The federation's labor liaison committee is alive and well again — or soon will be.

The committee was killed off by the executive committee last spring as part of a vigorous cost-cutting exercise. But the spring Representative Assembly restored the committee's budget.

At its Naramata meeting Aug. 24-25 the executive bowed to this "clear advice" from the RA and voted to re-establish the committee. It will be reposted for applications, with staggered terms of office of one, two and three years.

A motion to continue the committee with its former membership, proposed by first vice-president Al Blakey, was defeated 5-5 with 1 abstention. However, the seven members of the former committee will be specifically invited to apply for reappointment.

The committee's job is to advise the executive on the state of labor relations and on problems involving teachers, unions and employer groups; to promote contacts with trade unions; and to improve teachers' understanding of the labor movement.