

# Summer school

Those days of summer were a little hazy, a little crazy but not at all lazy for teachers attending the BCTF summer conferences. In North Vancouver, 130 agreements people learned all about a new school district. In Richmond, BCTF First Vice-President

Larry Kuehn told 100 delegates to the PD conference they have a leadership role to play. In Vernon, Toronto Teachers' Federation president Menno Vorster rallied the troops at the presidents' conference, and class size expert Nikola Filby had a surprising message for the learning conditions chairpersons. See our stories and photographs on the summer conferences on pages 2 and 3.

## BCTF Newsletter

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### Stand up for children, Blakey urges teachers

*'Nobody else is going to stand up for them'*

The educational needs of children must become the focus for B.C. teachers and their organizations, BCTF president Al Blakey told presidents of local associations attending the 1979 Summer Conference at Vernon August 19.

Economic pressures are shifting government priorities away from investment in people toward investment in property, he said.

"In the face of these tremendous pres-

ures it becomes more and more incumbent on us as teachers to stand up, to speak up for that other important priority, and that is people," Blakey said. "Nobody else is going to argue for the kids."

The International Year of the Child — "a year that started in B.C. with budget cutbacks in the schools, showing the great commitment of the government toward fostering the development of children" —

must not be allowed to pass without making a start on improving the lot of children, he said.

Therefore the BCTF Executive Committee will propose to the October Representative Assembly a program for a province-wide examination of the educational needs of children "Beyond IYC."

Blakey said he hopes this program will "begin a process of involvement with education that has never existed before" for the teachers and the people of B.C.

He said the executive hopes to stimulate, in every school in B.C., a discussion among teachers, parents and other members of the community of the educational needs of each community's children.

"That is the common theme that can

unify teachers, parents and the community, not only in protecting the immediate interests of children here and now, but in beginning to develop the kind of confidence, co-operation and mutual trust . . . so that we can collectively begin to determine in a new way the kind of future education that we should be offering our children," he said.

"That kind of thing is a possibility and that has to be the focus that this organization operates on."

He said he personally found the proposed program "an extremely exciting and challenging possibility."

He acknowledged that it will take courage for teachers to engage in this kind of communication and accountability.

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Welcome back, BCTF President Al Blakey tells reinstated administrative staff member Ralph Sundby at door of BCTF building.

### Sundby reinstated

**Panel says firing inappropriate**

Ralph Sundby has been reinstated as a member of the BCTF administrative staff.

The action was taken by the Executive Committee August 23 on the recommendation of a review panel which found that Sundby's firing last January had been legal but "inappropriate."

The panel's report dealt largely with constitutional and contractual issues and the process by which Sundby's job performance was evaluated, rather than with the question of his competence.

The panel said that the evaluation that

led to Sundby's dismissal had been done according to the process then in effect. But it found the process questionable.

The panel said it doubted that Sundby had clearly understood his staff role, in spite of efforts by his divisional director to define his job content. It said he was not given sufficient warning that his performance was considered to be lacking, and that he should have been given a chance to improve it.

The panel concluded, therefore, that the federation had not had just cause to fire Sundby.

It suggested the federation clarify Sundby's responsibilities and duties and "have him undergo a fresh working test period in the job."

Where does this leave Sundby?

The Executive Committee's motions of August 23 did not specify whether

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### BCTF announces contract aims

*'We'll follow Bennett's advice'*

This is the text of a press release to be issued by BCTF President Al Blakey at a press conference scheduled for September 6.

British Columbia's teachers will follow Premier Bennett's advice and seek salary increases for 1980 in line with those being won by unions in the private sector.

Al Blakey, president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, said the strengthened B.C. economy should be able to support salaries that will not only offset inflation but also give teachers an increase in their purchasing power.

This is the trend that has developed in contract settlements for workers in major private-sector industries, Blakey said. "Surely teachers can expect similar increases. This would not only be economic justice, but it would be in

accord with provincial government policy."

Blakey recalled that Premier Bennett, in a television address on Feb. 8, 1978, declared that "public service salaries should reflect patterns set in the private sector."

Increases in the private sector have been running up to 12 per cent, Blakey said.

