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BCTF Newsletter

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Govt, BCTF to study investment practices

Pensions action referendum postponed while new proposals are pursued

The BCTF and the provincial government have agreed to undertake a joint study of the investment practices of the Teachers' Pension Fund.

As the result the referendum planned for March 17, on a one-day province-wide pensions protest April 7, has been postponed until the nature of the study has been clarified and the cabinet has

been pressed to respond to other BCTF pension concerns.

The BCTF Executive Committee decided on the postponement at its meeting March 6, after it received an offer for the study from Provincial Secretary Evan Wolfe, the minister responsible for teachers' pensions.

The executive accepted Wolfe's offer,

but only conditionally, because of strings that Wolfe had tied to it.

Wolfe had specified that the BCTF should be represented by a specific staff member and had declared that he alone would set the terms of reference for the study.

This was unacceptable to the executive.

Wolfe modified his position when he met with BCTF President Al Blakey, March 10, the day after the opening of the new legislative session.

"Mr. Wolfe proved quite amenable to allowing us to choose our own representative, and to joint agreement on the terms of reference," Blakey reported after

the meeting. "I think we're off to a good start."

The federation will shortly name its representative, who will meet with Jim Reid, the government's pensions commissioner, to draft terms of reference for approval by the BCTF Executive Committee and the government.

The study of investment practices is a first step toward an overhaul of the pension fund, which even Wolfe admits may need to be "modernized."

The government's practice, as the recent report by consulting actuaries Paterson, Cook Ltd. pointed out, has been to invest teachers' pension contribu-

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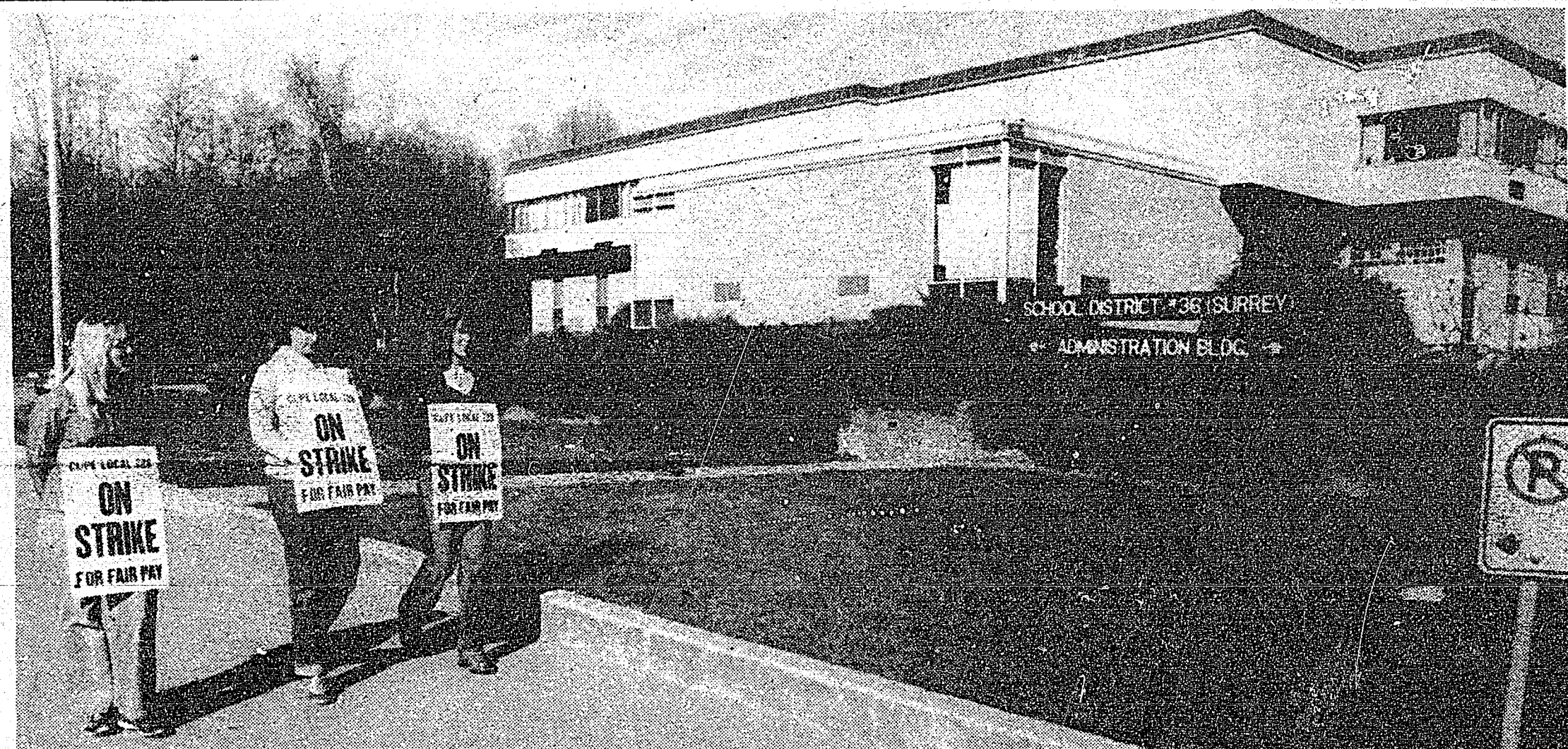
Broader scope EC's top priority

Achievement of full collective bargaining rights is the goal the Executive Committee wants the federation to pursue as its top objective next year.

It's probably the most important decision that 675 delegates to the 1981 BCTF Annual General Meeting will make when they meet April 12-15 at the Hotel Vancouver.

Setting achievement of full collective bargaining rights as the top priority of the BCTF is the first recommendation in the Executive Committee's leadership report, which charts the course the executive believes the federation should follow in the coming year.

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On March 9, Surrey non-teaching school board employees went on strike, joining colleagues in Nanaimo and Powell River on the picket line. One day later they were joined by Burnaby's school board employees.

Rash of strikes affecting schools

Teachers caught in middle in Nanaimo, Powell River, Lower Mainland disputes

For a group that doesn't have the right to strike, teachers find themselves in the middle of quite a few labor disputes this spring.

Non-teaching school board employees are out in Nanaimo (since February 5), Powell River (since February 23), Surrey (since March 9) and Burnaby (since March 10). Their colleagues in Coquitlam, New Westminster, Delta and Richmond are a good bet to follow them out, and Vancouver and West Vancouver also face possible strikes by non-teaching staff. Maple Ridge settled after a brief strike in late February, and Langley narrowly averted a strike before settling.

In addition, strikes by municipal workers in Nanaimo and virtually the entire Lower Mainland are affecting schools and programs. Most cultural facilities are run by municipal workers, so it's best to cancel the field trip you planned in Nanaimo or the Lower Mainland; you're likely to have to cross a picket line if you don't. That might not bother you, but it wouldn't sit well with the parents of many of your students.

The major facilities affected in Vancouver are the Queen Elizabeth Theatre and Playhouse, the Orpheum, the Centennial Museum, the planetarium, the Bloedel Conservatory in Queen Elizabeth Park, the VanDusen Gardens, and all community centres, pools, skating rinks and amenities within parks.

A major strike issue is one of "equal pay for work of equal value" — that is, bringing the wages of (mostly female) inside workers into line with the higher wages earned by (mostly male) outside workers. The BCTF has stated its support for the demand that school board clerical workers be paid on the same basis as other board employees.

"The BCTF has long enjoyed the benefits of equal pay for male and female teachers," says BCTF President Al Blakey. "We strongly endorse the justice of the claim of workers in schools and school district offices to be paid equally for work of equal value to that performed by other members of their bargaining units." The Langley and Maple Ridge settlements achieved this.

All local associations affected except Burnaby have decided to leave it up to the conscience of each teacher whether to cross a picket line, even if the local has decided to stay on the job. A teacher refusing to cross a picket line will lose that day's pay, but will not otherwise be punished.

"Our policy protects teachers who don't cross picket lines on conscientious grounds," says Tom Hutchison of the BCTF's Government Division. "We can't ask teachers to judge the nature of a picket line, whether it's legal or illegal, and our policies will protect the people who don't cross the picket line."

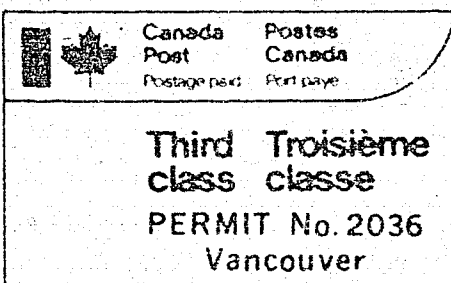
Burnaby teachers have a long-standing policy that teachers shall not cross a picket line without union permission.

In any case, the BCTF has a policy that no teacher shall perform work normally performed by a striking or locked out worker, and teachers will not work alongside strikebreakers. Blakey has said this policy will be strictly enforced.

B.C.'s Labor Minister Jack Heinrich, who has a reputation for keeping out of labor disputes, has said that he will step into these disputes if schools are closed for any length of time. But except for brief closures at the beginning of the Nanaimo strike, no schools have closed.

In past strikes schools have been closed after a health inspector has examined a

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

Help/crisis line in place by September

Executive Committee adopts program to deal with teachers' stress

Beginning in September, B.C. teachers under stress can phone the BCTF building after hours for a sympathetic ear and advice. The anonymous phone line, to be staffed by specially-trained teachers, was approved on a trial basis by the Executive Committee in February.

The phone line is one part of the stress program developed by Professional Development Division staff member Nora Grove and approved by the executive. Other elements in the plan:

- A peer counselling program. Volunteer teachers will be trained to initiate and facilitate support groups for teachers in their locals. These groups would provide something that last year's Flanders report said teachers want: "... to share with teachers who experienced different situations; to discover that other teachers had

the same difficulties, feelings and concerns; to discover what other teaching situations are like, and to explore other solutions to common problems that had been tried."

- A recommendation that local association negotiating committees bargain for an employee assistance program. The spring Representative Assembly will examine this proposal.

- A recommendation that the BCTF approach the B.C. School Trustees' Association about employee assistance programs, and seek the BCSTA's support for such programs. This will also be discussed first at the spring RA.

- A recommendation that local associations negotiate for early retirement incentive programs, sabbaticals, flexible short- and long-term leaves of absen-

ce, and a grievance procedure to protect teachers experiencing various forms of harassment on the job (administrative, sexual or parental).

- A career/life planning workshop for BCTF members. This will provide information and guidance for teachers thinking about leaving the profession.

