

Last month, Terrace teachers achieved a major breakthrough when they became the first local in B.C. to gain a signed personnel practices contract, including a grievance procedure, with their board. But Terrace's teachers had to stage a one-day walkout and threaten to strike, to get the contract. Last week Newsletter writer Ralph Maurer went to Terrace. Here is his report:

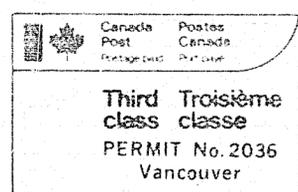
One of the people I work with referred to this assignment as a "post-mortem" on the Terrace dispute. But the body in question, the Terrace District Teachers' Association, is more lively than it's ever been, because of the dispute.

More than 90 people showed up for their annual meeting on June 4. That's fewer than were coming to emergency meetings at the height of the month-long dispute, but three times as many as had shown up at the last regular TDTA meeting.

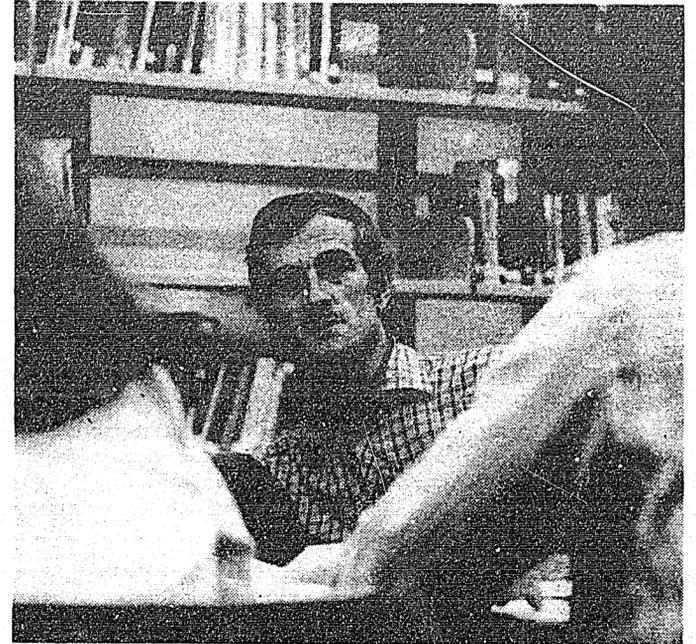
For the first time in years, every executive position was contested. There were no election issues as such — just a lot of teachers who suddenly wanted to become involved in their local. "I got a fire under me in the last few months," confessed one candidate. And in her campaign speech, the new secondary vice-president Nancy Nelson said, "This year I experienced a political reawakening, and so has the TDTA." In the past, she said, she spent all her spare time improving her students' education — for which the school board got credit. "I'm interested in making the school board look good, but I'm more interested in making teachers look good."

The same meeting, which lasted more than 3½ hours, elected Glenn Grieve, the TDTA negotiator during the dispute, as their new president. They also debated a 1981-82 budget that would double their local fees. The major items in the new budget are release time for the president and \$10,000 for public relations. Although the vote wasn't released (the sub-locals hadn't debated it yet) it appeared the budget would pass.

The debate on the budget reflected what a number of teachers later said privately:



Above, student leaders Greg Byng, Stephanie Cousins and Andrea Clark in front of their — and Tom Hamakawa's — school. Above right, parent leader Debbie Gregg at work. Below right, teacher leader Wayne Wyatt.



Dispute brought local to life

Terrace teachers weren't getting what they wanted until they started causing trouble. Talking about a pending learning conditions grievance — the district's first in living memory — current president Wayne Wyatt commented, "Up until this year people have seen the local association as ineffectual. Coming out of the recent dispute, people are more willing to bring things forward because they now see the local as becoming a more effective body."

According to TDTA negotiator Grieve, the two major breakthroughs teachers made during the dispute came as a direct result of actual or threatened teacher actions. Negotiations on the personnel-practices contract made no progress until teachers staged a one-day walkout on May 6; then the board and the TDTA quickly reached agreement on all the main issues — except on the teacher demand that the agreements be embodied in a signed contract. The board held out for a policy statement, which it could revoke at any time, until late May, on the eve of a threatened teacher strike.