Last year, B.C.'s 28,000 teachers won increases for 1979 averaging 7.8 per cent from the province's 75 school boards. This barely enabled them to hold the line, Blakey pointed out; in Vancouver this year the cost-of-living index has risen by nearly 8 per cent.

The teachers' modest 1979 increase set a trend that was followed by other public sector groups.

Blakey explained that teachers had been the trend-setters last year because

they were the first large employee group in B.C. to be released from Anti-Inflation Board controls.

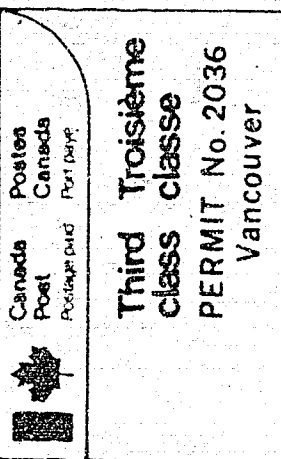
This year, however, large unions in the private sector — in forestry, mining, manufacturing, transportation, fisheries and the food industries — have led the way. Typically their 1979 increases have been 3 or 4 percentage points above what teachers received this year.

This trend in the private sector stems from a British Columbia economy that has shown considerable strength so far in 1979 and indications are that the period of prosperity will continue through 1980.

Blakey said that, according to the premier's guidelines, raises to teacher's salaries should be significantly better than those received in 1979. Obviously the trend in the private sector has been to grant increases that offset inflation at nearly 8 per cent and recognize increased provincial productivity at about 4 per cent. This trend should be reflected in teacher salary increases for 1980. "I would consider nothing less as fair treatment," said Blakey.

