

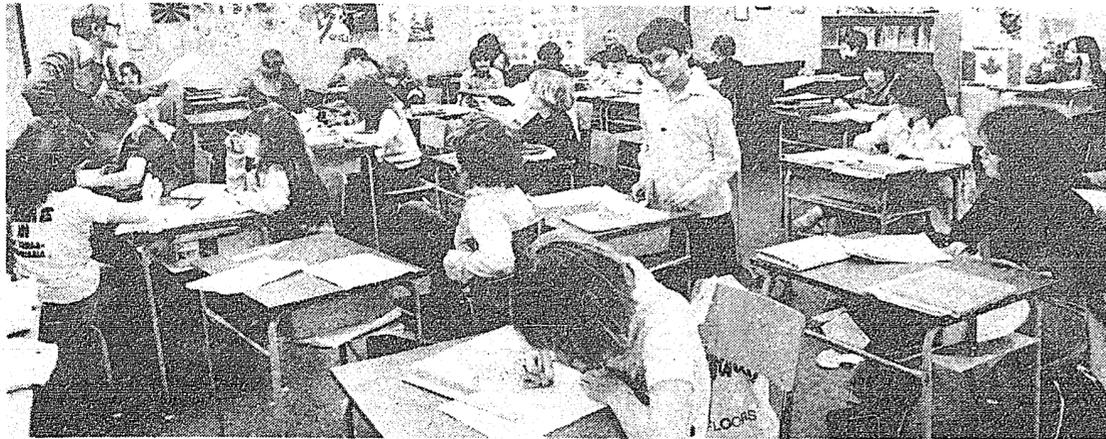
newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Vol. 18, No. 8

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JANUARY 25, 1979



LANGLEY CLASSROOM... 266 class-size violations

BCTF commission to examine learning conditions in Langley

At the request of the Langley Teachers' Association, the B.C. Teachers' Federation is in the process of establishing a commission to investigate and report on learning conditions in the Langley School District.

The BCTF Executive Committee gave approval for the inquiry at its Jan. 12 meeting. The three-member commission will be composed of well-known and respected British Columbians.

Pat Brady, president of the BCTF, said the commission is expected to give an independent and informed view of the state of learning and working conditions in Langley schools, including current and historical perspectives.

It is expected that the commission will provide a forum for public discussion and involvement in education in the district.

The commission will interview parents, teachers, students, school administrators and school board officials, convene public meetings in differ-

ent parts of the district, and compare data from other school districts of similar size to Langley.

At its meeting Monday, Jan. 22, the Langley School Board declined an invitation to participate in choosing one of the commissioners to undertake the investigation.

Terry Eastman, president of the Langley association, said he was disappointed that the board had turned down this opportunity to participate in the learning conditions commission.

"The commission will be a direct benefit to the children in the community and at no cost to the board," Eastman said.

The general membership of the LTA had voted unanimously to request that the BCTF executive set up a commission.

Concerns have arisen over present school board budgeting policies which will result in 1,200 children entering Langley schools between September 1977 and September 1979 with a net addition of only three to five teachers to the district's staff.

The LTA has asked the school board to participate in

the work of the commission and to name one of the three commissioners. The BCTF would name a second, and the two commissioners would agree on a third.

The board's proposed budget for 1979 is \$19,731 less than the Ministry of Education's shared Basic Education Program for the district. Langley is currently B.C.'s fastest-growing school district.

Joint sick-leave study compares costs/benefits of various plans

Portability of sick leave from one school district to another could be achieved at very little cost to the taxpayer.

That's one of the findings of a newly completed study, jointly funded by the BCTF and the B.C. School Trustees Association. The study was conducted by B.C. Research, an independent non-profit research institute.

The study shows that sick leave could be made fully portable, and the 120-days-a-year limit on sick leave removed, at

Cutbacks predicted

Executive proposes unchanged fee level

The Executive Committee will recommend to the Annual General Meeting that the 1979-80 BCTF membership fee be set on the basis of .86 per cent of the estimated mean salary of BCTF members.

The percentage of salary would be unchanged from the current year. However, because of an increase in the estimated mean salary (from \$20,447 for 1978-79 to \$22,337 for 1979-80) the fee would increase by \$16 (from \$176 to \$192).

The recommendation was passed by the executive at its meeting Jan. 11-13. It will go to the AGM March 26-28.

The recommendation to hold the fee to .86 per cent came from the BCTF Finance Committee. The Management Committee, however, proposed an increase to .89 per cent. It said this was necessary to avoid deficit budgeting (there is a deficit of \$135,000 in the current budget) and to provide \$100,000 for necessary furniture and equipment purchases and renovations to the BCTF Building.

Treasurer Derek Holden told the executive the .89 per cent level would add \$9 to the fee, would increase revenues by \$196,000 and would allow an increase of 8 per cent in program expenditures. The .86 per cent level would allow an increase of 4.2 per cent in program budgeted expenditures.

Past President Bill Broadley said the .86 per cent level would mean a cutback in programs, because of the effect of inflation.

Member-at-large Gerry Retaillick moved to raise the level to .89 per cent. He said it was "ludicrous" to think existing programs could meet the federation's needs in the coming year.

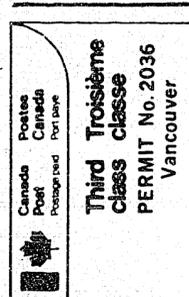
Member-at-large Phil Van Seters said it was unfair to expect federation staff to subsidize the organization by foregoing vacation time and compensatory time off for weekend and evening work.

Most other members opposed the higher level.

First Vice-President Al Blakey said he could not approve an increase without a firm budget. Second Vice-President Ken Smith said the .86 level would produce a higher percentage increase in fees (9 per cent) than teachers got in their salaries (estimated at 7.8 per cent).

Member-at-large Steve Norman said the .89 level would mean a 13-per-cent increase in fees. He argued the federation should look at some of its real estate assets if it needed more money.

Member-at-large Doug Steinson said the executive was kidding itself if it thought the membership would approve an increase in the level.



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

McGeer reveals rewards for 'budget performance'

Education Minister Pat McGeer has announced the details of his incentive grants to school boards for "excellent budget performance."

McGeer told the Union of B.C. Municipalities convention last September that a "reward" system was in the works. He unveiled the specifics on Jan. 19.

Under his plan any school board that has held the increase in per-pupil costs to a level 3 percentage points or more below the provincial average over the last two years will qualify for a special grant. The provincial average is estimated at 22.61 per cent.

McGeer said in a news release that his incentive program is based on an objective analysis of the boards' budget performance rather than on a subjective analysis of their education programs.

Only 13 districts qualify for incentive grants totalling \$1.7 million so far, McGeer said.

But he held out hope for other boards. All they have to do, he indicated, is cut their provisional budgets enough to bring them below the magic line.

He's optimistic others will make the necessary adjustments.

(For staff member Jim Bowman's response to the grants program, see page 8.)

a cost of less than \$50,000 a year. The benefit to individual teachers might be significant but there would be no great gain to the membership as a whole.

The study was based on the sick-leave records of a random sample of 1,737 full-time teachers, or about 6.2 per cent of the teaching force over the three school years 1975-76 to 1977-78. (Data for the final year were not used in the analysis because some sick leaves were still in progress.)

The study had two major purposes: to determine the extent of use of sick leave by B.C. teachers, and to analyse the costs and benefits of 20 variations of two different models of sick-leave protection.

Sick-leave provisions at present are based on a service model. Each teacher is entitled to 1.5 days' sick leave for each month worked. Unused sick leave can be carried over and used in subsequent years, subject to the 120-day limit. This model favors veteran teachers who have built up a backlog of protection with a particular school board, and tends to discriminate against new entrants to the teaching force and those who leave one district for another.

Last year's BCTF Annual General Meeting debated a recommendation from the Income Security Committee proposing a shift to a different

type of plan based on an insurance model.

Under such a plan every teacher, even the newest, would be entitled to a uniform block of sick leave. A specific number of days might be paid at full salary followed by a longer number of days at partial salary.

Delegates had qualms about abandoning the protection of the present service scheme. They amended the committee's resolution to read that sick-leave protection should be based on either the insurance or the service principle, "whichever provides the better protection for most members." The committee is expected to submit a further report to this year's AGM.

The Income Security Committee warned last year that the government would probably not enact major changes in sick leave that lacked the support of the BCSTA, and that the trustees would probably exact a price.

That price might be a "deductible" clause which would make the first day of sick leave unpaid. Trustees are concerned about the high proportion of one-day sick leaves. The B.C. Research study showed that 62 per cent of sick leaves in 1975-76 and 65 per cent in 1976-77 lasted only one day.