- Finally, that the BCTF insist on better teacher training at the universities. Flanders stated in his report: "University teacher education was universally alleged to have been useless in preparing teachers for the realities of the classroom experience. The transition from university teacher education to full-time classroom teacher was typically reported to be a traumatic shock."

About 20 Lower Mainland teachers will be trained this spring by Vancouver Crisis Centre people to take phone calls on the crisis line service, which will operate from 5-9 p.m. weekdays at the BCTF switchboard.

"Basically, it's a listening service for people who need to talk and clarify in their own minds what their concerns are," says Grove, who was hired specifically

to prepare a stress program and whose job will end before the program is in place.

"We want teachers to answer the phone line because teacher volunteers would have a more sensitive understanding of where a person is coming from," she said. "Unless you're a teacher you can't really appreciate the kinds of pressures and hassles teachers are experiencing."

The phone line will cost just \$2,000 to operate for six months, she said; the peer counselling program will cost \$10,000, mostly the cost of training the teacher volunteers.

But while those two services will have the most immediate impact, Grove's program suggests that there is a better way of dealing with stress: by attacking the sources of stress at their roots. Thus, the various recommendations for areas that should be negotiated.

"We found that the major sources of stress for teachers have been learning and working conditions, and the major way of reducing stress for teachers is improving the conditions under which they work," she said.

Strikes affecting field trips

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struck school and determined it to be unsanitary. But this time, health inspectors themselves are on strike in Nanaimo and the Lower Mainland.

In Nanaimo, two grievances have been filed under the local's learning conditions contract, alleging substandard learning conditions as a result of the strike. The BCTF Executive Committee has adopted an interim policy to speed up resolution of such grievances.

Also affected by the labor disputes are some professional development activities scheduled for schools. Organizers of PD events have been asked to relocate such activities outside schools, and not to cross picket lines.

TV survey

Last year, the Canadian Teachers' Federation conducted a survey of children in 234 classrooms to discover what television shows they watch (just about everything, they found out). Now, the CTF is conducting another survey, this time to find out what kids want to watch.

If you want your class to take part in this survey, contact Peggi Hall at the BCTF building for copies of the survey form. Complete survey forms must be returned to the CTF by April 30.



The Executive Committee spent four hours on March 6 discussing the government's response to BCTF initiatives on the pensions issue.

Joint study imminent

From page 1

tions in low-yield, government-guaranteed bonds. This practice, the report said, is "economically inefficient" and produces too low a yield.

A shift toward higher-yield securities would generate more income which

would help restore full indexing for teachers' pensions.

Although Blakey sees the joint study as a good move, it is only one step toward achievement of the federation's pension objectives.

The ultimate objective is complete restoration of indexing rights. But as an interim step, Blakey proposed on January 27, a compromise: a return to full indexing for 1981 and 1982 and a commitment

from the provincial government to negotiate with the federation on a broad range of pension issues.

Wolfe had promised to put this proposal before the cabinet at its meeting the day before the opening of the session. This was not done.

Blakey has now written to Wolfe, reminding him of his promise and elaborating on the compromise proposal.

He said he hopes the cabinet will deal with the matter soon.

Geographical representatives or members of the Executive Committee cannot be members of the Investigation, Judicial, or Ombudspersons' committees.

Agreements co-ordinator

Agreements co-ordinators are sought for the following zones: South Coast, East Kootenay, West Kootenay, North Central and Metro. Application deadline is April 24; for more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF building.

LC co-ordinator

Learning conditions co-ordinators are sought for the following zones: South Coast, Vancouver Island South and Central Mainland. Application deadline is

April 24; for more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF building.

PD co-ordinator

Professional development co-ordinators are sought for the following zones: Fraser Valley, North Okanagan, East Kootenay and Metro. Application deadline is April 24.

CTF committees

The Executive Committee will at its May 1-2 meeting nominate BCTF members for the following Canadian Teachers' Federation advisory committees: teacher welfare, economics of education, quality and innovations in education, and status of women. Application deadline is April 24.

Committee vacancies

The following BCTF committees have vacancies. Unless otherwise indicated, terms are for three years effective July 1. Application deadline is April 24, and the Executive Committee will make appointments in May and June. For more information and application forms, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF offices.

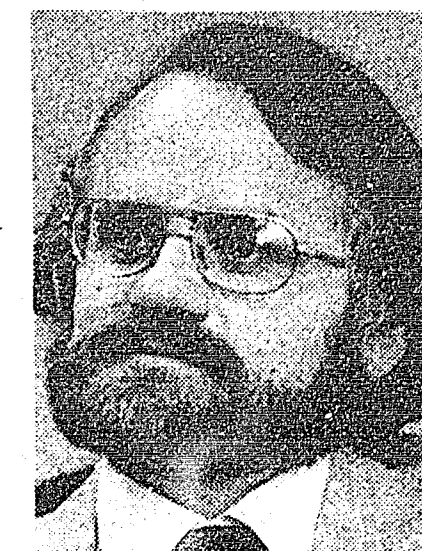
BCTF Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board (1 vacancy); **B.C. Teacher Editorial Board** (1); **Education Finance** (2); **Finance** (3); **Income Security** (1); **Investigation** (3); **Labor Liaison** (2); **Pensions** (1); **Policies and Procedures** (2, plus 1 corresponding member); **Racism** (4); **2/MARCH 12, 1981**

Status of Women (2); **Teacher Education** (1); **Teacher Personnel** (2);

Professional Relations (2); **Judicial** (3 to be elected at the spring Representative Assembly. Applicants for the Judicial Committee must be approved by a secret ballot of the local association general meeting or local association delegate assembly); **Ombudspersons** (1, for the Kootenay region, to be elected by the spring RA to a five-year term); **Federation Appeals Board** (8, to be elected at the fall RA. Applicants for the Appeals Board must be approved by a secret ballot of a local association general meeting or local association delegate assembly).

BCTF Executive Committee Candidates' statements

For President



Teaching experience: Kitimat, Kettle Valley, Kamloops; Simon Fraser University faculty associate, B.A. and M.A. degrees. Local association experience: Annual General Meeting delegate for many years; served on several committees: full-time president in Kamloops, 1976-78; BCTF geographical representative, 1974-75, 1976-77; learning conditions co-ordinator, 1975-78; Task Force on Authority and Responsibility, 1976-78; executive member-at-large, 1977-79; first vice-president, 1979-81.

Larry Kuehn

Teachers in B.C. operate in a feudal backwater when it comes to their rights to influence the conditions under which they work.

Expectations of the school — and thus the teacher — have increased in recent times as other social institutions have given up responsibility for children.

At the same time, increasing numbers of decisions have been made at the ministry and board levels which have reduced the ability of the teacher to determine the operation of the classroom environment and to shape the program to meet the increased demands.

These factors together have produced increasing symptoms of job dissatisfaction. The symptoms have been identified in the Flanders report, in the presentations made by teachers to the minister in his forums last fall, and in general staffroom discussions.

If we are to reduce these symptoms of dissatisfaction we must gain the right to be equal partners in making the decisions which define our jobs as teachers.

If we are to improve the quality of our working life we must be able to negotiate not just our salaries, but also our learning and working conditions and our professional rights.

We can no longer be satisfied to have fewer bargaining rights than any other employee group in B.C. and a narrower scope of bargaining than the teachers in any other province.

Achieving bargaining rights — whether to bargain pensions, preparation time, class size, conditions of "mainstreaming," or any other issue of collective concern — must be the major priority of the BCTF for the next year.

We must have a strong and effective organization in order to gain bargaining rights and then to use those rights to produce quality conditions for teachers and students.

Ben Thomas



The issue

The issue is plain and simple... it is the BCTF.

Role reversal

A classic case of role reversal exists. Instead of the federation serving the teachers, it has become a case of the teachers serving the federation. This creates a growing alienation between the teachers and their own organization... the federation. Nowhere is this alienation more apparent than in the use of our financial resources.

Executive failure

The executive, which guides our federation, has in the last two years failed to exercise proper fiscal control as required by policy statements 12.C.06, 12.C.08, and 12.C.10. It has evaded its responsibility by saying that these policies are "in general," or as an "objective."

Expenditures outrun salaries

1979-81 SALARIES UP... 23 PER CENT
1979-81 EXPENDITURES UP... 36 PER CENT

The \$1.8 million question

In 1979-80 our expenditures were \$283,553 over fee revenue. In 1980-81 our expenditures are \$444,552 over fee revenue. If in 1981-82 we had our normal .86 fee then our expenditures would be \$1 million over fee revenue.

So that in three short years we would actually be \$1.8 million over our revenue from fees.

WHY? Inflation is accounted for by the constant .86 fee. Not pensions — it is supported by our reserve fund.

Proposed fee increase: \$60 — up 28 per cent

Mismanagement brings its own rewards. The present executive has the audacity to recommend to you a 28-per-cent fee increase. The present fee is \$214; the proposed fee is \$274, an increase of \$60. They promise that they will now balance the budget. They are not balancing the budget, they are in fact "balancing the fee." That is, setting increased expenditures, then raising the fee to match.

NOWHERE IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE OF A CONCERTED EFFORT TO BRING THE BCTF PROGRAMS AND EXPENDITURES UNDER CONTROL.

Members have lost control

What we are witnessing is an organization which has lost all sense of direction and purpose. The organization has developed a synergism all of its own. The programs resulting from this process require funding only as an afterthought. The result is that funding is not properly planned but simply passed on to the teachers with a "give it or we will take it" attitude.

WE HAVE LOST CONTROL OF THE PROGRAMS AND THE FUNDING PROCESS OF OUR FEDERATION.

Is it not time to say STOP... ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

I think so. Will you join me?

More
statements
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MARCH 12, 1981/3

For First Vice-President



Lynda Coplin

- Where will our political protests lead us?
- To the right to negotiate decent pensions.
- To the right to negotiate our working and learning conditions.

Political protests, withdrawal of services, political rallies and marches are *not* common actions for B.C. teachers! But this winter we saw a change. Teachers had no other choice. We were forced into this position by the government.

Our retired colleagues and indeed ourselves, as we reach retirement age, must be guaranteed a liveable pension. Bill 29 has denied that right. While we cannot negotiate our pensions we are at the mercy of any government. This must stop! We must have the right to bargain for our pensions, and for the conditions under which we work and children learn.

No other organized employee in B.C. or teachers' group in Canada is denied those basic rights.

Recent research shows that 31 per cent of teachers in a metro district answered affirmative to the following question: "Are you receiving or have you received medical or professional assistance to deal with a stress-related ailment while teaching?" Also, 36.2 per cent of teachers in a province stated they experienced physical illness which was attributed to work-related stress.