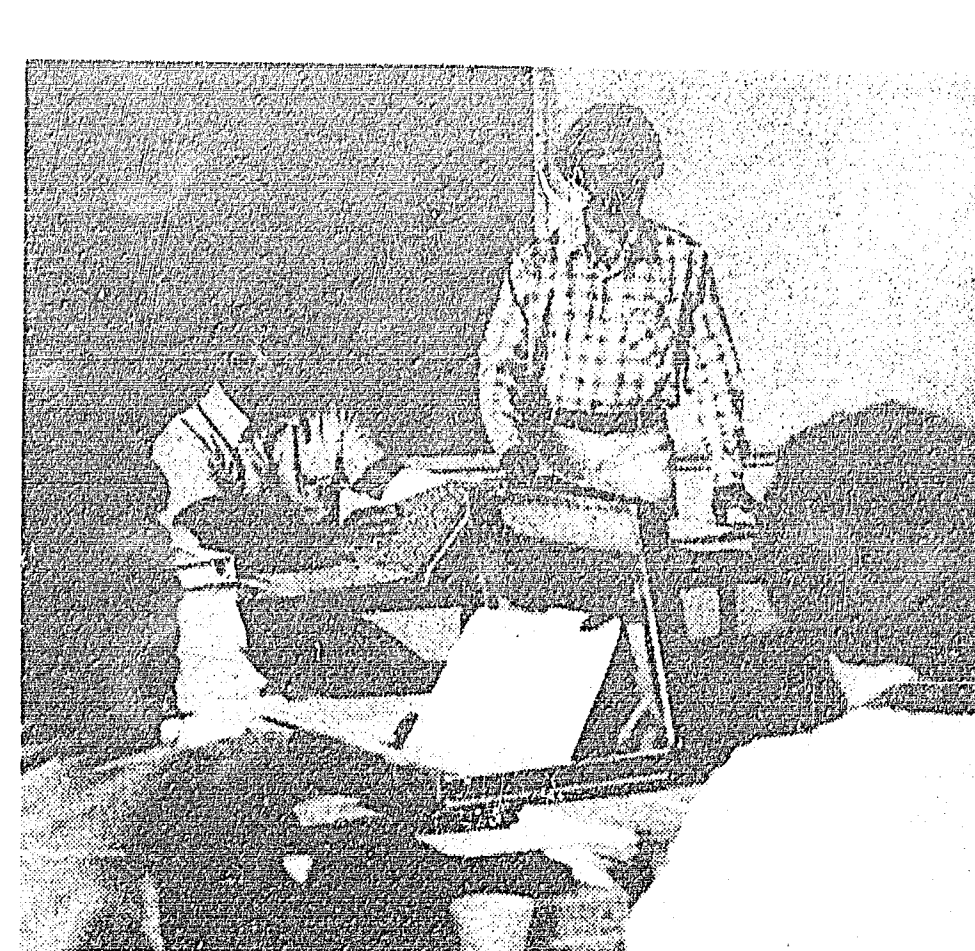
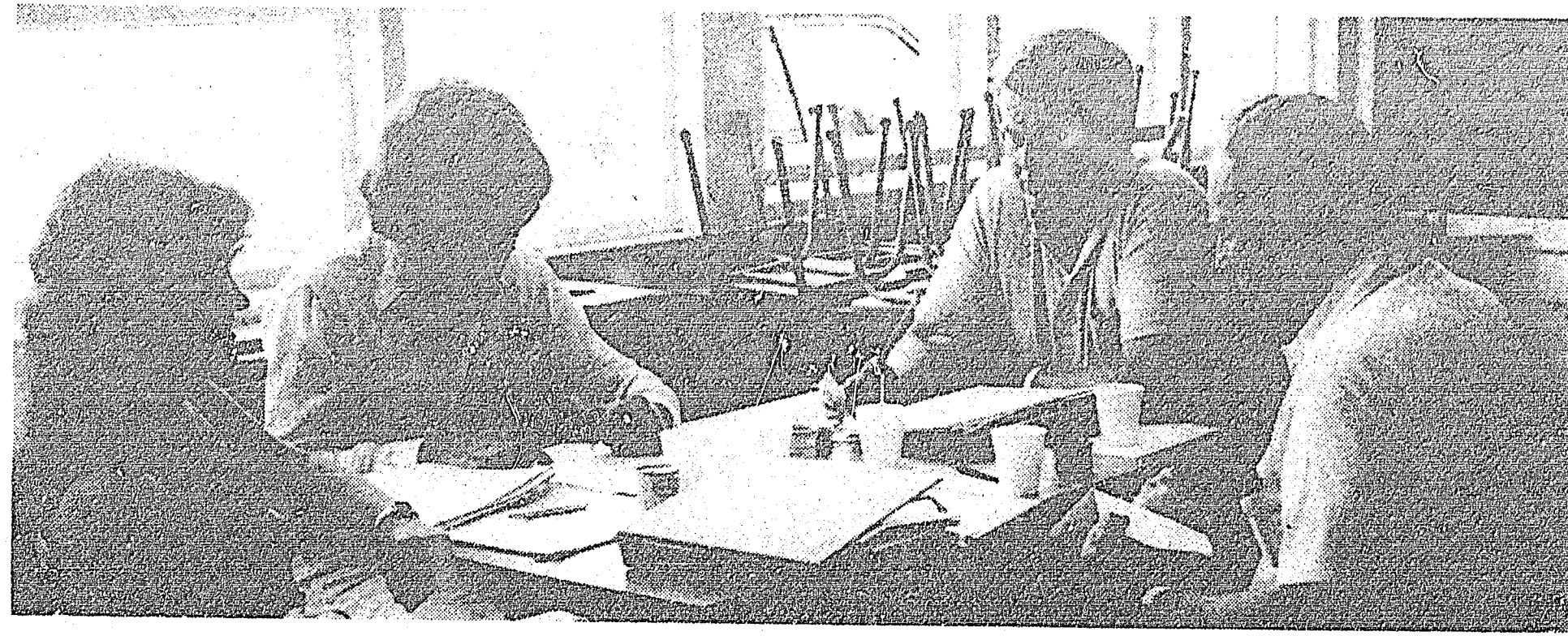
Blakey pointed out that over the last several years, B.C. teachers have fallen

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





A workshop group at presidents' conference; sports day was the highlight for the delegates' children; Neil Worboys and Don Walmsley confer at agreements short course; Wolfgang Hofmeir makes point at learning conditions budgeting workshop while Ajit Bains listens.

# Summer school

## Presidents' conference

Stop philosophizing. Start telling teachers and the public how education cutbacks hurt them.

That's the message Toronto Teachers' Federation president Menno Vorster has for B.C. teachers, who find their jobs and their profession under attack as enrolment declines.

