

It's 1979 — the International Year of the Child

newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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(Glenn Baglo photo)

And in Victoria . . .

Gov't clamps down on school boards

"Tightening the screws on the public school system is a strange way for the provincial government to open the International Year of the Child," BCTF President Pat Brady said in response to a series of fiscal restraint measures announced Jan. 3 by Finance Minister Evan Wolfe.

Wolfe announced a freeze on municipal mill-rates for general (non-school) purposes, and said municipalities, regional districts and hospital districts will be held to a 5-per-cent increase in their budgets for 1979. Municipalities will have to give up their nest-eggs of accumulated surpluses and treat them as revenue for the year.

He also announced a series of measures, many of them already in effect, aimed at school boards. Although he didn't freeze the school mill-rate — in fact, Education Minister Pat McGeer has already announced an increase of 1.93 mills — or set an arbitrary limit on school board budget increases, the overall effect of these measures is to put pressure on school boards to restrain their spending.

"Nowhere in the minister's statement is there the slightest recognition of the needs of the children in our school system," Brady said in a news release.

"There isn't even a mention of education. It's a single-minded attempt to pare costs without giving a thought to the

effects these measures may have on the quality of education in B.C."

Brady said the measures appear to emasculate both the Ministry of Education and the province's 75 local school boards.

"We've just had the minister of education agree to join us in a jointly funded, independent study of the effects of reducing the size of school classes," Brady said. "We've offered to put up \$200,000 of our own money as our share of the costs of the study, because we believe it will prove that smaller classes mean better education.

"Now the minister of finance, no less, announces that the ratio of students to teachers will be frozen at its present level. This would mean that the class-size inequities that now exist in the school system would continue, to the detriment of the children.

"In effect, the minister of finance is torpedoing a study supported by his colleague, the minister of education.

"Furthermore, under these new measures, the minister of finance and the minister of municipal affairs will be using municipal councils as watchdogs on the school boards.

"School boards will be required to disclose their provincial budgets to the municipal councils in their districts before they're made final. We

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The UN says every child has the right to:



1979 International Year of the Child

- affection, love and understanding.
- adequate nutrition and medical care.
- protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- free education and full opportunity for play and recreation.
- a name and nationality.
- special care, if handicapped.
- be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
- learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
- be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
- enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

Proposition Fairtax goes to Victoria

BCTF representatives took the federation's case for Proposition Fairtax to the provincial cabinet Dec. 14.

President Pat Brady, First Vice-President Al Blakey, Finance Committee chairperson Norm Ornes and staff member Jim Bowman met with Premier Bennett, Finance Minister Evan Wolfe, Education Minister Pat McGeer and most of the other cabinet members for an hour.

They got a courteous hearing for the Fairtax proposals but, of course, no commitment to act on them.

Fairtax calls for a more equitable distribution of school

costs between the provincial treasury and local property-taxpayers.

Specifically, Fairtax proposes:

- A reduction in the basic mill rate for school taxes to 39 mills. (The basic rate was 39.75 mills for 1978. McGeer has said it will be 41.68 for 1979.)

- Increases in the homeowner's grants, to \$350 (from \$280) for those under 65, and to \$520 (from \$480) for senior citizens. Homeowner's grants are intended to offset school taxes.

- A minimum school tax, after deducting the homeowner's grant, of \$1 for all tax-

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Executive dismisses federation staffer

By ARNIE MYERS
Newsletter Editor

The Executive Committee of the BCTF has terminated the appointment of Ralph Sundby, an assistant director in the federation's Professional Development Division.

The termination is effective Feb. 28. Sundby is to be given a severance and readjustment allowance of \$10,500.

The executive came to its decision at 1:10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 7, after approximately 13 hours of discussion. The decision was taken in private but the case for and against the termination was heard in open session at Sundby's request. The open session lasted 11½ hours.

The hearing, unprecedented in the federation's history, attracted an audience of approximately 100 members. They overflowed the executive chamber even after two large tables had been removed to make space for more seating. Some members, unable to find chairs, perched on window ledges throughout the marathon meeting.

Sundby has been a member of the federation's professional staff since July 1, 1975 and has worked with such bodies as the



Ralph Sundby

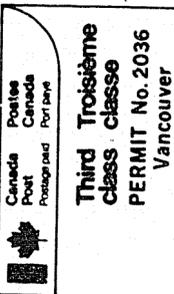
Professional Development Advisory Council and the provincial Learning Conditions Committee. His initial appointment was for two years. He was reappointed as of July 1, 1977 to a continuing position, subject to review within 18 months and a decision as to continuation or termination.

The power to "appoint, fix the remuneration of, and dismiss" members of the professional staff rests with the Executive Committee under By-law 5.9.

Sundby was one of four BCTF staff members whose work was under review. At its

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



'Mischievous statements'

Talking about mischievous statements, (*Newsletter*, Nov. 22, 1978) Mr. Brady makes some of his own. The suggestion, for instance, that the independent schools have more freedom to set the ground rules for classrooms than the public system would have is hardly true. The ground rules for classrooms in the independent schools are just as much tied to economics as those in the public system. Public school boards have the authority to lower pupil/teacher ratios without reference to Victoria; it is a matter of priorities, as is the case in independent schools.

I agree that it is not fair to compare the academic results of a university-prep school with those of a comprehensive public school, but it should not be made to appear as if in the public system all students can enter all programs or schools they wish. A rather vigorous selection does take place and heads of departments know it. The vast majority of independent schools, however, are not university-prep schools but community-based elementary schools.

More important, the FISA has never claimed a right to public funding for independent schools because of alleged academic superiority. We have claimed the right to public funding for services which otherwise would have to be rendered by the public system at the taxpayers' expense, on the basis of philosophical differences.

Mr. Brady further indicates that independent schools can choose only children from the upper socio-economic brackets. The question is, do they? The onus of proof is on Mr. Brady. In fact independent school students represent the widest possible scope of socio-economic background.

Mr. Brady also makes it appear as if the independent schools do not accept immigrant children to whom English is a second language. Perhaps Mr. Brady can document that claim. Students come to independent schools by choice, and the FISA knows of no independent school which excludes immigrants from enrollment.

Further Mr. Brady raises the

question of control of independent schools by elected people. Such control, as in the case of public schools, lies ultimately with the legislative assembly; so, contrary to what Mr. Brady says, "the people" do have control.

Finally, with respect to teacher qualifications, the Independent Schools Support Act provides for a five-year upgrading program which is fully acceptable to the FISA, thus acknowledging that some upgrading is desirable. But rather than further restricting the scope of people able to teach in independent schools, would it not be more desirable to widen the scope of people able to teach in public schools? Does the BCTF really believe that narrowly prescribed regulations for certification on paper guarantee competent, human teachers in the classrooms? Both systems would benefit by stressing competence before certification. One does not necessarily include the other.

Gerry Ensing,
Executive Director,
FISA
Jan. 5

A thank you

My family and I thank members, locals and staff of the B.C. Teachers' Federation for their many warm expressions of concern and encouragement following the unfortunate automobile accident in which my son and I were injured.

We are both as fully recovered as possible and by the time this note appears I will be back full-time at my learning conditions assignment, doing my utmost to serve the membership effectively.

I have attempted to acknowledge personally the many gifts of plants and flowers and the scores of letters, cards and telephone calls I received, but I trust that any inadvertent omissions will be forgiven.

I can say with total sincerity that all the messages of support contributed considerably to my mental and physical well-being. There is no substitute for friendship.