Marilyn Cook, a teacher at Skeena Junior Secondary School, calls herself a conservative but says, "I don't think we had any alternative (to job action). We were in a position where we either went back to the classroom and shut up, or we finally did something about what was going on."

"I don't remember a lot of soul-searching about it."

What happened in Terrace has been described as a "teacher campaign" for a personnel-practices contract. It wasn't. It was a teacher/parent/student campaign, although the latter two groups saw the issues differently.

Sean and Debbie Gregg, who eventually became identified as the "leaders" of the

parents' movement, got involved when Tom Hamakawa, principal for three of their children, was transferred to a teaching position, along with principal Roy Greening of Thornhill Elementary School. The Greggs were shocked by the transfer. "We just couldn't believe there was anything wrong with him," says Sean Gregg, a Canada Manpower counsellor. They got in touch with other parents, who shared their anger and started showing up in large numbers at school board meetings.

The parents' primary interest was in getting Hamakawa back in his principal's office. They weren't all that interested in the teachers' efforts to get a personnel-policy contract as such, Gregg says. "What became an issue with the parents was the fact that the board wasn't bargaining (with the teachers) in good faith. They were avoiding the issue." As far as the Greggs and company were concerned, the biggest problem was that the board simply wasn't interested in recognizing the public's concerns.

"We recognize that parents have to share part of the blame for that," Gregg adds. "Personally, I wasn't even on the voters' list the last time."

Many parents did not initially have a lot of sympathy for the teachers' concerns. "We were very surprised that teachers had this many problems, and we had never been made aware of them," Gregg says. "Some people were bordering on being mad at the teachers as well as the board."

The lesson doesn't appear to have been lost on the TDTA who, as indicated, have budgeted \$10,000 for publicity next year. A school action committee, of which Debbie Gregg is chairperson, has been established to provide the contact between parents, teachers and trustees that never existed before.

The students at Skeena jumped into the

fight when their popular principal Hamakawa got his transfer. Three hundred of them marched to the school board office and a smaller group went to the next board meeting, and later leafleted the local shopping mall. They also held a general assembly to which they invited TDTA president Wyatt.

They prolonged their demonstration at the school board offices for three class periods "so we could get some coverage on CFTK and CBC," says Grade 10 student Stephanie Cousins, a student councillor. "I think it woke some of the parents up."

While personnel practices as a whole were the issue the TDTA was concerned with, the parents, students and the two individuals concerned are more interested in what will happen to Greening and Hamakawa. The campaign on their behalf achieved a significant victory with immediate repercussions throughout the province: the appeal procedure has been changed.

Formerly, the ministry's appeal boards, appointed to consider appeals of transferred or fired teachers, consisted of a teacher representative, a trustee representative and a chairperson appointed by the ministry. Many teachers thought that process was loaded against them. Now, the chairperson of the appeal boards will be an individual chosen by the teacher and trustee reps. Hamakawa and Greening are the first beneficiaries of the new system. Hamakawa's chairperson is Adam Robertson, a former BCTF president who is a trustee in Creston; Greening's is Norm Robinson, a Simon Fraser University education professor and former trustee.

Things have quietened down in Terrace, but they will never again go back to "normal." "To keep things in perspective," Grieve said in his campaign speech, "we don't have a hell of a lot in the contract but we did accomplish something significant." The contract was the first step; it's up to the Terrace teachers to take the second step towards a good contract next year.

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

Photo controversy: staff defends itself

The staff of Sinclair school would like to respond to the series of hysterical letters which have appeared in recent editions of the *BCTF Newsletter* concerning the picture of a classroom in our school during the recent CUPE strike. But before we do so, let me first "wag the finger" at the editorial staff of the *Newsletter*. The storyline which accompanied the picture made only passing reference to Surrey and none at all to the particular context in which those circumstances developed. The whole story ought to have been told *then*, and not as I am doing *now*.