A four-year program of activism based on that principle resulted in a major victory for Toronto teachers on May 3. On that day, Toronto's board of education not only decided against cutting 108 teachers from the payroll, but added new programs to employ them. Declining enrolment was seen as a chance to improve education, not to fire teachers.

"There is no point in talking about philosophical approaches because one thing that would really count with our members was if they knew that the issue was directly affecting them," Vorster told local presidents attending the Vernon summer conference.

"It had to be a very conscious decision at the beginning to continually talk about their self-interest and to collectivize that self-interest into some kind of unified action."

Toronto teachers realized a few years ago that the provincial government was using declining enrolment as an excuse for education spending cuts far in excess of anything justified by the smaller school population, he said.

"The excuse of declining enrolment is being used as a hammer to impose an order of fiscal restraint on the educational system. It's simply being used to create a tax shift between the local area and the ministry of education."

The 108 threatened firings in fact had "absolutely nothing to do with declining enrolment," he said. "We stopped using declining enrolment as an excuse for our problems and we started to use the real issue, and that was fiscal restraint by the provincial government."

The key to the success of the Toronto campaign was that the threat declining enrolment presented to teachers' jobs was never mentioned.

"It was programs we were concerned with, not teaching positions as such. We knew we'd never be able to sell the public the fact that teachers were being fired and that was wrong. It's happened in Ford plants for many years. It's happened in mining communities. It's happened in the labor force for hundreds of years, so labor unions certainly understood the situation, and we were no different. One point we tried to make was, program levels was what counted because that hit

parents on their own level of self-interest — the quality of education their children were getting.

"I can't say it often enough because it was a very vital part of what we did," Vorster said. "There was no philosophical rambling."

The Toronto Teachers' Federation, representing only 3,000 teachers, aimed its campaign at four groups: parents, trustees, the general public, and its own members.

Getting to the parents was relatively simple because, as Vorster pointed out, many teachers are parents themselves. The mechanisms to involve parents in local-level decisions existed already. Through these channels teachers and parents listed each school's most pressing needs.

"It not only came up with a very concise list of perceptions of the educational community as to what was missing but we also generated through that process a series of very real expectations not only on the part of the teacher but of the community," he said.

The federation worked to elect trustees who not only expressed sympathy for teachers (those sympathies could change as soon as the trustees didn't need the teachers' votes anymore) but who shared their own philosophy on education. Voters, faced with a clear choice of candidates who were against education spending, and candidates intent on improving education, favored the latter.

Newspaper coverage was the key to gaining public support for their aims, and the key to good newspaper coverage was establishing good relationships with reporters.

"The traditional teacher comment had been 'No comment,'" Vorster said. "It's the most disastrous statement that one can make because I can assure you, the Toronto board of education doesn't use that word either, and will give their point of view quite readily even if it's inaccurate."

Public demonstrations by teachers generated needed publicity too. Over four years and half-a-dozen demonstrations, teachers' resistance to such action gradually wore down. The crowd of 4,000 that demonstrated at the May 3 board meeting contained at least 2,500 teachers, he said.

"For the first time teachers, by having done it so often, considered a demonstration, rather than being unprofessional, as their professional responsibility. It was something they were doing on behalf not only of their fellow teachers but on behalf of the quality of education. It was the professional thing to do."

## More teachers than ever before attended BCTF summer conferences in August. Here are reports by Ralph Maurer

The federation's own membership was the most important — and difficult — target.

"We had 3,000 teachers who were uninformed, disinterested, and relatively alienated from both the education system and certainly from their federation, and they were teachers that considered themselves professionals but received none of the privileges professionals normally get," he said.

"They thought it was unprofessional to demonstrate. They thought teaching was an apolitical activity and that they had no place in the political forum. They looked upon saving of teachers' jobs more as feather-bedding than they did as protection of programs, and they had no faith that their federation would protect them from what was happening to them."

An aggressively pro-teacher stance in grievances was the biggest factor in gaining members' respect for the TTF, Vorster said.

"By filing grievances and by obviously showing complete tenacity without regard for judgment,

teachers began to raise eyebrows and say, 'Well, maybe they are defending our rights.'