Job-related stress stems from the demands continually being added to our workload. New and revised curriculum, district-wide testing, self-assessments, racial incidents, technological changes, mainstreaming of children and the administration of medication are but a few of these demands. They continue to be added without the benefit of adequate preparation time, smaller class sizes, duty-free lunch hours or well-equipped classrooms.

If teachers and children are to work in a healthy, enriched and challenging environment we must have a strong voice in determining our conditions of work. I believe we achieve these goals through discussion, reason and diplomacy. However, when these approaches fail then we must be prepared to take stronger action!

Doug Smart

What are the central issues facing teachers and the federation in the 1980s? It is difficult to identify clearly those issues, let alone address them in a short space. Maybe the issues can be summarized by where are we going and how are we going to get there?

Teachers in schools are facing pressures — pressures of changing community expectations, changing and growing diversity of needs of children, changing curriculum, increased demands in terms of student performance. We need to — I will use the word — *empower* teachers to deal with these pressures and demands. I use the word empower in more than one sense. First we need to make teachers aware of their own power as curriculum decision-makers in their own classrooms. We are on the front line where the day-to-day decisions about individual children are and must be made. Secondly, we have to empower teachers by making them aware of their collective strength. Teachers can not work in isolation — cannot cope with all their needs on an individual basis. This joint or collective action can take place at the school level in what some call collective autonomy. Or it can take place through local associations and/or the federation.

One of the powerful statements about the effectiveness of teachers and the federation is the significant changes that have been brought about by our efforts since 1972. One in four teachers teaching in B.C. today is there because of the efforts of the federation to meet needs of students by staffing and class size-criteria.

The third way we can empower teachers is to expand the scope of bargaining to include terms and conditions of employment. We have, however, too quickly narrowed the discussion to what would be the best method of resolving disputes. Many questions remain unanswered. Questions that simplistic solutions do not address. What do we want to bargain? I, for example, do not want to bargain away the collective autonomy that I already have. While I believe the Executive Committee's proposal on dispute resolution may offer the best of all possible worlds, other issues need to be addressed before we are ready to seek new legislation on teaching bargaining. These questions will have to be discussed over the next year.

I have demonstrated in my two years on the executive that I look responsibly at the individual issues, mindful of the concerns of the majority of teachers in this province. I will continue to do so.



Public school in Prince George, B.A., B.Ed. (Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario), M.Ed. (language arts and reading) University of Victoria, 1977. Taught Grades 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. Presently teaching Grade 3 and administrative assistant. Have also been sessional lecturer and field associate for faculty of education, University of Victoria.

Local association: served as professional development chairperson, education advisory council chairperson, geographic representative and full-time president (1977-79). Annual General Meeting delegate, seven years. BCTF: served as chairperson Task Force on Rebates to Locals, served on Education Finance Committee and Representative Assembly Triennial Review Committee; served on labor relations and building executive subcommittees. Also attended Canadian Teachers' Federation Improving Political Effectiveness Conference, 1978 and CTF AGM, 1980. Community: active in community affairs. Presently director, Carefree Society (transportation service for handicapped and senior citizens).

For Member-at-Large (Four to be elected)



Pat Clarke

As a full-time local association president for the past two years and geographic representative for the Central Okanagan for three years I have had the opportunity to talk with many teachers here and elsewhere in the province about their views and concerns. In that time it has become clear to me that there are a number of issues which are of broad interest.

1. Working conditions

Perhaps foremost of these is the frustration teachers feel because of the lack of control they have over various conditions of their employment. These include curriculum matters and professional development as well as such working conditions as contact time with students. The existing processes for addressing problems related to these matters are frustrating and often demeaning. We need a formal, meaningful and productive bargaining process that will allow teachers some effective say on the conditions of their employment. The priority expressed in the executive leadership report on expanding the scope of teacher bargaining is our best hope.

2. Personnel practices

Personnel practices on the part of our employers have recently received much attention from the federation and deservedly so. Current common practice in personnel relations involving teachers would be laughable if it were not so potentially unjust. Regulations governing teacher suspension, dismissal and probationary appointments can and sometimes do deny teachers processes of natural justice that would outrage any citizen subjected to them. That lumbering dinosaur of the Victorian era, the School Act, is in many ways the culprit here but we must also strive to impress upon our employers the responsibility they have in developing employee assistance programs and, in general, humane rather than autocratic approaches to employee relations.

3. Curriculum

Teachers are increasingly becoming technicians. The little input they are allowed in curriculum development as well as the increasing centralization of the school system make it ever more difficult for teachers to make the kind of professional decisions they must be allowed if their jobs are to be anything more than exercises in frustration.

The BCTF must be an organization devoted to improving all of these conditions under which teachers work. We have made a good start at doing that — I am committed to continuing the process.



Terry Eastman

The main business of the federation for the next short period of time has to be the attainment of recommendation 1 in the leadership report of the executive to the 1981 annual general meeting:

That the BCTF priority for 1981-82 be to gain full collective bargaining rights for teachers.

As one of the few teacher groups in Canada without this right, we cannot hope to gain and to keep, with any degree of certainty, major remedies to continuing concerns such as preparation time, due process and other terms and conditions of employment. Without this right we will continue to work in a highly stress-related occupation where we have no direct recourse to deal with the major difficulties in our work environment, such as:

- daily time pressures.
- isolation in the classroom.
- daily paperwork and administrative demands.
- an increasing and seemingly never-ending list of expectations from all segments of the system.
- no specific limits to extra duties, supervision.
- job security.

The action plan recommended to the AGM, given full support from the membership, should accomplish this fundamental right.

While the right to bargain all terms and conditions of employment will most certainly improve our professional autonomy we must also begin to focus our professional development activities on this goal. Professional development must enhance our professional status, otherwise we will never break out of the fix-the-burnt-out-teacher cycle. In addition to these two major thrusts, the federation must continue to:

- improve ways and means of assisting local associations to deal with their concerns.

- expand federation and employer programs to deal with stress.
- demand that the education minister deliver on expectations raised at the public forums by obtaining appropriate revisions to the School Act.
- lead the public debate on an improved system for the 1980-90s.
- initiate a vigorous inquiry into where we are now and where we are going.

Over the past year the executive has done the preparatory work which now makes the accomplishment of these goals a reality. Teachers and children will make significant gains if we now work together to achieve these goals. I am prepared to continue to work with you to this end.

Thom Hansen



Teachers are constantly being criticized. It is therefore imperative that we deliver a strong message by moving further towards control of our own profession and only through this can we truly become the educational leaders of this province. It is towards this end that I am offering my services to the federation.

I feel it is important that all members be made aware of clearly-defined strategies for every campaign the BCTF undertakes. Current BCTF efforts to achieve wider scope of bargaining must be understood and perceived by members to be for the benefit of all and not at the expense of service to teachers.

I feel it is important that the BCTF be seen as a leading force in education rather than, as is sometimes the case, in a reactionary role. The federation must emphasize professional leadership. We must work toward our own certification and hiring procedures. We must take the initiative and if necessary develop parallel processes to exemplify how the BCTF would fulfill these tasks, rather than wait for someone to grant us the control.

I feel it is important that we give the Flanders report the consideration it deserves. The Flanders report recommends extensive and rapid moves to improve communications to involve more members, especially through local associations, in the discussion of and response to federation policies.

I feel it is important that we review the present fragmented approach to the problems of our members which often falls short of what is needed, and consideration be given to the replacement of some of those programs with a teachers' retraining program, in cooperation with Manpower, that would allow an easy transition to a new career, for those teachers who are unhappy in the profession.

I feel it is important that the welfare of all members be the foremost consideration of the executive and the federation in policy and decision-making. We must guard against becoming so involved with politics that we appoint members with high political profiles to committees, rather than other applicants who are highly-qualified but non-political.

I feel we must look to our valuable professional development programs such as Project TEACH to serve as models by which we can share the expertise of the teachers in this province. Through our own resources we can demonstrate that our profession consists of highly-skilled and dedicated people.

I feel that only through involvement, communication and clearly-defined goals can we obtain a strong teaching profession.

Education and background: Born in Powell River. Educated in Slocan and Vancouver. B.A. in English and history at the University of B.C. Work experience in the fields of architecture, marketing, longshoring and personnel management. Seventeen years teaching in Vancouver elementary and secondary including 9½ years in alternate programs. Currently teaching socials and music at Templeton secondary school.

Local experience: Fourteen years of involvement on various committees, including learning conditions, budget, et cetera. Two years as full-time president of Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association.

Federation experience: Seven years as geographical representative. Annual General Meeting delegate, professional development association.

For Second Vice-President



Steve Norman

This year the pensions issue has caused a reawakening of the federation. We have learned that pension plans across Canada are in need of reappraisal and the BCTF is in the forefront of that examination. We have also learned that *all* of Canada's teachers have better bargaining rights legislation than we do. What do we do with this knowledge?

The executive's leadership report to the 1981 Annual General Meeting considered these questions and proposes we seek full collective bargaining rights for all terms and conditions of employment and provides an action plan to begin the process of achieving these goals. We must, however, not lose sight of the fact that we have no economic clout and are members in the public service. Thus, we must develop a plan that unites the public and teachers. I propose the call for an independent commission to study and make recommendations on all aspects of education. Such an inquiry should analyze education finance, pupil and parent rights, the School Act, teacher rights, curriculum development and control and many other issues.

We must, as well, continue our internal analysis of federation structures. The Flanders report is at the moment providing a framework for analysis, particularly in the professional development field, as well as providing some base data on teacher stress and involvement in federation structures. This process of inquiry should be extended to take a hard look at the role, responsibilities and expectations of each level of our governmental structures. I believe many legitimate requests of the membership are impossible to attain as many of your elected and appointed representatives have an unmanageable task.

Finally, I would note that through all our internal and external investigations we must not obscure the fact that all our activities are to support the concept that teachers, pupils, and parents are the prime triad in the educational process. Each corner of that triangle should be given equal consideration.

Born and raised in B.C. B.P.E., UBC, 1965, education diploma programs, UBC 1966, M.Sc. (P.E.) University of Oregon, 1968. Thirteen years in Vancouver at elementary level. Local association experience — 10 years on the executive in most offices, including two years as full time president. AGM delegate for eight years, geographical representative for four years. Executive Committee for three years, Canadian Teachers' Federation delegate. Currently serving on four executive committees (professional staff bargaining, labor relations, building and RSP subcommittees).



Elsie McMurphy

The strength and purpose of the BCTF will be found in its support of teachers who are working to establish sound, healthy educational environments in their classrooms.

However, a recent report commented that 22,000 members do not feel that the federation is indeed meeting the needs of the ordinary classroom teacher.

We must design ways to keep in close personal touch with teachers so that the federation is a real entity, so that it means something positive to each of us.