B.C. Research used a computer model to test the costs (in (Continued on Page 8)

Correcting the press

"SCHOOL STRIKE LOOMS ON JOBS" screamed a banner headline in the Jan. 8 Vancouver Express. "Cutback rumpus 'looks like war.' City's teachers prepared to strike."

The news story began: "Vancouver teachers say they are prepared to go on strike — possibly illegally — if the school board attempts to cut back teaching staff."

We would like to state clearly that our organizations have not discussed or decided on any punitive action toward the Vancouver School Board, parents or our students. The only actions our associations have planned to date are directed to further informing our members and the public. A brochure is to be distributed throughout the city and two conferences, one for teachers on Jan. 29 and one for the public on Feb. 3 at Eric Hamber School, are being planned in co-operation with the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

Although other actions have been discussed, any decision about further action is premature. It would require wide involvement of our membership and any decisions are theirs. We feel that job action such as suggested in the article, while "possible," is very unlikely.

As was stated to the writer of the article, we expect to discuss with the board our concerns as professional educators. We hope to come to mutually acceptable solutions which will not only show our

interest in fiscal responsibility but also continue to improve the quality of education provided to students.

We are pleased to read that school board chairman Nathan Divinsky does not want to be at war. Neither do we. We are also pleased that trustee Divinsky also seems to share our often-stated aim, that the quality of education for children is of paramount importance.

To respond in detail to the many omissions and inaccuracies in the article would be very lengthy and serve little purpose at this time. We would like to note, however, that the headline is a particularly blatant misrepresentation of the discussions which took place between us and the writer.

The conference on Feb. 3 will provide a factual version of the teachers' position.

Thom Hansen, President VSTA
J. Alan Crawford, President, VESTA
Jan. 9

Supports task force

The BCTF Task Force on Racism deserves our support. On Nov. 22, Wes Knapp, the coordinator for the task force, presented a three-hour workshop for 12 interested members of Strathcona School staff during a school board professional day. All the participants described the workshop as very good and excellent.

Many worthwhile suggestions for relieving tension in the classroom and playground were presented and discussed. The workshop format included the use of teaching strategies that are directly relevant and applicable to the classroom. The two films shown and discussed provided a stimulus for examining the camouflages for discrimination and the roots of its origin — racism.

When the films were shown in the classroom they elicited much the same response as they did with adults. The children became aware of the problems caused by teasing. They also discussed why people tease one another. More

importantly they saw how hurtful thoughtless people can be.

As a member of a minority group, I have experienced the barbed discriminatory remarks of insensitive individuals. Prejudice exists within our society, and our school system mirrors that society. It is a relief to know that a beginning is being made to examine institutional racism in our school system. I am proud to be a member of the BCTF when it takes a courageous stand against a deeply rooted social problem that has been generations in the making.

Finally, I recommend to the BCTF and its members that they consider changing the task force into a permanent standing committee of the federation at the next AGM. Affirmative action will mean becoming advocates for all children rather than being adversaries of some.

Sam Philippoff, Vancouver, Jan. 18

How Toronto teachers resist cutbacks in spending

By Mardee Galt
Editorial Assistant

"If teachers' jobs were not that secure, you and I wouldn't be here today," Menno Vorster, president of the Toronto Teachers' Federation, told the approximately 100 delegates at the opening session of the BCTF provincial conference on declining enrolment Friday, Jan. 19, at the Sheraton-Landmark Hotel in Vancouver.

His federation has been active since March 1977 resisting teacher layoffs in the Toronto area where the elementary school population has dropped 11 per cent over the last two years. The Toronto federation has also submitted a brief, *Don't Shoot the Teacher*, to Ontario's Jackson Commission on Declining Enrolment.

He outlined the steps Toronto teachers took to "save not only themselves but what was left of the fabric of the education system in Toronto."

He said that although it was apparent by 1973 that declining enrolment would become a factor, an attrition rate exceeding 12 per cent was "enough to keep the rest of us securely in our jobs" and the "teacher unions let the situation slide by with nothing more than a nervous glance."

However, in 1977 the Toronto Board of Education considered and passed a motion to fire 159 teachers whose jobs were claimed to be surplus, in spite of a rapidly organized protest march on the school board by 500 teachers, relatives and others after "a frantic four-day effort."

"Our direct political activity began the day that the first group of teachers was laid off. It should have started much earlier, but I can assure you that it was difficult enough to get any involvement at all even when possibilities had turned into realities," he said.

Vorster reported that since this slow beginning, recent demonstrations protesting cuts have been attended by no fewer than 1,000 people, including parents; teachers were mobilized within a five-day period to circulate a petition calling for an end to program cuts and firings and collected 12,000 signatures; and in the recent municipal elections the



MENNO VORSTER

newly elected school board "reflected a clear voter preference for those candidates whose priorities were dictated by needs rather than dollars."

He said that 15 members of the present board have formed a tight coalition and "have publicly announced that the days of mindless program reductions and teacher firings are over."

"I would like to stand before you and say it was all due to the herculean efforts of our members. Realistically we have contributed, but the voter ruled supreme. It was, at the same time, the awareness of the issues that created the strong public statement at the ballot box," Vorster said.

"The message that we have presented has been loud and consistent; declining enrolment is a hammer used to impose fiscal restraint that has caused unjustifiable, unnecessary and detrimental cuts which have deteriorated the quality of education that students and parents have the right to expect. We continue to insist that declining enrolment offers us a golden opportunity to increase the quality of education without substantial increases in cost.

"I want to be emphatic that this turn of events would never have occurred had we not had the weight of facts behind us. When 18 per cent of the school libraries close on a full- or half-time basis, when 65 per cent of English-as-a-second-language programs disappear, when 28 per cent of the inner-city teachers lose their positions and there are still 600 children waiting for special education programs, there is something wrong."

Vorster's experiences suggest a few tips for teacher organizations considering action against fiscal restraints in schools.

DO become media hounds, report events as they occur, report the severe effects of staff cuts, suggest human interest articles, and encourage parents to approach the media with specific concerns.

(Ed note: Teachers interested in this exchange should be aware of a resolution passed by the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association. See story page 3.)

quest, you will get positively decimated by not responding at all. We felt that if the board's actions were being scrutinized by the press, there would be some natural consequences of their actions."

DO make sure that democratic procedures of the local federations are being scrupulously followed. "We have found that the more insecure teachers become about their position, the more critical they tend to be of any organization that affects their jobs."

DO refer to teacher layoffs only as a matter of consequence, concentrate on the quality and variety of programs the schools were providing, and be ready to explain when provincial governments shift school taxes to local boards.

DO involve members in direct political activity, question school board candidates, lobby school trustees and members of the provincial legislature and get out the vote.

DO ask each school staff to approach their community directly through parent-teacher meetings or door-to-door canvassing. "We embarked on an alliance that is proving to be absolutely effective in changing the situation."

DON'T rely on an unformed membership to make an informed decision, or embark on a call of action that does not accurately reflect the mood of the teachers. "Use a regularly scheduled and factually accurate news bulletin to keep members aware."

DON'T leave too much organization to chance rather than planning. "You don't ask teachers to participate. You make sure that they do it."

DON'T rely on paper to replace the effectiveness of personal contact. Have the executive of your association visit every school on a regular basis.

DON'T rely on reaching all the membership. "Involving a majority in any one voluntary event can be considered a major victory. Being discouraged when it doesn't happen will ensure future defeats."

"When they don't shoot the teacher this year I will feel no guilt," Vorster said.

At the opening conference session BCTF First Vice-President Al Blakey told delegates: "Simplistic slashing of already-slim school board budgets is another form of child abuse," and until "organized pressure is brought to bear on the governments, we have a role to play in giving leadership to the public."

"We'll be accused of trying to protect our jobs," he said. "What's wrong with protecting our jobs? Has high unemployment become a goal of our society? As long as children's needs are not being met, there is a need for more teachers, not less."

"Defence of our jobs is defence of children."

Conference delegates attended workshops on resisting layoffs, student needs, women and declining enrolment, action-plan models, public relations, and growth districts during the two-day conference.



Wendy Johnson (left), Langley, and Lynne Nickford, Maple Ridge, sit in on media workshop at declining enrolment conference.



Lynne Hampson, chairperson of the BCTF declining enrolment task force, being interviewed by a CBC-TV news crew.

'A tragedy being visited upon us'

Anti-school forces deny child rights: LaPierre

Mardee Galt
Editorial Assistant

"A tremendous tragedy is being visited upon us because children are becoming an element of society with no rights," says educator Laurier LaPierre and "if you're poor or unsophisticated there is a danger that your children are doomed."