"We continually made sure that those senior teachers who have more of a tendency to sit around and say, 'This problem really doesn't affect us because I've got seniority,' we made sure that by putting the emphasis on the programs that it was clear that it affected the day-to-day work and that it did in fact affect their job performance, and their working conditions."

The program, which continues, is producing long-term benefits in education in addition to the gains already achieved, Voster said.

"Those (education officials) who thought teacher-baiting was their favorite sport have suddenly found out it's not a popular thing to do any more, and that trustees don't have a sympathetic view toward that kind of activity," he said. "They (officials) too have changed their view and they too come to us much more often to consult and to ask our opinion, to ask our co-operation, which is something they had never expected nor wanted before."

## Agreements short course

The agreements chairpersons negotiating for teachers at the bargaining table this fall are the most experienced group of bargainers we've ever had representing us.

All have had at least some experience at the table, even if it's only in the Cordillera School District (School District Number 96).

Cordillera School District? Never heard of it, you say? BCTF economic welfare staff members think it's a good place to learn bargaining skills because it's so typical.

The interior district's school board is dominated by conservative trustees. Conservative, yet supportive of the school system and critical of the provincial government's attacks on education.

Its teachers' association is balanced between activist, militant teachers and those who believe a quiet manner and moderate demands are a surer way to success.

The senior district staff? Well, Nigel Height, the veteran secretary-treasurer, is thought to be too authoritative, and prone to have too much influence on purely education policies and procedures.

District superintendent John Atkins, on the other hand, is respected by all sides for his smoothing, conciliatory approach, and his innovativeness.

In fact, Cordillera School District is similar in at least a couple of respects to almost every other school district in the province.

It's meant to be. It was invented by Economic Welfare staffers to give a taste of what to expect in negotiations to new agreements chairpersons and committee members among the 130 delegates who attended the agreements short course August 22-24 in the Plaza International Hotel in North Vancouver.

Delegates were given a 14-page description of Cordillera School District, a copy of their "contract" and necessary additional data.

They were then presented with seven bargaining problems, simulating the situations they will run up against at the table. They were asked to argue their case, while EW staffers took the side of the school board negotiators, throwing back at the teachers all the counterarguments they know will be offered.

The simulation, tried for the first time this year, was a success and the approach will probably be used again next summer.

"Looking through the evaluations, I'd say reaction was very positive," EW staff member Jim Cairnie said. "They found it very helpful."

## Learning conditions

Teachers have better things to do than fight for overall reductions in class sizes, U.S. researcher Nikola Filby told Learning Conditions chairpersons at their summer conference in Vernon August 24 to 26.

Not that she doesn't think smaller class sizes are better. Research carried out by her and her co-workers at Far West Laboratories for Education Research and Development in San Francisco shows convincingly that they are.

"It's all related to the fact that it's not practical to give teachers classes of 15," she says. "One has to look at the political realities."

Instead of seeking an overall reduction, teachers should try a staggered school day that would allow children to be in small classes for parts of the day. Other classes would have to be correspondingly larger, but that's all right as far as Filby is concerned: their research showed that would have little effect on students' performance.

Performance improves gradually as class sizes drop from 40 to about 15, the Far West study, by Gene Glass and Mary Ann Smith, shows. Not until class size drops below 15 are dramatic gains seen.

"I believe it will make a difference to reduce class size to 24 from 26," Filby says. "But it's not going to make a big difference, and people aren't going to want to pay for it."

"Instead of focussing on class size as the issue, you could tie together a concern with class size and a particular program."

The LC chairpersons didn't like the message Filby gave them. Her speech provoked a heated question

period, and comments on conference evaluation forms reflect the reaction.

Many teachers worried that the staggered workday Filby suggested would mean a longer day for them. "Interesting but not terribly useful," one teacher wrote. "I didn't like the implications of the staggered day."

Another teacher wanted to see more on the experiences of a San Francisco-area school experimenting with the staggered day.

Yet another questioned Filby's statement that the political climate makes overall class-size reduction an impractical goal. The problem with Filby, the teacher wrote, is that "she is not politically or union oriented."

Somebody else was suspicious that Filby's solution is just another "faddish" education trend from the U.S.

