

# 1980 Leadership Report: Highlights

## Goal I: To achieve a co-operative professional autonomy for teachers.

**Objective 1:** Teacher stress is causing more and more cases of "burnout" among teachers. We have a responsibility as colleagues to ensure that support systems are available to teachers in crisis. At the same time we must work toward alleviating the conditions that cause teacher "burnout."

**Objective 2:** Expand the scope of bargaining to include class size, preparation time, facilities and resources, support services for the learning-disabled, participation in decision-making, less supervision time, and other matters affecting the learning and working conditions of children and teachers.

**Objective 3:** Continuing education of teachers by teachers. Project TEACH and the PD Associates program have been successful because they are based on the principle of teachers using their own experience to teach others. This concept can be expanded.

**Objective 4:** Curriculum is becoming less and less a matter of teacher decision. The core curriculum, textbook restrictions, standardized testing and the *Administrative Handbook* are dictating what we teach and how we teach. Teacher expertise, children's needs and community involvement are needed to make the best curriculum decisions.

**Objective 5:** Standards of practice for school administrators are needed to clarify a relationship between teachers and principal teachers based on collegiality. Such a relationship can help eliminate reasons for friction and provide support for principal teachers in resisting pressures from above to pressure teachers.

**Objective 6:** Public support for public schools is necessary to achieve both children's needs and teachers' needs. We must work with the community to build and improve public school system based on the good already achieved.

**Objective 7:** Mainstreaming of children with special needs — the blind, the retarded, the emotionally disturbed and the multiple handicapped — is a new issue with which teachers must cope. Mainstreaming can be successful when teachers have adequate training, assistance and resources and are involved in the decisions.

## Goal II: To develop a BCTF perspective on education for the 1980s.

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# BCTF Newsletter

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 10

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FEBRUARY 21, 1980

## BCTF representatives meet with minister

### Federation's community relations program, teacher autonomy discussed at meeting

Representatives of the BCTF met on February 20 with Education Minister Brian Smith to discuss the prospects for B.C. public schools in the 1980s.

The delegation was led by BCTF President Al Blakey and First Vice-President Larry Kuehn.

Blakey told the minister that the federation would welcome any move by the ministry to join the BCTF in involving

the general public more fully in education decision-making.

The minister has announced that he will hold a series of "education accountability meetings" around the province next fall, presumably as a prelude to a long-overdue rewriting of the Public Schools Act.

Blakey described to the minister the federation's community relations pro-

gram, which also involves public meetings to discuss the current state of the public school system and directions for the future. The B.C. School Trustees Association has shown interest in being associated with this program.

Blakey said he hoped the two programs could be made to complement each other.

Blakey informed the minister that he could expect to see teachers working hard in the '80s to achieve the status of "co-operative professional autonomy."

Blakey pointed out that teachers are "a peculiar breed of cat: practising professionals in our individual work, a union in our collective enterprises."

But he said the present Public Schools Act gives teachers neither the autonomy

of a full-fledged profession nor the full range of bargaining rights that traditional unions enjoy.

"These are issues that can no longer be avoided by government," Blakey said, "and we intend to pursue them with all the vigor and resources at our command."

The federation's presentation to Smith covered a number of other topics including the minister's declaration that his immediate priority will be the community colleges; government policy on funding private schools; the need for more resources for handicapped children who are "mainstreamed" into regular classes; the financing of education; and the federation's professional development and continuing education programs.

## CUPE strike ends in Alberni school district

The strike of non-teaching employees in the Alberni school district has been settled with the appointment of mediator Fred Geddes as a special officer under the Labor Code.

Geddes will function in much the same way as an industrial inquiry commission, with power to recommend a binding

settlement of the sometimes-acrimonious five-week dispute.

The local teachers' association decided at the beginning of the strike that members would cross picket lines but would not do work normally performed by members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

During the strike some schools closed down, others operated on a limited scale and some maintained more or less normal operation. Unsanitary conditions and lack of heat coupled with limited instructional time were significant problems during the dispute.