We have no regrets about the manner in which we demonstrated support for our striking colleagues in CUPE. We believe that except in a dire emergency we should not do the work of a person who is on strike, or encourage or direct others to do so. This position was overwhelmingly adopted at a large meeting of Surrey teachers prior to the strike. In a memorandum to all Surrey teachers, the superintendent of schools also directed that no teacher do the work of a striking school board employee or direct others to do so. The consistency and firmness with which this

fundamental principle (apparently unknown to your correspondents from Kaslo, Vernon and Victoria) was applied won us the respect and admiration of our fellow employees from CUPE. Surrey was one of the few locals which managed to maintain a harmonious relationship with CUPE during the current round of contract negotiations.

What is particularly insidious about the letters is that rather than taking on a real issue of support for our fellow employees your correspondents impugned the professional integrity of the teachers at Sinclair elementary. The reason the floors are dirty, they say, is because the teachers allowed their students to litter, or worse still, they actually encouraged them to do so. Nothing could be further from the truth. What the pictures showed, but neglected to explain, was that you were witnessing *three* weeks of unswept floors. What the picture couldn't show was the three weeks' accumulation of filth that was ground into the floor. A proper caption would have explained that teachers were desperately trying to have the situation remedied.

We made repeated phone calls to trustees and administrative staff at the school board office. At the end of the second week the chairperson of the school board toured the school with the superintendent. Her assessment was that the situation was very unpleasant but not intolerable. We invited the medical health officer to visit the school. He declined the invitation, adding offhandedly that a little dust would hurt no one. The deputy superintendent of schools emptied the garbage pails during the strike and so was a regular witness to the deteriorating conditions within the school. We invited the parents' auxiliary in to view the situation in the hope that they could bring pressure to bear on the school board. They fully supported our position of not doing CUPE work and were insistent that their children not be required to do CUPE work either. They joined the chorus of people urging the school board and CUPE to come to a settlement so that their schools could get back to normal. Throughout the strike the school board went on record as saying that they could keep the school operating efficiently. This was manifestly untrue.

The superintendent was invited to meet with the staff concerning the conditions in the school. He was unable to make a commitment to have the

school cleaned on a regular basis. Members of the staff expressed dissatisfaction with the response. The following day we received a phone call from our local association president informing us that the school board office had assured him that the school would be cleaned. A further three weeks elapsed before certain rooms were swept again.

I hope readers will appreciate that this was an extremely harrowing experience for the staff and students at Sinclair school. On the positive side our students learned the valuable lesson of not doing the work of a person who is on strike.

Phil Alain,
U. Siegler, W. MacTavish,
B. Porter, K. Wiebe,
J. Blakely, R. Perryman,
Joan Henderson,
P. Hansen, M. Bentley,
R. K. Robinson, Dan
Blake, Dyann MacLeod,
Robin Connolly, K.
Steele, S. Kremer,
P. Robinson, S.
Pettovello, J. Hurt, J. M.
Trotzok, J. E. Jurczak,
J. B. Coleman, R. J. Scully

Dr. F. D. Sinclair Elementary School
Surrey

Newsletter wrong in handling issue

The April 2 *BCTF Newsletter* contained a picture of a classroom at Dr. F. D. Sinclair Elementary School in Surrey which was taken during the CUPE strike. Subsequent issues of the *Newsletter* contained letters criticizing the staff of this school for allowing such a mess to accumulate.

My first concern is that this picture appeared without any accompanying story or explanation. Neither did the editor follow BCTF policy 39.26.08 (page 60 of the *Members' Guide*) and allow those criticized an opportunity to respond in the same issue. No effort was even made to solicit a response from the staff of the school.

Another concern is that none of

these letter writers contacted the school prior to writing their letters to find out why a classroom could look like the one in question. These writers apparently would not want fact to interfere with their sanctimonious outpourings.

Did they know, for instance, that the classroom in question had not been cleaned for over three weeks? Or did they know of the special problems relating to dirt that the staff and students of Sinclair school face each day, regardless of whether there is a CUPE strike?