Service to locals, particularly the smaller and more isolated ones, is critical. Close liaison is essential. The federation can provide moral, legal, and financial support. The executive can provide leadership and set general directions.

But locals need more than money and goals. They need on-site assistance to plan, to develop strategies, and to implement their objectives, which centre on a desire to provide quality education.

In order for us as teachers to do the very best job possible, we must have some control of the situation in which we work.

Teachers command tremendous resources of knowledge, experience, imagination and practical common sense. The federation, in expanding the traditional scope of bargaining, is developing a climate that allows us to draw upon those resources in our efforts to meet the needs and aspirations of children, parents, and society in general as these are manifested in our schools.

Teachers are frustrated by having to implement and be responsible for some other authority's decisions about student needs, placement, curriculum, learning materials and evaluation, without having the right and the responsibility to make their own decisions.

The causes of the stress that is today one of the most significant characteristics of a teacher's job must be addressed through procedures that allow, not for hopeful petitioning, but for meaningful negotiations. The current pension situation is but another example of our present inability to influence, in a legal and binding way, the conditions under which we work.

Obviously, the federation must use, at different times and for different issues, both a professional and a union model to meet the needs of teachers. We are professionals who require the opportunity to exercise individual professional judgment, but at the same time we are employees who in some instances need the strong and vigorous protection of a collective organization. The federation will be strong if its members perceive that it can attain for them goals that as individuals they are powerless to achieve.

Teachers are being challenged to provide their educational best for our society's children. I want to be part of an executive and an organization that helps teachers meet that challenge.

Wesley Nickel

If ever we needed a strong federation the time is now. The BCTF has recently emerged as a unified body, a body that is advocating an improvement in the quality of education for every child in our province.

Teachers are the key people in the educational process. They should play a full role in determining the focus and direction of education. Meeting the needs of teachers must be a major goal of the federation.

Teacher stress and burnout are increasingly evident. Teachers are so overworked in trying to give the best possible education that they do not have the time to participate in the improvement of the educational system.

We need to give teachers the right to negotiate preparation time, class size, leaves of absence and other services that would improve the education we now offer. It is time to end collective begging. Changes should be made in the legislation.

We need the right to bargain our pensions to adequately safeguard the benefits of retired teachers and our members who will retire in the future.

Community support for education should be increased by encouraging parents to enter the schools and by teachers actively seeking support from the public. Public opinion is a major influence upon school board decisions.

The federation must have strong, effective leadership which conducts our affairs in an open and democratic manner. We need to pursue active participation from local associations of every size and geographic location. The efforts of classroom teachers in their districts are the backbone of the federation.

The federation must be the collective strength of teachers so that we have effective control of our jobs and thus improve the learning and working conditions of our students and teachers.

Al Paterson

Teacher concerns this year have focussed on pensions and scope of bargaining. With pensions we have had to react because of unilateral changes made by government while with scope of bargaining we are seeking what we have long been denied concerning our terms and conditions of employment.

These two areas will continue to be up front during the 1981-82 year.

The Paterson-Cook report justifies our concerns over pensions. We must pursue our goals in this area vigorously, mindful of the fact that inflation has not been "wrestled to the ground" and will continue to erode purchasing power of ourselves and our retired colleagues.

The time has come to gain the right to bargain all terms and conditions of employment. The concern of many of our members is about how we will resolve disputes — province-wide dialogue is needed on the matter.

Other matters are of concern as well.

Teacher image is poor among many sectors of the public. We must strive to raise this image through continued professional development activities, educational excellence in the classrooms, and appropriate public relations vehicles. Wherever possible a co-operative approach must be used.

The cost of the BCTF to its members is also a concern. Programs must continue to be closely examined in terms of benefit to the members. Specific items of progress by committees and task forces must be shared with the members regularly either through the newsletter or through direct contact with local associations.

Good personnel practices must be pursued throughout the province and crisis situations for teachers must be greatly reduced.

In summary, I stand for the attainment of the goals and objectives of the BCTF. I will pursue them forcefully but fairly if elected as member-at-large.

Cliff Read

Locally, I have seen an immense growth in the pressures being placed on teachers. Feelings of inadequacy and frustration deriving from a general devaluation of the teacher's judgment abound. There is no dignity when there is no input into matters of working and learning conditions. There are strong competitors vying for the control of education. The next few years are going to be ones of rapid change. It is imperative that teachers effect changes they wish to see made. It is patently ridiculous to leave such vital responsibilities solely in the hands of boards — however well-meaning they may be.

An expanded scope of bargaining must remain a major objective of both the federation and locals. Everything that impinges on a teacher's work must be negotiable.

Provincially and locally we must increase public support — it's there in greater measure than most realize, albeit untapped. Without it, we can accomplish little. With it, we can move the most intransigent authority.

How can we go about making changes? Clearly, in a system as political as ours is at all of its levels, we must become a stronger political force both as a federation and as local associations.

I believe that the federation will continue to have a leadership role, but that the real power of the BCTF lies in strong local associations. The important initiatives begin in locals. The greatest potential for effecting significant changes in the area of expanding the scope of bargaining certainly lies in strong local associations. And not for a moment should large, Lower Mainland locals believe that there is little potential in the smaller, more distant locals.

I believe that the federation must redefine its role in terms of members' needs and locals' needs.

I believe that the BCTF executive must work to increase the effectiveness of communication and contact with members through their locals, especially those outside the Lower Mainland.

I believe in the strength and dignity of the classroom teacher and the profession. I have spoken, and will continue to speak, aggressively and intelligently for teachers and students.



Born Regina, Saskatchewan, 1942; public school in Victoria; teacher training at Victoria College and the University of B.C., B.Ed., 1972; employed by Vancouver school board since 1962.

Member of many Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association committees, two years VESTA president; attended many AGMs, geographical representative, five years, chaired Representative Assembly three years and AGM two years, nominating committee chairperson two years; chairperson, Task Force to Review TQS; nominee of BCTF to board of reference.



Born in Australia; received elementary teaching qualifications at Melbourne Teachers' College; studied economics at University of Oregon. Arrived Canada in summer of 1969; since taught in the intermediate grades in Trail. In third year of local presidency; experienced in local in areas of learning conditions, personnel practices, agreements (peripheral) and labor relations — president during the infamous 1978-79 strike and the lockout of 1979-80. BCTF experience: Labor Liaison Committee for two years, one as chairperson; currently on the Learning Conditions Committee as the co-ordinator for the West Kootenays.



Christina Schut

We are in a time of change. A time when teachers are examining the role of the federation and their status as an employee group in B.C. It is a time of growth that is challenging and exciting.

In the past year the BCTF has commissioned reports that study the terms and conditions under which teachers are employed and the kind of service the federation provides its memberships in terms of professional development. The Flanders report, the Yorke report and the Paterson-Cook report provide us with clear direction for our internal and external activities.

One main theme emerges from each of these reports — the theme of meaningful involvement. It is evident that to improve working and learning conditions, thereby ensuring a sense of dignity for teachers about their work, we must gain the right of meaningful involvement in all levels of educational decision-making. I am deeply committed to this goal.

The time has come when teachers are preparing to take collective action to gain full indexing of pensions. This is a first step towards gaining greater rights for teachers. We must continue to be active to gain full collective bargaining rights, meaningful involvement in curriculum development and implementation and greater collegiality at the staff level.

I support the executive's leadership report that advocates the gaining of full collective bargaining rights as the priority of the 1981-82 year.

It will be the responsibility of the executive and the federation staff to provide strong leadership and support for the membership in our campaign to secure greater rights for teachers. The executive will have to work to make sure that the commitment of all teachers in all locals throughout the province remains firm and unshaken. Frequent personal communications between executive, staff and locals will be necessary. It will be a challenging task, and a stimulating one. I look forward to being involved in the work of our federation during this time of growth and change.

Letters

'Smaller pensions need full indexing'

I feel I have to respond to Mr. Ovan's letter published in the *BCTF Newsletter* of January 15. As he stated in point three of his letter, long service and a relatively high salary has removed his need in retirement. Therefore, from the last sentence of his letter, we could delete the word "greedy" and substitute the word "fat."

I would like to submit that a great many teachers are in receipt of a pension which is well below the poverty level, some lower than \$4,000 per year

as applies in my case. It could very well be true that a limit of 8 per cent on an annual pension of somewhere about \$15,000 or more would still be quite adequate. However, a ceiling of 8 per cent on a pension of \$6,000 or less, assuming inflation runs at a constant 10 per cent, would result in economic hardship for the retiree.

I made a 10-year projection of a situation wherein inflation is a constant 10 per cent and indexing is a constant 8 per cent. At the end of 10 years

the pension value will have dropped by something near 45 per cent. If during the same period the difference between inflation and indexing is greater than a constant 2 per cent, the drop in purchasing power of the original pension will be much greater. Projected beyond 10 years, and many of us should live so long, we will be caught in a whirlpool of accelerating poverty.

To conclude this part, I would paraphrase an old nursery rhyme in that perhaps a few piggies can afford roast beef, but without full indexing, a great many will have none.

The next point I would like to make is that it is well time we restructured

our ideas about pensions. We should not consider pensions as reduced salaries. Being that, all should contribute towards indexing, both the active and the retired, albeit the latter on a reduced scale. The rate of contribution should be geared to the rate of inflation and this would ensure that the pension fund would be adequately funded.

My earlier suggestion on this to the BCTF was rejected as being against BCTF policy. The letter did not elaborate if this policy was etched on stone.

Steve Borden
Victoria

What does the future hold?

The whopping increase in auto insurance, and other signs of social disintegration — like mounting prostitution on Granville Street, exorbitant rises in housing, fuel, living costs generally — brought a few Richmond secondary teachers to an in-depth staff room discussion recently. Where is it all leading to: will there be a collapse, or perhaps a depression? Like all other bourgeois pundits of the social order — economists included — these highly trained leaders of the rising generation just have no idea what is taking place. Indeed, one wonders if they want to know; or like fat cats, do we just drift along with the tide?

As I sat listening, my mind went back more than 40 years to when I first became a teacher. My salary was a three-digit number compared to five-digits today. I never heard of such things as "smoking pot," "pushing," or the demand for facilities in public schools for the mentally handicapped. Private enterprise was more of a flourishing thing then, with monopolies

and large corporations being rare. Money was scarce; yet some, not all, enjoyed the luxuries available to them. Strikes in our part of Canada were just a vague concept of some kind of labor trouble; but the Winnipeg general strike of 1919 had left its mark; a spell suggesting that people should organize for a greater share of the country's wealth.