A proposal by the local's executive committee, and endorsed by the BCTF Executive Committee, would have resulted in a federation commission working with the local "to investigate

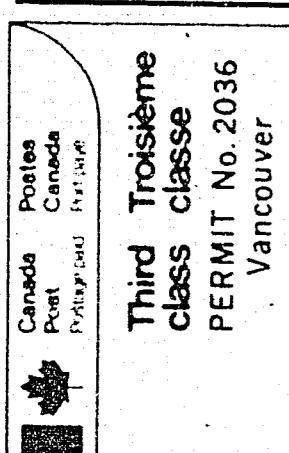
learning and working conditions ... in light of the current dispute."

This recommendation, however, was turned down 94-87 at a February 14 Alberni District Teachers' Association general meeting.

The proposed commission was patterned on a similar investigation carried out by the Learning Conditions Committee during the 1976 strike/lock-out in the Nanaimo school district.

The Port Alberni teachers also voted

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## Chalk Talk

### First Vice-president Larry Kuehn on the Admin Handbook, draft 2

Before escaping from the education ministry with the universities, Pat McGeer left behind one last punishment for the teachers of B.C.: the second draft of the *Administrative Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

The evolution of this document is a story in itself.

Two highly respected members of the BCTF, Norm Ornes and Jim Killeen, were hired by the ministry in 1978 to put together a comprehensive handbook which would include information from the variety of circulars, administrative guides and the like issued over the years.

Their work — the first draft — was given limited circulation and reaction meetings were held around the province a year ago. Many of the views expressed by teachers individually and through the BCTF were incorporated into the second draft prepared by Ornes and Killeen.



But something happened on the way to the printer. It got waylaid in the ministry, with significant changes decreed by McGeer and others.

That is why the acknowledgements in draft 2 credit Killeen and Ornes with "professional advice and assistance" and why *Education Today*, the ministry's public relations paper, says that draft 2 was "prepared at the ministry."

What is the effect of draft 2 being rewritten by people who did not hear the reactions from teachers? They ignored much of it.

For example, draft 1 proposed that the number of courses required in grades 11 and 12 for graduation be increased to 14. Many submissions, including that from the BCTF, requested that the minimum prescription remain at 12.

Not only does draft 2 maintain 14 courses as a requirement, but throws in

three categories of graduation certificates with different requirements for each.

On the matter of provincially prescribed letter grades for elementary years, the BCTF asked that the use of letter grades continue to be voluntary rather than universally required.

The ministry received more than 800 submissions from teachers asking that letter grades not be used in the early childhood years (K-3).

The reaction to these pleas from primary teachers followed the strategy commonly used by the ministry: if an issue is politically hot, give the authority to the local school board so it can face the heat from all sides. Thus draft 2 says that K-3 need not use "provincial symbols unless required by the board." In addition, draft 2 adds a chart which ties letter grades to percentage marks at the primary, intermediate and secondary levels.

Interestingly, another ministry publication, *Grading Practices: Issues and Alternatives*, as recent as August 1979, describes this type of practice as "unprofessional" and "nefarious" (p. 16).

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# Letters

## Full bargaining rights needed by teachers

Teachers in B.C. need full bargaining rights over wages and learning and working conditions, including the right to strike.

Unlike any other group of organized employees in the province, teachers are not able to meaningfully bargain collectively over their wages and working conditions. Currently, only six districts have learning and working conditions contracts — and the courts have ruled that these cannot be legally enforced.

Therefore we as teachers are forced to rely on the good will of the school districts. But this course of action is unacceptable. For instance, twice in the

action in defence of teacher interests can be ruled illegal.