George North,
BCTF Staff
Dec. 18, 1978

CTF award

Nominations are invited for a special award of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

The CTF Special Recognition Award is presented annually to a person who has given meritorious service to education and/or the teaching profession at the interprovincial, national or international level.

Winners, (one or two each year) are selected by the CTF Board of Directors from nominations from the various teachers' organizations across Canada.

BCTF nominations for this year will be decided at the Feb. 9-10 meeting of the Executive Committee. Nominations of B.C. candidates should be sent to President Pat Brady no later than Feb. 2.

'Over-stepped authority'

BCTF President Pat Brady has over-stepped his authority in protesting to the government on behalf of the BCTF over the legislation passed Dec. 9 to end the strike/lockout situation in the West Kootenays.

However strong his personal convictions, neither Mr. Brady nor any other person has the right to speak for the entire membership.

The petition from the West Kootenays bearing 5,500 names, including those of

many teachers, specifically requested "essential services" legislation. School District No. 11 (Trail) children have had their education disrupted twice in one calendar year, two academic years in succession. Their parents — taxpayers — want to ensure this does not happen again.

Mr. Brady is not fit to lead the BCTF and should resign immediately.

Marion C. Booth,
Castlegar
Dec. 12, 1978

Brady replies

President Pat Brady replies to Mrs. Booth:

I am in complete disagreement with your statement that no one has the right to speak for the membership of the BCTF. If no one may speak for the federation, it must remain silent on all public issues.

It is the responsibility of the president to speak for the collective BCTF membership on any issue that affects the membership. While individual members or groups of members may disagree with statements made, that disagreement does not negate the res-

ponsibility placed on the provincial Executive Committee and in particular the president of the organization.

You as a member also have the right to express your individual opinion and have done so. The fact that there is a provincial spokesperson for the organization does not negate your right to speak as an individual nor does it release me from my responsibility to speak for the organization as an entity.

P. T. Brady,
President
Jan. 5, 1979

Result of tension

I am a high school teacher. I took my first certificate 40 years ago, and for 33 of those years I have been teaching. On the whole I have enjoyed my work as I always like associating with young people. But let's face it, there are tensions as well.

About 10 days ago, I noticed unusual sensations in the upper regions of the abdomen. At first, I thought of reactions from certain foods taken at the time — an item our household has always selected and prepared with care.

With recurrence, I finally decided to phone the doctor. Tests and examinations reveal an ulcer and a duodenal hernia. According to the doctor,

the former is "caused by tension — often found among teachers;" the latter, by some unusual exertion, also possible within the classroom.

Upon learning this bit of startling news, my mind at once reflects back to the political jackass who occasionally spouts off about education and teachers — and "the soft time they are having" — but obviously knows little about what he is talking about outside of holding the public eye for a time.

As for me, my job goes on; and I must now adhere to greater care in order to repair the damage done.

Ivor J. Mills,
Richmond
Dec. 7, 1978

Section 11, Bill 46

The provincial government has brought into force the controversial legislation that places school, municipal and other public-sector workers under the Essential Services Disputes Act.

The power to include these groups was contained in Section 11 of Bill 46, the back-to-work legislation enacted by a special session of the legislature Dec. 8, 1978, to end the strike/lockout of West Kootenay non-teaching school employees.

However, Section 11 was not immediately proclaimed, or brought into effect. Labor Minister Allan Williams said at the time his ministry and the Ministry of Education would conduct studies to determine whether this action was necessary.

Early in January he announced that the section had been proclaimed.

The Dec. 11 edition of the *Newsletter* said that the Essential Services Disputes Act could be invoked only when the government concludes that there is "an immediate and serious danger to life, health or safety" or that there is "an immediate and substantial threat to the economy and welfare of the province and its citizens."

The text of Bill 46, the legislation passed at the special session, was not available at deadline for that edition.

It has since become known that the essential services act was further amended to broaden the conditions under which it can be invoked.

Under this amendment, it can now be used whenever the government decides that "a substantial disruption in the delivery of educational services" exists or is likely to occur.



Canadian Forces photo
Parklands School students from Sidney on one-day familiarization cruise on HMCS Oriole.

Class-size study set

The BCTF is moving ahead on its plans for a definitive study of the educational effects of class size, to be funded jointly by the federation and the Ministry of Education.

Education Minister Pat McGeer agreed to join in funding the study when he was confronted by BCTF President Pat Brady on an open-line radio program Oct. 24, 1978.

A year earlier the Representative Assembly had agreed to an expenditure of up to \$200,000 as the federation's share of the costs of the study.

At its Dec. 7-9 meeting the

Executive Committee approved a timetable for development of the BCTF position on the study. This involves working with consultants to draw up a set of criteria for evaluating the effects of class size, and developing a design for the study.

It's expected the executive will be able to recommend a design and a budget for the study to the Jan. 25-27 Representative Assembly.

The B.C. School Trustees Association has turned down the BCTF's offer to participate in the study.

School staffs or groups of teachers interested in discussing certification requirements may obtain a discussion guide by contacting the Communications Division of the BCTF.

The BCTF Teacher Education Committee is examining policy on certification with a view to recommending to the governing bodies of the federation changes and additions to that policy.

The committee is anxious to get the opinions of as many teachers as possible on this topic.

Grade 12 writing assessment 'disturbing'

By JOHN S. CHURCH
Professional Development
"Extremely disturbing" is the phrase used by a panel of teachers, school trustees and other members of the public in describing the spring 1978 Grade 12 assessment of written expression.

Nearly 9,000 students in Grades 4, 8 and 12 — a sampling in each grade of approximately 5 per cent of students — wrote three types of exercises. The directed writing exercise required the student to write a brief passage in response to a specific writing request. The global writing exercise presented the student with a comparatively broad topic which was then to be developed in the form of a narration or an exposition. The proofreading exercise required the student to identify and correct "error-laden passages."

The panel interpreted

achievement in written expression at the end of the intermediate years — that is, in Grade 8 — as "giving cause for concern," and at the end of the primary years — that is, in Grade 4 — as "generally satisfactory."

The panel identified spelling, handwriting and choosing between commonly confused words, such as accept/except — at all three grade levels as "satisfactory." The major weaknesses across the three grade levels were stated to be in the areas of grammatical usage (for example, subject-verb agreement) and in summarizing the main idea of a passage.

Twenty-nine recommendations follow, ranging from pointing out the need for all teachers, not just teachers of language arts/English, to assume increased responsibility for teaching and rein-

USER future doubtful: needs financial push

The future of the United Society for Education Review and its proposed commission on education is in doubt. Unless the BCTF gives it a push, USER may collapse.

Mike Zlotnik, director of professional development, told the BCTF Executive Committee at its Dec. 7-9 meeting that USER must get its commission under way soon or fold up.

USER is a group of 15 organizations, including the BCTF, with interests in education. It was formed a year ago to conduct a full-scale examination of education from K-12 in B.C.

Zlotnik said USER has developed terms of reference for its commission and even has a short-list of commissioners willing to serve. But it has no funds, no staff support and is drifting, he said. Apart from the BCTF, only two of USER's member organizations — the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs — have pledged financial support (\$3,000 each). The BCTF has so far paid \$40,000 of USER's start-up costs, part of the \$400,000 it had earlier agreed to contribute toward a commission.

At its Jan. 12-13 meeting the executive will consider what further action the federation should take. Zlotnik suggested three alternatives. He said the federation could:

1. offer USER \$500,000 or more on condition that it proceed with the commission regardless of other contributions;
2. wait for other groups to contribute, or for USER to collapse; or
3. run its own commission.

