

BCTF Newsletter

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BCTF rep named to pension study

James Paterson, a Vancouver consulting actuary, has been chosen to represent the federation in a joint study, with the provincial government, of investment practices of the teachers' pension fund.

Paterson is the author of a recent report, commissioned by the federation, which showed that the government's traditional policy of investing teachers' pension money in low-yield government-guaranteed bonds is "economically inefficient" and produces lower rates of return than other "fair and sensible" investment policies.

The government's representative on the

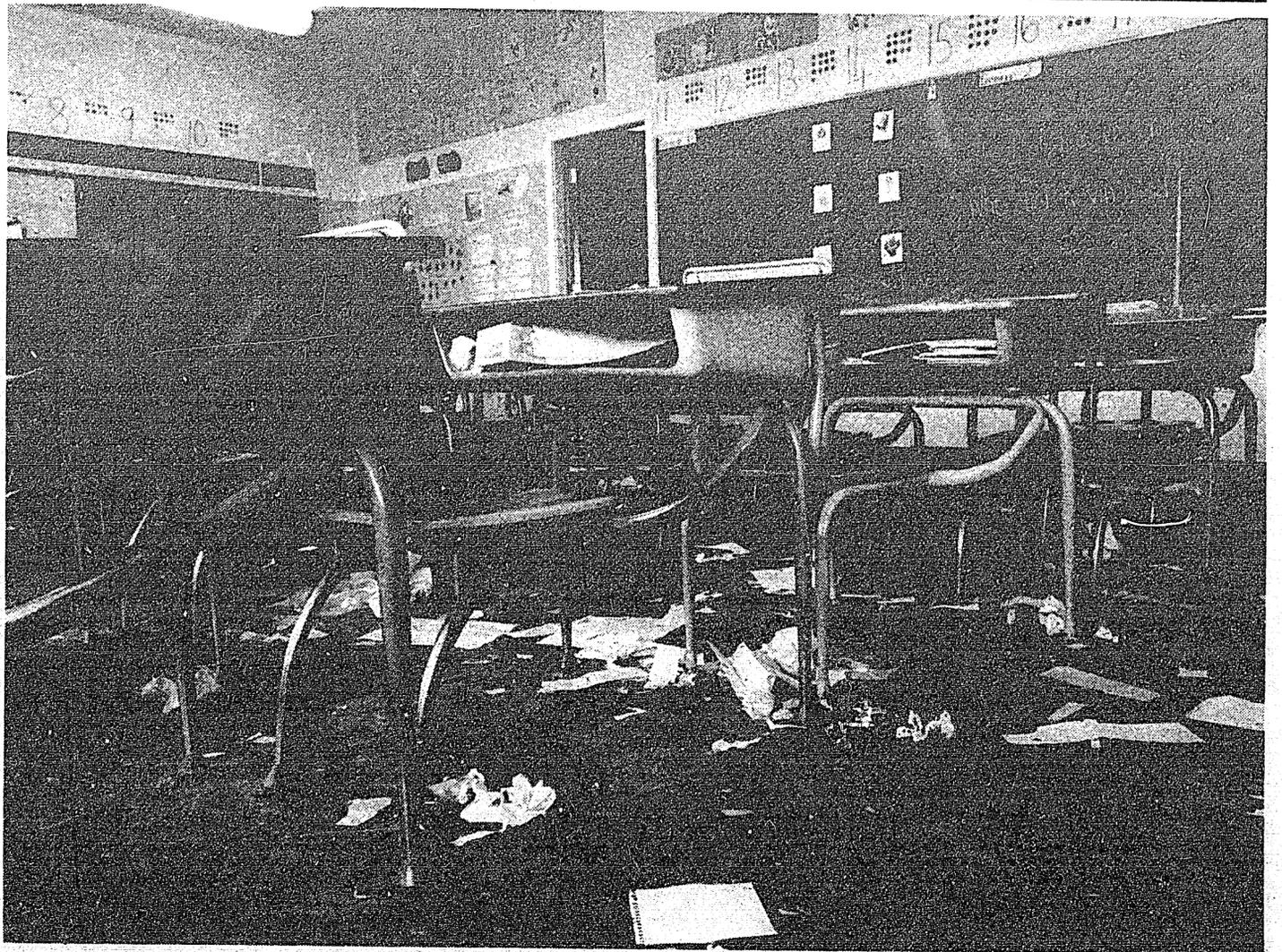
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AGM news inside

The draft agenda for next week's Annual General Meeting is on the back page of this issue of the *BCTF Newsletter*.

Fourteen people are running for seven positions on the Executive Committee: Larry Kuehn and Ben Thomas for president; Lynda Coplin and Doug Smart for first vice-president; Steve Norman for second vice-president; and Pat Clarke, Terry Eastman, Thom Hansen, Elsie McMurphy, Wes Nickel, Al Paterson, Cliff Read and Christina Schut for member-at-large. The 14th is Kerry Gibb, who has indicated he will be nominated for member-at-large from the floor. There are a number of letters on pages 6-7 of importance to the elections.

In addition, pages 4-5 are devoted to material on the fee recommendation debate.



What are your kids doing in a place like this? This classroom, at Sinclair elementary school in Surrey, is typical of many schools in struck districts.

CUPE strike drags on in three cities

Non-teaching school board employees in Nanaimo are back at work, and their Vancouver counterparts are rumored to be close to signing a deal with the Vancouver School Board. But strikes by Canadian Union of Public Employees members in Burnaby, Surrey and Powell River drag on with no relief in sight.

Meanwhile, negotiations continue in a listless fashion in Richmond, Coquitlam,

New Westminster and Delta. The major issues in the struck districts are a general wage catch-up and, more importantly, equal pay for work of equal value — that is, better pay for women.

These are B.C.'s first major public sector disputes over that issue, and there is a suggestion that the employers are being encouraged by other employers to "be tough." Those locals still negotiating are

likely waiting to see what happens in Surrey, Burnaby and Powell River.

There doesn't seem to be much teachers can do about it, unless they are willing to walk off the job to protest deteriorating conditions in the schools.

Filthy classrooms, rising dust levels, unsanitary facilities and dwindling and breaking supplies are growing as issues where teachers are crossing picket lines with (Surrey) and without (Burnaby and Powell River) the consent of the unions.

The Burnaby school board is trying to keep schools clean by pressing all their

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BCSTA, BCTF move closer on bargaining

T. A. Myers
Editor

B.C. teachers and trustees seem to be moving toward common ground in their search for a better collective bargaining system.

The BCTF's Annual General Meeting this month will be asked to make full bargaining rights for teachers the federation's top priority for 1981-82.

This would mean gaining the legal right for local teachers' associations to bargain with their school boards on the full range of working and learning conditions, as well as salaries and fringe benefits.

Trustees have traditionally opposed any expansion of teacher bargaining beyond money matters.