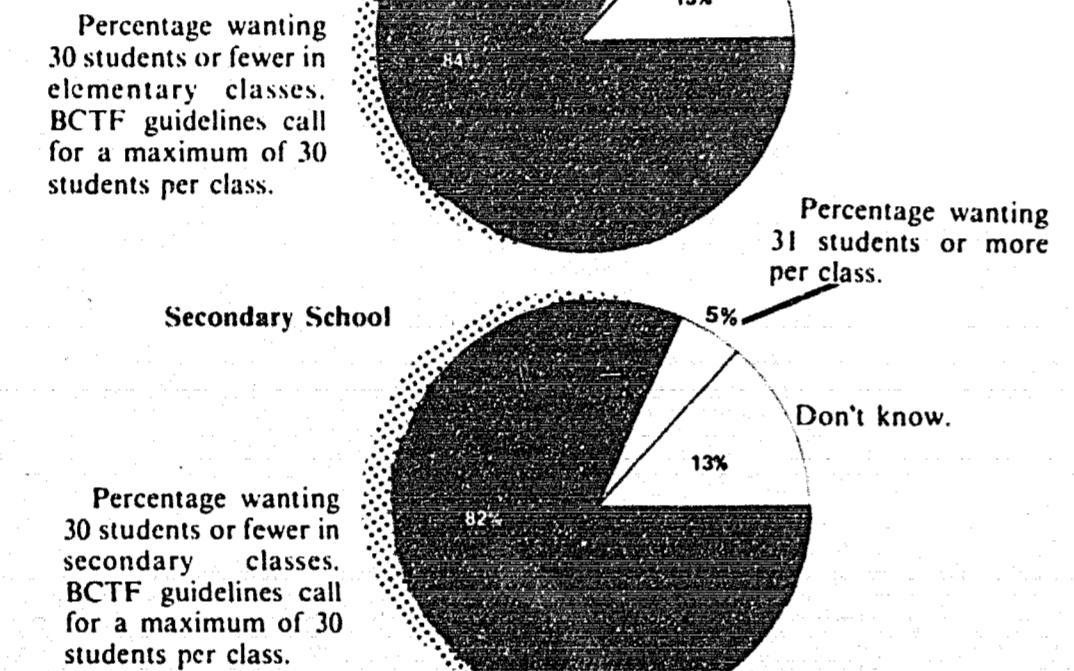
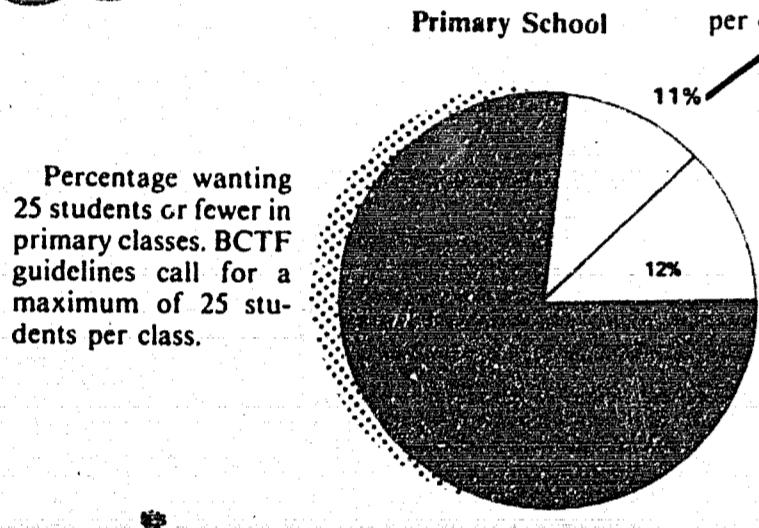
This has left teachers without bargaining weapons in a period of economic crisis. Since the period of the wage controls, B.C. teachers have "negotiated" a steady loss in real wages, with increases consistently below the increase in the cost of living. This situation is consistent with the general pattern of attacks by the state on public service workers.

The only effective means for teachers exerting collective pressure on school boards and the provincial government is through the exercise of real collective bargaining rights. This includes the option of legal job actions and strikes to ensure reasonable salary and working conditions settlements.

Sharon Goldberg  
Surrey

**6.**

How many students do you think there should be in an average classroom in each of the following school divisions in your community?



Hamish Simpson  
Victoria

The incorrect proportions in the original graphs are an error. The corrected graphs are reproduced at left.

### In or out?

The RA issue of the *BCTF Newsletter* reported a news item entitled "Ombudsman is in!" The reported facts failed to convince me that the ombudsman was indeed "in." On the contrary, I was left with a clear impression that the ombudsman was more "out" than he was "in."

Perhaps the more appropriate title for this item should have been "Ombudsman is in and out." But the "Ombudsman is in" when he is actually "out" is definitely misleading.

Alexandra Pazitch  
in and out and in again  
member in good standing

## News briefs

### BCTF members on certification committee

Three teachers are on a committee recently formed by the Ministry of Education to advise the minister on matters relating to the certification and decertification of B.C. teachers.

They are former BCTF president Bill Broadley, Frances Worledge of Vancouver and Elsie McMurphy of Saanich. These teachers join Bruce Hoadeley, Nanaimo schools superintendent, and Russ Leskiw, chairman of the Joint Board of Teacher Education, as voting members of the new committee.