President Pat Brady said \$500,000 wouldn't enable USER to do the job it was created for. He suggested it might have to narrow its focus and simply conduct studies of specific problems rather than try to cover the whole field.

He suggested a fourth alternative might be to press for a government-funded royal commission on education.

Executive member Phil Van Seters suggested that a major conference, at which significant research papers would be presented, might provide another "high-powered, high-profile" alternative to the commission.

Past President Bill Broadley criticized the other two major elements in the school system — the Ministry of Education and the B.C. School Trustees Association — for not giving more support to USER. The BCSTA has made no contribution so far and the ministry has agreed only to consider funding specific research projects.

Second Vice-President Ken Smith said he felt the commission idea was a good one. The commission would give individuals and groups in the community a chance to express their support of education, and this process might be more im-

portant than the commission's report.

He said the January Representative Assembly should be asked to recommend support for the commission to the Annual General Meeting, as one of the federation's major thrusts for the coming year.

Even if the federation had to go it alone, he said, the estimated \$1 million cost of the commission would amount to \$33 per member.

Steve Norman said the federation should be looking for other ways to achieve its objective.

Doug Steinson questioned whether the commission was necessary. He said the federation had already invested \$40,000 and produced only "a dull thud . . . Pouring more money into it is simply going to set up some kind of propaganda agency."

GRs rank top 10 teacher priorities

Everyone knows that teachers are only interested in money.

Everyone "knows" it — but it's not true.

Geographical representatives, committee and task force chairpersons were asked to rank-order the 10 stated goals of the BCTF (printed on the inside front cover of the *Member's Guide*), in accordance with their understanding of the feelings of their members.

A summary of the responses, presented to the Executive Committee Dec. 7, showed that the top priority for teachers is the growth and development of their students.

No. 2 on the teachers' list is sound learning and teaching conditions.

"A level of status and economic standing appropriate to the responsibility of the profession" was third, well below the two leaders in popularity. Not

one respondent listed this goal as a top priority.

The rank order of the 10 goals as shown by the survey:

1. Pupil growth and development.
2. Learning and teaching conditions.
3. Economic status of teachers.
4. Professional growth of teachers.
5. Public awareness of social problems that hinder pupil growth.
6. Professional autonomy for teachers.
7. Integration of social and educational services for children.
8. Code of ethics.
9. Elimination of discrimination.
10. Public participation in determining educational objectives.

The responses will assist the executive in developing its leadership report to the Annual General Meeting.

forcing skills and standards of written expression, to pleading for increased allotment of time for instruction and practice in written expression in the secondary school program. Increased emphasis on training in the skills of written expression and in instructing for specific forms and skills in writing are recommended for both pre- and continuing education programs.

The assessment report, of course, merely confirms what teachers have been requesting for years. Smaller-sized classes, with increased time made available for teachers to mark paragraphs and essays immediately, have been legitimate concerns of teachers for many years.

B.C. teachers would tend to agree with the very recent findings of Fillion that the opportunity to learn by writing is not available to many stu-

dents. This study found, for example, that the amount of writing done by elementary students indicated less than one page per week per student. Put this comment back to back with that of Donald Groves who states, "The problem with poor writing is not poor spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. The problem with writing is no writing."

Teachers know, and research confirms, that writing improves in classrooms where writing is a regular and central part of the whole learning process. For this to occur, there must be careful planning and the best writing then flows from the play/work/thinking with which the children have been closely and intimately involved.

Hence, in the B.C. assessment, written expression among Grade 4 students who have had most if not all of their

thinking/learning experiences with one teacher is rated "generally satisfactory." In the later years, students may experience a more fragmented approach unless the teachers have had the opportunity to meet regularly and to plan the overall learning/thinking experiences for their students.

Thus the recommendations in the *Summary Report* of the written expression assessment are logical and sensible and will be helpful as confirmatory evidence of what teachers have been advocating for years. Unfortunately, however, is the fact that the researchers apparently failed to recommend smaller-sized classes, increased release time and an increase in the number of professional days, particularly for intermediate and secondary teachers, to enable school staffs to plan integrated learning/thinking experiences for their students.

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

newsletter

Editor
ARNIE MYERS
Associate Editor
MARDEE GALT

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.

EDRESS

Letters: the Sundby case

Gary Onstad:

How would you react if your superintendent called you in one day and told you that he was going to fire you because he had just discovered that he had a "gut feeling" that there must be somebody who could do the job better than you?

That, in essence, was the charge against BCTF Professional Development staff member Ralph Sundby during a strange 10-hour open hearing in front of the Executive Committee on Jan. 6. After listening to the evidence that Ralph Sundby presented in response to the "gut feeling" that Mr. Buzza has about him, I left convinced that the executive would be fair-minded and would have to agree with the unanimous praise and endorsement of Sundby's work by dozens of prominent BCTF members who based their appraisals on their direct first-hand experience with Sundby's work in the field over the last four years.

Not so. The eight right-wing members of the Executive Committee, so silent these days when schools and teachers are under public attack, apparently chose to ignore the opinions of teacher leaders in the field while instead, recognizing Mr. Buzza's "gut feeling."

The evidence that Ralph Sundby presented in support of his work came from an impressive group of people — presidents of local associa-

tions, chairpersons of task forces and committees, staff colleagues, principals, teachers, the provincial Learning Conditions Committee (unanimous support) and even a leader in the Home and School Federation.

The credits and plaudits of this large and diverse group (all of whom had seen Sundby in action carrying out his duties in response to member requests for service in the field) were in unanimous and complete opposition to the "gut feeling" of Mr. Buzza that there must be somebody out there who could do an even better job than Ralph Sundby.

When asked to substantiate his "gut feeling," the closest Mr. Buzza came to specifics was to make reference to his personal feelings that Sundby was short on "judgment and perception," was "defensive" and had difficulty "bridging the political spectrum." When repeatedly asked to present concrete examples of such vague charges, Mr. Buzza either refused outright to give any examples or, when pressed for detail, reverted back to his "gut feeling." On the other hand, the testimony of the people in the field resulted in specific example after specific example of evidence that indicated that Sundby had excellent judgment and perception, effectively defended federation policies (example: in specified meetings with

ministry officials) and was successful in bringing together people with opposing political positions (example: teacher-trustee relations in a large metro district).

The executive should have heeded the legal advice it was given when it was reminded that in order to fire an employee, it is incumbent upon an employer to show "just cause." After all, "just cause" is never proved by vague feelings.

But it became increasingly clear that the right wing majority on the executive was not going to get confused by facts. The pseudo-legal trappings of the "open hearing" were a sham. In fact, the lack of interest in the proceedings by those who were eager to fire Sundby was exemplified by the executive member from Chilliwack who, by my count, slept through a third of the hearing. It became obvious that the legal trappings could not camouflage the political knives that were drawn in the open session and plunged in the later secret session by secret ballot.

How humiliating for those of us who have to approach school boards to request fairness in evaluation processes, improvements in employer-employee relations and competent internal management from their top bureaucrats.

Surely we can save some face by reinstating the capable and popular Mr. Sundby.

Gary Onstad,
Vancouver
Jan. 8

Amrit Manak:

I wish to register my disapproval over a recent (Jan. 8) meeting of the Metro Learning Conditions chairpersons.