LaPierre, chairperson of the Ontario Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child, lecturer at Simon Fraser University and television commentator, spoke to delegates at the BCTF provincial conference on declining enrolment Jan. 20 at the Sheraton-Landmark Hotel in Vancouver.

"What is at stake is child development and the fundamental rights of the child to learn," he said.

He said that his Ontario commission has found — "and this parallels situations elsewhere" — that when declining enrolment hit the media it appeared to be an almost instant phenomenon although reports began to circulate in Ontario in 1970 — "but there has been a conspiracy to hide it — not to come to grips with it early on" and "teachers have been politically naive and stupid."

And since then, he said, "declining enrolment can easily become an instrument for whatever you want to use it — an instrument for political assault."

"Declining enrolment has created a demand for the dismantling of the school system in favor of private schools," he said, "and dismantling of the public school system would mean the abandonment of the forces of destiny of the poor, handicapped, mentally retarded children and single parents."

He referred to deaf children who go to a school for retarded children in Belleville, Ontario because there is no other place for them.

"It's enough to make you cry — the human indignity placed on a handicapped child."

LaPierre said that almost half the children in Ontario have to be taught English when they come to school, almost half are from single parent families and the majority of

them is responsible for children not being able to read or write, the school system is decaying and teachers are using the school system to pass along their own views and beliefs. It has given rise to a hate-teacher campaign by the demagogues.

"That children can't read or write has little to do with the school system or teachers. It has a lot to do with parents and a lot to do with an illiterate society and a consumer society," LaPierre said.

LaPierre said that declining enrolment has led some people to believe that if there are fewer people in the schools it should cost less to run them and that's a fallacy. "It should be an opportunity for increasing quality of education, not an excuse for mediocrity."

"We have found that declining enrolment has been used to camouflage the inflation spiral. The inflation rate is almost two digits and if you increase your school budget by about five per cent you don't even meet inflation."

"You haven't heard people complain about the costs of highways and airports but you've seen armies of people complaining about the increasing costs of education."

He said that some children (who are bused) "ride in tin boxes — travel 400 miles a week and spend almost three hours a day in buses in a society that says it believes in children."

"We've also seen that children can be passed around from ministry to ministry — their arm belongs to the ministry of education — their leg to the ministry of health. It's an abomination."

He referred to deaf children who go to a school for retarded children in Belleville, Ontario because there is no other place for them.

"There's a real need in the community to assess what will determine class size rather than through a figure reached at a bargaining table."



LAURIER LAPIERRE

single parents are women who live on the poverty line.

"Children live in high-rise apartments — little boxes where the walls are made of paper and if you drop a pencil the person next door stops to pick it up. These children come to school for the first time and they spread their arms and reach out. There are no walls to stop them. They can't restrain themselves when they go home and then they're called hyperactive children and put on drugs," he said.

He said his commission discovered that local school boards hold no real power — "only the power to say 'no' to a program and when the population has been made an accomplice through inflation — when they have the concept that education costs too much, the end result is that they cut in stupid ways."

Referring to Vancouver School Board budget cuts, LaPierre said, "I was horrified that they're cutting the teaching assistants who help little kids (in wheelchairs) go to the bathroom."

He warned teachers not to go into the declining enrolment battle on the class size issue alone — because although it's important, "I don't think you'll win" — but instead concentrate on the fundamental rights and needs of children.

"There's a real need in the community to assess what will determine class size rather than through a figure reached at a bargaining table."

But he said, "School boards should stop lying about class size, though, in saying that there are 19 students to a class when there are 35."

He pointed out that children only have two institutions, the home and the school.

"We have to become advocates of children and if teachers don't become advocates of children no one else will. There must be a real assessment of what the school is all about."

"The school must do more. It has to take care of all the needs of the child — become an extended family — a source of enrichment and a place of delight to be in."

"The school must become the agent of the child and this is

going to mean we will have to abandon our textbooks on how to teach."

He said that teachers are the key and must become coordinators of resources as far as children are concerned, facilitators and agents provocateurs.

"You've got to come out of your closets" and "if you're not passionate about the rights of children, get out — do something else."

He told the delegates, "You have a hard fight ahead of you. You will be humiliated, your motives will be questioned, you will become more and more the whipping boy. The sins of society will be visited upon you."

"To teach is to love," LaPierre concluded.

'Stay away' say New Zealand teachers

New Zealand post-primary teachers will refuse to teach with immigrant teachers brought in under special overseas recruitment schemes in future.

This resolution was passed by the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association at its 1978 annual conference.

New Zealand governments began to resort to overseas recruitment in postwar years when secondary school enrolment expanded rapidly, according to a statement sent to the Canadian Teachers' Federation by the New Zealand association, and "in the interests of providing education for our children this association accepted the need for these schemes."

The statement continues: "In recent years, however, new circumstances have arisen that have forced this association to revise its attitude."

"The association has been locked in a continuous struggle with successive governments to improve staffing, salaries and conditions of service in order to recruit and retain sufficient teachers. Faced on the one hand with association

demands and, on the other, by an economy in decline, successive governments have used overseas recruitment as a cheap alternative to improving salaries and conditions of service to the level where the present high rate of loss of secondary teachers can be reduced and recruitment retained at an adequate level.

"The teachers recruited abroad are then used to bolster statistics to show that no recruitment and retention problem exists. Special recruitment schemes are thus used as a means of depressing salaries and conditions of service."

Home exchange

If you'd like to exchange homes with a teacher in another part of Canada for the upcoming summer vacation months, contact the Canadian Teachers' Federation for a registration form. The CTF is operating a housing information service and will issue a supplement to its current housing registry in May.

The CTF address is 110 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1B4.

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

news letter

Editor ARNIE MYERS
Associate Editor MARDEE GALT

EDPRESS

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

Peter Thomson, Surrey TA:

The Surrey Teachers' Association Executive Committee wishes to publicly register its protest over the manner in which the case of Mr. Ralph Sundby was handled.

We have passed a censuring motion against the BCTF executive, and have urged other local associations and/

or executives to take similar action.

The major source of our dismay is that the BCTF executive, in our opinion, disregarded principles of due process in handling Mr. Sundby's case.

Peter Thomson,
President,
Surrey Teachers' Association
Jan. 10

Geoff Peters, Coquitlam TA:

The Coquitlam Teachers' Association executive asked me to convey to you some concerns and four motions passed unanimously at our Jan. 10 meeting.

1. Lombardi/Hampson moved that the BCTF Executive Committee develop in conjunction with the Professional Staff Association an evaluation process for all staff evaluation reports. This evaluation process to adhere to the principles of due process for teachers as outlined in BCTF policy.

The CTA executive believes that an evaluation process for BCTF staff members must be developed as soon as possible in conjunction with the staff association. It is incredible that no such process exists at present, although Ralph Sundby was evaluated and fired. The evaluation process should adhere to our policies and procedures for teacher evaluation and rights of due process. Any procedures we demand for teacher evaluation must apply to our staff members.

2. Lombardi/Hampson moved that we recommend to the BCTF Executive Committee that Ralph Sundby be re-appointed to the position of assistant director of the Professional Development Division; that his position be re-evaluated within a 12-month period in accordance with the evaluation processes outlined above.

Since no approved evaluation process was followed, Ralph Sundby should be reinstated immediately. At such time as an evaluation procedure is established, a re-evaluation should take place. Messrs. Buzza, Zlotnik, Shamsheer and Sundby (the evaluation team) all expressed concerns about problems or faults in the assessment procedure. Considering these factors, the evaluation should not have progressed and the termination decision never been made.

3. Scott/Gregg moved that the geographical representative be directed to raise the issue of Ralph Sundby's termination at the January Representative Assembly.

4. Scott/Florko moved that the CTA executive express its outrage over the dismissal of a BCTF staff member at a critical time during the learning conditions program; especially in light of recent governmental dictums affecting school board budgets.

We in School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) are in the process of preparing for budget follow-up, as are many colleagues throughout the province. Our Learning Conditions Committee is also grappling with the possibility of closure of three elementary and one

secondary school, staffing formula changes, preparation for spring learning and working conditions negotiations, "forced transfers" due to declining enrolments, the prospect of losing 39 teaching positions this year and pre-planning for next fall's learning conditions budget brief to the school board.

On top of this, add the finance minister's recent announcements on fiscal restraint and a possible provincial election and the workload is obvious. We require much assistance from the federation. Yet all this comes at a time when one learning conditions staff member is ill, one has just returned after a four-month absence and a new staff person is learning a new job. The final straw is the Sundby termination.

This action seriously threatens the learning conditions program, the jobs of teachers and the unmet needs of the children in our schools. In the best interests of the learning conditions program, the federation, teachers and children, we urge immediate consideration of our recommendations.