The committee also has five non-voting members: Bruce Andrews, the ministry's director of teacher services; Earl Cherrington, assistant director of teacher services; Murray Elliott of the University of B.C.; Arthur Olsen of the

University of Victoria; and Stan Shapson of Simon Fraser University.

Education Minister Brian Smith says the committee was set up to facilitate the participation of professionals in the discussion of certification issues. It follows from a recommendation by Malcolm McGregor in his 1978 report on teacher training.

### Plan your retirement

Teachers contemplating retirement in 1980 should request pension estimates now from the Commissioner of Teachers' Pensions, 544 Michigan Street (West Wing), Victoria V8V 4R5.

Teachers who must retire this June (age 65 this school year) will receive the

pension estimates automatically. Information on retirement is contained in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, pages 75 to 79, and in the booklet *As You Retire*, sent to all schools.

### Montessori seminar

The Western Montessori Learning Centre is having a one-day practical workshop on implementing individualized learning in the elementary classroom.

The workshop, led by Mary Ruth, an experienced Montessori teacher, will begin at 9:30 a.m. on March 1 at Austin Heights Elementary School in Coquitlam. The \$25 fee (\$30 at the door) includes lunch.

For more information or to register call 931-3314 or 939-0203 or write to Willie Savage at the Western Montessori Learning Centre, 223A Evergreen Drive, Port Moody V3H 1S1. Registration is limited to 40.

## Vacancies

### Windermere School District 4

Pick up a copy between 9 a.m. and 12 noon any weekday or telephone 734-3721, local 21.

### University of Victoria Faculty of Education

Applications are invited for the following position in the School of Physical Education:

Position: Sessional appointment in physical education.

Qualifications: Master's degree in physical education minimum with experience in public school teaching.

Duties: To teach courses in physical education in the following areas: Introduction to Physical Education, Secondary School Methods. Supervision of school experiences will be required.

Salary: Dependent upon qualifications and experience.

Applications: Send full curriculum vitae and names of three references to Dr. B. L. Howe, Chairman of the School of Physical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700, Victoria V8W 2Y2.

Effective: September 1, 1980.

Closing date: March 1, 1980.

### Spring Interviews

A schedule containing school board plans for interviewing in Vancouver at spring break is now available from Diane Walter, Teachers' Employment Service, B.C. School Trustees Association, 1155 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver V6H 1C5.

## BCTF Newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

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. Letters to the editor and signed articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF. Unsigned articles are the responsibility of the editor.

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# Executive Committee Leadership Report to 1980 Annual General Meeting

professional teacher and the technician. When allowed to function as a professional, the teacher diagnoses the needs of individual students and provides the curriculum and instruction that will meet those needs. Restrictions on the teacher's right to make these decisions turns him or her into a technician who merely delivers pre-packaged materials to students without regard to their distinctive backgrounds, abilities and interests.

Current curriculum trends in British Columbia are toward far-reaching restriction and limits to teacher choice. Examples include the requirement that each school district choose a single reading approach for all elementary classrooms; the development of a social studies curriculum which, in its early drafts, is heavily prescriptive; and the requirement that a teacher who wishes to use a textbook that is not on the ministry's "prescribed" or "authorized" lists must get approval from the provincial cabinet.

Teachers throughout B.C. are still making professional decisions about curriculum but if the current trends are not halted we will become technicians, with the added stress of being unable to make the decisions that will best serve our students.

### Objective 2

#### Expand the scope of bargaining.

The frustrations expressed by teachers over large classes, inadequate preparation time, inadequate space and resources, and a limited voice in the decisions affecting the learning environment in which they teach can best be relieved through formal agreements between teachers and their employers.

Under the present law we are allowed to bargain only for salaries and bonuses. Our input into the size and makeup of classes, teacher workload, appropriate resources for "mainstreaming," and the creation of the best possible environment and support services to meet student needs is subject to the goodwill of employers faced with concrete pressures opposing our requests. Unilaterally boards can give and take away, or not give in the first place.

Alone among organized bargaining units in B.C., teachers do not have the right to bargain for more than the salary they earn. This must be changed. We need collective agreements that guarantee teachers more control over their classrooms and a greater voice in the educational decisions affecting them and the pupils they teach.

In the face of demands upon teachers to accept more and more responsibility it is necessary for teachers to have the authority commensurate with our responsibility, and the authority to have a say in the degree of responsibility teachers might bear.