Glass and Smith applied a new research tool they call meta-analysis to the many class-size studies carried out in the past. Meta-analysis involves combining data from these many small studies, treating them as one large study. This showed a definite trend toward better learning ability in smaller classes, a trend which accelerated dramatically when class size dropped below 15.

Filby's complementary study, which cost the bulk of the \$200,000 (U.S.) the entire project cost, tests those findings by applying subjective methods.

Researchers spent the last school year carefully observing Grade 2 students in a school in Oakland and a rural school in West Virginia.

"You could find out a lot about how students were doing simply by looking at them in the classroom

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## Professional development

Professional development chairpersons have a leadership role in teachers' fight against government programs that limit resources, challenge teachers' professional autonomy and dispute their esteem, BCTF First Vice-President Larry Kuehn said at the PD summer conference in Richmond August 14 to 16.

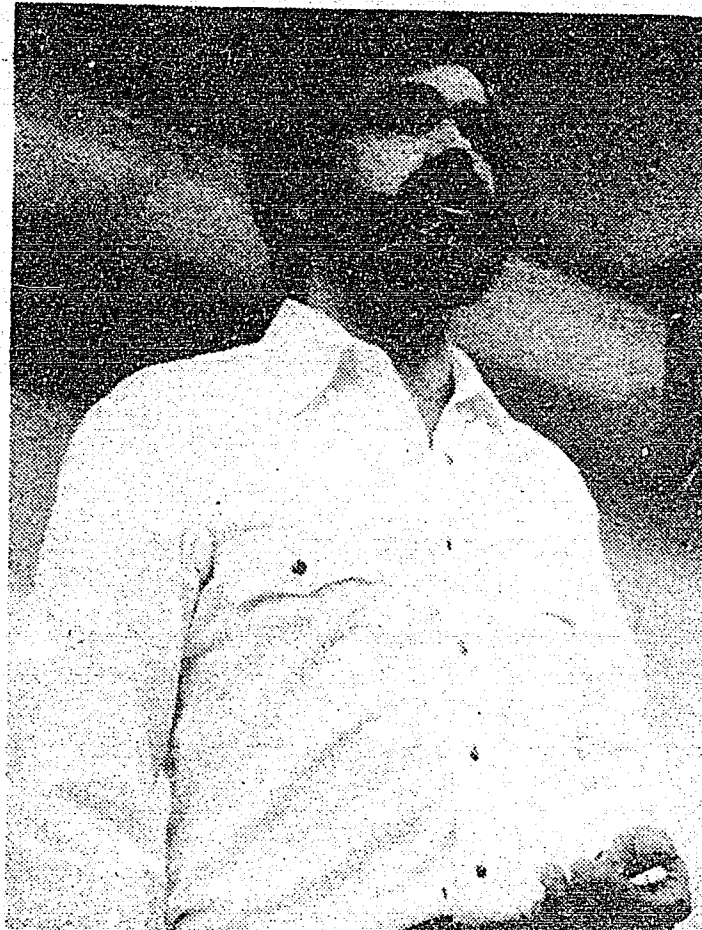
"Ministry attacks on (teachers') self-esteem, subtle or direct, intended or unintended, can have a serious effect, but only if teachers allow it to," Kuehn said in his keynote address to the 100 delegates. "If we act collectively to respond in a positive way, then we can build collective self-esteem, and that is part of our task, as professional development workers."

Kuehn cited the credit allocation plan for textbooks, Instructional Circular 81, and the Administrative Handbook as three government programs that put pressure on teachers.

The credit allocation plan is a new system for distributing textbooks. Instructional Circular 81 sets criteria for approval of local curriculum materials. The Administrative Handbook is intended as a comprehensive guide for school administrators.

Will CAP provide enough materials of the right kind to meet the needs of teachers? And will the plan provide enough money to allow real choices?

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Menno Vorster; presidents plan their day; Nikola Filby in a class by herself; delegates at the professional development conference.



# Ralph Sundby reinstated

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Sundby is now on continuing appointment or whether his appointment is subject to further review.

General Secretary Bob Buzza has written to the executive, asking for clarification. He suggests that Sundby's appointment be considered probationary, subject to formal review and an explicit decision by the executive by May 30, 1980.