Geoff Peters
President
Jan. 12

Marjatta Chapman, LC Committee:

In the last BCTF Newsletter Mr. A. Manak, learning conditions chairperson for Richmond, expressed his impressions about the Jan. 8 Metro LC Zone meeting. Since his perceptions are misleading to those who were not in attendance at the zone meeting, it is only fair to present the facts.

1. The amendments to the agenda (the termination of Ralph Sundby, LC Work Group member, and due process) were proposed by two local presidents at the beginning of the meeting. The decision to include these two items on the agenda was democratically determined by the group. (The chairperson had pointed out to the group that there was a full agenda already and that they were not a legally constituted body. Despite these cautionary notes, the group decided to amend the agenda — an obvious expression of concern.)

2. There was no orchestration; the facts vis-a-vis the Sundby hearing were presented by various members of the group. These individuals had attended the Jan. 6-7 hearing.

3. Since the chairperson had no prior indication that the agenda would be amended, it was impossible to have a formal representation on behalf of the executive. One

Letters

Tom Krall, Executive:

I have concern that a vocal minority with a vested interest are attempting to stampee the BCTF membership in much the same manner as they attempted to influence the judgment of the Executive Committee on Jan. 6.

At the December executive meeting, I placed a motion to support Mr. Sundby's request for an open session. At the Jan. 6 meeting I had reason to regret that.

The ploy of a crowded meeting room was an obvious one. The ploy of flooding the BCTF Newsletter with letters of indignation is also an obvious one. I know that most BCTF members will see through this and realize that the Executive Committee had no political motive nor was it engaging in a political vendetta. The Executive Committee was acting upon a recommendation from the general secretary, just as it has acted upon eight previous recommendations from the general secretary regarding staff personnel matters. In the previous eight cases the recommendations were for continuing appointments.

There are those who would equate the professional staff agreement with the Public Schools Act. They are in no way related, nor intended to be related. Article 6.1 of the professional staff agreement reads: "Employment of the professional staff may be terminated by the Executive Committee or the professional staff member, by either party providing the other with 30 days' notice." Article 6.2

executive member, however, was present at the zone meeting.

4. In addition to the two agenda amendments, the following items were dealt with:

a) The minister of finance's statement, Jan. 3; its impact; BCTF response; Provincial Learning Conditions Committee recommendations to the executive.

b) Budget follow-ups: local reports; what has been done in your local; what needs to be done before Feb. 15; what kind of help may be needed; what should be the tone of our follow-up (what kind of PR or political action); what impact has the Dec. 1 letter on your local?

c) Vancouver staffing formula.

d) Questions, comments, sharing of ideas re a), b), c).

e) Next meeting: Feb. 6, to deal with further budget follow-ups (Feb. 15 - April 30), PR or political action.

Contrary to Mr. Manak's opinion, there was "a discussion on local budget presentations, public relations and other learning conditions matters as related to various metro locals."

Marjatta Chapman,
Metro LC Co-ordinator,
Chairperson, Provincial
Learning Conditions
Committee
Jan. 22

reads: "In the event that the Executive Committee terminates the employment of any staff member, it shall pay the member in lieu of tenure protection a severance and re-adjustment allowance."

The agreement is well understood by all BCTF staff members and is consistent with senior management personnel practices in related organizations and the world of business. The severance allowance and the relatively high salaries of senior staff people are compensation for lack of tenure protection.

No doubt the next ploy will be to flood the Representative Assembly and possibly the AGM with expressions of indignation and a call for reconsideration. I don't intend to be duped by these tactics and I have confidence that GRs and the general membership will respond in a similar fashion.

This executive member has always acted in the best interests of the federation and has every intention of continuing to do so, as long as he has the privilege of serving the teachers' federation. We must resist the temptation to be misled down the perilous road of political infighting. It is time we again directed our time and energies toward the growth, development and self-worth of our students and the welfare of our membership.

Tom Krall,
BCTF Executive Committee
Jan. 19

Nominations needed

Nominations for positions on the Executive Committee next year must be received in the BCTF office on or before Jan. 31.

Nominations are required for the table office positions — president, first vice-president, second vice-president — and for three member-at-large positions.

Elections to fill the six positions will take place at the Annual General Meeting. Table officers will be elected for one-year terms; members-at-large, for two-year terms.

The three members-at-large whose terms will expire on June 30 this year are, in alphabetical order, Larry Kuehn (Kamloops), Doug Steinson (Chilliwack), and Phil Van Seters (Duncan).

Additional member-at-large positions will become available if any of the four people whose terms have another year to run decide to run for table office this year. The four are, in alphabetical order, Pauline Galinski (Powell River), Tom Krall (Nanaimo), Gerry Retallick (Richmond), and Steve Norman (Vancouver). All were elected at the 1978 AGM.

Nominations may be made by resolution of a local association or district council, or may be signed by 10 members in good standing.

The Sundby letters — a recap . . .

The Executive Committee's termination of the appointment of Ralph Sundby, an assistant director in the Professional Development Division, has generated a spate of letters to the editor of the Newsletter.

Nine of those letters were printed in the Jan. 12 edition. Several of them supported Sundby and contained criticisms of the Executive Committee or the majority of its members who voted for his dismissal. That edition also contained responses by BCTF President Pat Brady and General Secretary Bob Buzza.

The discussion continues in this edition. On these pages you will find letters from presidents of two local associations, reporting motions by their executive committees concerning the Sundby case. There is a statement by Mike Zlotnik, director of the PD division, on the processes used in the case. There are responses to the criticisms in the Jan. 12 edition by four members of the Executive Committee, and a reply by the provincial Learning Conditions Committee chairperson to a letter from a Richmond member.

Other letters supporting Sundby and criticizing the decision to terminate his appointment have been received from the following members:

Michael Christie, Port Coquitlam; S. E. Cooper, Coquitlam; Lynda Coplin, Delta; Al Cordoni, Burnaby; R. Cowie, Surrey; Peter Ellis, Delta; Julia Goulden, Burnaby; Heather Knapp, Richmond; Marlene Morgan, Burnaby; Wes Midmore, Burnaby; Gale Neuberger, North Vancouver; Florence L. Nicholson, Maple Ridge; Les Phillips, Coquitlam; Karen Purdy, Burnaby; and Harley Rothstein, Richmond.

. . . and an apology

The Newsletter does not endorse or subscribe to the personal views expressed by any correspondent. The letters printed in the Jan. 12 edition were published in the interest of full and frank discussion of a matter that appeared to be of pressing interest to BCTF members.

Some of those letters contained statements alleging personal malice and political motivation, and reflections on the honesty and integrity of some members of the executive.

Such statements are excessive and unjustified. We regret any distress or embarrassment that these statements may have caused, and we take this first opportunity to publish this absolute disclaimer of these statements.

T. A. Myers, Editor

Pauline Galinski, Executive:

In response to some statements made in letters to the last edition of the Newsletter, I maintain that although members have every right to question my judgment, they do not have the right to impute motives to my actions.

I believe that I was elected to the Executive Committee to make decisions in the best interests of the federation, based on my own judgment of the facts — unswayed by pressure or intimidation by any one group. This I did on Jan. 6.

This forum does not provide the space for me to explain fully the process or the factors influencing the decision. I will be pleased to elaborate to any member on request.

I hold strong beliefs in the rights and responsibilities of the individual. These led me to vote, in the minority, to hold an open session at Mr. Sundby's request. Naively, I did not realize the restrictions that would be placed on the facts presented and the one-sided view that onlookers would re-

ceive. That would not, however, have changed my vote.

No effort was spared during that very long day to give Mr. Sundby the opportunity for natural justice that is his right. I did not intend then and will not now attempt to discredit or demean any staff member for serving the federation to the best of his or her ability.

I was called upon to make a management decision on an issue I found unpleasant to contemplate. You did not elect me to turn and run from unpleasantness, and I did not.

With the severe attacks our profession is being subjected to externally, we cannot afford to be using our energy to fight one another. Take the time to find out all about the process and then decide whether you want our federation managed effectively, as the 11 elected Executive Committee members are now attempting to do, supported and advised by our staff.

Pauline Galinski,
BCTF Executive Committee
Jan. 22

Kids, Kids, Kids.

Read all about them in the January/February B.C. Teacher — a special 48-page edition commemorating the International Year of the Child.

The B.C. Teacher takes a look at the rights and needs of all children; retired teacher and well-known author Sam Roddan reminisces about being a pupil in the dear-old-golden-rule days; current children's literature is discussed; some unique teaching approaches are described; two adults, one physically handicapped and the other with a past "learning disability," discuss mainstreaming, and a teacher takes a look at schooling in Mexico.