Several Lower Mainland school districts recently faced CUPE strikes. In Surrey we managed to survive because of the clearly-articulated guidelines

established by the membership prior to the strike. Teachers expected students to maintain the same standards of cleanliness they normally would (an incredibly difficult task) but they did not expect them to do CUPE work themselves. For that reason, relationships between teachers and non-teaching staff are extremely cordial now that the strike is over.

Our task would have been much more difficult had we encountered attitudes such as those indicated by your letter writers. I'm sure that they would be the first to complain if, after having done janitorial and secretarial work during a strike by non-teaching staff, these functions suddenly became part of their job descriptions at the conclusion of the strike.

Peter Ellis, President
Surrey Teachers' Association

Glad kids aren't in that class

I have many times seen classrooms as littered as the one you pictured, and this when there hasn't been a strike to blame. It may come as a surprise to you, but some teachers don't care how much litter is left on the floor at the end of the day.

What are the children who are involved to learn from the teacher's attitude? Do they learn that sloth and

filth are acceptable? Do they learn the unionist creed that no one helps another if it cuts across job lines, no matter how uncharitable that belief is when applied to daily living? How much better it would be to have the children pitch in and clean the room — strike or no.

"What are your kids doing in a place like this?" I agree with the rhetorical question in the picture caption, but for a different reason: I'm glad none of my kids are in that classroom because of the absence of a thinking teacher.

R. H. Pulsford
Black Creek

Custodians not to blame for mess

The caption below the picture on the front page of your April 2 *BCTF Newsletter* implies that the mess on the floor is the result of the CUPE employees not being on the job. I am disgusted and annoyed that this situation could be blamed on the custodians.

What teacher would allow the

students to leave a classroom in such a conditions? I can see from the blackboard that this is a primary class, but surely the pupils can pick up paper. If this is a regular occurrence, what sort of training are the children getting with respect to caring for the school?

Don't you think that the teacher was more than a little embarrassed to see that picture on the front page of the *Newsletter*? Did he or she give permission for the picture to be printed, or was the teacher not consulted?

Rose Burley
Langley

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MEMBER: EDPRESS ISSN 0709-9800

2/JUNE 11, 1981

Editor should quit

I too was infuriated by the picture of the dirty classroom in the April 2 *BCTF Newsletter*. The letter from Marjorie Fulton of Vernon describes my feelings exactly. I cannot imagine any teacher worthy of the name allowing his or her

classroom to get into a condition like that shown in your paper, and I am ashamed that you would stoop so low as to publish such a picture. You are not worthy to be an editor of any paper, and I think if you have any sense of decency, you would resign immediately.
W. Harold Shannon
Retired
Chilliwack

'Superfluous' racism program?

I read the letter from Lila O. Stanford (*BCTF Newsletter*, April 30) with astonishment. She seems to be attacking the entire structure of the Annual General Meeting and bases her attacks on a series of half-truths and hysterical statements.

However, I would like to concentrate on one aspect of her argument — example five in her letter. This alludes to the fee increase and the contention that the additional money would be used for "superfluous" programs and "dirty work." I am a member of the Racism Committee and a classroom teacher; I take great exception to Ms. Stanford's remarks on both levels.

The Racism Committee has worked hard this year to develop liaison with similar groups across the province and to provide advice and crisis intervention to schools and teachers facing racist incidents. The committee is developing a

pilot project on racism and methods of handling racist incidents in the schools; it evaluates material destined for the classroom; it has developed strategies for teachers to use in their classrooms.

The committee is composed of ordinary classroom teachers who give up many hours of their time each year to work with their co-ordinators in defusing potentially explosive situations and developing materials which emphasize the multicultural base of our society. Dirty? Superfluous? The first adjective warrants no rebuttal; the second is astonishing when it is considered that racism and multiculturalism is seen by educators' groups across Canada as critical — the federal and provincial governments are concerned enough to finance programs to deal with racial problems and the problems new Canadians are having adjusting to our society.