Said President Al Blakey: "It would make no sense to have Sundby evaluated again by a process the review panel found inadequate. We need to get our house in order; we need a more satisfactory staff assessment process.

"Then, over a period of time, the entire staff should be assessed. This process should include Sundby, but he should not be singled out for special treatment in any way."

Sundby has been reinstated without loss of pay or benefits as of March 1, the day after his dismissal officially took

effect. His duties are to be assigned by September 30.

Sundby was dismissed from his post as an assistant director in the federation's Professional Development division by the 1978-79 Executive Committee January 7 after a marathon open hearing.

His firing generated considerable controversy before and during the Representative Assembly of January 25-27. On the advice of the RA, the executive agreed to a review of its action.

The review was conducted by a panel consisting of lawyer Leo McGrady, nominated by the Professional Staff Association; Stan Evans, former assistant general secretary of the federation, chosen by the executive; and a chairperson selected by these two, Ed Peck, formerly of the B.C. Labor Relations Board.

General Secretary Bob Buzza and members of the Executive Committee agreed at the August 23 meeting that the implications of the panel's report go far beyond the Sundby case. The panel's

recommendations for changes in the agreement between the executive and the Professional Staff Association, and for ensuring that members of the staff are given due process, will be discussed by the executive in consultation with the association and with legal counsel.

The panel considered that the relationship between the federation and its professional staff does not match any one of the three standard models: collective bargaining under the Labor Code, voluntary recognition, or the master/servant concept. Instead it has elements of all three. This confusion exacerbated the Sundby case.

The panel said the federation should adopt one consistent model.

A crucial question for the panel was whether the executive had acted properly in firing Sundby.

The panel found that the BCTF constitution, coupled with the termination section (6.1) of the agreement between the executive and the staff association, gave the executive the legal power — "unqualified and virtually absolute" — to fire any member of the

professional staff on 30 days' notice, without cause.

But it said this section is archaic and should be replaced by a standard provision of the Labor Code, that "the employer shall not dismiss or discipline an employee bound by this agreement except for just and reasonable cause."

Pauline Galinski, a member of the executive team that negotiates with the Professional Staff Association, told the executive that an attempt earlier this year to eliminate section 6.1 had been rejected by the association. (The agreement includes provision for severance pay in lieu of job tenure.)

The panel recommended that, no matter what model of employment relationship is eventually adopted by the BCTF and the Professional Staff Association, the general secretary should be excluded from the bargaining unit. Divisional directors should also be excluded if they exercise management functions.

The panel's report has been distributed to Geographical Representatives. It is available to members on request.

—T. A. Myers

## 'Stand up for kids'

From page 1

But, he said, "If what we have to say can't be sold — if you can't sit down with parents and other members of the community and justify what you're doing and what you think are the needs of children — well, then, maybe we'd better examine our premises rather than theirs.

"If what we have to say and what we have to offer is worth its salt, we should be confident enough to take it into that kind of an arena . . . and learn from those who have differing opinions."

The Beyond IYC program should not be a one-shot event, like a CORE meeting, Blakey said. It should lead to establishment of vehicles for continuing discussion of educational issues between teachers and the communities they serve.

He said he was confident the federation could mount the program at minimal cost. The BCTF has the highest level of membership participation of any teachers' organization in Canada, Blakey said. By tapping the spirit of voluntarism

in its members, the federation could operate what would be "in effect a million-dollar program" at a cash cost of perhaps only \$140,000.

But, he said "it's going to demand one hell of a lot of work" from everyone.

"We desperately need and invite the participation, the involvement, the suggestions, the ideas of all of you, of all your members," he told the local presidents.

Involving teachers with their communities in a mutual attempt to meet the needs of children would do more to improve the teachers' public relations than expensive, slick media campaigns and newspaper advertising, he said.

But the really important thing that will emerge from the program is "a new and coherent concept of what we and the parents and the public want for our children."

"Nobody else seems to be speaking up loudly enough (for children)," Blakey said. "I would hope that we will be able to meet that challenge and address that problem and come out of it, maybe bruised but with flying colors."