### Objective 3

#### Provide and expand continuing-education experiences developed by teachers for teachers.

One frequent source of job dissatisfaction is the lack of recognition of the value of the work of the classroom teacher. The most effective way of improving our classroom performance, and therefore adding to the value placed on our services, is through continuing education.

"One-shot" professional development workshops, presented by "experts" long divorced from the classroom, have been criticized as ineffective. But there are alternatives. Project TEACH has successfully demonstrated the ability of classroom teachers to lead extended professional development experiences for their colleagues.

To develop professional autonomy, teachers must make significant gains in translating theories of learning into successful classroom practices. By effectively linking educational theory with the skills of practising teachers, the BCTF can make a significant breakthrough in providing teachers with powerful leadership tools. Continuing-education programs, developed and led by teachers, will offer an effective means of reaching this new level of professional development.

### Objective 4

#### Maintain and increase professional decision-making by teachers in curriculum matters.

Neither total regulation of the curriculum nor a total absence of regulation serve the interests of the student and the teacher. The key to meeting the needs of more of our students is the teacher's ability to choose, modify and adapt curriculum within a common framework.

It is the degree of freedom of choice in curriculum matters that makes the difference between the

### Objective 5

#### Develop a statement of standards of practice for school administrators.

One of the sources of stress, as commonly perceived by classroom teachers, is administrative practice. This perception has surfaced repeatedly in Representative Assembly discussions and in stress workshops. It is probably inevitable, in a hierarchical system, that the school administrator will be blamed for the implementation of policies over which he or she has had little influence. Centralization of decision-making — the lack of school-level autonomy — means that the administrator is often placed in the invidious position of being the messenger bearing unwelcome tidings from the school board or the Ministry of Education.

In these circumstances conflicts between classroom teachers and administrators are bound to arise. Teachers may be deterred from voicing their complaints openly because of concern that the administrator may give them an unsatisfactory report. The result is rankling discontent and a rise in the stress level.

A new statement of standards of practice for teachers is being submitted to the 1980 Annual General Meeting. That statement only peripherally addresses the question of how principal teachers should relate to their colleagues. We propose to work toward development of a supplementary statement which will assist in reducing potential conflict between administrators and teachers by more clearly defining the collegial role of administrators in working co-operatively with their fellow teachers in resisting pressures from the hierarchy.

### Objective 6

#### Increase public support for public education.

As mentioned earlier, a continuing source of stress and dissatisfaction for teachers is an apparent lack of public recognition of the value of teachers' services and of the positive aspects of our school system. This is a problem that needs to be dealt with at a fundamental level.

Public confidence in the school system, which fell off so sharply during the '70s, seems now to be recovering; our latest poll shows a slight upturn in public support. That trend must be supported.

Polls have consistently shown that parents of school children are mostly strongly supportive public. But only about one-third of British Columbians now have children in school. The challenge for us is to reach the broader community, both so that our fellow citizens know and understand what is happening in the schools and so that we are in touch with community goals.

While we have long recognized the need to communicate with all our publics, we are only now beginning to identify effective means of doing so. Effective communications flow two ways. We must listen to our publics as well as talk to them, and we must continue our criticism of the flaws in our school system at the same time that we publicize its successes.

Our community relations program is built on the premise that effective public relations can best be conducted by teachers at the school/community level, with support from their local and provincial organizations. Program materials and support services

# Ministry changes scholarship rules

The Ministry of Education has changed the government scholarship program so it is similar to the way it was when the Social Credit party was in power in the early 1970s.

The changes effectively eliminate district scholarships, and require scholarship winners to go on to post-secondary education to collect their prizes.

"The ministry is now going back to the pre-1973 concept that scholarships were designed to recognize excellence and at the same time encourage good students to pursue a post-secondary education," a ministry official says.

The size of the scholarship — \$1,000 — remains the same, and scholarships are still available in career and vocational

fields as well as in academic areas. But all winners must now pass a uniform English composition exam in addition to a locally-developed exam in their field.

BCTF First Vice-president Larry Kuehn criticizes the changes.

"The key area we're concerned about has to do with district scholarships," he said. "They were introduced in the mid-1970s as an attempt to recognize students who weren't in academic programs or oriented toward university but were outstanding students in vocational areas, performing arts and the commercial fields. The local district was given the right to set up its own criteria for these scholarships."