But now trustees throughout B.C. are studying proposed policy changes that imply abandonment of this position. The proposal would give teachers the same rights as non-teaching school-board workers.

If the two sides do converge, legislative changes are likely to follow. Education Minister Brian Smith has apparently been waiting for cues from the teachers' and trustees' organizations. If they agree on expansion of bargaining rights, Smith would probably feel strongly impelled to enact it.

But trustees aren't likely to concede an expansion of the scope of bargaining unconditionally. They will want a change in the way board/teacher disputes are settled.

At present school boards are required to bargain with teachers only on money matters. If negotiations fail the dispute goes automatically to binding arbitration.

The B.C. School Trustees' Association has opposed this means of resolving disputes for years. It doesn't like compulsory arbitration even on salaries; it would find it even more objectionable if it applied to the full range of bargaining possibilities.

The association feels that educational decisions — for example, those dealing with learning conditions — should be made by locally elected trustees and not by non-accountable third parties.

The policy trustees are now being asked to support does not specify a new method for resolution of disputes but makes it clear that arbitration would be acceptable only by mutual agreement.

The BCTF is also grappling with this issue of dispute resolution. The AGM will be asked to approve a fall referendum on the question. The BCTF executive is recommending a system under which teachers would have the right to decide unilaterally whether a dispute should result in a strike or be sent to arbitration.

Obviously this will be a major point of conflict between the two organizations' developing policies.

The policy now being considered by trustees was developed by the BCSTA executive after studying the report of an association task force (see *BCTF Newsletter*, March 12, 1981). Trustees will be asked to approve the new policy at their annual general meeting in May.

The BCSTA executive has not laid out
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Arbitration panels split on busing

Teachers who drive school buses as part of their extracurricular activities find themselves between a rock and a hard place. In many districts, both the local board's non-teaching employees, and even many of their own colleagues, do not want to see them behind the wheel of a bus. Yet a refusal by teachers to drive buses could scuttle the basketball or debating team.

Recent rulings by three labor arbitration boards do not solve the problem, but they do indicate a path to take. In all three cases, non-teaching staff — members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees — asked the arbitration panels to declare that by contracting extracurricular busing to legally-independent "societies," the boards were violating provisions of the CUPE contract. CUPE won in Vernon but lost in Alberni and Nelson. There were slight, but important, differences in the circumstances.

In all three places the boards would not or could not pay CUPE bus drivers to take on the odd hours required by extracurricular busing. Teachers, anxious for their activities, approached the problem by setting up busing "societies," for which they were the unpaid drivers.

The school boards, recognizing a bargain when they spotted one, were happy to let these societies assume the responsibility for extracurricular busing. In some cases they even helped out by making buses available to the societies at low cost. The unions didn't like the arrangement, because to them it appeared the boards were contracting out work which the unions believed they had contracted to provide. To CUPE, it was a jurisdictional question, a question of protecting bargaining unit integrity.

The situation raised different questions for teachers. By driving these buses, teachers were in effect taking on the responsibility for maintaining extracurricular activities, whereas many teachers believe this should be the responsibility of the local and provincial governments.

At last year's BCTF Annual General Meeting, delegates adopted a policy that called for proper funding of extracurricular activities so teachers would not feel compelled to drive buses. This, however, is difficult to enforce within the BCTF.

In the Vernon case, the arbitration board ruled that the CUPE contract defined bus driving as bargaining-unit work and also prohibited contracting-out without CUPE's consent (which was not given). In Alberni and Nelson, the contracts did not specify that bus driving was bargaining-unit work, and so there was nothing keeping the board from turning elsewhere for bus drivers.

The BCTF's Labor Liaison Committee suggests a number of courses to pursue:

- Unions should insist that bus driving is bargaining-unit work, and negotiate that understanding into the contract. Meanwhile, teachers, together with the union, should make budget presentations calling for more money to be allocated to extracurricular activities, so a union monopoly on bus driving would not kill these activities.

This, however, is the slowest route. Short-term approaches include:

- More closely defining a teacher's job and responsibilities. Should a teacher be expected to drive?
- Examining other funding possibilities for sports. Why is it that schools have taken on the responsibility for children's sports, formerly the province of clubs and other social groups?



A group of North Vancouver teachers at a pre-retirement planning seminar held on February 24. North Van's school board recently agreed to provide release time for teachers to attend these sessions, sponsored jointly by the local, the BCTF and the Retired Teachers' Association.

Teacher bargaining rights

From page 1
a detailed blueprint for legislative change. It doesn't even express an opinion on whether teacher bargaining should continue to be carried out under the School Act, or be transferred to the Labour Code or some other act.

The executive asks trustees only to endorse a set of principles and priorities and to leave the government to work out the details. The basic principles in the proposed BCSTA policy are that school boards are elected to represent parents and the public in the governance of the schools, and that the provincial government has the responsibility for setting public policy on collective bargaining.

The BCSTA executive then states one "imperative": any new legislation must protect "the foundations of democratic

society which are embedded in (these) principles."

The primary priority of the BCSTA executive is that all non-salary disputes with teachers must be resolved with the agreement of the local school board. This rules out compulsory but not voluntary arbitration. The statement then sets out secondary priorities.

1. "All school board employees should receive the same rights and privileges under the law." This presumably means either that teachers should have full bargaining rights and the right to strike, or that non-teaching board employees should be restricted to bargaining on money matters, with settlement of disputes by binding arbitration.

It's difficult to imagine the provincial government being foolhardy enough to try to restrict the bargaining rights and wipe out the right to strike (or be locked out) now applying to members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees which represents most non-teaching board employees.

(A third possibility would be that

teachers and non-teaching staff would be placed under the Essential Services Disputes Act, which gives the government a wide range of options in dealing with strikes or lockouts that threaten "a substantial disruption in the delivery of educational services." This would also be opposed by organized labour.)

2. "School board employees should enjoy the same rights and have the same responsibilities as other public-sector employees." Again, this seems to suggest full bargaining rights and the right to strike for teachers, since those rights are enjoyed by most public-sector workers.

3. "School boards should have the same rights and responsibilities as other employers." Presumably this would include the right to lock out teachers, as well as non-teaching staff.

The BCSTA report takes the principled position that new legislation must not violate the right of parents and the public to determine the education of their children, but also that "this fundamental right must not be used as an excuse to violate the right of school board employees."

teachers to cross their lines (although most do) is absolutely insistent that no teacher perform its members' work. That's consistent with BCTF policy as well.

The use of superintendents, directors of instruction, et al to try to keep schools clean has brought up another issue. "The rule of thumb," says Tom Hutchison of the BCTF's Government Division, "is that supervisors only do the work of the people they normally supervise." But few of the temporary janitors in the CUPE disputes actually supervise custodial staff.

Despite these moonlighting crews, filth is building up to alarming levels in most schools. However, no schools have been closed by health officials.