As a relative newcomer to BCTF affairs, I was shocked at the sham perpetrated by a group of experienced BCTF members. I attended this meeting anticipating a discussion on local budget presentations, public relations and other learning conditions matters as related to various metro locals.

Instead, what I attended was an orchestrated meeting that was concerned with ridiculing and chastising the Executive Committee of the BCTF over the termination of Ralph Sundby's contract. I was asked to vote on matters of which I had no prior warning or knowledge. Two motions were introduced which attacked the action of the Executive Committee in firing Ralph Sundby. Yet there was no one there to make representations on behalf of the Executive Committee. It seems deplorable to pass resolutions without exploring all facets of an issue.

I am disturbed that fellow professionals could deny the right of one group to be heard, while purporting to protect individual rights.

Amrit Manak
LC Chairperson
Richmond Teachers'
Association
Jan. 9

Joan Glover,
Burnaby
Jan. 9

Joan Glover:

I was present at the executive meeting on Jan. 6 and feel that I must write and communicate my extreme shock and anger at the things that I witnessed there that day.

Ralph Sundby had his employment with the BCTF terminated that day and I still don't know why!

I heard accusations that Mr. Sundby showed bad judgment, that Mr. Sundby was politically unacceptable to some people in the federation, that Mr. Sundby was unable to build bridges between people of differing opinions within the federation.

I was not personally acquainted with Mr. Sundby or with the work that he had done. I listened carefully to hear any evidence that would justify the firing of Mr. Sundby. After all, who was to doubt the integrity or impartiality of our esteemed Executive Committee. They have been after all elected by the teachers of B.C. to direct the federation in a wise and judicious manner. I was sure whatever course was followed, I would see justice done.

As the proceedings continued it became very clear to me, on the one hand, that no one could or would substantiate any of the charges against Mr. Sundby. What "proof" I did hear was subjective and vague at best. I was beginning to think that there must have been some mistake.

On the other hand, I heard voluminous, precise and well documented evidence indicative of the respect and credibil-

ity that Mr. Sundby had generated among his colleagues, committees and teachers in the field with whom he had worked.

It became very clear to me, as I was sure it had become very clear to the Executive Committee that a grievous error had been committed against Mr. Sundby. It was with complete confidence that I waited for the results of the "in camera" decision to be made.

In my opinion the only course to be followed would have been a complete vindication of Mr. Sundby from these vague and unsubstantiated charges against him.

I was incredulous when I later heard that the Executive Committee had voted 8-3 in favor of dismissing Mr. Sundby.

This action taken by the Executive Committee was absolutely indefensible. The treatment given Mr. Sundby was shabby, reprehensible, and beyond belief.

I came away from that meeting somewhat less naive than before. I was ashamed of what I perceived as a clear lack of honesty and integrity on the part of a majority of our Executive Committee. I was ashamed of this travesty of justice, disguised as a hearing and on that particular day, in that particular instance, I was ashamed to be a member of the BCTF.



—Geoff Peters photo

Geoff Peters:

I was ashamed to be a BCTF member on Saturday, Jan. 6, 1979. I was one of over 100 BCTF members who attended the executive hearing regarding the general secretary's recommendation to terminate BCTF staff member Ralph Sundby's appointment.

Although it is impossible to briefly describe what took place during nearly 12 hours of testimony, I want to share some aspects that greatly disturbed me.

Even though (or maybe because) more than 100 interested BCTF members attended the scheduled open hearing, seven executive members voted to close the session. The vote of four executive members (two-thirds required) prevented an immediate in-camera meeting.

Despite members' requests, the executive would not move the meeting to the auditorium to accommodate people who were unable to see, hear or even get into the boardroom.

Second Vice-President Ken Smith suggested that if members were not comfortable that was their own problem.

One could not help get the impression that the decision to terminate was already made — few executive members took notes during the hearing, few asked questions, and at one point one executive member appeared to be sleeping.

Having heard both sides of the "case" presented, one can only come to the conclusion that there was no justification for firing Ralph Sundby. Criticisms were unsubstantiated by examples and refuted by testimony from witnesses. The overall evaluation was satisfactory, yet the recommendation was termination. Ninety per cent of Sundby's work is in field service — service rated highly by all people involved in the evaluation.

It was admitted at the hearing by Mike Zlotnik, who supported termination, that the process used to fire Ralph was a "sham." All others on the assessment team, including the general secretary, found the process lacking.

In fact the evaluation process was characterized by its vagueness. Since there were no

pre-set performance standards to match the job description, and no weighting of the various components of the job, each person on the evaluation team operated under their own "rules" of evaluation. When the rules for evaluation of a teacher were applied it became obvious that no grounds for termination existed.

As a local association president I have had the privilege of receiving excellent service from Ralph Sundby, service characterized by competence, knowledge, sensitivity and depth of commitment.

I am very disturbed by the executive's action. This is not the time to create divisiveness in the federation, but a time to work closely together.

I was appalled that principles and procedures of evaluation we demand for our members, the executive ignores for our staff. The ministry and school boards will love this!

In the best interests of the federation the executive should rescind the termination and reinstate Ralph Sundby.

Geoff Peters, President,
Coquitlam Teachers'
Association.
Jan. 8

Maureen MacDonald (to Executive):

On Saturday Jan. 6, 1979, I attended the marathon special meeting at which you, in your wisdom, fired a valuable and effective staff member, and respected colleague, Ralph Sundby. In doing so, the majority of you have demonstrated to me that you think fair personnel practices are inconsequential compared to vindictive political and personal vendettas. To terminate Mr. Sundby's continuing appointment on the basis of thirty letters and one telegram of commendation for services rendered, seven oral statements of confidence and support, and two reports which contain some unsubstantiated negative comments indicates to me that the outcome of the hearing had nothing to do with the evidence presented.

In the future, if any of you who voted in favor of the recommendation to terminate

Boardroom 1 bulged at the seams when approximately 100 members turned up for marathon session Jan. 6. First Vice-President Al Blakey (white sweater) questions Ralph Sundby (left). Next to Sundby is his lawyer, Kevin O'Neill. To right of Blakey are President Pat Brady and BCTF solicitor Allan Black, with other executive members in foreground.

Clifford Boldt (to Bob Buzza):

It has come to my attention that Ralph Sundby has been recommended for termination as a BCTF employee. My initial reaction to this was surprise. I was surprised because of my professional involvement with Ralph when I served on PDAC. At that time, I found Ralph to be an innovative and competent staff person for PDAC. Specifically, I found his perspective of professional development geared very directly to the concerns of the classroom and school building programs. His ideas and suggestions helped me focus my actions toward a new PD structure that would give sup-

port to my colleagues in the field. During my tenure on PDAC, I was not aware of any specific, professional criticisms of Ralph in his performance as a BCTF staff member.

I have another concern, which is fundamentally more serious, and that is in regard to the process of evaluation and termination. When I was on the executive, I frequently heard you state that BCTF staff should be given the same rights and considerations as members in the field. I agreed. Now, I find that a BCTF staff member is being terminated, and I'm not sure that he is being given the same process which I would expect if the school board decided to fire me.

While I am not aware of all the specifics of the procedures followed to the present time in the case of Ralph Sundby, it appears that a process is being followed which does not conform to existing BCTF policy. I would hope that you, as the general secretary, are in a position to recommend that a just process, not unlike that available to our members, will be followed in the case of Ralph Sundby. I would further hope that our BCTF is not cast in the same light as a Langley School Board, that we are not accused of a political firing which is glossed over by reference to professional or technical reasons.