As I continued to listen, I thought, too, that we are indeed heading for something: a general collapse, unless we allow capitalist nations to generate another major war, for which the stage is now being set, for a breather; the only "solution" left to our dying economy. Hopefully, westerners are strong enough *en masse* to maintain peace to thwart this trend; in which case, the collapse will come and the system will strangle itself into non-existence.

The ruins then will provide the base upon which socialism must come at the hands of working people (teachers included, in case some think we don't work!), free of exploitation, usury, speculation, gross profiteering by giants who today are at the bottom of all our ills.

Ivor J. Mills
Richmond

Thanks for December protest

Permit me, as a retired teacher, to express appreciation to all of you young teachers for an intelligent evaluation of the pension situation. Your co-operation and enthusiastic expression on December 11 was a real tonic for teachers everywhere.

One finds it difficult to understand the reluctance of some teachers to participate in such justified protests. Perhaps they have been influenced by that very strange bargain struck by our pensions representatives and the government. It is incredible to 90 per cent of us that we ever negotiated the elimination of our indexed pensions. It must be the only occasion on record when people of "sound mind" bargained for a progressive reduction of income.

The printed information and the excellent speeches by our leaders on December 11 were most helpful. They measured the enormity of the crimes against us. It was made very clear to teachers and the general public that we were not seeking a special deal for teachers. We just want justice through previously-agreed sharing of contributions.

In a just society all pensions (industrial and government) should be indexed, just as each new salary or wage agreement reflects cost of living. Instead of decrying the teachers' battle (as some of the work force tends to do) all employees in every work sector should recognize before it's too late that a non-indexed pension is equivalent to no pension a couple of years after retirement. Surely, when it is found necessary to increase wages to keep pace with the cost of living, it is vitally necessary to do the same for pensions. I wonder what kind of logic our critics use?

My ex-service friends from World War II will recall the Hungry Thirties, and how readily money became available to wage war (1939) to save society. What society were we saving? We seem to be back to square one with first-, second- and third-class societies. People on fixed or dwindling pensions are callously placed third-class to aid peacetime economies. All this from a government that claims to have a booming economy and can dream of monuments such as B.C. Place.

The present government has squandered our pension funds over a period of 25 years, and now have the cruel cheek to make us pay for their criminal abuse of those funds. They take too literally the Biblical quotation, "To him who hath shall be given, but from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." I understand that Evan Wolfe will have his pension fully indexed with only 12 years' service. I had 37 plus 5 years' war service. How can I see these situations as fair?

The organizers of that massive demonstration on December 11 are entitled to our hearty congratulations. They did a wonderful job for us, and I hope they were not discouraged by the few who felt it was undignified to stand for elementary justice. Possibly those teachers have a brilliant method which they have yet to divulge. The minister of education didn't like our method, but he had no suggestions either.

Perhaps, in retirement years, a grateful government will provide food, clothing and travel vouchers for those "gallant" people who refused to support our pension action.

The facts related to us, during our demonstrations, should be given in detail to the media without benefit of editing by such media. The minister could have difficulty with real facts.

Vic Coulter
Port Coquitlam

Insulted by job search handbook

On requesting a list of school district superintendents recently, I received from the BCTF a "package" or "kit" detailing how to apply for a job, together with the list of current superintendents' names.

The "Hints on Finding a Teaching Position" ran to 39 pages and included such tidbits as, "Reread your letters before mailing. Check appearance, grammar, and spelling; identify yourself as 'a teacher of . . .'; plan to use good quality paper for resumes and correspondence."

Although aware that teachers vary in ability and many are neat or have done good from time to time, I was not aware that the profession harbored

half-wits. Evidently the BCTF believes this to be the case, so strongly, in fact, that it has seen fit to raise my federation fees by a substantial amount this year in order, to some degree at least, to subsidize the creation and publication of this Pythonesque document to assist these same half-wits in attempting to pull the wool over the eyes of potential employers.

Such a move can only be designed to make the selection process of the employer more difficult from the outset, hinder the applications of literate candidates or help persons in Burrard Street justify their existence.

What other puerile pedantries are being plotted?: "Hints on Hallway Posture," or "Six Easy Ways to Avoid Ending Job Applications with the Words, Yours Hopefully!"

Graham Milne
Kitimat

Ovans gets thumbs-up this time

Charles Ovans is a man with whom I've disagreed on more than one occasion, but I respect his forthrightness and his ability to express himself clearly and literally. Dave Smith is a man I've listened to at various AGMs. He is an extremely intelligent man, and I respect his ability to express himself, too, but he's a little prolix for my taste.

Regarding their two letters in the *BCTF Newsletter* of January 15, I give Charles the thumbs-up, and Dave the

thumbs-down. Of the two more or less evenly matched gladiators, I find Charles the cleaner fighter. No doubt there'll be many more letters about the pension dispute, but these two should be hard to top.

Personally, I'm backing Charles. I couldn't have said it half as well, but he's expressed by views more or less completely. I'll give points to Dave for a good letter, but it's dirty pool to twist a man's words, Dave. Charles did not compare us to our porcine brethren, but merely suggested that if the cap fits, wear it.

E. M. Addicott
West Vancouver

'Principals belong in the federation'

May I express my support for Kay Sigurjonssen's recommendation that principals and vice-principals be considered as principal teachers and not as representatives of management, the school boards.

The fact that, left to themselves without the support of the teachers' association, principals and vice-principals are in an extremely weak

position, dependent to a dangerous degree on the school board in any process of bargaining, is of importance. The major reason, from my point of view, is that the chief responsibility of principals and vice-principals is to the staff and students. It is their job and responsibility to represent staff and students to the board and to the public in educational matters. Their priorities

must be the needs and best interests of staff and students.

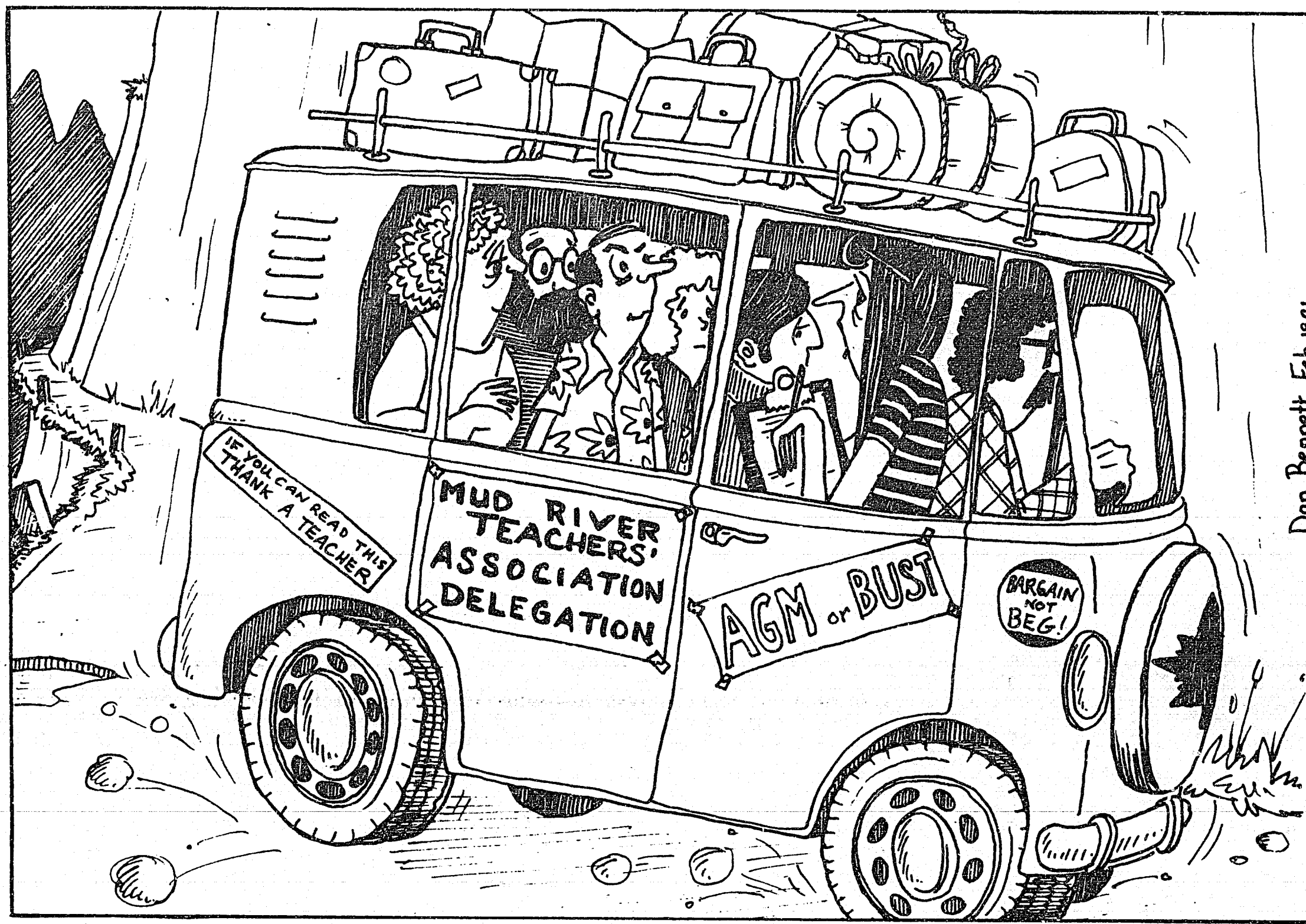
As members of management, there is danger that the administration will represent the school board and its concerns to the staff, rather than represent the interests and concerns of staff and students to the board.

Also, based upon several years of service on teacher bargaining teams, I am fully in support of widening the basis of bargaining to include not only salaries and related items, but every aspect of the teaching process: class size, resources, equipment, conditions

of work, sabbatical and other leave, et cetera.

Also, from my experience, binding arbitration in many cases nullifies the bargaining and negotiating processes. Faced with having to give a substantial increase to their teachers, the board will present a very tough, unreasonable position. Then, when the arbitration board gives the teachers a raise, the school board can say to the electorate, "We put up a good fight in your interests, it was the arbitration which gave the raise."

Frank Snowsell
Kelowna



"... Right, I think I have it! On the question of stopping for coffee at Boston Bar, I have one 'yes', one 'no', two abstentions and a motion to reconsider ..."

Ovans comments 'out of order'

To my mind Mr. Ovans's comments about teachers who are pursuing full pension indexing (*BCTF Newsletter*, January 15) are completely out of order. Just to refresh everyone's memory, Mr. Ovans was once our general secretary. This position earned Mr. Ovans a very healthy salary, paid

by people Mr. Ovans now calls "piggish." Additionally, Mr. Ovans's tenure as our general secretary earned him very generous fringe benefits, one of which was a very healthy teacher's pension.