"There seems to be no mechanism for

judging at what point the lack of cleanliness in a school is a factor that causes it to be closed," Hutchison says. "Who's responsible for deciding? What are the criteria?"

A number of teachers in the struck districts have filed learning conditions grievances about the condition of their classrooms. But on such a sporadic basis these grievances seem to have little effectiveness in applying pressure on the two sides to settle. The best advice for teachers seems to be to refrain from doing CUPE work and wait until public pressure forces the sides back to bargaining.

CUPE pickets closed the BCTF offices on March 13 to protest teachers crossing their picket lines around schools, but the CUPE pickets have not reappeared at the BCTF building.

Paterson was appointed to the study by the Executive Committee March 27. He and Reid will draft terms of reference for the study for ratification by the BCTF and the government.

At the same time the executive appointed BCTF staff member Bruce Watson as an "official observer" to the Pensions Investment Committee, a body consisting mainly of civil servants which advises the government on pension investments.

Provincial Secretary Evan Wolfe, minister responsible for pensions, had repeat-

edly asked the federation to nominate a member to the committee.

The executive chose, however, to give Watson only observer status rather than full membership on the committee.

His appointment is an interim one, "to continue until investment policies satisfactory to the BCTF are adopted by the government."

Wolfe's offer of the joint study, made early in March, postponed a planned March 17 referendum on a province-wide one-day work stoppage which was to have taken place April 7.

Metro teachers win 1980 Hilroy awards

Jennifer Stoddart wanted to teach her elementary school students how to cook, but nobody had written a course program to tell her what to do. So she wrote one herself, and it was good enough to win her a \$1,200 provincial Hilroy award from the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Arnald Muir was supposed to teach high school children how to write, but he found the existing programs inadequate. So he designed a new course, and it was good enough to win him a Hilroy award too.



Committee vacancies

PD Associates

The BCTF is looking for professional development associates — teachers who volunteer to act as workshop leaders and facilitators for PD workshops.

These associates would consult with and facilitate such groups as school staffs, local specialist associations and local association committees to further the influence of teachers in affecting their working lives and to assist in the development of negotiating processes and skills.

PD associates must commit themselves to at least five days of service for the BCTF during the school year. All expenses for providing workshops will be paid for by the BCTF. There is no honorarium but additional training will be available during the year as recognition for this voluntary service.

For more information, contact Gale Tyler at the BCTF offices.

PD co-ordinator

A professional development co-ordinator is sought for the North Coast area. Application deadline is May 15. For more information contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF building.

CTF committees

The Executive Committee will appoint one BCTF representative to the Canadian Teachers' Federation's French language commission.

The commission advises the CTF on matters concerning the education of francophone students educated in French, and is studying the political, social and cultural impact on the Francophone minority of classes or schools where French is the language of instruction.

Application deadline is April 24. The executive will make the appointment in May. For more information contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF building.

Stoddart, of Gilmore Avenue Elementary School in Burnaby, and Muir, of Windsor Secondary School in North Vancouver, were the B.C. Hilroy winners for 1980.

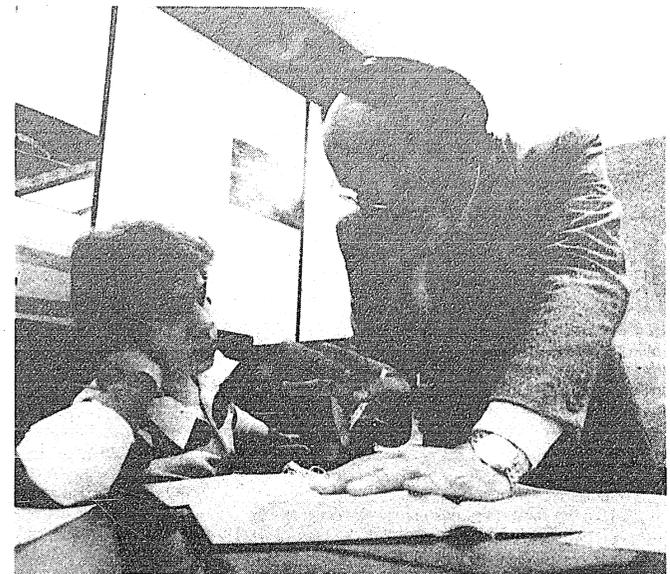
Stoddart wanted a metric cooking program to follow up on an elementary nutrition course but found that she was breaking new ground. "There are kids' cookbooks but they're for home use," she says. "To my knowledge, there's never been a booklet available for teachers to use."

She spent last summer writing such a booklet, adding material and recipes from the many food industry-produced booklets to recipes by her students.

With recipes for everything from frozen bananas (as simple as it sounds) to borscht to won ton soup, Stoddart's program is arranged to recognize the student's growing confidence in the kitchen, and to match the seasons and holidays to the menus. It's been published under the title *Kids Cook Too* and is available for \$4.38 from the BCTF's Lesson Aids service.

Muir served on the Ministry of Education's 1978 writing assessment panel, where he discovered just how inadequate high school writing courses are. He wrote a course outline a few years ago, and has been continuously revising it since. It's as effective for students with below-average writing skills — the majority in his classes — as for those wishing to improve their writing.

Muir teaches his students to be acutely conscious of every step of the writing process. Every student prepares notes and an



Muir with a student in his North Vancouver class, above; Stoddart, below.

outline before writing even a first draft, and at every step of the way each student discusses the piece with the other students, sometimes by reading aloud and learning by listening to the audience's responses and criticisms. The students learn different types of writing structures and their purposes. Grammar is taught, but indirectly.

"We use grammar but grammar isn't used as a vehicle to teach them to write, and that's a real departure," Muir says.

"Some teachers teach grammar in order to teach writing; there's an assumption that grammar teaches writing. Here we teach writing." While no formal grammar is taught, he adds, students do know why they are putting their commas where they do.

Muir has published his course outline. For more information, write to English Language Arts Publications, P.O. Box 76902, Postal Station S, Vancouver V5R 5T3.

Chalk talk

Science PSA's Terry Dale on the BCTF bureaucracy

This is the discouraging tale of how the B.C. Science Teachers' Association tried — and failed — to get BCTF approval of a set of recommendations for changes in the elementary science curriculum.

Our disillusionment with the approval procedure to which we were subjected has already been reported to the BCTF Executive Committee, which plays a major role in that process.

Our reason for seeking broader publication of our story is that we wish to encourage discussion among teachers about the structure and control that exist within the BCTF.

Many of the problems that Tony Flanders identified in his Flanders report of March, 1980 are typified by the problems we have had. His report, therefore, is used as a reference to support our beliefs.

Our recommendations were developed through long hours of work by Ken Abramson and a group of teachers as our response to the 1978 Provincial Learning Assessment Program (PLAP) report on science. Abramson has only recently stopped working on them (after nearly two years) as a result of total frustration with the workings of the BCTF.