Letters

Ken J. Smith, Executive:

I would like to highlight some facts of the Sundby termination that some people are ignoring.

The Professional Staff Association of the BCTF has negotiated a collective agreement that does two things:

1. a trade-off of tenure for salary. (Staff do not have tenure; they can be terminated with 30 days' notice, without reasons being given. Mr. Sundby was earning close to \$40,000 a year.)

2. a trade-off of tenure for severance pay. (Staff receive severance pay as a percentage of salary for each year of employment. Mr. Sundby will receive over \$10,000 in severance pay for 3½ years of employment.)

The staff association developed the assessment process that was used in this instance. Some staff members opposed the process. Mr. Sundby supported it. One might reason correctly that any assessment process developed by the employee will favor the employee. This process does.

Mr. Sundby was well aware of the above when he accepted

employment with the BCTF. Why then are his friends crying foul? The Executive Committee followed the agreed-to process to the nth degree, plus went several steps further in allowing Mr. Sundby one month extra to prepare his case, and in allowing the hearing to proceed in open session (against solid advice to the contrary!)

The Executive Committee further applied the provisions of the collective agreement in the most liberal sense possible. (Mr. Sundby actually received close to 50 days of notice and had severance pay pro-rated for the portion of the contract year employed.)

And why was Mr. Sundby released? Because quite simply, in the considered opinion of the general secretary (and confirmed by the divisional director), Mr. Sundby was not performing at the level of expectation of a \$40,000-a-year staff person. Members of the Executive Committee, each using his or her own judgment, voted in the majority to support that opinion.

Ken J. Smith
Second Vice-President
Jan. 22

Doug Steinson, Executive:

One of the aspects of being a BCTF executive member that particularly bothered me was the staff hiring procedure. It seemed to me that the first and most important qualification an applicant had to have was a "correct" political point of view. I reasoned that if staff appointments were made on a political basis, staff terminations might be made on a political basis. And, more importantly, staff terminations would appear to be made on the basis of politics.

Mr. Sundby's termination is being interpreted by the usual radical groupies as a politically motivated termination. No amount of evidence and reason is going to change the party line of the extreme left on this issue. The usual left-wing clique have "an issue." Elections at the AGM will, according to them, revolve around the "political" firing of Sundby. Candidates will be right-wing extremists or fair-minded objective candidates. Mark my words, the moderates in the federation will be labelled right-wing extremists, and the Marxists will be labelled moderates. Shades of Alice in Wonderland.

Regardless of why the rest of the BCTF executive voted as it did, I personally saw the issue as a matter of principle. Do we respect the judgment of our general secretary and the affected division director and terminate Mr. Sundby? Or do we accept (or demand) the resignations of those two and retain Mr. Sundby? Either someone is managing our federation, or no one is.

The 16-hour circus the left-wing "rent-a-crowd" subjected us to on Jan. 6 was, in my humble opinion, a pathetic distortion of the process of natural justice. Important decisions should not be made by mobs, and mobs should not perceive themselves to be a significant factor in democratic decision-making.

Mr. Sundby wanted an open session. I spent 16 hours of my life patiently listening for any information that changed my perception of the basic principle at stake. No such information was forthcoming. How Mr. Onstad, who sat behind me, could be so sure I was sleeping and not simply resting my eyes or engaging in profound thought mystifies me. (Besides, I make more sense asleep than most of that rent-a-crowd does awake.)

Mr. Onstad's red herring deserves to be ignored, as do the specious arguments of my other critics.

Doug Steinson,
BCTF Executive Committee
January 12, 1979

Mike Zlotnik, PD Director:

The members of the BCTF have a right to expect effective performance from their highly paid administrative staff. In turn, staff are entitled to humane, decent treatment and good personnel practices from their employers.

The general secretary had the responsibility to make a recommendation concerning the continuation or termination of Ralph Sundby. That was his duty and responsibility assigned by the BCTF Executive Committee. The general secretary was required to make his recommendation in consultation with me. As Mr. Sundby's immediate supervisor I was in a position to consider all aspects of his work. I weighed all of the evidence carefully in coming to my assessment. The basis for my assessment was performance, not political or personal considerations.

There was a major violation of good personnel practices in the hearing on Mr. Sundby's termination: holding the hearing in an open session of the Executive Committee. Certain of Mr. Sundby's supporters have interpreted the open session as meaning that anything goes: public discussion of the merits not only of Mr. Sundby but of other staff members as well, a moratorium on ethical practices, and an open season on the general secretary, me and Executive Committee members.

Many members are likely to be misled by reports giving a partial or one-sided perspective on the proceedings. The Executive Committee was provided with a great deal of documentation on both sides of the matter. Selected pieces were read into the record in the open session. However, observers at the executive meeting did not have the confidential documentation which was the primary evidence in the hearing.

During the open session, some of my testimony was contradicted by Mr. Sundby. Whether he was successful in refuting my testimony and in proving me to be in error could be pursued in a court of law where rules of evidence and impartial judgment would pertain.

It was reported that Mr. Sundby's job description showed 90 per cent of his time spent on field work. That is not true. Linda Shuto claims to have heard that 12 BCTF members were asked by the evaluation team to assess Mr. Sundby. They were not. The 12 were asked to comment on specific services received or interactions with Mr. Sundby. The 12 did not have information on Mr. Sundby's overall performance nor the expectations for the job and were not asked to provide an overall evaluation.

It was reported that six witnesses spoke favorably concerning Mr. Sundby's work and this is true. However, many readers may not know that these witnesses were selected by Mr. Sundby and his lawyer. They were "witnesses for the defense."

I have seen six letters to the editor that are critical of my role. Not one author has discussed his/her concerns with me or provided a copy to me. One attributes a quote to me which was in fact made by Mr.

Sundby's lawyer. Some contain mis-statements and we have a legal opinion that some of the letters to the editor, if printed, might be defamatory.

Two members of the PD division have indicated to me that there is the expectation that staff should take sides in this personnel case. They feel that such pressure tends to compromise their roles as staff, particularly in light of the staff association's position. I believe such pressure is stressful and needlessly interferes with the carrying out of federation programs.

Some of Mr. Sundby's supporters, in their concern for due process, have ignored a basic element of due process. BCTF policy 53.A.01, part 5 states "the right to appeal to clearly designated competence authorities or bodies." However, these supporters have been pursuing appeals with various groups of members, BCTF committees and local association executives. They have provided partial, one-sided information. In so doing, they are pursuing a political strategy rather than due-process principles.

Mr. Sundby and his supporters have criticized the process used in his evaluation. That process was adopted by the Professional Staff Association and approved in principle, by the BCTF executive. The process has been used for nine staff evaluations. The process does have some weaknesses and because of my concern about those weaknesses, based on my experience with three previous evaluations, I moved a motion on June 20, 1978 at a meeting of the Professional Staff Association:

"That the Professional Staff Association no longer support the formal assessment procedures it had formerly agreed to, and is not prepared to enter into any further assessment until its concerns regarding appointment, assessment and terminations are resolved."

I was concerned that the process be fully acceptable before proceeding with the four evaluations that had to be conducted in the fall of 1978. I spoke in favor of the motion as strenuously as I could, and I voted for it, although it did not carry. Mr. Sundby spoke against the motion and voted against it. In other words, Mr. Sundby voted to support the process used in his evaluation. His concern with process was expressed when it was clear there was a disagreement on the evaluation team concerning his performance.

The Professional Staff Association is opposed to public evaluation of staff members. We believe that personnel matters should be dealt with in committee rather than in public session. I have attempted to avoid commentary in this letter on Mr. Sundby's work and to deal with matters of process arising from the unfortunate decision to hear the termination case in public. It is my hope that any further appeals will be to appropriate bodies so that we can get on with the business of serving teachers.

Mike Zlotnik,
Director,
Professional Development
Jan. 22
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A chance for leadership

By W. Allan Garneau, Vancouver

A remarkable opportunity has been placed before the BCTF, one that results from a series of deliberate acts and some coincidental happenings. Consider the following:

• It has been three years since the idea of a commission on education was hatched, and one year since the United Society for Education Review (USER) was established to get it under way. For a variety of reasons, no commission has yet been established.

• The United Nations has declared 1979 to be the International Year of the Child (who hasn't heard?) and a number of activities are in the planning stages. One of them, I presume, is a conference sponsored by the BCTF and other "concerned agencies" on the rights and responsibilities of children (Executive minutes, April 13 - 15, 1978, p. 5.)

• Education continues to take a bashing through tight fiscal restraints and public criticism encouraged by the provincial government.

• At the same time, the movement toward integration of handicapped and/or exceptional children (mainstreaming) is being given attention from all corners. In particular, a number of concerned groups have formed an informal coalition to monitor the trends and suggest action where necessary.