And yet Mr. Ovans has the nerve to call us piggish. It should be noted, as well, that Mr. Ovans in no small part due to our "piggish" efforts and money, now enjoys a relaxed, healthy and wealthy retirement on acres of land on the beautiful Sunshine Coast.

There are of course teachers who

have worked just as hard and long as Mr. Ovans did, supported him and tried to save their money, but couldn't due to low salaries, an inadequate pension plan, poor working conditions, et cetera, and now eat poorly in one-room apartments.

Perhaps Mr. Ovans should look into a mirror before he calls someone a pig. Or better yet, pigs who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Claus Spiekermann
Bowen Island

Not wild about fee increase

The staff members of Champlain Heights Community School are very concerned about the proposed increase in professional dues.

Our response to the plan to increase fees from \$214 to \$274, an average of \$60, is as follows: 16 opposed to any increase; 7 opposed to any increase in excess of 12.18 per cent; and 1 requested detailed information to determine the necessity of an increase.

Several staff members have suggested that any proposed increases be considered by all teachers in the form of a referendum.

We feel that the proposed increase for 1981 is excessive and should not be considered without consultation with the teachers of B.C. through a referendum.

Ronald Timmis, Anne Erickson, G. Dyer, Brian Conner, Susan Sanderson, P. D. Curell, James Procter, B. Foster, Dianne Guild, G. C. Dunbar, A. Sawatsky, L. Harper, Carolyn O'Reilly-Cooke, Pamela George, Catherine Fung, Deborah Walmsley, Pam Harris, Jean Ferguson, Irene Ward, G. Solheim, C. Read, Caroline Wallbridge, Deborah Van der Kraak, Raymond Rintoul
Champlain Heights Community School
Vancouver

What the NDP would do

My stand on the question of teachers' pensions is well known in the Hope Teachers' Association and in the Representative Assembly.

I was opposed to what I considered a poor deal sometime back along with other locals — notably the Burnaby Teachers' Association.

We were out-voted on what is now recognized as a bad decision. This mistake has given Mr. Wolfe the opportunity to say the BCTF has endorsed Bill 29.

I am still opposed to that bad

decision we now recognize. I still believe fully-indexed pensions are attainable by appropriate government investment of our money.

As a teacher who has now entered the political arena, I would remind you that through free collective bargaining, full indexing was arrived at with an NDP government in 1974.

An NDP government would not institute any pension changes without negotiation. This the Social Credit has not done and refuses to do.

Bill 29 must be repealed before any meaningful negotiations can take place on teachers' pensions.

Don Olds
Teacher and NDP candidate
Yale-Lillooet
MARCH 12, 1981/9

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.

T. A. MYERS
Editor

RALPH MAURER
Editorial Assistant

MEMBER: EDPRESS

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8/MARCH 12, 1981

Committee's job is to protect teachers

Geoff Peters
Chairperson, Teacher
Personnel Advisory Committee

Has any of the following happened to a teacher you know?

- An experienced teacher is put on a probationary appointment and then the appointment is cancelled. The teacher is not told the reason for the loss of the job and has no right to appeal the decision. The teacher is now unemployed.

- A teacher is transferred to another school in the district and is not informed of the reasons except that it is "in the best interest of the teacher and schools concerned." The teacher appeals to the minister of education who refuses to even appoint a review panel to investigate.

- Although the School Act regulations prohibit boards from placing teachers on temporary appointment for more than one year, a teacher is "on temporary" for the fourth year in a full-time continuing position.

Budget news is all bad

There was no good news for the B.C. public school system nor for the taxpayers who support it in the provincial budget presented to the legislature March 9.

A hoped-for increase in the home-owners' grant, which would have helped offset the massive school-tax increases facing many B.C. home-owners, failed to materialize. The increase had been urged by the BCTF, the B.C. School Trustees Association, the Vancouver School Board and others.

Direct government grants to public school boards will be up 10 per cent for 1981-82, to a total of \$512 million. But the total Ministry of Education budget — covering kindergarten through college, and including private schools — is up by 13.2 per cent.

- A secondary specialist teacher is assigned, over protest, to a grade and subject area in which the teacher has no experience or qualifications. The teacher later receives an unsatisfactory report that may eventually result in the loss of the teacher's job.

Although the above examples are fictitious, they are based on recent incidents in this province. The recent Cincer and Shuswap commission reports highlighted individual problems that represented larger, more general concerns. Serious problems do exist and new ones are emerging. The federation has created a new Teacher Personnel Advisory Committee to deal with these types of problems. The striking of TPAC indicates a strong commitment to improve the treatment of teachers by those in positions of authority.

Terms of reference for the TPAC include: to make recommendations for improving chances for fair hearings by

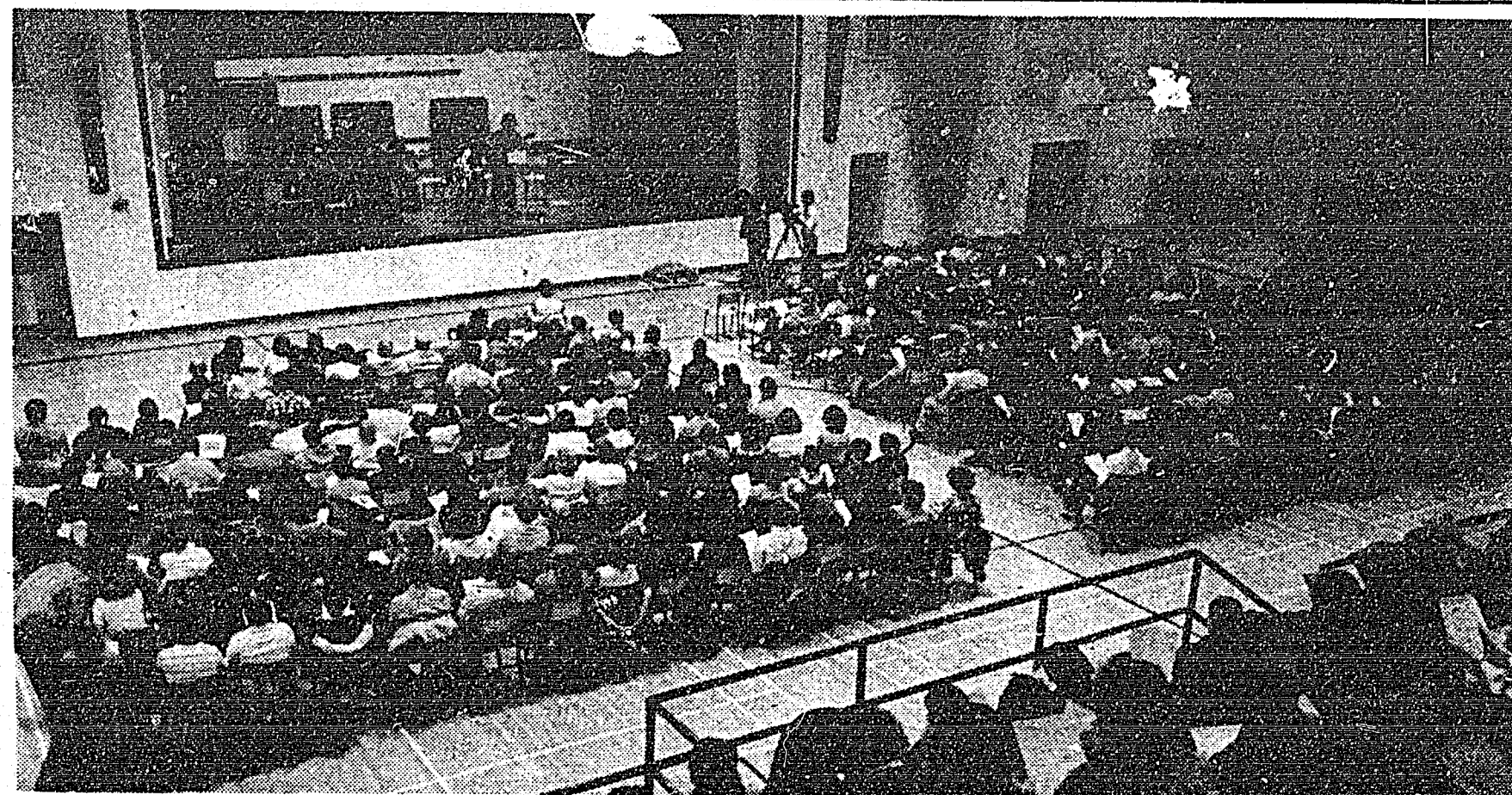
members; to monitor changes in the School Act, regulations and other pertinent legislation; to continue work on the federation's proposed statement of standards of professional conduct; and to make recommendations on the expansion of support services to teachers "in crisis" and develop a proposed statement of standards of practice for school administrators.

The statement of standards of professional conduct is a continuation of the work of the previous Task Force on Federation Hearings and Appeals. A proposed statement was dealt with at the 1980 Annual General Meeting and was referred for clarification. The proposed statement of standards of practice for school administrators was part of the BCTF Executive Committee's leadership report adopted at last year's AGM. In order to provide as much input as possible, the committee plans to involve as many BCTF members as it can in developing these standards of practice before presentation to the 1982 AGM.

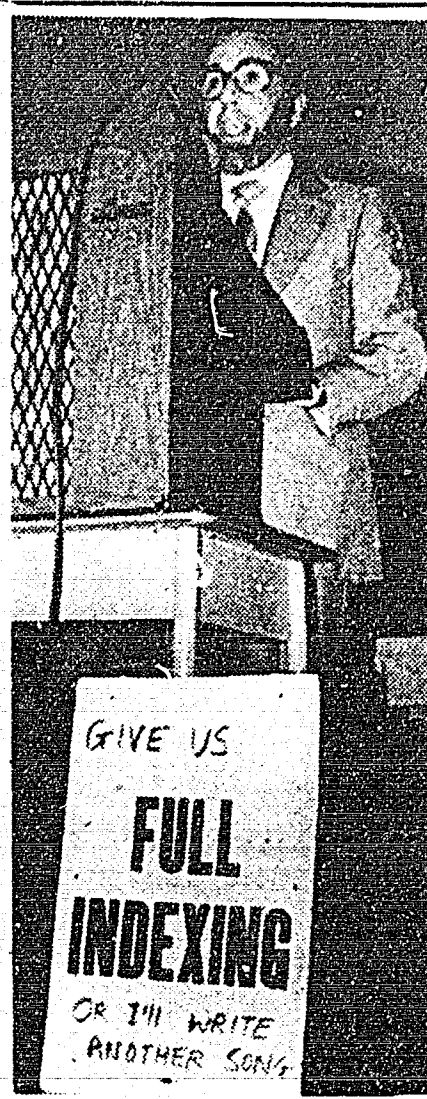
Currently, the committee is completing a survey of local association and district personnel policies and practices. The committee will act as a clearing house for information received and make recommendations to locals and the BCTF Executive Committee for improvements.