I have been teaching in the province for 13 years. My experience over the years has convinced me that teachers are no different from others — we need reassurance that we are effective, and

help when things go wrong. The Racism Committee is attempting to offer reassurance, advice and practical suggestions in a critical area.

I have been around for 13 AGMs. The election results and fee increases have not always pleased me. However, I have always recognized that AGM decisions were products of a democratic process. The delegates represent their associations and, by extension, the majority opinion in each. Where then was the "disregard" for the wishes of the members? Perhaps Ms. Stanford was simply reflecting the fact that the assembly's votes did not go *her* way. Frankly, I find that a relief. If committees such as Racism and Status of Women are indeed superfluous, then let us turn the clock back to the "good old days" when teachers simply taught, racist incidents simply didn't happen, feminists were not on the same footing as males, politics was a dirty word and apathy, non-involvement and intolerance were a way of life. Remember?

John Wright
Atlin

Executive put cart before horse

After establishing that expanded scope of bargaining is to be a federation priority for the coming year, the Annual General Meeting stopped short of making a decision for the entire membership regarding the right to strike as a tactic in negotiations. It was absolutely clear at that time that a

referendum will be held to find out if the members concurred with the direction in which the federation appeared to be heading.

Our concern now, as a result of the spring Representative Assembly, is that the federation's Executive Committee and now, by a slim majority, the RA, have decided to proceed with plans *vis-a-vis* a strike fund and procedures before seeking the views of the membership on whether they wish the right to strike. Clearly, the executive's recommendation to the RA has put the cart before the horse and has contributed to an already-

stressful situation for teachers.

We expect leadership from the provincial executive and from the RA, but "leaders" must at all times turn around and ensure that those whom they profess to be leading are indeed following.

Amrit Manak (geographical representative, Richmond)
Gerry Retallick (GR, Richmond)
Barry Freeman (GR, Richmond)
Brian Bennett (GR, Powell River)
Sophia Jeffrey (GR, Victoria)
Bob Meredith (GR, Creston)
Tom Krall (GR, Nanaimo)

Criticisms unfounded

Mr. Garneau's numerous criticisms of the abortion debate at the Annual General Meeting (*BCTF Newsletter*, May 28), including "manipulation", "immoral procedure" and "being forced to think one way", are unfounded.

During the first session of the AGM, when the agenda was being approved, a motion to delete these recommendations was made. The assembly debated the deletion. Our vote on the issue indicated that we wanted to maintain these issues as part of the business of the AGM. Mr. Garneau's particular point of view lost.

When the debate began on the first recommendation, the speakers lined up at the microphones to put forward their positions. For over 25 minutes we listened to the speakers. The vast majority spoke in the affirmative. In order to ensure that both sides of the debate were heard, the chairperson deliberately requested representation from negative speakers. When the question on the motion was finally put to the meeting, over two-thirds of the

assembly agreed that we had heard substantial debate, and the procedural motion passed. When the vote on the recommendation was taken, it passed as well. A count was called. The negative count was 203; the affirmative was 412. The debate on the second recommendation proceeded in a similar manner.

Mr. Garneau cannot deny the strength of support for the affirmative position. Nor can he deny that his particular point of view lost. It is unfortunate that his ensuing response has been to start an attack on the procedures and processes of debate contained in the BCTF constitution. He conveniently forgets to state that the assembled delegates are constitutionally empowered and obligated to make the final decision on all procedures and recommendations. It is the members of the assembly who ultimately decide whether or not to have debate, when to put the question, whether or not to amend, postpone, refer, defeat or pass a recommendation.

We will not be dissuaded by emotional appeals which attempt to

erode the confidence of the membership in the ability of the AGM to make informed and knowledgeable decisions. Nor will we be dissuaded from our support for a woman's right to control her own life by making a choice on the issue of abortion. It has become increasingly apparent that the organized groups who are taking over hospital boards and shutting down medical services are determined to impose their particular point of view on all women by eliminating the right to choose. The BCTF Status of Women Committee, the Executive Committee and the BCTF through the elected delegates to the AGM support the right of choice, and the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code. The BCTF is not alone. We are joined in our position by many organizations including the Vancouver Status of Women, the Psychiatric Association of Canada, the YWCA, the B.C. Federation of Labour, the United Church of Canada and the Canadian Medical Association.