• The report of a task force established in 1975 by the Canadian Council on Children and Youth is recently published. Entitled *Admittance Restricted*, the report raises all kinds of questions we should be asking (and answering) both as teachers and citizens. The report emphasizes the necessity to focus on children's basic needs and rights and urges the re-establishment of the family as the basic unit in society.

What arises from the foregoing is an overwhelming desire to gather all these and other components together in a huge bag and shake vigorously. Once inverted, out of the bag will tumble the fundamental organization for a major conference — a conference on the child in British Columbia:

— a chance for all of those interested in the child and the family in society to meet together;

— a chance to exchange information on children's problems, their origins, and their solutions;

— a chance to prompt anyone with responsibility for solutions — from governments to individuals — into action to deal with them.

Such a conference would extend considerably beyond a child's educational needs, and would therefore be more than we could (or should) tackle alone. But we could not create a better opportunity for ourselves to accomplish what was hoped for with the commission on education.

In addition to exploring with the public the nature of effective education in our present society, we provide a forum for those whose concerns for children may be different: economic or health, for example. The possibilities abound!

An event such as this would have many times the public impact and cost considerably less than the commission (estimated to be up to \$1,000,000).

United Nations Day is Oct. 24. A two- or three-day conference scheduled near that time would be a very appropriate way for the BCTF to make a valuable contribution to the International Year of the Child. We've lost some lead time, but it is not too late. Let us hope that executive and/or Representative Assembly decisions capitalize on this opportunity.

Minimum 20-hour week for UIC benefits now

By MIKE MIDZAIN

Economic Welfare

Recent amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act, presented as part of the federal government's "fiscal restraint" program, will require a minimum of 20 hours of employment in a week for the employment to be insurable.

This means that unemployment insurance premiums will not be deducted from earnings for periods of less than 20 hours a week, and the time worked will not count for potential benefit purposes. The change is effective as of Jan. 1, 1979.

The commission has decided that teacher claimants on regular part-time or substitutes will be considered to have fulfilled the 20-hour minimum requirement, and therefore will be insurable in a given week, if they have worked at least 50 per cent of that week. This rule will recognize that while half-time teachers may spend less than 20 hours in the classroom (i.e., 12 or 13 hours on average) the amounts of preparation, testing, marking and other necessary duties will

require at least 20 hours per week for a half-time teacher or a substitute who works 2½ days.

Other changes that will impose additional hardships on those people already suffering most — the unemployed or marginally employed — provide for increased entrance requirements for new entrants and repeaters, a reduction in the weekly benefit rate, and a recovery of a portion of benefits paid to claimants with gross annual incomes (including unemployment insurance benefits) of more than \$22,000.

When the amending legislation was introduced in the house in November, the Canadian Teachers' Federation vigorously opposed it in representations to the house committee which studied the bill and to the minister. But despite similar protest from opposition MPs, the NDP in particular, and submissions from the Canadian Labour Congress, the government dug in its heels and passed the legislation just before its Christmas recess.

Exec, RA debate resolutions

The January meetings of the Executive Committee and Representative Assembly each year discuss some of the many resolutions submitted by local associations.

The January meeting of the Executive Committee had 12 resolutions on its agenda.

Two from the B.C. Counsellors' Association were passed. They read:

• That teachers appointed to the position of school counsellor should have specialized training in counselling.

• That teachers appointed to the position of school counsellor should be able to provide counselling services at the developmental, preventive and remedial levels in the career, educational and social/personal areas.

Two resolutions from the Surrey Teachers' Association were approved in principle, but referred to the Policies and Procedures Committee for possible rewording. The Executive Committee approved the ideas, but had reservations about the wording. The two resolutions read:

• That the BCTF actively oppose any increased requirement for making application for sick leave or verification of sick-leave claims.

• That the BCTF actively oppose any directive or tendency toward elimination of substitutes when a teacher is sick, or any requirement that other staff be required to "cover" an absence.

A resolution from the Burnaby Teachers' Association

SFU raising admission standards

Tighter admission standards, to be fully in force by the fall of 1981, have been announced by Simon Fraser University.

The new standards will require B.C. secondary school graduates to have an overall average of C+, or 2.5, in four Grade 12 subjects, including English 12. Two Grade 11 subjects will also be required — algebra plus a language or science course.

The new policy will recognize Grade 12 courses approved by the Ministry of Education for inclusion on the arts and science list.

As part of the gradual phasing-in of higher standards, the new Simon Fraser policy requires applicants graduating in 1980 to have an overall average of 2.5, or C+, on three Grade 12 subjects including English 12.

As of the fall of 1981, the admission to SFU of applicants who graduated before that date will be based on admission requirements in the year of graduation.

At present, B.C. secondary school graduates must have an overall average of 2.0, or C, in three Grade 12 courses including English, plus Grade 11 algebra, for admission to Simon Fraser.

The new admission standards will mean that all three B.C. universities will have comparable policies. UBC and the University of Victoria are phasing in similar changes.

was amended slightly and passed: "That whenever possible, BCTF administrative staff appointees have recent teaching experience in a Canadian public school system."

A resolution from the Langley Teachers' Association was referred to the BCTF solicitor for a legal opinion. It read: "That the BCTF provide legal aid to any teacher who, after an unsuccessful attempt at the local level to delete an inaccuracy in a teaching report, wishes to challenge the accuracy of that report."

The Executive Committee turned down a resolution from the Gulf Islands Teachers' Association seeking to have the formula for grants to local associations amended. The amendment would have added \$135,000 to the BCTF budget.

A resolution from the Terrace District Teachers' Association was also turned down. It sought to make it mandatory for the Executive Committee to appoint a person as a regional co-ordinator if a

majority of the associations in the region nominated the person. Such a provision would be contrary to By-law 5.6, according to the BCTF solicitor, so the resolution was not accepted.

A resolution from Burnaby on staff salaries and one from Fraser Valley East District Council on pensions were not discussed because they will be submitted to the AGM.

A resolution from the Queen Charlotte District Teachers' Association on the time off allowed teachers for BCTF business was tabled because the Executive Committee believes the time is inopportune to pursue the resolution.

A resolution from Alexandra Pazitch, which sought to have excessive use of alcohol or other drugs included in "conduct harmful or prejudicial to the interests of the federation," was defeated because it would have prejudged ethics cases involving drugs.

The January meeting of the Representative Assembly will have 15 resolutions to debate.

Private-school policy goes to AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be asked to approve a new BCTF policy on private schools.

The policy statement sets out eight conditions which should be met by all publicly funded schools. Private schools in B.C. are now eligible for an annual subsidy of \$500 a student from the provincial government.

The proposed new policy was endorsed by the Executive Committee at its Jan. 11-13 meeting for submission to the AGM. It reads:

"11.59 That the following principles should be strictly adhered to by all schools receiving public funds:

"1. There should be equality of opportunity with respect to discipline, learning conditions, standards, quality of service, and course offerings, for students within a school district.

"2. No student should be denied admission to any school on the basis of race, color, nationality, language, religion, sex, ability, interests, wealth, social class or educational goals.

"3. All schools should be governed by the same laws, regulations, and procedures as set by duly elected representa-

tives of the public both provincially and locally.

"4. Parents and other members of the general public should have equal rights to involvement in the operation and activities of all such schools.

"5. No public funds, directly or indirectly, should be used to proselytize, to the exclusion of others, any one religion, nor to give any imbalanced views of particular moral codes or political views.

"6. The operating funds spent on behalf of each student at the school level should not be greater in the publicly funded private school(s) than in the public schools in the same district.

"7. All schools should be subject to the same public control, requirements, scrutiny and accountability with respect to budgeting, expenditure and reporting.

"8. There should be strict enforcement of the same ethical considerations with respect to conflict of interest by publicly elected officials on matters dealing with governance and financial support of public or independent schools."

Chilliwack staff launches class-size grievance

By WES KNAPP

Professional Development The staff of Chilliwack Junior Secondary School has launched a grievance over large classes at the school. Thirty-one teachers have signed the grievance, which has the support of the Chilliwack Teachers' Association and the BCTF.

There are 26 classes with more than 30 students. In addition, a promised additional staff member for the gifted and enrichment program has not been supplied. The library, according to the latest ministerial standards, operates one-half teacher short.

The local association decided to pursue the grievance after the Chilliwack School Board rejected the request for additional staff. Further, the superintendent informed the staff of Chilliwack Junior Secondary that the request for extra staff was unwarranted.

News Briefs

North Van reunion

North Vancouver High School is closing its doors permanently next June.

Several special events are planned and a grand final reunion will be held next May.