"In general, it seemed to be a common attitude that the federation was going about some other business, had some other purpose, was too 'politically engaged' to serve the interests of 'the ordinary classroom teacher.'" (Flanders, A-4)

Our involvement with the process of trying to get approval for these recommendations raises some interesting questions about the professional climate in which teachers currently find themselves. Should a PSA council, which is made up of representatives from a variety of fields,

have to endorse the recommendations of a PSA when the BCTF executive has to further approve them before they can be sent to the Ministry of Education? Are these people *really* interested and knowledgeable about the problems of teaching science in the elementary school?

"The BCTF was often perceived as a 'burgeoning bureaucracy' and this was highly resented by many... the bureaucracy no longer supports classroom teachers in their efforts to do a good job with kids." (Flanders, A-4)

We have submitted 16 recommendations, none of which has been sent to the ministry. In looking at just one of the recommendations we can see an example of the process we have been subjected to. Our recommendation 6 states "That sufficient metric equipment be made available to every primary teacher, and that greater attention be directed to instructing primary students in the SI/metric system."

On March 15, 1980 the BCTF Executive referred it again to the Primary Teachers' Association. They accepted it again and on November 7, 1980 the executive again referred it to the Primary Teachers' Association.

At this point we gave up. Should classroom teachers be asked by their federation to go through a ridiculous process such as this? Is it productive? Is it professional?

"It should be noted that many teachers perceive their federation as another growing control system, rather than as a support system." (Flanders, A-29)

It appears the PSA council lacks adequate direction and was set up prema-

turely; in fact it may not be needed at all. It is not facilitating PSAs; it is hindering them and alienating teachers.

"In particular, this anger tends to be focused on institutions which are supposed to support teachers, but fail to do so." (Flanders, A-2)

As a PSA we are involved in educational matters and are not a political body, nor do we wish to be. We do not have the time, energy, resources or the people to engage in an extensive political process. Our members do not want or expect it.

"...teachers frequently made the point that they know that it is generally felt that they do not have the professional ability to decide much for themselves. They say they get this feeling... often from the BCTF." (Flanders, A-17)

In looking at the actions of the BCTF executive in dealing with this matter we see that they have been neither supportive nor consistent. How does the executive rationalize approving seven recommendations at one point (June 13, 1980) and withdrawing them at another (November 7, 1980)?

"Clearly, the activist members control the federation and they control it according to their own perception of what is right for teachers." (Flanders, A-3)

In trying to determine what is "right" for teachers the executive has treated the science PSA in a somewhat cavalier manner. In vacillating with many of these recommendations they have thwarted rather than enhanced the development of science education at the elementary level.

As a PSA we are committed to furthering the teaching of science in the province but we cannot be successful in this if we are asked to expend our energies in non-productive ways and are stonewalled in the BCTF.

"PSAs were said to be 'more real,' 'tangible,' and 'not as political' as the BCTF." (Flanders, A-6)

CUPE school strikes

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non-BCTF administrators into service as janitors, and by pressing teachers to keep their own classes clean. That latter tactic is justified by the Burnaby board's interpretation of the School Act and Regulations. The board says the regulations require a teacher to maintain a clean learning environment.

The BCTF has responded that this case is an inappropriate application of the laws, and that it could be viewed as an invitation to teachers to break the strike. Burnaby CUPE, which doesn't want

Investment study

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study will be Jim Reid, Victoria's commissioner of superannuation.

The joint study is the first step in a process being pressed by the BCTF which, the federation hopes, will lead to negotiated improvements in many aspects of the pension plan. These would include the restoration of full indexing for retired teachers' pensions.

Here's what the fee proposals would do

Three recommendations for the 1981-82 BCTF membership fee will be presented to the Annual General Meeting April 12-15 in Vancouver. What does each of these mean in terms of dollars paid by the members, and the programs and services provided? How does each proposal compare with current fees and resources?

1980-81 fee

The per-member cost of BCTF programs in 1980-81 is \$234.79, but the amount being paid by each member in fees is only \$214. The additional \$20.79 per member has been covered primarily from two sources: a transfer of the past interest earnings from the reserve fund, and a decrease in the cash operating surplus. Both of these are sources which disappear when they have been spent once, and are not continuing sources of revenue.

Thus either the fee must increase to cover the cost of the level of services to be provided, or the level of services must be reduced to match the level of fee provided.

In addition, because of expenditures on the pensions campaign it is necessary to rebuild the reserve fund; further, to reduce summer borrowing it is necessary to increase the cash operating surplus.

The Representative Assembly's fee recommendation

The fee of .92 per cent of mean salary would result in one of the following:

- It would allow the current level of services and programs (including an inflation factor), but would not rebuild the reserve fund or the cash operating surplus.
- Or, it would reduce the level of services and programs, but rebuild the reserve fund and cash operating surplus.

The Executive Committee's fee recommendation

A .97-per-cent fee would allow the current level of services (including an inflation factor), and would rebuild the reserve fund and operating surplus over a three-year period.

The Finance Committee's fee recommendation

The 1.06-per-cent fee would allow the current level of services (including an inflation factor), and would

	1981-82 Recommendations			
	1980-81 Fee	RA	Executive	Finance Committee
% of average salary for operating dollar fee	.86%	.92%	.97%	1.06%
Salary Indemnity Fund-% of salary	.20%	.20%	.15%	.20%

rebuild the reserve fund and operating surplus in one year.

Salary Indemnity Fund fee recommendations

The Executive Committee is recommending that BCTF members pay .15 per cent of salary to the Salary Indemnity Fund, for long-term disabilities. This would cover expected claims for 1981-82 and maintain the \$3 million reserve for future claims.

The Finance Committee, Representative Assembly and Income Security Committee are recommending that we continue with the .2 per cent of actual salary formula. This recommendation would cover expected claims and increase the \$3 million reserve.