Heather Knapp
Richmond

The role of geographical representatives

The recommendations of the BCTF Executive Committee and subsequent endorsement by the Representative Assembly at the May 28-30 meeting should be a concern to many teachers in B.C. The 1981 Annual General Meeting approved the holding of a referendum of all teachers on the question of strike action. The action plan endorsed also stated that such a referendum should be held prior to November 15. When asked at the RA about the planned date for

holding the referendum, Mr. Kuehn was vague and evasive and indicated he had no intention of meeting the November 15 timeline.

On a survey conducted at the annual general meeting of the Delta Teachers' Association on May 27, teachers stated by a 70 per cent majority that they did not believe that processes for strikes and strike pay should be set up prior to a referendum of the membership. They also indicated by a 76 per cent majority that the Executive Committee should not have access to the reserve fund for strike pay at this time.

In spite of the results of the survey,

two of the three geographical representatives from Delta voted in support of the strike proposals in a roll call vote at the RA. Perhaps I am politically naive, but I have always believed that geographical representatives should reflect the opinions of the local membership — particularly when such opinions have been so clearly expressed.

Is this happening in your local? How are your GRs voting? Are you concerned?

Menno Wiebe
798 Glenwood Place
Delta

Abortion issue was adequately debated

Approximately one-third of the delegates at this year's Annual General Meeting voted against the recommendations on abortion. It was expected that there would be opposition; what was not expected was the subsequent attack on the process of the AGM debate.

Mr. Garneau's statement (*BCTF Newsletter*, May 28) that the decision on Recommendation 36 was made after only two delegates had spoken is misleading in many respects. Recommendation 35 had received lengthy debate which included discussion on the issue of abortion. Recommendation 36 was closely tied in to the concerns of that debate.

When Recommendation 36 was moved and seconded there was well over half an hour remaining in the meeting. After the opening speech, there ensued a procedural wrangle prompted by those who opposed the recommendation — "filibuster" is the word that springs to my mind. By the time the third speaker was recognized, there were two minutes left in the 1981 AGM. There were frantic motions to call the question as the AGM was almost at an end. Two-thirds of the assembly agreed that the vote should be taken. This is hardly what I would consider "immoral" or "manipulative."

If those who oppose Recommendations 35 and 36 continue to do so openly, that will be politically principled. However, these current attacks made under the guise of moral indignation at process seem to me to be dishonest. The use of parliamentary technicalities to stall and obfuscate debate was employed by those who opposed the recommendations and not, as many would suggest, by the supporters of the motions.

Jane Turner
Chairperson,
Status of Women Committee

Congratulations to Terrace teachers

Congratulations to the Terrace District Teachers' Association. The unprecedented contractual guarantees on personnel practices were obtained through hard work, commitment and unity of purpose that saw all Terrace teachers working together with parents and students. The gains have set a precedent for all other local associations to consider as part of our campaign to achieve full bargaining rights.

On June 3, the Coquitlam Teachers' Association annual general meeting passed this motion: "That the CTA congratulate the Terrace teachers' association for their success in negotiating unprecedented personnel practice clauses into their agreement." Our members were moved by Terrace's commitment and efforts to ensure the contractual guarantee of some fundamental personnel practice rights. Strong action, including work to rule and withdrawal of services, was necessary to persuade the board to take teacher concerns seriously.

Geoff Peters
President,
Coquitlam Teachers' Association
JUNE 11, 1981/3

RA votes to keep local support grants

Ralph Maurer
Editorial Assistant

The Executive Committee's proposal that local support grants be eliminated next year ran into an immovable object in the form of the spring Representative Assembly.

At its May 28-30 meeting, the RA voted to add \$180,000 to the budget to maintain the grants, which help finance local association activities.