With the achievement of full bargaining rights by the federation, the committee will have a new area of concern. Recommendations regarding negotiation objectives and the personnel areas will be made. These could include bargaining clauses on due process, transfers, grievance procedures, evaluation of teachers, selection of administrators and sexual harassment, to name a few.

If BCTF members have issues that they believe the Teacher Personnel Advisory Committee should be considering, do not hesitate to contact Teacher Personnel Services Division at the BCTF or any of the following committee members: Pat Clarke, Central Okanagan; Jan Eastman, Delta; David Janzen, North Vancouver; Sheila Park, Kamloops; Rod Sherrell, Vancouver Island North; Frances Worledge, Vancouver Elementary; or Geoff Peters, Coquitlam.



About 600 Prince George teachers attended a pensions rally in that city last January and listened to speeches (including one by Al Blakey) and, yes, sang songs. Now if this threat doesn't give the government pause...



News briefs

BCTF admin staff position posted

The BCTF is advertising for an administrative staff member for the Learning Conditions Division. The vacancy was created by the resignation last December of Dennis Rankin.

Primary responsibility of the position is to develop and maintain a financial and educational data base — that is, to become an education statistics expert.

Starting salary is \$35,276. Starting date is July 15 or an earlier, mutually acceptable date, and the job is a term appointment to July 31, 1983.

Application deadline is March 27. For more information, contact the BCTF personnel department or see the BCTF News poster on your bulletin board.

War service

Time spent in the military during war can be counted toward your pension, if you meet certain conditions, the most important of which are:

- You must be a contributor to the Teachers' Pension Plan now, and have contributed for at least 10 years.

- You must have gone into teaching or teacher training right or soon after leaving the armed forces.

By paying a little bit extra, you can "buy" the years you spent in the war and

10/MARCH 12, 1981

add them on to your years of service as a teacher, up to a maximum of 35 years. So, for example, a retiring teacher with 26 years' experience in the classroom and four years' service in the army during World War II can pay contributions for those war years according to a formula in the Pension (Teachers') Act and receive pensions based on total service of 30 years.

Details are in the booklet, *Teachers' Pensions in B.C.* (October, 1980), prepared by the Economic Welfare Division of the BCTF.

Cowichan reunion

Students and teachers at Lake Cowichan Junior-Senior Secondary between 1947 and 1962 are invited to a reunion June 26-28. For more information, contact Jurd Kirby at the BCTF building.

Help offered

The BCTF Assistance Society, established in 1926, provides emergency financial aid to B.C. teachers and their families.

Assistance is given to present and former BCTF members and their families in the form of interest-free loans or, if circumstances warrant, non-repayable

grants. Each application for help is confidentially examined by the society's board of directors, who are also responsible for managing the fund so that future demands can be met.

In the past year the society has given loans or grants to assist in medical emergencies, housing emergencies, local disasters, need for wheelchairs, and to impoverished applicants. The fund is financed by a small annual levy of BCTF members, residual funds from the Provincial and Vancouver Teachers' Medical Service Associations, and any voluntary contributions or legacies that may be bequeathed to the society.

For more information or application forms, contact Jean MacDonald at the BCTF office.

RTA meeting

The Retired Teachers' Association's annual general meeting will be at the Holiday Inn on 1133 West Hastings Street in downtown Vancouver at 10 a.m. on March 25.

Reservations for the luncheon following the meeting may be made through the RTA, at the BCTF office.

Hi, technology

A conference to examine the impact of new technology on learning will be held April 24 and 25 at the Bayshore Inn hotel in Vancouver.

The conference is organized by the BCTF Provincial Specialist Association Council, representing all 26 BCTF PSAs.

Conference participants will have a chance of direct experience with the new developments in computer and communications technology, and will also examine the implications of this new equipment for student learning, teaching styles and school programs.

Feature speaker is Seymour Papert, a psychologist, educator, author, mathematician and developer of computer programs.

Registration costs \$40 and does not include accommodation. Rooms have been reserved at the Bayshore for those participants wishing to stay there; cost is \$55-65 per night, and rooms must be booked before April 3.

For more information, contact Mari-lou Long or Nancy Flodin at the BCTF building.

Steveston reunion

Steveston high school in Richmond, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, plans a reunion of former and present teachers on November 18, and a reunion of former students on November 19 and 20. For more information contact Gayle Ediger or Don MacLellan by mail at Steveston Senior Secondary School, 10440 No. 2 Road, Richmond V7E 2E3, or by telephone at 277-7155.

BCSTA examining bargaining options

Ralph Maurer
Editorial Assistant

The right to strike/lockout goes hand in hand with broader scope of bargaining for teachers, and binding arbitration is incompatible with broadened scope, says the report of the B.C. School Trustees bargaining policy task force.

In other words, say the report's four authors, trustees — and teachers — face an either/or proposition. Either bargain for the full range of working conditions and face the possibility of a strike or lockout, or rely on a system of binding arbitration to solve differences but don't expect to bargain for any more than salaries and bonuses.

The task force (former BCSTA president Rendina Hamilton; Stuart Jamieson, a University of B.C. economics professor specializing in labor relations; Larry Hoback, secretary-treasurer of Nisgha school district, and Brian Bastien, labor relations officer for the Burnaby school board) was appointed in late 1979 to examine the BCSTA's salary policies and to prepare a report containing recommendations. The BCSTA's executive will discuss the report at its March meeting.

The task force examined school board negotiations both with teachers and with other employees, mostly members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The report identifies three objectives shared by school boards in collective bargaining: the desire for effective local decision-making (also referred to as local autonomy), the avoidance of work stoppages, and equality of bargaining power between the employer and employee groups.

The third objective can be met by "mandatory school board membership in a provincial association (i.e., BCSTA or a parallel labor relations association) to provide boards with research, recommendations regarding collective bargaining and other services... Members of this association must establish a set of goals and objectives accepted by the member boards," the report says.

But no one labor relations system can guarantee that both of the first two objectives — local autonomy and avoidance of work stoppages — can be met. The study describes two alternative systems which trustees must choose between.

The first would guarantee effective

local decision-making. Collective bargaining would be carried out on a local basis; both teaching and non-teaching employees would have the right to strike, and boards could lock out; mandatory third-party arbitration is out of the picture.

"Mandatory third-party intervention is contrary to pure local autonomy" because it "takes the decision-making authority away from the negotiating parties," the report states. Arbitrators tend to base their decisions on what happens elsewhere rather than on the particular conditions of a specific school district, it adds.

The second alternative, to be adopted if trustees see the avoidance of work stoppages as the most important consideration, is a system very much like the one teachers have now. Employees could not strike, and the employer could not lock out. The dispute goes to an arbitrator when negotiations fail.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the report leans toward the first alternative. After describing alternative two, the authors note: "Non-teaching staff should not be allowed to strike but should be bound by the same mandatory third-party intervention as teaching staff." It is extremely unlikely that any B.C. government would take away CUPE's right to strike and bargain the

full range of working conditions.

Further, the report continues: "It must be noted that no system of collective bargaining can guarantee that work stoppages will not occur. A collective bargaining system may render work stoppages illegal, but if morale becomes low enough and disharmony serious enough, work stoppages may still occur."

Finally, the BCSTA task force reports that "Among the briefs submitted by school boards to the task force, the objective that was most frequently stated was the objective of local autonomy." (Only six school districts presented briefs). "If the BCSTA executive feels that this view is representative of B.C.'s school boards and that the analysis of the task force is sound, this leads to the conclusion that the executive should favor Alternative A."

The task force also briefly discussed the place of principals in a bargaining structure. The report recommends "that the BCSTA adopt a set of policies supporting the membership of principals in local teachers' associations but does not support the involvement of principals in the collective bargaining process. In this way, principals and teachers may both benefit from the membership of administrators in the local association without the ambivalence of having both parties part of the same salary agreement."

Leadership report

From page 1

The other priorities suggested in the leadership report:

- Continued emphasis on the need for local, as opposed to provincial or zonal, bargaining.

- A referendum should be held this fall to decide the means preferred by teachers for settling contract impasses.

- Local contracts should contain a grievance procedure.

- Provincial laws should be changed to allow teachers to bargain provincially on pensions.

- The BCTF should be able to negotiate with the Ministry of Education matters of provincial educational concern.

- Locals would be encouraged to restructure their bargaining committees to include, for example, representatives of local professional development, status

of women, agreements and learning conditions committees. This would reflect the new broadened scope thrust.

Broadened scope of bargaining was one point in last year's leadership report. The recent Yorke report on bargaining options clearly influenced the executive's discussions and is included along with the leadership report in this year's *Reports and Resolutions* booklet (copies of which should be available in your school or through the BCTF).

AGM delegates will also be voting for six positions on the 11-person executive, and will consider an additional 30 recommendations from the executive and 35 resolutions from local association and other sources. These include three separate recommendations on the 1981-82 BCTF fee.

Other AGM highlights include the Fergusson award announcement and speeches by Education Minister Brian Smith and Gary Begin, president of the B.C. School Trustees Association.

Third fee proposal to AGM

The BCTF Finance Committee has decided to go to the Annual General Meeting next month with a fee recommendation of its own. That means AGM delegates will be faced with three different recommendations for what the 1981-82 BCTF membership fee should be.

The Finance Committee is recommending a fee of 1.06 per cent of the estimated mean salary of BCTF members (\$28,256), or \$300. That was its original recommendation to the Executive Committee in December, but the executive voted to endorse a fee of .97 per cent of salary, or \$274.

The winter Representative Assembly later decided to reject both recommendations, and to propose a fee of .92 per cent, \$260.

The AGM can choose to reject all three proposals and establish any fee it wishes. Last year's fee was .86 per cent of a much lower mean salary, or \$214.

The \$300 fee would pay for next year's projected operations and replenish the BCTF's reserve fund to the point where the federation would not have to borrow to get through the summer, a time when no fee revenues are coming in.

Those objectives are set out in the *Members' Guide* as policies 12.C.08, 12.C.10, and 12.F.04. "The committee believes it has no alternative but to make its recommendations consistent with current BCTF policy statements," the Finance Committee states in the minutes of its meeting in late January.

The executive's \$274 fee proposes to meet those goals over a three-year period. The RA's \$260 recommendation reflects a reluctance on the part of geographical representatives to raise the membership fee at all.