Here's how your money was spent last year

Table shows dollar amounts spent on each BCTF program, and the benefits to you

PROGRAM	1980-81 BUDGET COST PER MEMBER	BENEFIT	PROGRAM	1980-81 BUDGET COST PER MEMBER	BENEFIT
Negotiations	\$14.04	Salary increases averaging 12.68% (\$5000 average dollar increase)			
Pensions	\$ 4.56	Ongoing examination of pension benefits, advice to members			
Legal Advice and Representation in Hearings	\$13.64	Advice and representation on reports, transfers or disciplinary actions by boards against teachers	Administrative Services (Treasury, Accounting, Building Management, Records, Print Shop, Computer, Personnel Administration, Word Processing/Graphics, Management, etc.)	\$54.03	Behind-the-scenes services necessary to run the organization
PD Services	\$20.57	Workshops, advice, planning in PD area			
Lesson Aids Service	\$ 1.36	Inexpensive lesson aids available	Other (Employment Information Service, Resources Centre)	\$ 3.73	Employment information service to student teachers; research facility for BCTF staff and committees
Rights of Children	\$ 2.38	Development of mainstreaming policy; participation with other concerned groups	Grants: 1. PSAs	\$ 6.34	Subsidize PSA services
Racism	\$ 2.26	Development of program to assist teachers to deal with racism	2. Teacher Qualification Service	\$ 2.11	Defines salary categories for teachers; jointly run by School Trustees Association and BCTF
Learning Conditions	\$17.26	Improved class sizes; improved pupil/teacher ratio—6,969 teaching positions more than if we had 1972 PTR; gains in prep time for elementary teachers	3. BCTF Assistance Society	\$ 4.42	Assist teachers and retired teachers who are seriously in need of financial assistance
Status of Women	\$ 5.62	Increased participation by women in the BCTF; working to improve the status of women in the school system and society	4. Canadian Teachers' Federation	\$ 7.79	Represents the interests of teacher organizations across the country on the national level
Annual General Meeting/ Representative Assembly/Executive Committee	\$23.25	Membership participation in the governing of the organization	5. International Assistance	\$ 2.96	Funding for Project Overseas and other assistance to teachers on education in Third World countries
Membership (policy, records, and fees)	\$ 4.53	Collect fees, keep necessary records	6. Grants to Locals and District Councils	\$10.68	Includes grants to locals for PD, travel to AGM, arbitration, local organizational support, political action, public relations, grievances, special grants, grants to establish local offices and to run district councils
Communications (newsletter, B.C. Teacher, provincial PR, toll-free long distance)	\$14.37	Information to members; access to BCTF services by phone	Capital Expenditures	\$ 5.16	Updating of BCTF Building
Influencing Government and Other Agencies	\$ 6.50	Representation of BCTF position to government	Pensions Campaign	\$17.68*	Campaign to regain full indexing and to gain right to bargain
Support to Locals	\$ 9.33	Assist locals to influence university teacher education programs	Benefits (general benefit plans and SIF)		(\$.50)** Plans for income protection when ill, life insurance, etc.
Teacher Education	\$ 2.40	Attempt to influence university teacher education programs			
				TOTAL	\$234.79

SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR 1980-81 BUDGET:	
MEMBER FEES	\$214.00
NON-CASH ADJUSTMENT (DEPRECIATION, ETC., AND CHANGES IN CURRENT ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES)	1.76
DECREASE IN CASH OPERATING SURPLUS	11.19
TRANSFER FROM PAST INTEREST EARNINGS ON RESERVE FUND	7.84
	\$234.79

*from Reserve Fund in 1980, not in operating budget
**Administration costs recovered from Salary Indemnity Fund

The BCTF membership fee: Now, that's what I call a real bargain!

Al Blakey
President

Would you buy a \$3 lottery ticket that guaranteed a \$25 prize? Foolish question. Who wouldn't?

This year for \$300 I won \$2,500. The \$300 was by VESTA and BCTF fee and the \$2,500 was my salary increase, won by VESTA in conjunction with other locals through the BCTF. Not a bad deal!

School boards probably would have raised salaries even if we couldn't bargain. But it's certain that such raises would be far from what we've got. Just look at how boards react to the concerns we can't negotiate. Look at the increases of unorganized employees. I think I got my money's worth.

I remember when we had a campaign to get all classes below 40 kids. That was the beginning. Since 1972 enrolments have gone down by more than 23,000 students, yet the number of teachers has gone up by nearly 6,000. Class sizes are a lot smaller as a result.

With about five fewer kids in my classroom my workload is better; not good enough, but better. And 6,000 teachers have jobs — one-fifth of our members.

Local and provincial action, including job action and political action, by the BCTF won these gains at the same time as teacher jobs were being lost in the rest of Canada. Good value for my money.

Not only can I buy salary indemnity, long-term disability and life insurance at a cheaper rate than I could as an individual but I get my legal bills paid if something that happens on the job requires a lawyer. I've never had to use any of these but it's nice to know they're there. Reduces my stress level.

My fee premium also buys something I can't measure: what doesn't happen to me. I've talked to older colleagues who remember earlier days when personal opinions and lifestyle were shaped by job insecurity and harassment. I have heard some real horror stories, such as when women teachers lost their job when they married.

I am still not satisfied with my inadequate rights but I know that the very existence of my organization makes sure that a lot that used to happen doesn't. Both in my local and provincially I've seen examples of this protection.

Not perfect, by any means. But worth a lot. I want to see the children I teach get a good deal, a good education. I want to use my skills in a way that brings pride, not frustration. What I teach, how I teach and the conditions in which I teach have a lot to do with creating pride or frustration.

When I'm denied any real right to have a say in these things, my skills and dignity are denied, and I'm frustrated by having to make do, to spread myself too thin, to short-change my kids.

I want my organization to do something about this, to get me and my colleagues more control over our jobs, over what we do and how we do it. I want to bargain these things, to have a collective say.

I'm willing to pay to get these rights, to pay more if necessary to do what needs to be done. Job satisfaction and a better deal for kids are important to me, just as important as my salary.

And for those who have two strikes against them from the start in our society — those who face racism or sexism, those who come from disadvantaged homes and those with learning disabilities — I want to see some special help. I think teachers have to provide part of that help, not only for the kids we teach, but for ourselves, where we are affected.

Costs me money? Yes — about \$11 a year. I pay more for beer.

I have a dream that someday we teachers will become masters of our own house, that those who teach will be those who generalize, that the experience of the teacher will be the primary ingredient of educational philosophy and direction.

A dream? True, but dreams can and do become realities. Without them nothing would change. My pride as a teacher demands that I work to make my dream a reality. But that costs money, too.

For what I already get, I get good value. For what I don't get, but want, I'm willing to pay more.

I think the federation is far from perfect. It must do a better job for its members and get better dollar value for what it does. I don't like paying more than I have to, either, but my \$300 is still one of my best investments.

And if I want more, if I expect more from the federation — as I do and our members do — I'm willing to pay the price.

Letters

Support for Almond

I agree wholeheartedly with H. Almond (*BCTF Newsletter*, December 10) on the matter of pensions.

If, as Rae Couplier of Kamloops says (*BCTF Newsletter*, February 12), there are elderly retired teachers still receiving \$285 to \$300 per month, I would ask (a) why do we have retirees at that level in the light of what some of us are getting — to use them as an argument at a time like this for a need for higher indexing? and (b) why are we fully indexing pensions on a percentage basis when we still have retirees in that bracket? It doesn't take a mathematical genius to see that percentage indexing does very little for a \$285 pension. If we're really sincere about being our brother's keeper, we at the top would give up all indexing until all retired teachers have a livable pension.

Edith L. Markle
Retired
Burnaby

Comox says thanks

On behalf of the Comox District Teachers' Association, I thank the BCTF officers and staff for the generous support they gave us in our struggle with the District 71 board this year, assistance and encouragement which were vital factors in our success.

The members of our association, in addition to discovering their own collective strength in job political action, have a new and vital appreciation of the value of our federation as a collective force, as a resource of talent, experience and commitment, and as a source of effective leadership.