The 1980-81 budget provided \$160,000 for local support grants.

The executive's proposal united many geographical representatives more used to voting on the opposite sides of issues. "This cutting out of the grants is much too fast," said Wes Nickel of Penticton. "We should be going about it slower. Perhaps we should attach more strings to these grants." Dave Stigant of West Vancouver pointed to the apparent inconsistency of an executive that emphasizes the importance of local initiative while recommending that grants to locals be eliminated.

Two reasons were put forward for eliminating the local support grants: one, it makes no sense to collect money from locals that they will get back a few months later, and two, the federation's money should be spent on programs specifically aimed at achieving federation objectives.

The addition of \$180,000 for local support grants is the biggest change GRs made to the budget presented to them by the executive for approval. It dwarfed any cuts made, resulting in a planned expenditure next year of \$7.4 million. The executive had recommended a budget with \$7.2 million in expenditures.

A \$60 increase in the membership fee

(set by the Annual General Meeting last April), to \$274 from \$214, makes possible the 16 per cent increase in this year's budget over last year's.

The difference between income (\$7.6 million) and expenditures (\$7.4 million) will go into the federation's reserve fund, which is supposed to be maintained at 25 per cent of the BCTF's gross operating budget but has fallen below that (to about \$1.3 million) as a result of the RA's decision to use \$450,000 from it to pay for the current year's scope of bargaining and pensions activities.

The RA's budget debate also featured unsuccessful attempts to cut the status of women and racism program budgets and the BCTF's contribution to the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Chilliwack GR Edward Fritsch touched off debate on the status of women program by moving that \$25,000 budgeted for the program's fall conference be chopped. He suggested the money could be saved by holding the conference at the same time as the other summer conferences.

When it was suggested by other delegates that such a move would effectively kill the conference, Vancouver's Allan Garneau countered that "if this conference is so critical then let's scrap everything else and have just the conference, and save \$175,000."

Contrasting a 17.5 per cent increase this year in the status of women program's budget with a 48 per cent cut in the rights of children budget, Garneau added: "I just can't believe that (deleting) \$25,000 will destroy (the status of women program). If \$25,000 will destroy this program, just think what a 48 per cent decrease in the

budget of that (rights of children) program will do to it."

Executive member Marion Runcie suggested that Fritsch, Garneau and others who shared their views are not primarily interested in saving money. "Every time it's the same argument," she said. "They're not against the status of women program, they just want to cut enough money out of the program to cripple it."

Later, on a motion to add \$30,000 to the rights of children budget, Fritsch suggested that the money could come from the racism program, "not in a negative way but in a positive one." He said that the racism program's objective was simply one of many rights of children issues that must be addressed.

But that proposed budget cut wasn't adopted.

Mike Hayes of the Gulf Islands proposed that the allocation for the BCTF membership fee in the Canadian Teachers' Federation be cut by \$180,000 (from \$208,600). The money saved would pay for the local support grants.

"We must service our foundation, which is the local association," Hayes said. "The CTF, while having laudable objectives and while being, I suspect, valuable as a federal lobby, doesn't service our membership to the tune of \$225,000."

But after opposing views were put forward by several speakers, including Executive Committee members Pat Brady (next year's CTF president) and Maureen MacDonald (a CTF director), the motion was defeated.



Roger Gosselin of Quesnel debates budget at RA while fellow GRs await turn at microphone.

Shuswap changes need OK

Ralph Sundby
Government Division

Education Minister Brian Smith has told the legislature that he won't approve a new administrative structure for Shuswap school district until he's satisfied that there has been adequate "discussion" and "co-operation" between teachers and trustees.

Earlier, BCTF president Al Blakey had telegraphed Smith expressing concern about a proposal to replace helping positions with administration-oriented positions. Blakey asked Smith to withhold approval until teacher concerns about the reorganization have been resolved.

In response to teacher demands, the Shuswap board held a public meeting on May 21, at which interested parties were invited to put forth their concerns. Twelve presentations were made, including ones from the BCTF, the Shuswap Teachers' Association, administrators, parents, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Indian education co-ordinator. The message was virtually unanimous: people called for district administrators who

would fill an advising, helping role to improve classroom instruction.