But the uniform English composition exam requirement means the scholarships are no longer strictly district awards, and in any case the particular exam is probably not appropriate, Kuehn says.

"It excludes precisely those students who are top students in career and vocational fields or in the arts, and who should also have some access to recognition."

## New minister, new attitude?

From page 1

Even the tone of the *Administrative Handbook* changed significantly between drafts. The emphasis of much of the first draft was on the "handbook" side, describing good practices which should be followed in organizing and administering a school.

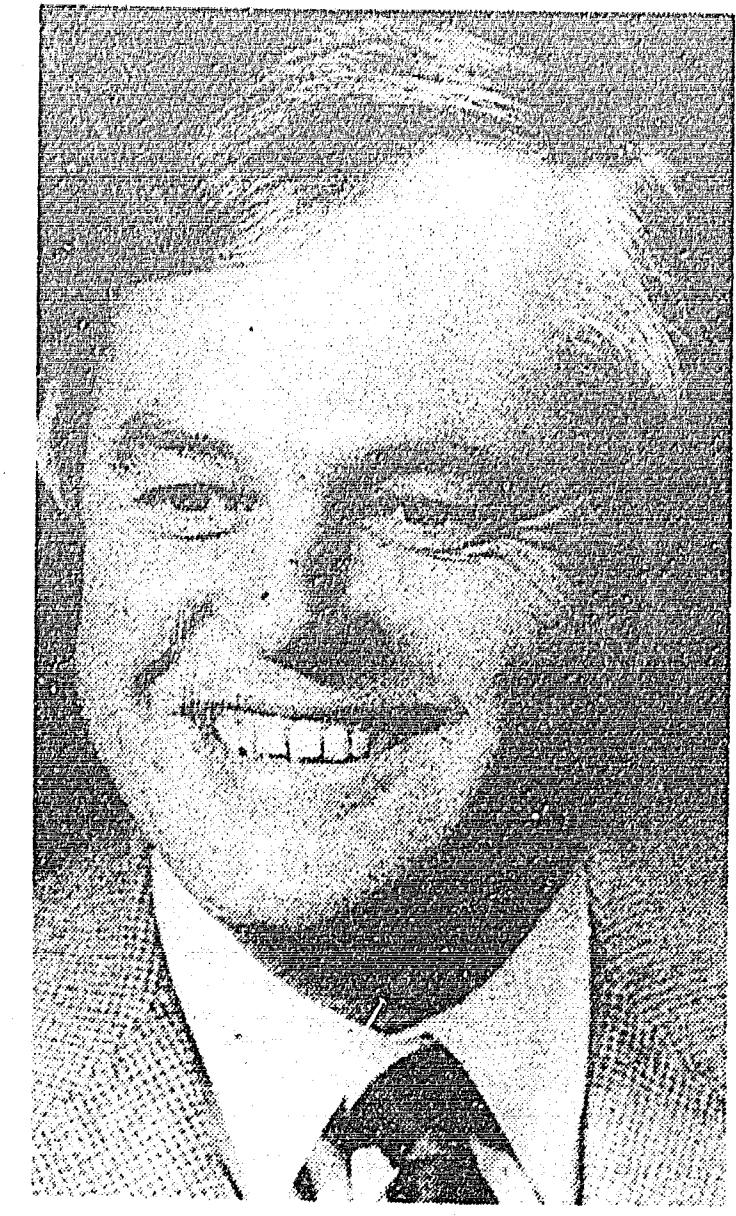
Draft 2, on the other hand, emphasizes the "administrative" and is more consistently directive, further centralizing decision-making about education.

If this is the record of the ministry on the handbook — that not only do they not listen to teacher input, but actually make things worse — then why should teachers bother to react to draft 2?

The key is the new minister.

Much of what is worse about the second draft reflects the views of Pat McGeer. We do not really know the views of the new minister, nor whether he is willing to listen to teachers.

Teacher reaction to the second draft — and his response — could be a good test.



Brian Smith

## Former BCTF president Ernest Lock dies at 94

Ernest H. Lock, the BCTF's oldest past president, has died at the age of 94.

He had an outstanding career as a teacher of English at New Westminster's Duke of Connaught High School, retiring in 1951.