I heard the director of PD, Mike Zlotnik, charge Sundby with several specific errors which were clearly refuted with evidence and documentation. I heard three credible, respected members of the BCTF — Frances Worledge, David Janzen, and Gordon Eddy and three federation staff members — Wes Knapp, Mohammed Shamsher, and John Church — witness to the competence and acceptability of Ralph Sundby.

I heard that 12 BCTF members, asked by the evaluation team to assess Sundby, provided over-whelming support in each and every submission.

Finally, I heard that eight members of the BCTF executive passed the motion to terminate Sundby's appointment.

Many excuses and rationalizations will be offered to explain this unconscionable decision. But those of us who sat crowded and uncomfortable for 11 hours know that no evidence was provided to warrant firing — and neither will we forget.

Thank you.
Clifford L. Boldt
North Vancouver
Dec. 12

Linda Shuto,
Burnaby
Jan. 7

Linda Shuto:

I attended the Executive Committee Meeting of Jan. 6, 1979 to hear the result of a recommendation to terminate the employment of Ralph Sundby, member of the BCTF staff. What I saw and heard was the most appalling situation I have ever encountered.

After an attempt by seven members of the executive to hold the meeting in private, this majority then refused to move to the auditorium to accommodate the approximately 70 members who were crowded

into the boardroom to hear the proceedings.

I heard the General Secretary, Bob Buzza, refuse to elaborate or substantiate charges of poor judgment, lack of political acceptance, imputing motives, and inability to build bridges between people of diverse opinions.

I heard the director of PD, Mike Zlotnik, charge Sundby with several specific errors which were clearly refuted with evidence and documentation.

I heard three credible, respected members of the BCTF — Frances Worledge, David Janzen, and Gordon Eddy and three federation staff members — Wes Knapp, Mohammed Shamsher, and John Church — witness to the competence and acceptability of Ralph Sundby.

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Many excuses and rationalizations will be offered to explain this unconscionable decision. But those of us who sat crowded and uncomfortable for 11 hours know that no evidence was provided to warrant firing — and neither will we forget.

Pat Brady, President:

In April 1977 four appointments were made to the administrative staff of the BCTF. The appointments were made for a two-year term, subject to a review within 18 months.

In August 1978 the general secretary was charged with the responsibility, in consultation with the director of the Professional Development Division, to bring recommendations forward to the Executive Committee in respect to the continuation or termination of the services of the four individuals.

The four staff members agreed to a process to be used in the evaluation and that basic process was used in all four instances.

At the December meeting of the Executive Committee the general secretary made his recommendations — three recommendations that the staff members be placed on continuing appointments, and one recommendation for termination (that of Mr. Sundby). The Professional Development Division director concurred with the four recommendations.

The executive, at the December meeting, agreed to the three recommendations for continuing staff appointments.

At the request of Mr. Sundby's lawyer, a one-month postponement was agreed to by the Executive Committee in order that Mr. Sundby could adequately prepare presentations to the meeting.

The Executive Committee

met from 9 a.m. Jan. 6 until 1 a.m. Jan. 7.

In the past all personnel matters have been discussed "in committee." At Mr. Sundby's request, the recommendation to terminate his employ with the BCTF was dealt with in a public session.

Each member of the Executive Committee had the opportunity, over the 16-hour period, to listen, question and evaluate the information presented. Each member also had to consider his/her own personal observations, impressions, and other factors he/she deemed relevant.

The conclusions/decisions made were certainly far from being hasty or "easy" — but I feel confident that they were reached in an attempt to meet the responsibilities placed on members of the Executive Committee by the constitution and by-laws of our organization.

I also realize that strong feelings are often engendered by such a situation. Obviously the authors of the "letters to the editor" quoted in this Newsletter strongly disagree with the recommendation of the general secretary, the opinion of the division director and the decision of the Executive Committee. I have sincere doubts that anything further that I could say at this juncture would significantly alter the conclusions they have reached.

Pat Brady,
President.
Jan. 10

Bob Buzza, General Secretary:

The Executive Committee is elected by the federation's sovereign body. It is obliged on behalf of the entire membership to discharge significant responsibilities, including the appointment and dismissal of the general secretary and assistants to him or her.

The Executive Committee now requires the general secretary, after consultation with the affected director, to recommend appointment or dismissal of assistant directors. It has also established standards of performance for the general secretary, and supported a recommendation from him that standards be established for his colleagues.

Nine reports on staff, including the one in question, have already been prepared. None was based on established standards of performance. The process followed in each case was consistent with formal assessment procedures adopted by the staff that had been endorsed in principle by the Executive Committee.

In only one case has the appointee, his or her designate, if any, the director and the general secretary failed to reach agreement concerning a report.

The general secretary shares the widely held view that all of the requirements of natural justice are best met when personnel matters are dealt with in committee of the whole. The rights of the appointee must be assured; the rights of others protected.

For federation administrative staff members, the general secretary commends a procedure in which the appointee and friend or counsel meet with the Executive Com-

mittee and those responsible for preparing a report so that questions can be raised and answered, and all documentation considered before a decision is reached by elected representatives.

He feels it inadvisable to deal with personnel matters in public, and is therefore reluctant to comment directly on various letters in this publication.

The dedication of all members of the federation staff is not in question, nor are the views of teacher members who have provided information to assist those responsible for making staffing decisions.

It has been the writer's privilege to work closely with various Executive Committees for several years. None has had an easy task; all have been committed to due process, and to furthering the objects of the federation.

R. M. Buzza,
General Secretary.
Jan. 10

And there are more to come

Mike Zlotnik, director of the Professional Development Division, who is referred to in several of the letters on these pages, has chosen not to respond in this edition.

Two letters which he considers critical of him have been withheld to allow Zlotnik ample opportunity to consider a response to them.

Other letters which arrived after deadline for this edition will be considered for the next Newsletter.

Executive sets objectives on private schools

By JOHN HARDY
Communications

B.C.'s private schools, under legislation unique in Canada, can use public funds without public control, accountability and scrutiny.

Private schools control entry of pupils on the basis of ability, behavior, race, color, religion, sex, social class, wealth, language, educational goals and handicaps.

Private schools make no provision for qualification, certification, collective bargaining, tenure provisions and evaluation in the sense that public school teachers know it.

And private schools can spend any amount of money they wish: there's no control at the school level, only what the traffic will bear.

The BCTF Executive Committee heard these and other concerns about private schools from Norm Ornes, chairperson of the Education Finance Committee, at its December meeting.

Following extensive discussion, the executive adopted eight objectives to guide federation activities on the whole range of concerns about private schools. These objectives, carried unanimously, will now form a basis for recommendations to the Annual General Meeting this March.

Mainly they deal with matters of admission policies, standards, and financial accountability.

There was extensive discussion at the executive table with Norm Ornes answering questions directly and effectively.



from a paper that he had presented on behalf of the Education Finance Committee.

Early in a discussion, he dismissed as a "myth" one of the arguments used by the provincial government when introducing the legislation that private school parents were suffering unfairly by having to pay a tuition fee as well as pay taxes to support public schools.

He estimated only 9 per cent of all property tax receipts for school purposes come from single-family resident homeowners.

"When you take into con-

sideration the homeowner grant, it was really only those persons who live in very expensive properties who contributed anything more than the \$50 minimum cost of public education in the province through the property tax," he said.

Ornes referred as well to recent newspaper accounts that some churches have reduced their school costs by as much as 30 per cent as a result of the government money. "In essence, this becomes a direct subsidy to the church," he said.