The board has shown some signs of responsiveness. It has engaged Bjorn Lieren, a member of the B.C. School Trustees' Association staff, to draft job descriptions for the new positions. Lieren has stated that he will attempt to satisfy the needs articulated by the various parties.

One of the six persons displaced in the Shuswap reorganization has launched an official appeal of her transfer to a teaching position. Marion Gleason, supervisor of elementary instruction, was represented at the required board interview by Mohammed Shamsher of the BCTF's Teacher Personnel Services Division. Gleason has agreed to accept:

- the right of first refusal on any district position the same as or similar to that which she held, should such a position be created within one school year;
- the "red circling" of her full supervisor's salary for two years, and
- an appointment to a principalship.

The STA has decided to recognize the extensive work done by Margaret Robertson, the local president for the last two years. At its annual general meeting the STA presented Robertson with a \$1,000 honorarium and bestowed honorary life membership upon her.

Strike pay provisions approved

The Representative Assembly voted 289-231 at its May 28-30 meeting to go ahead with an Executive Committee recommendation to provide strike pay from the BCTF's reserve fund.

The recommendation was part of a package of bargaining objectives and strategies put to the RA by the executive. By endorsing them, the RA is recommending them to local associations for their consideration in making plans for the fall round of contract talks.

The vote followed 3½ hours of debate in closed session. Many GRs wanted to speak against the motion in the subsequent open session but were prevented from doing so by a motion of the meeting.

"I think it's fundamental that any GR have the opportunity to have a debate in open session so (the different views) can be reported to the membership," said Bill Broadley, a GR from Victoria. Jack Gilmore of the Burnaby Administrators' Association added, "We have a fundamen-

tal question here affecting all of us and we haven't had a chance to speak to it."

The RA passed four recommendations. The first listed a series of specific bargaining objectives and the second recommended a strategy for bargaining; these two passed easily (see the May 14 BCTF Newsletter for details). The third recommendation, which suggested as one of the four major elements of BCTF support to locals "strike pay for local association strike actions authorized by the BCTF executive" and the fourth recommendation, which set up the mechanism enabling this, generated the most debate and led to the close vote.

The strike pay guidelines adopted call for strike pay of \$40 per teacher, kicking in after a teacher has been off the job as a result of an executive-sanctioned strike for more than three days. The money would be drawn from the BCTF's \$1.3 million reserve fund.

"The BCTF has a long-standing policy that teachers have the right to strike to change intolerable learning and working conditions," says BCTF First Vice-president Larry Kuehn. "We have to be prepared to support them, and this measure does that."

Subs' group gets status as 'section'

Ralph Sundby
Government Division

The Provincial Association of Substitute Teachers has been established as a "section" of the BCTF. At a recent meeting, the Executive Committee granted PAST official status to pursue economic

and working conditions objectives.

PAST had previously been refused status as a Provincial Specialist Association because its primary objectives were not consistent with the professional development orientation required of PSAs.

In granting PAST "section" status under by-law 5.6, the executive placed certain conditions on the substitute teacher group. Voluntary active membership in the BCTF is a condition of membership in the substitute organization and objectives must be pursued through appropriate fed-

eration channels. The initial constitution and any future changes must be submitted to the BCTF executive for approval.

A direct financial grant of 25 per cent of the voluntary active membership fees paid to the BCTF will be given annually and the fledgling organization can obtain a "modicum" of advice and assistance from the parent body.

PAST president Ken Schadt expresses satisfaction at the executive action. "Improving pay and conditions for substitutes will bring benefits to all teachers and stu-

dents in B.C.," he says.

PAST is completing an analysis of a survey of substitute teaching conditions. When this is done, representations will be made on bargaining objectives to both provincial and local federation committees.

Another project being undertaken is the preparation of a survival kit for substitute teachers. Workshops are also planned which are designed to improve co-ordination between substitutes and staffs in classrooms and schools.