Wider scope 'doesn't mean trade offs'

Gale Tyler

Professional Development Division

Expanded scope of bargaining in the U.S. has not resulted in tradeoffs between compensation and non-compensation items. This was a finding of Lorraine McConnell and Anthony Pascall in a report for the Rand Corporation, *Organized Teachers in America*.

The report resulted from two years of research on the non-economic effects of teacher collective bargaining.

In analyzing 100 contracts it was found that collective bargaining gains followed a pattern. In a historical perspective, organizations first bargain over and obtain increases in salary and fringe benefits. Then the scope expands to include working conditions and job security and finally issues of educational policy.

Contracts have shown that teachers have significantly improved their working conditions and have allowed for an increase in their influence over school and classroom operations. Assignment and transfer policy provisions and regulation

of class size are significant gains that have been made.

Research shows that state laws governing teacher bargaining are significant. Where states require bargaining on a broad range of issues and no penalties for teacher strikes, districts had a high likelihood of having strong contracts. With these state provisions teacher organizations felt less need to bypass the collective bargaining process by striking or seeking local political power.

The few districts that managed to negotiate without a state statute had to use a variety of strategies to maintain the integrity of contracts. These strategies included extensive political action to influence school board elections, strikes when contracts were rescinded, and mobilization of community support.

Where districts had strong teacher organizations, gains were made without the minimal legal guarantees.

The bargaining process regulates labor-management relations and implementation of contract, and results in more har-

monious and constructive relations between teachers and administrators.

As the collective bargaining process matures the authors found that the process becomes more professionalized. That is, both school boards and teacher organizations have chosen to conduct negotiations with professional negotiators. There is then the effect of having little or no active participation from the elected trustees or the community. Trustees, it appears, give up their mandated rights to a professional negotiator.

Principals or school administrators have less control over the management of schools as a result of contractual provisions. Teachers become more autonomous.

Teacher organizations, the report finds, can through joint strategy of collective bargaining and political action attain contractual gains locally and achieve political successes at the state level.

The report has implications for us in B.C., keeping in mind there are differences in the nature of organizations, educational funding, and educational jurisdiction.

Teacher organizations can through joint strategy of collective bargaining and the political action attain contractual

gains locally and achieve political successes at the provincial level. However, it is only recently that we have begun to view the issues related to professional development as being significant negotiable issues.

The concern expressed by some BCTF members that tradeoffs between compensation items and non-compensation items will occur, is not reflected in the report. There is mention that priorities must be established but that generally there are simultaneous advances being made on a number of fronts — compensation, working conditions, job security and professional issues.

There may be dangers in having professional negotiators bargaining for teachers. Local teacher commitment to the bargaining process may be lessened. Teachers would give up their right to negotiate what they had determined were priorities to a negotiator who might give away items in order to settle. The professional teacher negotiator who is not a member of a local association would not feel as responsible to the membership as would a negotiator who was a member. Local political action might be restricted if teachers did not feel part of the process from beginning to end.

EPT raises RA's concern

John Church

Professional Development Division

The winter Representative Assembly gave overwhelming approval to a motion from the B.C. English Teachers' Association which asked the BCTF to have the English placement test (EPT) discontinued.

A separate motion asked BCTF members "to refrain from supervising and/or marking the English placement tests."

Because of this concerted action by the BCTF, the ministry has announced that effective next school year the entire administration of the EPT will be conducted by post-secondary institutions in B.C. Moreover, the ministry now believes "that the results of the EPT are no longer in most cases being used for the original purpose of the individual student placement."

Because this is the last year in which schools will be involved in the administration of these tests, the ministry is asking secondary school teachers and principals to participate in the March 17 tests.

Because of these changes, the BCTF Executive Committee passed a special motion at its March 7 meeting to ask BCTF members, if requested, to "co-operate in the supervision of the English placement test for the March 17 sitting only."

The prompt action of BCTF members is undoubtedly responsible for the change in ministerial policy.

Issue on arts

The September-October issue of *The B.C. Teacher* will be devoted to the visual and performing arts.

Manuscripts of up to 2,000 words are invited, and must be received in the BCTF office by June 1.

Photographs to illustrate articles are most helpful, and all will be returned.



Social Credit MLA George Mussallem, standing left, and BCTF President Al Blakey, on right, engaged in a debate on the pensions issue on February 16 for the benefit of Maple Ridge teachers. While the issue was not resolved, the two did have the opportunity to put their different views forward.

Reading skills down among seniors

B.C.'s elementary pupils have become better readers during the past few years but Grade 12 students have not, a report to the Ministry of Education shows.

In comparing the results of a 1980 assessment of reading skills with those of a 1976-77 assessment, the report states "the gains made speak well for the 1980 Grade 4 and Grade 8 pupils."

A different picture emerges at the Grade 12 level. "There is the obvious fact that the pupils in Grade 12 did not do well compared to their peers in 1977," the report says.

The findings are contained in a report by Jaap Tuinman and Janet Kendall of Simon Fraser University, who assessed reading programs in B.C. schools earlier this year. The survey was part of the ministry's continuing learning assessment program and compared results with those of earlier

surveys. The report describes results of reading tests given to more than 100,000 Grade 4, 8, and 12 students and questionnaires completed by more than 3,000 teachers and administrators.

While the study did not compare B.C. students with those elsewhere, the report cites evidence from other research showing that the average reading performance of B.C.'s elementary and secondary students last year consistently equalled or exceeded the average of their counterparts in Canada and the U.S.

The report notes as promising the very satisfactory performance of all three grades on such applied reading and study skills as scanning newspaper items for details, understanding misleading advertising, or using reference materials, all of which were identified as weaknesses in 1976-77. It also

reveals that improvements in Grades 4 and 8 comprehension scores are counterbalanced by a "genuinely disturbing" decline in this skill in Grade 12.

The Tuinman-Kendall report reveals concerns about reading programs generally. According to many teachers, there is lack of leadership given to these programs. Many high school English teachers also stated they did not feel well prepared to teach reading. In addition, they said that the majority of high school students should receive continued instruction in reading, but that only about 10 per cent actually do.

The authors present 21 recommendations aimed at maintaining the present strengths and improving identified weaknesses in the reading picture. They include changes in the training and hiring of teachers and administrators, better reading programs at the secondary level, and more in-service training for teachers. Other recommendations call for a cooperative effort by the ministry and school

districts to ensure that all students have learned to read in the first two grades of school, and to place a high priority on improving reading skills of secondary students.

Since the 1976-77 assessment, the Ministry of Education and school districts have been introducing new reading programs for all elementary schools. These programs have been accompanied by workshop sessions for elementary teachers. Nancy Greer of the ministry's Learning Assessment Branch indicated that each school district has now received its own results for the current assessment and is in the process of establishing appropriate follow-up action as a continuation of that begun following the first assessment. Similarly, the Ministry of Education is now studying the Tuinman-Kendall report and priorities are being established for further province-wide action.

The next province-wide assessment of reading is scheduled for 1984.

Chalk talk

John Winstanley of Victoria explains why test scores are falling

It was a very nice workshop. We examined the new texts and completed our orientation exercises. The chicken Grand Marnier was palatable, even the coffee wasn't bad. English teachers sat quite unselfconsciously right alongside directors and assorted co-ordinators.

Then came the bad news.

The results of the 1980 reading assessment were out and revealed an incontrovertible decline in the reading skills of Grade 12 students.

Consternation! Our graduating students displayed less ability in the domains of word meaning, comprehension and applied reading than their counterparts of 1977 had done. The accusing statistics immediately triggered the usual defensive response. Guilt-ridden, we asked ourselves where we had gone wrong.

At this point I should explain that I am so old that I can feel gay without sniggering, so you will understand that it was with that depressing sense of *deja vu* which plagues those of us who have been teaching since Elvis Presley was new and exciting that I guessed what had to come next.

All teachers should be teachers of English. We were never trained. We

need new texts. We should mount a concentrated attack on USSR. Down with television. Rhubarb and more rhubarb.

A spark of rebellion stirred deep within my free lunch. When, I wondered, will we cease our habitual self-flagellation and say for once, "Lay off, it's not my fault"?

The ministry didn't need to wait for Dr. Tuinman's findings. I could have told them if they had asked me, though they would probably object that my opinions are not statistically valid, whereas the good doctor's results may be. I would have recommended a much less expensive test, which you can try for yourself. Ask your staffroom colleagues which of the books they read last month they enjoyed most. Ask the same question at a parents' evening or a school board meeting. You will discover that some people are readers and will discuss their reading with enthusiasm, while others will react defensively. They will be comfortable discussing real estate, sport, pensions, the stock market, politics or cars. They are philistines, and they are an increasing majority. Young David

had a good way of dealing with them, but now it's classed as homicide.

I don't particularly remember my encounters with such words as "fresnet", "swale" or "nuclei" when I last read *East of Eden*, but I did meet them and they gently massaged my vocabulary as they passed by. Those who watched the recent television production of that fine story didn't meet those words and probably never will.

The makers of Kleenex don't give a Funk and Wagnall what their brand name does to your spelling. Super-Valu didn't bother to clear their name with a curriculum advisory committee. Stick your Arrid under your arm, you pedantic prigs. Do you think the world is about to stop ongoing just because it offends your tender sensibilities?

Yet already I hear the distant rumble of our educational movers and shakers assembling programs, organizing workshops and printing product information booklets with cross-referenced glossaries. The ground will tremble beneath the hooves of publishers peddling relevant material. Pretty soon Jack Webster and those whom we have to accept as journalists for want of a better term will be asking unanswerable questions and you, miserable masochist that you are, will start moaning "*mea culpa*" and rending your clothes in anguish.

Relax. It's really rather simple. Those who want the statistics to look better merely have to remove the non-reading kids who ruin the average, as was done in the days of old. This brings me to King Canute (or Knut, if you prefer it).

Way back before the days of provincial examinations, King Canute was beset by sycophantic courtiers who sought to ingratiate themselves by flattery.

"Nothing and no one dares disobey the command of mighty Canute," they said. Knut had his throne placed at the edge of the advancing tide and, seated majestically like a minister of education, he pointed at the waves and roared, "Go back!" or words to that effect. Before very long, he got his throne wet. The courtiers were forced to admit that sometimes strong directives and good intentions are not enough.

Console yourself with the knowledge that quite a few of your students are book people, despite all distractions. Cherish them; try to help the others but don't get despondent and become a Knut case if you can't get all your pigs to fly. For if you allow the idea to become established that all your pigs are equal and can be taught to fly equally well, pretty soon you will find yourself under attack because they all can't loop-the-loop.