The grant, based on 30 per cent of the average operating cost per pupil, has created funding anomalies throughout the province.

He called the private school funding "a source of extravagance in a period of budgetary constraint and declining enrolment."

And he reminded the executive that a paper by Allan Sprague that reviewed private school legislation across Canada had shown that B.C. has the least stringent regulations in the country.

During this past year, 99 private schools qualified under the act for maximum financial assistance, about \$500 per student.

Private schools could, therefore, be a major source of discussion at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Committee thanked Norm Ornes and the Education Finance Committee for the well-prepared presentation, giving the objectives a unanimous endorsement for submission to the AGM.

Vancouver, for example, with a net operating cost per pupil of \$1,868, receives \$112 from the government, local taxpayers picking up the rest. But the government gives \$500 per pupil of public money to private schools.

In Kitimat, local residents raised 111 per cent of the total net operating costs last year, so they were taxed more than was necessary to pay for the public schools, the excess going to Victoria for redistribution to other school districts.

St. Anthony's school in Kitimat applied for the grant and would therefore receive public money from government in contrast to Kitimat public schools.

An article by Jack Gilmore in the November/December B.C. Teacher sent shock waves through the province as he documented events since the legislation on private schools was enacted. Gilmore, for example, surprised many teachers with the fact that private schools are evaluated by a committee of their own members, "a jury made up of their own families."

All indications are that the article itself has received widespread attention in the staffrooms of the schools in this province.

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About Pensions

Reciprocal agreements

By BRUCE WATSON

It is expected that all provinces except British Columbia will be signing very shortly a new reciprocal pension agreement which will permit a teacher to move between the signatory provinces without loss of pensionable service credits.

In general, provided the teacher does not take a refund of contributions from the pension fund of the province the teacher left, and the contribution rate in the new province is the same as in the former province, the contributions may be transferred to the new province and the teacher would receive full pensionable service credit. If the contribution rate is greater in the new province, the teacher would have the option of paying the difference and receiving full pensionable service credit; otherwise a pro-rata credit would be granted. However, the actual service from the former province is used to determine eligibility for a pension.

This new agreement, for all provinces except British Columbia, replaces the present reciprocal agreement whereby double contributions were transferred to the province of retirement for the purpose of increasing the pension benefit. However the old agreement did not provide for the transfer of actual service.

Unless other provinces give notice to B.C. of termination of the old agreement, that agreement will still apply to teachers moving to and from British Columbia. Page 73 of the current *Members' Guide* gives an outline of the current agreement as it applies to B.C.

The British Columbia government has taken the position that any new reciprocal agreement for teachers must parallel the agreements in existence between it and the federal government and with other public service pension plans of the provinces.

These agreements are similar to the new teacher agreement except that a person must leave the employ of the other employer and be in the employ of the new employer within a time span of

three months. For most teachers this would mean leaving employment June 30 and starting with the new employer in another province not later than Sept. 30 of the same year.

This short period of permissible absence is unsatisfactory to the federation. A brief was submitted in October, 1977 to the provincial secretary requesting a longer period. The government indicated there would be no problem in removing this restriction if the other provinces would agree to a different type of reciprocal agreement, i.e., the type in existence between the various public sector pension plans in B.C. whereby each plan pays its full share of the final pension based on service in each plan.

This pro-rata style of agreement means that the province or pension plan of retirement does not have to assume the costs of service performed for another employer. It does, however, permit total service to be used for eligibility and calculation of the pension with the cost being shared by the employers for whom the person worked throughout his/her career.

In view of the government's three-month restriction and in keeping with BCTF policy that each province should pay its share of the pension cost incurred by service in its province, the federation has requested that the present reciprocal agreement between British Columbia and the other provinces (east to and including Quebec) remain in effect.

Further there is a provision in the present Teachers' Pensions Act whereby a teacher who leaves teaching in B.C. without taking a refund of contributions and within three years enters the service of an "approved" employer (e.g., teaching in another province) and becomes eligible for a pension in the other province, may receive an indexed pension based upon the B.C. service, provided the combined service is at least 10 years. If the teacher has a minimum of 10 years' service in B.C., then B.C. will pay the pension regardless of service elsewhere.

Need for accuracy

Teachers should ensure that their pensionable service credits are accurate and complete. The Teachers' Pension Plan has provision for reinstatement of past pensionable service upon the return of a teacher after a period of absence.

All teachers are urged to apply to the Commissioner of Teachers' Pensions, 544 Michigan Street (West Wing), Victoria, B.C., V8V 4R5, for reinstatement immediately upon re-entering employment. The commissioner will then advise whether reinstatement is possible.

Further, all teachers now in the teaching work force who have not applied in the past for reinstatement, or who had applied and now think they may meet the previous or current regulations, should apply immediately. (*Members' Guide*, page 72).

Retirement sessions

Pre-retirement planning sessions emphasizing "retiring to" instead of "retiring from" are being conducted throughout the province by the Retired Teachers' Association. The project is being funded by the BCTF.

Sessions are aimed at over-50 teachers along with school board personnel in this age category. Spouses are included in the sessions.

Objective of the program is to emphasize the need for all persons in this age group to do some pre-retirement thinking about future income, activities, lifestyle and accommodation. Another objective is to provide participants with some insights into these areas.

The 1978-79 sessions are being held in East Kootenay; North Coast and Smithers; Nanaimo, Lake Cowichan and Cowichan; Summerland through to Kettle Valley and Princeton, and for teachers living in Squamish, West Vancouver and North Vancouver; Coquitlam and Maple Ridge and Vancouver. Exact times and locations will be announced later.

Local association presidents in major centres in these areas have been contacted and have agreed to organize the sessions in co-operation with Bert Wales of the Retired Teachers' Association.

Pre-retirement planning sessions conducted by the RTA began on an experimental basis in 1977-78. The pensions budget provided funds to cover travel costs and printing costs of materials. Active support was given the program by the B.C. Teachers Credit Union, Teachers' Investment and Housing Co-operative and the Teachers' Trust Company.

The program will be conducted by the Retired Teachers' Association, with BCTF funding, at approximately three-year intervals in most areas of the province. Districts not visited in 1978-79 will be visited in either 1979-80 or 1980-81.

Wartime service

There is provision in the Teachers' Pension Plan for limited purchase of wartime military service at time of retirement for those who meet the purchase criteria. (*Members' Guide*, page 73).

Former Manitoba teacher?

Teachers who formerly taught in Manitoba now have a chance to repay refunds they obtained, thereby reinstating themselves in the Manitoba pension plan, or making themselves eligible for annuities based on the repayment.

The current interest rate is 8 3/4 per cent. Additional information is available from the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, 512B-1181 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0T3.

This opportunity is the last one for people to repay on the old basis. The cost of repayment will be greater in the future.

IYC projects planned

UNICEF and the Red Cross, with support from the Canadian International Development Agency, are undertaking a special educational project to commemorate the International Year of the Child.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of Education has officially proclaimed United Nations Day, Oct. 24, as "a day of study and reflection in recognition of the International Year of the Child," and UNICEF and the Red Cross are co-ordinating a number of activities around that date.

These include a television broadcast, school/community projects and a special all-day program in every school.

An instruction kit will be sent to all teachers in Canada in early fall and will contain teaching materials about the Third World for pupils of different ages.

After IYC Day, local Red Cross and UNICEF personnel will be available to work with teachers to develop further international education programs.