All ex-students and teachers of the school since 1910 are asked to register either by

writing the reunion committee in care of the school, 210 East 23rd Street, North Vancouver, or by phoning 994-0815.

A staff reunion is being held March 3 and those wishing to attend should contact the reunion committee at the school or Pamela Graham, 733-7936.

Television seminar

Television — how it affects early reading development — will be the subject of a seminar sponsored by the Children's Television Association Friday night, Feb. 16 and Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Burnaby Arts Centre.

Dr. Regan Calloway, researcher at the Ontario Insti-

tute for Studies in Education, will be the keynote speaker.

Further information and registration forms can be obtained from B. McIlwraith, Suite 204, 6636 Dow Street, Burnaby, or by phoning 581-3476, 922-0493 (day) or 434-7466 (evening).

Language tour

A travel tour to New York March 24-31 for language teachers is being organized by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

The tour, which is planned to be of special interest to teachers of French, German, Ukrainian, Spanish, Greek and Chinese, will include visits to and lectures at New York's bi-

lingual education and resource centres and meetings with United Nations translation services personnel.

The \$440 fee includes airfare, accommodation and all organized activities.

More information can be obtained from Olenka Bilash, 352 Athabasca Hall, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alta. T5G 2E8.

Space update

Space scientists from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration will be among the resource personnel attending "Space Update: 1979," a conference on planetary exploration to be held May 17-19 at Burnaby South Senior Secondary School.

The conference program will cover new research in planetary (including earth) and cosmic exploration, classroom teaching strategies in space

science, and identification and availability of teacher resource materials.

The sessions will be of interest to science and geography teachers from elementary to college levels.

More information can be obtained from Anand Atal or Greg Edgar at Royal Oak Junior Secondary School, 6037 Marlborough Avenue, Burnaby, (433-9396).

Newspaper workshop

A one-day workshop will be held on Friday, Feb. 23 at Vanier Senior Secondary School, Courtenay, for Vancouver Island teachers and students interested in producing student newspapers.

The workshop is open not only to schools already producing newspapers but also to those wishing to get started.

There will be sessions in photography, advertising, newspaper writing, sports reporting, editing and layout,

column writing, use of the newspaper in the classroom, and possibly cartooning. The sessions will be taught by professional journalists from Vancouver Island.

Organizers of the workshop are Courtenay journalism teachers Brent Reid and Peter Feltham.

Information can be obtained from Peter Feltham, 1924 Comox Avenue, Comox, B.C. V9N 4A2, home telephone 339-5602.

CTF seeks delegates

A grass-roots conference held by teachers for teachers will be sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation in Winnipeg May 6-9.

Schools throughout B.C. will soon receive copies of the preliminary program for "Inquiry Canada — Quality of Education: Quality of Life" and local teachers' associations are asked by the CTF to consider sending delegates.

All resource persons at the conference will be Canadians. Almost all are classroom teachers or in-school administrators.

The conference was planned following evaluation of the CTF 1976 conference, "Canadian Focus: Quality of Education." Local school boards fi-

nanced many delegates to the 1976 conference.

Ed May, teacher at Moody Junior Secondary School in Port Moody, B.C., will be one of the conference speakers. Others include Kay Sigurjónsson, former teacher and broadcaster now with the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, and TV interviewer and Simon Fraser University lecturer Laurier LaPierre.

Air Canada, in co-operation with conference organizers, has arranged for a special allocation of seats on flights to and from Winnipeg May 6-9.

Additional information can be obtained from the Canadian Teachers' Federation, 110 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1B4.

Pt. Grey reunion

Point Grey Secondary School will hold a 50th anniversary reunion Oct. 26. Former students and staff members and all other interested persons are invited to attend. Further information can be obtained by phoning 261-6391.

Librarians meet

The B.C. School Librarians' Association will hold its spring conference May 3, 4, and 5 at the Vernon Lodge Hotel in Vernon. The theme is "Librarians, Force for the Future". For further information contact Tony Ramsdale, Charles Bloom Secondary School, Lumby, V0E 2G0.

Music conference

Pacific Sound: Canada '79, the national conference of the Canadian Music Educators' Association, will be held in Vancouver, March 26-29 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Registration forms are available from J. E. Stark, 2355 E. 6th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5N 1R4.

Mt. View reunion

Mountain View Elementary School in Coquitlam is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and May 7-11 has been designated as homecoming week.

Ex-students, teachers and anyone else interested should call the school (936-7288) or write to 699 Robinson Street, Coquitlam, B.C. V3J 4E7.

CUSO calling: teachers needed for overseas

The Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) has sent out a call for teacher-volunteers for assignment in developing countries.

CUSO hopes to place between 80 and 90 teachers in secondary schools and training colleges before March and is trying to meet a demand for instructors in math, science, and English as a second language. However, instructors in other subjects are needed as well.

Orientation courses are provided, along with language training when necessary. Travel to and from the assignment is paid by CUSO as well as a settling-in allowance and resettlement costs when the

volunteer returns to Canada.

The countries requesting the services of CUSO volunteers pay the volunteers' salaries at local rates, but according to CUSO, most teachers find they can maintain a reasonable standard of living. Housing is usually provided free or is subsidized, and CUSO pays medical, dental and life insurance costs.

CUSO particularly welcomes applications from teaching couples.

Additional information can be obtained from Beth Haddon, B.C. regional co-ordinator, 2524 Cypress Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3N2. The telephone number is 732-1814.

Former Quebec teacher?

Some former Quebec teachers who taught in religious institutions will now be able to count, for pension purposes, years of teaching in that province for which they did not make pension contributions.

Bill 60, which makes this possible, was enacted June 23 and also applies to lay teachers who taught in certain private schools and were not eligible to make pension contributions.

A condition of eligibility under Bill 60 is that teachers be participants in either the Teachers' Pension Plan or the Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan, or be entitled to receive a pension from either of these plans.

Also teachers who have moved to an employer with a transfer agreement with Quebec may be eligible.

If you feel that Bill 60 provisions apply to you, write for further information to Com-

mission Administrative, du Regime de Retraite, 2875 Laurier Boulevard, St. Foy, Que.

PD course

A summer short course for PD chairpersons is being planned by the BCTF Professional Development Advisory Committee which met Dec. 8-9.

One of the purposes of the proposed short course would be to acquaint PD chairpersons with professional development programs available from public universities, BCTF, libraries, private foundations, the Ministry of Education and the BCTF.

The advisory committee also resolved to ask the Executive Committee to request the Ministry of Education to restore withdrawn professional days.

By IVAN JOHNSON

Reprinted from *The Whistle*, official publication of the Burnaby Teachers' Association.

As a Staff Representative who has had the joyous task of having to ask his fellow staff to allow their names to stand for the position of BTA Staff Rep, I offer the following list of popular excuses for declining. These excuses are versatile, and can be used for almost any suggested position in any organization.

1. "I don't believe in politics." Congratulations, you have been selected as chairperson of the Welcoming Committee for B.C.'s first dictator.

2. "I was Staff Rep in 1956." Have you informed the BTA that you are returning all salary increases that the BTA has won for you since 1956? The BTA, however, may not be willing to allow you to have the same class size as you had in 1956. Class size reductions were won for the kids' sake.

3. "I'm coaching the basketball team." Do you mean that all those years I was Staff Rep I coached those teams and sponsored those clubs for nothing?

4. "I'm teaching night school." Don't forget to share your night school paycheck with your Staff Reps who don't get paid for their service.

5. "The meetings are too boring." What do you tell you students if they say the same thing about your class?

6. "I don't believe in unions." Haven't you heard, we have a long tradition of thinking we are better than a union. You will be right at home.

7. "I ran once before and lost." Isn't it a good thing you didn't use that excuse when you weren't accepted in your first job application?

8. "I'm going to the opera (or symphony) this year." Isn't it a good thing there are enough of us uncultured slobs to keep the BTA going?

9. "I don't have any experience." This one will last you a lifetime.

If you have a favorite excuse that I have not mentioned, please forward it to me. I am organizing a workshop for those who have run out of excuses. The tentative date of the workshop is either Dec. 25 or Feb. 30 — and do I have an excuse for not being there!

Lost in the Sacred mumble-jungle

From page 1

Sick leave

(The following opinion piece was submitted by a member of the BCTF staff who describes himself as "an unsuccessful horse-player and therefore perfectly competent to comment on the vagaries of education finance.")

By Jim Bowman

On Jan. 3 Finance Minister Evan Wolfe, in what must be at least the 549th pronouncement by one minister or another in the present government on the subject of the cost of education, said in part:

"The minister of education will accelerate the development of the budget performance evaluation program, including incentive provisions for school districts showing excellent fiscal management."