Our thanks to the following staff members who came over to help: Jim

Bowman, Bob Buzza, Tom Hutchison, Jurd Kirby, Wes Knapp, Fred Long, Ralph Maurer, Dennis Rankin, Mohammed Shamsheer, Ken Smith and Ralph Sundby. And also the many people who helped by long distance.

We especially thank Al Blakey, Larry Kuehn and Al Cornes, who were there when we needed them.

Our thanks also to the people who sat through the endless committee meetings to develop the necessary programs and support systems that we were able to draw upon.

And thank you, fellow BCTF members, for providing a fee support that enables the federation to respond effectively when it is needed.

Bob Reilly
President
Comox District Teachers' Association

News brief on SFU 'editorialized'

Thank you for placing an announcement of the introduction of our school associate tuition fee certificate in the news briefs section of the January 15 *BCTF Newsletter*.

As you know, we have arranged for our full announcement to appear in an upcoming issue of *The B.C. Teacher*. However, I was somewhat surprised at the direction in which you chose to editorialize in the news briefs section. I thought you might have found it more appropriate to mention the opportunity the certificate affords us to work

directly with practising teachers, rather than suggesting that this was a replacement for our small honorariums in the past.

Nevertheless, I must point out that you have the facts wrong regarding the honorariums. It was the university's decision to remove the honorariums because of financial considerations; this in fact had nothing to do with the School Act. A phone call to us would have easily clarified the matter. The important reasons which led to the introduction of the tuition fee certificate are contained in the information sheet we provided you.

Stan Shapson
Director
Professional Programs
Simon Fraser University

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.

MEMBER: EDPRESS

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Support for Pro-D questioned

Does professional development have a high priority in our federation? Vernon teachers have always considered it a top priority, and we feel strongly that it should remain a major concern for the BCTF.

When districts were informed that the BCTF Pro-D grant fund was exhausted, we were finalizing an extensive Pro-D event and counting upon these grants. It was too late for us to change our plans.

On that basis, we requested the Executive Committee to consider covering the grants on which we had planned. This request was obviously to no avail. We now must bear the additional costs.

The creation of this first-come, first-served situation could have been

predicted and avoided with some equitable distribution of funds arranged. All indications — small increase in Pro-D grant budget, increasing demands for Pro-D grants, concerted efforts by the federation to actively encourage greater use of BCTF grants — should have pointed to the impending danger.

Why was nothing ever communicated to locals? The only communication was that no more funds are available.

The Executive Committee should take the responsibility for the existence of the Pro-D grant situation. We feel it is totally unfair to pass on to locals the extra costs incurred because of oversights at the federation level.

We would ask where federation priorities are when there appears to be unlimited funds available for certain activities and such inflexibility in others.

Horst Giese
President
Vernon Teachers' Association

Pensions: a modest proposal

I am making two suggestions for solving the impasse between partial indexing and full indexing.

1. Teachers must pay a higher percentage towards their pensions.
2. Teachers must increase their pension contributions from the present 7½ per cent to 8 per cent at once.
3. The government should increase the guarantee for indexing from the present 8½ per cent to 10 per cent in January, 1982.
4. Each 12 months, the government should increase the guarantee indexing by one-half of 1 per cent for four years, and then open for further negotiations.

B. Let the teachers put their money where their mouths are!

1. Once a year (perhaps November), each teacher in B.C. contributes one day's pay to a special fund established by the BCTF to be used solely as a supplement to a retired teachers' fund.
2. This money should be administered by the executive of the BCTF and a small board of practising teachers.
3. This money loaned out at the highest rate of interest over a short period of time.
4. Each December, all teachers and/or dependants receiving a teacher's pension should be given a Christmas bonus of the difference between the actual indexing and the cost of living, or a suitable supplement as passed by the executive and directors.

Ken M. Hoffmann
Alberni District Secondary School
Port Alberni

Hold the line on BCTF fee

We have followed with interest the debate concerning BCTF fees in the *BCTF Newsletter* (January and February). The number of motions placed on the floor, and the time consumed, reflect our concerns over fee increases.

We have noted that the Krall/Worledge motion to maintain the fee formula at .86 per cent of the mean salary was defeated even though this would have provided a 12 per cent (approximate) increase in income over last year if the number of teachers has not diminished significantly.

The arguments presented against the motion stated that a need for program cuts would result from the .86 per cent levy. This would appear to indicate that program growth is to exceed 12 per cent.

We wish to see all BCTF programs work within the predetermined budget limits imposed by a .86 levy.

Ernest Wilhelm, Maureen Nemeth, Sandra Dorman, Doreen Brayley, N. Bowman, J. Kerr, Cecile Traviss, Joyce Kitagawa, Mary Hansen, Frederick Hutton, Judith Pilley, David Harbut, K. Long
Nootka Elementary
Vancouver

Priorities

If teachers do not believe in reason, in discussion, argument and persuasion, in talk and more talk, who else can be expected to?

Danger to safety or health would justify withdrawal of services. I can think of no other justification for such action. Leadership that threatens or takes teachers into work-to-rule or strike because of dissatisfaction with pensions cannot expect to have a united following. Children and their education come first with many of us.

Jan M. Norris
Comox

Letters policy

Readers should be aware that only letters written specifically for the *BCTF Newsletter* can be considered for publication in these columns. "Open letters" or copies of letters originally directed to individuals, groups or other publications will not be published.

In the last few months several letters have had to be rejected because of this policy, which will be reviewed by the Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board at its next meeting May 9.

Letters to the editor should be legibly written or, preferably, typed (double-spaced). Letters must be signed and the names of writers must be legible.

Coplin: Executive decision was wrong

On March 6 a motion was passed by members of the BCTF Executive Committee which postponed the referendum ballots on pensions that were scheduled for March 17. I was the only person who voted against this motion and I would like to state my reasons why.

It is my opinion that the entire pension campaign has been mismanaged by the Executive Committee. Even as early as the August executive meeting (held prior to the Presidents' Conference), I was in a minority position as to how strong our stand should be. It was also disconcerting when I recognized how unprepared we were both to discuss this issue and to lead pension workshops during the conference.

Further, it is my opinion that from that day on the Executive Committee proceeded to run behind the membership. We failed to adequately communicate the issues, we called a "cool-off" period at the peak of the campaign, and we held back on information about pensions because of the so-called "negotiations" with Evan Wolfe.

Therefore, it was not a surprise when some metro presidents felt "the membership was soft" on the issue and that the referendum would probably fail. I believe the main reason for the membership going soft on the issue was the lack of leadership shown by the Executive Committee.