During his entire teaching career he was active in the New Westminster Teachers' Association and in the BCTF. He became a member of the federation's Executive Committee in 1922, and served as president in 1925-26.

His unstinting work on behalf of teachers and students earned him the Fergusson Memorial Award, the highest honor the BCTF can bestow, in 1942.

The 1975 Annual General Meeting celebrated the golden anniversary of Lock's election as BCTF president, and presented him with mounted enlarged photographs of himself as a beginning teacher and as BCTF president.

In a moving address to the delegates Lock recounted some of the victories he and his colleagues had to struggle for in the early days of the federation, victories that established conditions that teachers today take for granted.

Lock was born and received his early education in England. After spending four years in the British civil service, he came to the Okanagan Valley.

In 1914 he graduated from McMaster University with honors in English and history.

He began his teaching career at Okanagan College, and taught at Chilliwack and Ladner high schools before moving to Duke of Connaught in 1918.

He practised what he taught about using English correctly to communicate one's ideas. Reporting on his election as BCTF president, the May 1925 issue of *The B.C. Teacher* commented: "He is a most conscientious worker, and his reports have always been splendidly prepared and have been presented in a clear and concise manner."

Lock's BCTF work continued for many years after his term as president. Indeed, he was involved in local or provincial work on behalf of his colleagues right up to the time of his retirement, when he became a member of the Retired Teachers' Association.

For example, he was one of the founders of the BCTF Medical Services Association, became its first president, and served on its board of directors for 22 years.

It is difficult for teachers entering the profession in these days of complete medical protection to appreciate the importance of Lock's work in establishing medical protection for teachers. The association he worked so hard to found and to guide, later renamed Provincial Teachers' Medical Services, removed medical worries from teachers for more than two decades, until the B.C. medical plan covered all citizens in the province.

—Ken Aitchison  
Editor, *B.C. Teacher*

## Leadership report

From page 3

have been developed by the federation and the program is to be tested in a small number of districts. The results of this pilot project will guide the development of models for use in districts throughout the province.

### Objective 7

Attain conditions for teachers and students that will make possible the successful "mainstreaming" of special-needs students.

Policy decisions — regardless of how well-intentioned or potentially valuable for students — cannot succeed unless adequate human and material resources are provided. Such is the case with "mainstreaming."

The pressures and stresses on teachers can only be amplified if students with special needs are simply placed in regular classrooms without reducing the number of students in the class or increasing the support available from aides or the training and preparation time available to teachers.

The support provided must be significant, not just a token that symbolically acknowledges the need.

### Goal II

To develop a BCTF perspective on education for the 1980s.

The start of a new decade seems an appropriate time to take stock of education in its societal and economic context.

In retrospect, the 1970s were a decade of drastic swings in public and professional attitudes. The play of economic forces resulted in inflation, high unemployment and a loss of public confidence in the economy. The economy would not allow education to keep the promises of the '60s: free tickets to secure, high-paying jobs. Public disillusionment set in.

For teachers, a decade that began with optimistic attitudes toward education reform closed with a strong air of pessimistic conservatism. The late '70s saw the introduction of the core curriculum, the provincial learning assessment program, a new Administra-

tive Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools: all clear indications of the ministry's intent to move away from any educational models that would view the teacher as an autonomous professional.

Some of these measures stem, perhaps, from a hope of restoring the ideal school of the past. But that is nostalgic romanticism for something that never existed.

This romanticism fails to take account of the forces that have transformed our society and, therefore, our educational system. There is no historical precedent to guide us in attempting to educate all children from kindergarten to Grade 12. British Columbia teachers today are providing more educational opportunities for more children in more ways than ever before.

We live in a society that would like to guarantee education and employment for all. In fact, the economy has only been able to deliver on the first promise. Education continues to live with the paradox of attempting to filter and sort for the job market, while at the same time trying to find ways of equipping all students to face the challenge of the future.

A BCTF perspective on education for the 1980s must be based on an analysis of current trends in the public school system, on an understanding of social and economic forces, on a view to the future — and it must be thoroughly grounded in current knowledge about child development.

Such a perspective will go far toward providing the BCTF with consistency and direction in the formation of further goals, objectives and strategies for action.

The choice is clear.