On Jan. 19, after just 16 days of acceleration, the minister of education announced that his ministry had indeed developed a budget performance evaluation program and that 13 school districts would be rewarded for showing excellent fiscal management.

Good show! Those of us who labor in these particular vineyards could hardly wait to hear the details. Had the ministry decided that it cost more to heat the sumptuous staffrooms of Fort St. John than the palatial ones of Port Moody? Were the pedagogues of Princeton more profligate with the foolscap than the mentors of Merritt? Could the Cache Creek custodians clean more cheaply than the sweepers of Smithers?

One observer wondered, in an obviously hallucinatory moment, if there would be some consideration given to the educational services offered to children in determining what was excellent fiscal management. "No way," cried those of us well schooled in the ministerial mumble-jungle, "no way!" But even our most doleful predictions could not have foreseen what was to come.

All of the "key management efficiency indicators," that were used to determine "excellent fiscal management" start with a "p." Parsimony, parsimony, parsimony and more parsimony. Depending on how many indicators they've got that's how many times they are parsimonious.

Now it may well be that some of the boards receiving the rewards do practise "excellent fiscal management." It may well be that some of the boards not receiving the rewards also practise "excellent fiscal management" because that phrase is not a synonym for parsimony.

As the late Edmund Burke noted, "Mere parsimony is not economy. Economy is a distributive virtue and consists not in saving but in selection. Parsimony requires no providence, no sagacity, no powers of combination, no comparison, no judgment."

However, old Burke, the father of modern conservatism, is probably regarded as a profligate whose clones sit on 62 school

boards, by Mr. Wolfe or Dr. McGeer or whichever minister will be making next week's attack on education.

It is a well-known fact that most school trustees are wild-eyed muzhiks bent on bankrupting every taxpayer in sight. It is also a well-known fact that most teachers are incompetent jackasses bent on graduating nothing but illiterates, unemployed layabouts and cartoonists. I repeat these well-known facts because of another well-known fact: the government of this province is our only bulwark against bankruptcy, illiteracy and cartoons. (They don't like to talk about employment.) I almost forgot the most important well-known fact: inflation does not exist or at least does not affect school board and municipal budgets.

Let us acknowledge all these well-known facts and reveal some facts not so well known:

1. From 1964 to 1978 B.C. government revenues increased at the rate of 16.24 per cent a year and expenditures at 17.17 per cent a year.

2. Expenditures on elementary and secondary education in B.C. between 1964 and 1978 increased at the rate of 13.66 per cent a year.

3. Between 1964 and 1978 the costs of elementary and secondary education as a percentage of the total provincial expenditures on education declined from 75.4 to 59.9.

4. Between 1964 and 1978 elementary and secondary expenditures as a percentage of government revenue declined from 19.7 per cent to 14.7 per cent.

5. Between 1975 and 1978 the provincial government increased the basic levy from 26.5 mills to 41.68 mills, thus forcing an increased share of the cost of education onto local sources.

Will the rewards to school boards be paid in old money or new money?

This answer requires some elaboration. Those of you familiar with the theories of Major Douglas will know that the difference between old money and new money can't be explained; it just is. For instance, government grants to public school boards are made in old money which has a limited and diminishing supply, whereas government aid to alleviate social and economic distress, as in grants to independent schools are (as termed by the government) new money. And new money increases in quantity because of the excellent fiscal policies of the government.

This means that you can't take new money from old money areas because one is diminishing and the other expanding. Therefore the reward money must be new money. But you can't give new money to old areas because it would then diminish — therefore the reward money must be old money.

This, for those of you still with us, is known as mumble-jungle fiscal logic and its high priests sit on the treasury board. Those of us who still believe in the tooth fairy see no predicament — we'll just call it funny money.

salary dollars) and benefits (in days of protection for teachers) of variations of the two basic models.

The variations ranged from merely making the present service plan portable and abandoning the 120-day limit, to implementing an insurance plan with six days' leave at full salary and 124 days at 75 per cent of salary, to an insurance plan with a 200-day guarantee (15 days at full salary, 85 days at 90 per cent of salary and 100 days at 80 per cent).

The model also considered variations that would protect teachers who have built up a bank of sick leave under the present plan. These variations would permit these members to "top up" their protection under an insurance plan, bringing the partial-salary days up to full salary.

It also tested hybrid combinations of features of the two basic plans.

The computer analysis showed that the cost of these improvements would range from \$48,600 a year (for the present plan with portability and no limit on the number of days used per year), to almost \$2 million for the most expensive insurance scheme.

An insurance scheme with a one-day deductible (penalty) clause would actually save the school boards money — from \$5.9 million to \$6.4 million on the four variations tested.

The study also showed the following average sick-leave utilization in 1975-76: male teachers, 5.73 days; female teachers, 8.42 days; all teachers, 7.14 days.

During that school year 16 per cent of all teachers (23 per cent of males and 9 per cent of females) took no sick leave and 9 per cent of all teachers (5 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females) had absences of more than 15 days.

The basic results of the study were jointly released to the news media by the BCTF and BCSTA Jan. 19. The full report is being distributed to local association presidents and geographical representatives.

Scholarship discontinued

We have received a number of letters from students requesting information and application forms for the Charlesworth Memorial Scholarship.

Policy 25.C.03 states: "That the BCTF support the principle that each school staff in consultation with its students and their parents decides what, if any, kinds of excellence should be rewarded, and if so, at what stages of pupil growth and development, and in what form these rewards should be made."

In response to this policy, the BCTF discontinued the Charlesworth Memorial Scholarship, or any other form of scholarship, to students pursuing post-secondary education.

It may be advisable for school counsellors to notify students of the situation, so that students will not be depending on such financial aid.

How Victoria has responded to Fairtax

By George North
Professional Development

Proposition Fairtax objectives remain as valid today as when they were formulated last summer, in spite of pronouncements by Finance Minister Evan Wolfe and Education Minister Pat McGeer.

Here is how matters now stand:

Fairtax proposal: Cut the provincial education tax (basic levy) to 39 mills.

Government response: The estimated basic provincial education tax has been raised to 41.68 mills from the 1978 level of 39.75 mills, an increase of 1.93 mills.

Fairtax proposal: Increase direct grants to school districts.

Government response: Wolfe has said (Jan. 3) that "provincial grants to school districts and/or homeowners will be increased." With the 41.68 mill rate and an estimated 7.5-per-cent increase in property assessments, direct grants could go up by \$11.6 million or 3.3 per cent. A new incentive grant will reward cost-cutters.

Fairtax proposal: Reduce the minimum education tax to \$1 (from \$50).

Government response: No action indicated.

Fairtax proposal: Increase the homeowner grant to \$350 (from \$280) for those under 65 and to \$520 (from \$480) for those over 65.

Government response: Premier Bill Bennett stated (Sept. 19 at Penticton) that the

homeowner grant is "one of the areas we're looking at." (See also Wolfe's Jan. 3 statement).

Fairtax proposal: Remove all costs of post-secondary and adult education from local property taxes.

Government response: A section of the Colleges and Provincial Institutions Act, which gives the minister of finance power to do this, has been proclaimed. Changes in the Public Schools Act are also needed. It is likely that college costs will be removed but this will be totally offset by the increase in the provincial tax.

The net effect of the government's planned increase in the basic levy, coupled with the increase in assessments, means that:

1. The local share of the

Basic Education Program (BEP) will rise by \$62.3 million, or 12.75 per cent.

2. The provincial share of the BEP, in dollar terms, may rise by \$11.6 million.

3. In percentage terms, the provincial share of the BEP may drop to 40 per cent (from 42 in 1978).

4. The provincial share of school board operating budgets will decline to a figure below last year's 39 per cent.

Currently estimated grants to school districts will be far below the 9.0-per-cent increase in the Consumer Price Index in spite of gimmicks produced by the Ministry of Education.

Incentive grants will be given to cost-cutting boards, regardless of how insensitive to student needs their budgeting may be.

Do we have your correct home address?

Name _____
first middle initial last

Address _____

Social Insurance Number _____
(essential for identification purposes)

School District _____

Return to:
BCTF, 105-2235 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

We need to have all members' home addresses in order to provide you with the services you pay for, and to comply with the law of the province.

As you know, most BCTF materials are distributed through schools, but members assigned to district staff and members on leaves of absence get these items at their home addresses.

Two regular items each year go to every member at their home address. These are your fee receipt for income tax deductions, and the official notice of the Annual General Meeting. Home addresses are also needed if a referendum or special general meeting is called.

In the past, we have complied with some members' requests by putting school or district office addresses on our files as their mailing address. We can no longer do this — we must have your home address, because of a change in the Societies Act.

If we do not have correct home address information for you, please use the form to send it to us.