## Adjust your calendar

Four executive committee members have moved since the 1979-80 Teachers' Appointment Calendar was printed. Here are their new addresses and telephone numbers.

First vice-president Larry Kuehn: 5594 MacKenzie Street, Vancouver V6N 1H2. Telephone number: 266-3030.

Lynda Coplin: 2271 West 33rd Avenue, Vancouver V6M 1C1. Telephone number: 266-0600.


Steve Norman: 218 Queens, New Westminster V3L 1J9. Telephone number: 5219238.

Doug Smart: 2451 Huble Place, Prince George V2N 3C8. Telephone number: 5622711.

In addition, the BCTF building has a new toll-free long distance number, replacing the Intratel number given in the Teachers' Appointment Calendar. The new number is 112-800-663-9163.

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**LOOK FOR IT**



## Contract aims

From page 1

behind other employee groups in major industries, such as forestry, retailing and the food industry, and those in some public sector areas and other professions. He said he expected some local teachers' associations will want to try to regain their position in this year's round of bargaining.

Blakey pointed out that each of the B.C. Teachers' Federation's 1979 local associations is autonomous, and each will decide for itself what its 1980 salary requests to its local school board should be. The federation assists its local associations by providing information and expert help in negotiations, but the basic decisions will be made at the local level.

## PD people have role, says Kuehn

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"Unfortunately, the answer to both of those questions appears to be no," Kuehn said. "Choices must be made from lists of authorized materials. Can the limitations of the provincially authorized list be overcome by selecting locally authorized materials? Hardly. A district under the credit allocation plan may elect to spend 5 per cent of its total allocation to order supplementary materials locally authorized by a board of school trustees . . . Five per cent will not provide enough."

The BCTF raised objections to CAP when it was set up. Now that the ministry has ignored the BCTF and gone ahead with it, the federation plans to monitor the plan closely.

"It is at this stage that you as PD chairpersons have a key role," Kuehn said. "Our information must come from the school level where it is you who have the contacts. You will be asked to survey in your local during the year to find out if there are sufficient materials and what effect the new system is having on teaching.

"It is only with that kind of information that we can go forward as a collectivity to make our case effectively."

Instructional Circular 81 is evidence of an extreme lack of faith in teachers by the ministry, Kuehn said.

"If a teacher wishes to use for an extended period of time, with a majority of students in the class, a text other than that in the curriculum guides, then he or she must obtain an order-in-council passed by the cabinet of this province. This circular comes as a clear message

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that there is a lack of trust in the professional judgment of teachers."

In addition to providing professional help for teachers hindered by circular 81, PD co-ordinators must play an activist role, he said.

"Inspiration isn't enough. We must also provide some strategies. We must not make the government's mistake of telling teachers what they have to do in a limiting way. Rather, we can talk about some alternative ways that they can respond to the problems posed by the circular . . . Then we must trust that they will choose to act and we must provide support for them in their actions."

PD chairpersons should direct their energies in connection with the Administrative Handbook toward improving its model for curriculum development, he said.

"As professional development workers we should encourage that extensive examination from many different points of view and interests, and to whatever degree possible provide a forum for discussion," Kuehn said.

## Filby

From page 3

rather than by giving them standard achievements studies," Filby said.

The researchers noted the amount of time students spent in various activities in different sizes of classrooms. The time students wasted with their hands up waiting for attention, or waiting for the other students

to finish assignments they had completed, dropped with the smaller class sizes, Filby said.

"We have been looking in depth at what's been going on between teachers and students when class sizes were reduced," Filby says. "We wanted to find out what really did change when teachers had smaller numbers of students to deal with."

The Oakland class size was reduced after the New Year to 22 students, from 34. In Virginia, classes of 20 were reduced to 13.

One important finding of the field study was that teachers did not change teaching techniques in response to the smaller classes.

"There is evidence teachers do better with smaller classes but they do it within the framework they already have, and that is a limitation," she said. "They need some kind of training to take advantage of that opportunity (offered by smaller classes)."

"Smaller classes are only partly enough."

The next step for Far West is to compile a catalogue of methods for producing smaller classes for parts of the school day. In 1980-81 the team plans to conduct another field study, this time to observe schools where a staggered schedule has been adopted.

**BCTF  
Newsletter**

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