However, I also voted against the motion for another reason. In my opinion we did not receive a substantial

offer from the government. What we received was a "slap in the face" from Evan Wolfe. On the day he was to present our "compromise" proposal to cabinet he was in Palm Springs. Instead, Al Blakey received a copy of the following memo:

MEMO TO: Honorable Evan Wolfe
FROM: Jim Carter

I have informed the BCTF (Al Blakey) that you have agreed to have a study into the investment practices of the B.C. teachers' pensions, carried out by Mr. Jim Reid (commissioner of pensions) and (a BCTF staff member), the exact terms of the study to be established by yourself sometime after March 9. As a result of this move you are expecting the BCTF to nominate a member to the investment committee.

Signed copies of this memo are going to:

The Honorable Brian Smith
The Honorable Hugh Curtis
Mr. Al Blakey
Mr. Jim Reid
(the BCTF staff member)

The Representative Assembly agreed that the Executive Committee could withdraw the referendum ballot if we had made substantial progress in the achievement of our pension objectives. In my opinion, the memo from Jim Carter did not constitute any kind of substantial progress. This was later verified when the Executive Committee rejected almost all aspects of the memo but still postponed the referendum.

I have attempted to state my position and I am sure those executive members who supported the postponing motion

will make their position clear. You will have to decide for yourselves as to whether the pensions campaign has been well handled, postponed or scuttled.

Lynda Coplin
Executive Member

Blakey defends decision

BCTF President Al Blakey responds:

Lynda's comments and criticisms, unfortunately, miss much of the context of the pensions campaign and flow from a different perception, in hindsight, of what was possible at each stage.

The BCTF opposition to a limit on pensions indexing was adopted just a year ago at the AGM. The government ignored our point of view and we virtually immediately faced legislation limiting indexing. Lobbying failed to change the government's mind, but last spring's Representative Assembly overwhelmingly rejected more militant action at that time.

When the government last July made concessions to government employees, the federation executive unanimously recommended an action plan which included job action, and the Representative Assembly overwhelmingly adopted the plan.

The government said no. On the basis of Surrey's initiative, the executive called for a number of locals to withdraw services on December 4 and 11, and locals representing 40 per cent of our

membership acted. Indications appeared of a softening by members of government.

To test these indications and to ensure that future job action would be bigger than the December actions — not relatively minor skirmishes in comparison — the executive initiated a "cooling-off" period.

The government agreed to discussions. To keep pressure on the government the RA overwhelmingly recommended a referendum on further job action, giving the executive authority to delay or cancel if significant progress was made towards our compromise proposal.

The government's counter-proposal was not satisfactory but was a step in the right direction since it could lead to significant increases in indexing.

The executive agreed — with conditions — to the government proposal and pressed for the federation's other objectives, postponing the referendum while negotiations continued.

Government accepted our conditions and Mr. Wolfe agreed to further consideration of our unmet objectives.

Progress has not been sufficient to meet all our objectives, but there have been improvements since last summer and fall. Further progress has not been cut off by government.

No one on the executive would argue that our efforts have been perfect. Hindsight is a great advantage. But progress has been made and further improvements are possible.

The shortest distance between two points is not usually a straight line, in the world of political reality, and the responsibility of leadership is to know this and act accordingly.

Executive 'has done it again!'

The executive of the BCTF has done it again! From the start of the pensions problems, the executive has radiated an aura of defeatism and has shown a total lack of confidence in the membership. Now, after three months of the "six-week" cooling-off period, the executive body is apparently quite cold. The postponement (cancellation) of the referendum kills our pensions campaign.

The much-heralded "blitz" that the executive promised to sell the pensions campaign to the membership has, of course, never materialized. Instead we have the sickening exhibition of executive members telling us that a humiliating slap in the face from the finance minister is a victory (of sorts).

After a year of planning, the executive has unveiled its plan of action for the expanded scope of bargaining campaign. The plan consists almost entirely of locals doing all the work with the BCTF acting only as a cheering section and backstop. The main thrust is to have locals try harder to negotiate additional items into local contracts. How will we tell when we've won? More items will be in local contracts! This is leadership?

After careful consideration of the York report, I feel that the executive has also misdirected the membership on the question of how our bargaining should be terminated. It is clear from the B.C. School Trustees Association stand that unless unsuccessful negotiations end in the strike-lockout

option, they will oppose expanded scope of bargaining. It is also clear from the government stand that unless there is BCSTA agreement, they will not change the law. We can either accept strike-lockout, as almost all other workers do, or we can stay with the restricted scope of bargaining we now have. We cannot have the best of all worlds.

A peculiar situation exists in relationship to the principal's and vice-principal's PSA and locals of that body. Most executive members are quite upset over the PSA acting as an alternative federation for administration in B.C. Their involvement in collective bargaining and in taking an active part in opposing the BCTF efforts to win full indexing are of particular concern.

It is my opinion that management personnel should be in a separate local from the managed. The people who write reports ought not be in the same organizations as those who are promoted or fired on the basis of these reports. While they are members, they must be assured fair and equal treatment by the BCTF — in exchange, they must not function as a separate federation. We need an executive that will take action rather than just fume about such situations.

Kerry Gibbs
Surrey

(Editor's note: We understand that Mr. Gibbs is to be nominated for executive member-at-large on the opening day of the Annual General Meeting. He is not yet an official candidate; however, his letter is in effect his candidacy statement. Because of these unusual circumstances President Al Blakey has chosen not to exercise his right to respond to Mr. Gibbs' criticisms.)

Executive 'has done right thing'

The Coquitlam Teachers' Association executive wishes to go on record in support of the BCTF executive's leadership in its response to the government position on pensions and the postponement of the referendum ballot.

Although the government "offer" of a study of the investment practices was obviously inadequate, it is a recognition that our actions in December have forced the government to modify their position — which had not occurred previously. Since we are in "quasi-negotiations", it can only be considered a first step.

We were pleased to see the referendum ballot postponed. The labor

climate in this province had changed drastically since the Representative Assembly adopted the pension action plan. We have experienced the occupation of buildings by striking telecommunications workers, escalated picketing by municipal and civic employees, a greater number of school board support staff on strike and picketing schools, a regional general strike and threats of a provincial general strike.

The actions proposed by the Representative Assembly are no longer relevant. They would be viewed as incredibly weak and feeble in comparison to other employee groups.

We call on the executive to develop a revised, stronger plan of action and continue to pursue our objective of full pension indexing in talks with the provincial government.

Geoff Peters
President
Coquitlam Teachers' Association

Error in biography

In the March 12 edition of the *BCTF Newsletter*, member-at-large candidate Cliff Read states that he was president of the Trail District Teachers' Association during the "infamous 1978-79 strike." This presumably refers to the strike which took place during the spring of 1978 in School District 11.

Please be advised that Cliff Read was not the TDTA president during that strike. I was.

I would appreciate it if you would publish this correction in the next

edition of the newsletter.
Robert Jackson
Castlegar

Cliff Read responds.
Bob Jackson is right. The strike occurred in the winter of 1978-79, when Bob was president. I first became president the following year.