1979 International Year of the Child

Average salary gain 7.7 per cent

Increases in B.C. teachers' salaries for 1979 will average 7.7 per cent — slightly less than the increase in the cost of living over the last year.

This is the result of the efforts of local and provincial agreements committees and the staff of the BCTF's Economic Welfare Division. The settlements were arrived at by negotiation in 26 school districts and by arbitration in the remaining 49.

The increases were reasonably uniform across the province, ranging from 7.25 to 8.25 per cent.

In most districts the increase achieved for the basic salary scale was also applied to administrators' allowances.

Apart from salary increases there were improvements in fringe benefits in most districts. Dental plans were initiated in a number of districts and enhanced in several others.

Brady said that the BCTF would take up the matter of withdrawal of textbooks with ministry officials and would try to establish guidelines to cover the review of textbooks in the future.

Strawberries and Other Secrets, a Grade 9 short-story textbook, was de-listed for classroom use by the ministry last summer and another text, *Go Ask Alice*, was banned by the Richmond school board early in 1978.

committees be established to review current and projected textbooks used in major subject areas and it is expected that the BCTF will be asked to name representatives to these committees.

BCTF President Pat Brady asked in December that procedures be set up to review textbooks and criticized the means by which textbooks have been withdrawn from classroom use either by the ministry or by local school boards in the past.

only 6 teachers with Category 1 qualifications and 1136 with Category 2 teaching in the province. Nearly all had taught for 10 years and were at maximum salary.

The only two-year training program in the province that still allows individuals to enter teaching is limited to industrial education. Graduates of that program move quickly to Category 3 and beyond.

Earlier in the year the Provincial Agreements Committee had expressed support for the proposal to eliminate 1 and 2.

The Executive Committee also examined a motion calling for the use of new criteria for Category 6, but did not adopt it.

Textbooks will be reviewed

The Ministry of Education has made a move toward establishing a process for ongoing review of textbooks used in the province's public schools.

It is hoped that proposals will be discussed at the mid-January meeting of the Deputy Minister's Advisory Committee, according to Jerry Mussio, director of curriculum development for the ministry.

It has been suggested that

TQS changes sought

By JIM CAIRNIE
Economic Welfare

At a recent meeting the Executive Committee adopted a proposal seeking the removal of Categories 1 and 2 from the qualification system used by the Teacher Qualification Service.

The elimination of these categories, if eventually approved by the TQS and included in local contracts, will mean that teachers presently being paid on the Category 1 or 2 scales will be placed on the 3 scale.

The proposal arose from a report, prepared by the BCTF representatives to the Teacher Qualification Board, which examined the desirability and feasibility of eliminating Categories 1, 2 and 3 and changing the criteria for Category 6.

The report argued that a minimum salary should be 6 — JANUARY 12, 1979

Self-evaluation policy

By JOHN CHURCH
Professional Development

A policy statement that "part of the professional responsibility of teachers includes participating in the self-evaluation of the educational programs of the school" was approved by the Executive Committee at its Sept. 16 meeting.

A second policy statement suggested that a school staff should consider certain factors prior to agreeing to implement a program of self-evaluation:

- The need to ensure that adequate resources and sufficient release time will be guaranteed;
- Clear definition of the purposes and objectives of a self-evaluation program;
- Adequate time — a major portion of the school year — should be considered as a requirement;
- Necessary resources guaranteed to insure implementation of recommendations;
- Pre-determination of the external group, if any, to which the report will be released;
- Pre-determination as to whether an external evaluation team should visit the school, and if this is agreed to, membership on the team of at least one elementary classroom teacher.

The policy statements were formulated from responses to a BCTF questionnaire sent to elementary schools that had participated in the Ministry of Education's 1978 trial evaluation of elementary schools.

Answers to the BCTF questionnaire were received from 14 schools; three teachers replied as individuals.

Responses indicated support for the principle of self-evaluation of their educational program, particularly when the objectives and purpose were clearly explained.

The need for adequate release time and designation of the major portion of the year for evaluation were stressed by all respondents.

Some suggested the need to negotiate for adequate resources, including additional secretarial assistance, before agreeing to self-evaluation. Others noted the importance of self-evaluation as a prelude to obtaining needed human, financial and material resources to overcome weaknesses and shortcomings in educational programs.

The formulation of the policy statements resulting directly from advice and guidance provided to the BCTF Executive Committee by teachers involved in the trial self-evaluation project may be an interesting new development.

News Briefs

Enrolment meet

Menno Vorster, president of the Toronto Teachers' Federation, will be guest speaker at the BCTF provincial conference on declining enrolment held Jan. 19 and 20 at the Sheraton Landmark Hotel in Vancouver.

A new slide-tape presentation, *Declining Enrolment: The Challenge, the Opportunity*, which had been commissioned by the BCTF, will be shown to delegates.

Conference registration forms have been sent to local association presidents and additional information can be obtained from Wes Knapp or Donna Coulombe at the BCTF office.

Student leaders meet

The 13th annual B.C. Student Council/Leadership Conference will be held at the University of B.C. next June.

About 200 members of high school student councils and other student leaders are expected to attend. The conference is run by students, with teachers and student-teachers acting as facilitators.

Purpose of the conference is to help students to develop problem-solving and communications skills, and to permit them to exchange problems and solutions.

Co-ordinator for the conference is Gayda Smith of Alpha Secondary, Burnaby, phone 299-2648.

CTF conference

A conference on Quality of Education: Quality of Life sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation will be held in Winnipeg, May 6 to 9.

Keynote speakers will be Kay Sigurjonsson, Laurier

La Pierre and Ed May. Speakers will be experienced teachers from schools and classrooms across Canada.

For registration information contact the BCTF professional development division.

Income tax course

Are you interested in unravelling the mysteries of income tax for your senior students?

"Teaching Taxes," a free educational package suitable for secondary students, has been developed by the In-

formation Services Branch of Revenue Canada, Taxation.

Information about teaching materials and how they can be ordered can be obtained from the public relations officer of the district taxation office in your area.

Executive dismisses staffer

meeting Dec. 8-9, 1978, the executive decided to continue the appointments of the other three (George North, Wes Knapp and Jim Bowman). After some preliminary discussion at that meeting, the executive postponed its decision on Sundby to a special meeting Jan. 6 to allow Sundby more time to prepare his case.

The recommendation to dismiss Sundby came from General Secretary Bob Buzza and was supported by Mike Zlotnik, director of the PD division.

The first two hours of the special meeting were taken up with debate and motions on procedural and technical matters. During that phase the executive decided not to rescind its December decision to hold the hearing in public, with only the decision-making session to be held in private. (The vote on this motion was 7 in favor to 4 against. The motion was declared lost by President Pat Brady, who said a two-thirds majority was needed to rescind the earlier motion. Later Past President Bill Broadley, who had moved the motion to rescind, said only a simple majority was actually needed.)

Broadley had supported the December decision to hold an open hearing. He said he now felt that he and the executive had made a mistake. He argued that the case should be heard in committee, with Sundby and legal counsel present, and with Sundby having the right to call in others to speak in his behalf. This, Broadley said, would protect Sundby's rights and those of others.

Buzza said the courts have determined that the rules of natural justice do not require the hearing of personnel matters in public. He said an open hearing would be inappropriate and inadvisable and

that it might prevent him from answering some questions.

First Vice-President Al Blakey argued for an open hearing. He said the executive must bend over backward to ensure that justice was not only done but was highly visibly done.