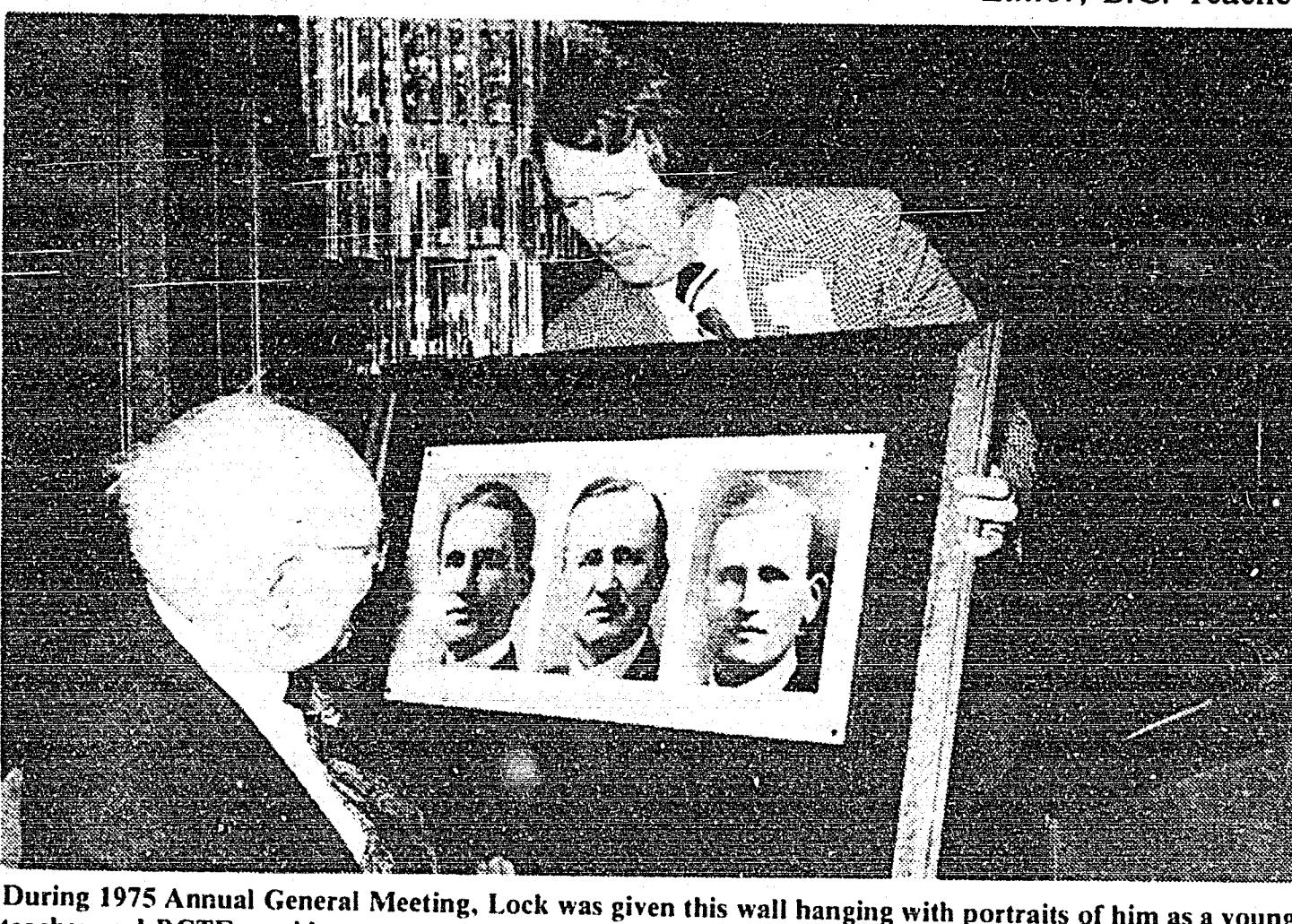
The shape of the future can be left in the hands of others, with teachers accepting whatever happens, or teachers, acting as a collective professional body, can have a significant share in determining the outcome.

## Alberni strike ends

From page 1

against a simplified procedure for dealing with violations of policies adopted by the local association to deal with performance of regular duties, and rejected a one-week "impartial media campaign to publicize unsatisfactory conditions in our schools and to publicly entreat the school board and CUPE to restore normal conditions."

—George North  
Learning Conditions Division



During 1975 Annual General Meeting, Lock was given this wall hanging with portraits of him as a young teacher and BCTF president.

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