UNICEF

Edge of Survival, a film about UNICEF's activities in East Africa, will be shown at the Media Centre, Robson Square in Vancouver, hourly from 9 to 5 on April 21.

Draft agenda: 1981 BCTF Annual General Meeting

Only official delegates may vote, but any teacher is welcome to attend the BCTF's annual general meeting, April 12-15 at the Hotel Vancouver.

The agenda below is a draft agenda; there may be changes before it is adopted by the AGM on April 12. A number of resolutions and recommendations which had originally been submitted to the AGM have been withdrawn, and these changes are reflected in this draft agenda. For more information contact Ken Aitchison at the BCTF building.

Sunday, April 12

- 7:00 p.m. • Preliminary business
 - President's report — Al Blakey
 - BCTF Executive Committee Leadership Report
 - Recommendations 1-8 re: full collective bargaining rights (p.5, Reports and Resolutions booklet)
 - Resolution 120 re: expanded scope of bargaining (p.44)
 - Resolution 102: inclusion in the B.C. Labour Code (p.25)
- 9:30 p.m. • Table-officer candidates' election statements: Larry Kuehn, Ben Thomas (president); Lynda Coplin, Doug Smart (first vice-president); Steven Norman (second vice-president)
- 10:00 p.m. • Session adjourns.

Monday, April 13

- 9:00 a.m. • Recommendations 1-8 re: full collective bargaining rights (continued)
 - Resolution 120 re: expanded scope of bargaining (continued)
 - Resolution 102 re: inclusion in the B.C. Labour Code (continued)
 - Report of the Labor Liaison Committee (p.65)
 - Report of the Representative Assembly (p.78)
 - Recommendation 34 re: withdrawal of BCTF support for ERIBC (p.44)
 - Recommendation 39 re: health standards in schools during labor disputes
- 12:10 p.m. • Recommendations for honorary life memberships
 - Report of BCTF General Secretary Bob Buzza
- 2:00 p.m. • Report of Pensions Committee
 - Resolution 121 re: provincial levy for rotating walkouts (p.45)
 - Report of Teacher Personnel Advisory Committee
 - Recommendations 31-33 re: restructuring of Investigation and Judicial Committees and Federation Appeals Board (p.42)
 - Resolutions 117-118 re: due process, fairness and impartiality of structures

and hearings of the Judicial Committee (p.43)

- Resolutions 123-125 re: amendment of the School Act to protect teacher rights and tenure (p.50)
- 3:15 p.m. • BCTF finances — overview; recommendations and resolutions to follow on Wednesday afternoon
- 3:45 p.m. • Executive Committee stewardship report: action taken on 1980 goals and objectives of the federations (p.52)
 - Business not completed at earlier sessions
- 4:30 p.m. • Presentation of the G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award
 - Election statements from candidates for member-at-large positions (Pat Clarke, Terry Eastman, Thom Hansen, Elsie McMurphy, Wesley Nickel, Al Paterson, Cliff Read, Christina Schut).

Tuesday, April 14

- 9:00 a.m. • The Hon. Brian Smith, Minister of Education
- 9:45 a.m. • Report of the Task Force on Children with Special Needs (p.55)
 - Recommendation 23 re: appropriate education for children with special needs (p.31)
 - Resolution 107 re: establishment of regional residential centres for care and education of children with psychological disorders (p. 33)
 - Recommendations 10-14 re: provision of notice of the meeting of the AGM in the *BCTF Newsletter*; substitution of "Society Act" for "Societies Act"; the term "Executive Director" to replace "General Secretary"; appeal of members as to guilt or sentence imposed by Executive Committee (p.26)
 - Resolution 104 re: distinguishing criticism of "federation" from that of "profession" (p.27)
 - Report of the Teacher Education Committee (p.75)
 - Recommendation 9 re: scheduling of supervisory visits (p.24)
 - Resolution 101 re: deletion of resolution 101 passed by the fall 1980 RA regarding reports on teachers (p.24)
 - Business not completed at earlier sessions.
- 2:00 p.m. • Report of Learning Conditions Committee (p.66)
 - Recommendations 26-30 re: amendment of the declaration; amendment of the basic staffing formula for elementary and secondary schools; supplementary staffing formula for schools with special educational needs; equal opportunity and right of students to participate in all school activities regardless of race, color or sex; reduction of class-

room time from 23 to 20 hours per week (p.34)

- Report of the Status of Women Committee (p.74)
- Recommendations 35-37 re: BCTF support of women's rights concerning their health and well-being, including the bearing of children; CTF support to have abortion removed from the Criminal Code of Canada; CTF commitment toward inclusion in the proposed Canadian Constitution of women's equal rights (p.46)
- Resolution 103 re: deletion of policy statement 2.F.22, which states that the difference between salaries of teachers and administrators should be reduced (p.25)
- Resolution 108 re: leaves of absence (p.37)
- Business not completed at earlier sessions.
- 5:00 p.m. • Report on the Canadian Teachers' Federation
 - CTF president Paschal Chisholm
- 7:30 p.m. • President of the Home and School Federation
- 7:45 p.m. • Resolutions 111-116 re: feasibility of electing executive members-at-large on a ward basis; release time for Executive Committee members; relinquishing authority to local associations to make responsible decisions on their own needs regarding structure or membership; differential between salaries of classroom teachers and BCTF administrative staff; negotiation of compensation levels with federation administrative staff by the Executive Committee to bring them closer to those of B.C. teachers; temporary contracts for new members appointed to the BCTF professional staff (p.39)
 - Resolution 109 re: membership in the BCTF of any person not a Canadian citizen (p.37)
 - Resolution 119 re: BCTF opposition to further uranium mine site developments in B.C (p.43)
 - Resolution 110 re: investigation of termination and reinstatement of A. Pazitch in the BCTF (p.38)
 - Business not completed at earlier sessions.

Wednesday, April 15

- 8:00 a.m. • Distribution of ballots
- 9:00 a.m. • Questions of chairpersons of committees not reporting elsewhere on the agenda: Education Finance Committee, Income Security Committee, Political Action Committee, Professional Development Advisory Committee, PSA Council, Racism Committee, School Buildings, Grounds and Facilities Committee
- 9:15 a.m. • Report of the Nominating Committee (p.79) and election of table officers and members-at-large of the Executive Committee, to continue throughout the day as required.
 - Report of the Finance Committee (p.57)
 - Resolution 105 re: budget calculation revision (p.30)
 - Recommendations 15-22 re: salary calculation adjustment; active membership fee calculation for operation of the federation; voluntary active membership fee calculation; annual fee for associate membership; annual fee for affiliate membership; appointment of auditors (p.27)
 - Business not completed at earlier sessions; late resolutions and new resolutions
- 2:00 p.m. • B.C. School Trustees Association president Gary Begin
- 2:15 p.m. • Business not completed at earlier sessions; late resolutions and new resolutions
- 7:30 p.m. • Business not completed at earlier sessions; late resolutions and new resolutions