Shortly before the formal hearing began, the provincial Learning Conditions Committee, also meeting in the BCTF Building, sent its chairperson, Marjatta Chapman, to the executive to express her committee's unanimous support of Sundby. For the last several months Sundby's work has been mainly in the learning conditions area.

The executive had before it a sheaf of documents dealing with the Sundby case. These included a self-evaluation by Sundby; the report of an assessment team consisting of Buzza, Zlotnik, Sundby and his staff designate, Mohammed Shamsheer; Sundby's commentary on this report; a substantial number of letters supporting Sundby and evaluative comments obtained by the assessment team from members and staff; and letters exchanged among members of the team.

Many of the documents were labelled "confidential," but passages from some of them were read into the record.

The hearing opened with remarks from Buzza. He said no formal assessment procedures currently exist for administrative staff, but that he and all those up for review had reached consensus in September on procedures to be followed. All members of the assessment team expressed reservations about the process.

Buzza was questioned extensively by Blakey and other members of the executive, and by Sundby's counsel. The same process was then followed with Zlotnik.



(Geoff Peters photo)

This was followed by brief remarks by O'Neill, who stressed the seriousness of the situation and contended that cause for dismissal "must be shown overwhelmingly and must be a severe problem associated with Mr. Sundby's work."

Sundby distributed his commentary on the assessment committee's report and quoted from it at length. He then questioned Zlotnik and Buzza.

Members of the executive, in turn, questioned Sundby on his written and oral presentations.

They then heard statements in support of Sundby by three other members of the BCTF staff — Wes Knapp and John Church of the Professional Development division, and Mohammed Shamsheer, Sundby's designate on the assessment team.

These were followed by oral

statements of support by three teacher members with whom Sundby had worked closely: Frances Worledge of VESTA, a former co-chairperson of the Professional Development Advisory Committee; Gordon Eddy, president of the Delta Teachers' Association; and David Janzen of North Vancouver, former chairperson of the Task Force on Authority and Responsibility. Sundby had served as co-co-ordinator for the task force and PDAC and had frequently been called on by Eddy for field service.

Executive members questioned the witnesses, and Zlotnik and Buzza responded briefly to their statements. The hearing ended with a summary statement by O'Neill.

The long hours of discussion, questioning and debate seemed to revolve around the differing perceptions of the personal qualities and professional capabilities of Ralph Sundby as seen by the general secretary, Sundby's divisional director, some other members of the staff, and teacher/members who had seen Sundby in action in the field and on committees.

The letters and comments received from members in the field were said to be unanimous in praising Sundby's work or his personal qualities or both. According to Shamsheer, taken together they covered "the whole range of skills" required for the job, not just field work.

Shamsheer said that in the absence of any agreed criteria for evaluation each member of the assessment team had developed his own criteria. Shamsheer said he applied the rules he would use when considering reports on teachers: accept statements based on objective facts and discount value judgments. On this basis, he said, he had to conclude that Sundby's work was satisfactory.

Other staff members who spoke on Sundby's behalf called him a co-operative and effective colleague.

The teacher/members who addressed the executive spoke warmly of Sundby's helpfulness to them in their work with committees and local associations.

Frances Worledge spoke of her involvement with both Sundby and Zlotnik in the work of the PDAC and said she felt the problem was a difference of opinions and a clash of personalities between the two.

Gordon Eddy said that when he called on Sundby he got instant assistance and good advice.

David Janzen said he found Sundby intellectually stimulating, informed, and capable of producing cogent arguments.

Neither Buzza nor Zlotnik questioned Sundby's effectiveness in field work, which according to his job description took up 90 per cent of his time. They did, however, express serious doubts and reservations about Sundby's effectiveness in other aspects of his job.

Buzza questioned Sundby's judgment and perspective, his acceptability across the political spectrum of the federation's membership and his ability to build bridges between individuals and groups. He found Sundby more defensive than most staff members and said he had a tendency to impute motives to individuals and groups such as the BCSTA and the Ministry of Education in a predictable and negative fashion.

Zlotnik also questioned Sundby's judgment and said he lacked an adequate grasp of education and curriculum matters. He rated Sundby as weak in managerial, research and analytical skills and in getting concrete results in the program areas for which he was responsible.

The Executive Committee's decision on the termination of Sundby's appointment was taken by secret ballot.

From page 1

Government clamps down

don't object to that — in fact, for years we've been urging school boards to disclose their budgets not just to their councils but to the general public.

"But the councils are also now being asked to meet with the school boards to work out a program to help minimize school taxes.

"In effect, we're being told that the aldermen can do the school boards' job better than can the trustees. This is ludicrous. Municipal councils have no statutory authority over school boards, and they should not be asked to interfere in school board affairs. School boards must remain autonomous bodies."

Brady said he was concerned about Wolfe's statement that efforts will be made to "improve productivity" of school staffs.

"How do you measure the productivity of a kindergarten teacher?" he asked. "Our schools aren't intended to be widget factories."

Brady said he was puzzled by Wolfe's statement that "administrative salaries that are too high by provincial standards will be identified and brought into line."

"What administrators is he talking about and what are

these provincial standards?" he asked. "We would vigorously oppose any move by the government to interfere with the collective bargaining process for setting salaries."

Brady said he welcomed Wolfe's assurance that grants to school boards, or homeowner's grants, or both, will be increased.

"This is long overdue," he said. "We've been pushing for both these measures through our Proposition Fairtax. We now expect both the homeowner's grants and the grants to school districts to be raised at least sufficiently to cover the rate of inflation."

He said he also agreed with Wolfe that the local taxpayer cannot be expected to bear the burden of school costs.

"But it is this government's policy that has year by year added to this burden," Brady said. "The government keeps shifting more and more of the costs onto the local tax base. In three years the government has increased the local mill rate by more than 50 per cent."

"Now that local taxpayers are finally complaining, the government is trying to do everything it can, except assume its rightful share of school costs."

The Wolfe statement and Brady's news release have been sent to the appropriate BCTF advisory committees and to local associations and geographical representatives for their comment and reaction. The Executive Committee will be studying the Wolfe statement at its meeting of Jan. 12-13.

One explanation for Wolfe's statement, voiced by some political observers, is that it's part of an attempt by the provincial government to preempt the "taxpayers' revolt."

The theory is that Premier Bill Bennett is worried about the threat posed by Conservative leader Vic Stephens as the province heads into an election year.

The pundits say that Bennett fears that Stephens's cost-cutting/tax-cutting platform may lure away enough right-wing Social Credit votes to enable the NDP to elect a minority government.

They see Wolfe's announcement as an attempt to convince these wavering supporters and the electorate generally that the Bennett government can effectively control public spending and taxation, at least at the local level.

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Fairtax

payers. The \$1 minimum tax now applies only to those over age 65; all others pay a minimum of \$50.

• Increased grants to school districts to compensate for inflation.

The effect of these changes would be to raise the provincial government's share of school costs and to lighten the load on local taxpayers.

The provincial government now pays only 39 per cent of school costs by direct grants to school districts; this figure rises to 53.3 per cent if homeowner's grants are counted as a provincial contribution to education.

Under the Fairtax plan, the government's share, including homeowner's grants, would rise to 67 per cent.

This would be a "reasonable step" on the way to implementing the recommendation of the McMath Commission that the government assume 75 per cent of school costs by 1980, the federation's brief said.

After the meeting, McGeer told reporters the government would have to increase other taxes or cut other services in order to implement Fairtax. There is no Tooth Fairy, he said.

Full implementation of Fairtax would cost \$82 million.