

Campaign against the cuts gathers steam

The campaign against the cuts is gathering momentum as teacher action plans swing into gear.

Letter-writing campaigns, shopping mall blitzes and public information campaigns have been initiated in many districts. Many local associations are working together with parents and non-teaching school board employees to develop a common opposition to the provincial government's budget controls. And all around the province local teacher delegations have been meeting with their school boards and local MLAs to press their demands for adequate funding of education.

The message has been consistent — budget cuts cripple education.

Some headway appears to be being made, at least with trustees, as a growing list of school boards have dug in their heels against the government's unilaterally-imposed budget cuts. The boards to date which have refused to resubmit new, chopped budgets to Victoria include: Vancouver, Coquitlam, Burnaby, Richmond, North Vancouver, Surrey, Langley, New Westminster, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Comox, Vernon and Shuswap.

Here are some highlights of local association actions:

• **Vancouver:** A mass meeting of teachers and parents was held to air concerns, with parents from nearly all 115 schools voicing their views. The school board later voted unanimously to advise the minister not to alter their budget until the controls program is backed by legislation. A major public information campaign is planned.

• **Burnaby:** Staff meetings have been held in every school to analyze the impact. A major public information campaign is getting underway which will feature letter-writing, public meetings, shopping mall blitz and a media campaign.

• **Surrey:** Lobby of MLAs and contact with other groups to establish a common base of opposition.

• **Chilliwack:** Local MLA contacted and pamphlet distribution, mall blitz, letter-writing and advertising campaigns underway.

• **Sunshine Coast:** Staff visitation and large public rally planned.

• **West Vancouver:** Blitz of shopping malls in the community.

• **Prince George:** Working on a joint campaign with the board.

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Future gloomy for ratepayers with new formula

George North
Bargaining Division

The new education finance formula is not simple. Provincial grant calculation is based on an equalization index and grant units. So now we have EIs and GUs instead of instructional units and a Basic Education Program. Moreover, and this is a major negative feature, the whole system is based on residential taxpayers picking up as much as 55 mills this year to pay their share of the new formula. What the future holds is even more ominous — as budgets climb to keep pace with inflation, so will homeowner taxes, reviving the pressures that helped bring about the change in funding.

While taxpayers will be looking at the
See "This year" page 2



Referendum Technical Committee members (left to right) Paddy Boyle, Dan Blake and Gordon Eddy do a final check on the ballots.

Referendum result:

Majority of members oppose pressing for strike action

The referendum answer is "no".

The majority of B.C.'s teachers do not want to push for legislative change giving them a choice between arbitration and strike action as means of settling contract disputes.

By the March 12 deadline, 58 per cent of teachers who cast mail ballots had voted "no" to the referendum, compared to 41 per cent who voted "yes".

The referendum asked members this question:

"The 1981 Annual General Meeting has recommended that the BCTF seek a change in the law which would enable a local association to choose either arbitration or strike action to resolve a contract dispute that cannot be settled by negotiation.

"Do you agree with this recommendation? YES _____ NO _____"

A total of 33,841 ballots were mailed to members, beginning February 10. By the

end of the voting period, 22,702 ballots (67.08 per cent) had been returned. The numbers voting "no" totalled 13,300 (58.64 per cent), the "yes" votes totalled 9,348 (41.22 per cent) and there were 32 spoiled ballots (.14 per cent).

President Larry Kuehn said the executive would review the referendum result at its March 27 meeting and would likely make some recommendations to the Annual General Meeting.

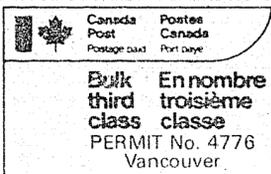
He foresaw two possible recommendations: 1) that the BCTF seek no change in the present legislation which recognizes bargaining only for salaries and bonuses with compulsory arbitration as the ultimate resolution mechanism, and that locals continue to bargain other matters outside the law; 2) that the federation seek a change in the legislation which would provide for bargaining within the law of all terms and conditions of employment with compulsory arbitration at the end of the

process for all items.

Kuehn pointed out that both the imposition of the provincial government's controls program and the new education finance formula have implications for teachers' contract bargaining. "Regardless of the result of the referendum," he said, "it would have been necessary to look at the wisdom of changing the bargaining system under these conditions because there won't even be free collective bargaining until 1985 if the new law comes in."

He said that he did not interpret the "no" vote on the referendum as an expression of members' desires not to negotiate improvements in working and learning conditions. It's clear from the imposition of the controls program, he noted, that those items set down in contract are better protected than those which are not.

"I believe there will still be pressure for improvements in the conditions under which teachers work," said Kuehn.



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

"This year is bad — next year will be worse"

From page 1

bottom line (how much they will be paying this year) the new system, in spite of assurances to the contrary by Minister of Education Brian Smith, will centralize funding and lead to tight control over program and staffing levels. This is indicated by the arbitrary features of the plan:

- The amount of money available for provincial government sharing will be set annually by cabinet.
- The maximum level of 130 per cent of the provincial average per pupil residential assessment to determine Equalization index value is subject to change. (A district with 130 per cent or more gets zero as an equalization index.)

Here is the formula in a nutshell:

1. The government will pick up an average of approximately 75 per cent of operating costs ranging from a base of 60 per cent in a given district to 95 per cent as a possible maximum.

2. At least 5 per cent will be at the expense of local residential taxpayers.

3. The other 35 per cent will be divided according to a formula that provides for a so-called equalization index (based on local assessment per pupil in relation to the provincial average per pupil).

Grant units are then allocated on the basis of the equalization index times the number of full-time equivalent pupils. Any balance, including local share of capital and debt servicing plus all the non-operating costs, is picked up by local residents.

The formula is too complex to describe here but as already indicated, its calculation is based on the amount of money cabinet allocates and the figure used to calculate the equalization index. It is now 1.3 but could be lowered. The result is reflected in mill rates ranging from 2.81 in Merritt to 55 mills in six districts: Lillooet, Central Coast, Queen Charlotte, Fort Nelson, Stikine and Nisgha. Had these rates not been capped (much as the

old system did for such districts as Nisgha where the ministry picked up 97 per cent of the total budget) the mill rates would have ranged from 25 (Fort Nelson) to 562 (Stikine) over the rates quoted.

While provincial homeowner taxes will rise by estimates ranging from 13 per cent (ministry) to 32 per cent (BCSTA), some district residential taxes will decline substantially. Main beneficiaries, with the cut in brackets, will be West Vancouver (\$489), Delta (\$134), Gulf Islands (\$122), Cranbrook (\$50), Vancouver (\$45), Prince Rupert (\$27), Smithers (\$26), Terrace (\$15), Maple Ridge (\$14) with lesser amounts for Armstrong, Merritt, Langley (\$1), Coquitlam (\$2), Victoria (\$3).

On the other hand, big losers, with increases over the \$100 mark, are Vancouver Island North (\$189), Vancouver Island West (\$165), Lillooet (\$156), Lake Cowichan (\$142), Nisgha (\$136), Fort Nelson (\$127), Central Coast (\$127), Agassiz-Harrison (\$126), Stikine (\$122), Queen Charlotte (\$121), North Thompson (\$119), South Cariboo (\$118), Kettle Valley (\$115), Kitimat (\$111), Howe Sound (\$109), Kimberley (\$108), Cowichan (\$103). Under the old education finance system, Vancouver Island North would have paid \$67, Lillooet \$55 and Vancouver Island West only \$34, a substantial difference.

What does the future hold under the new system?

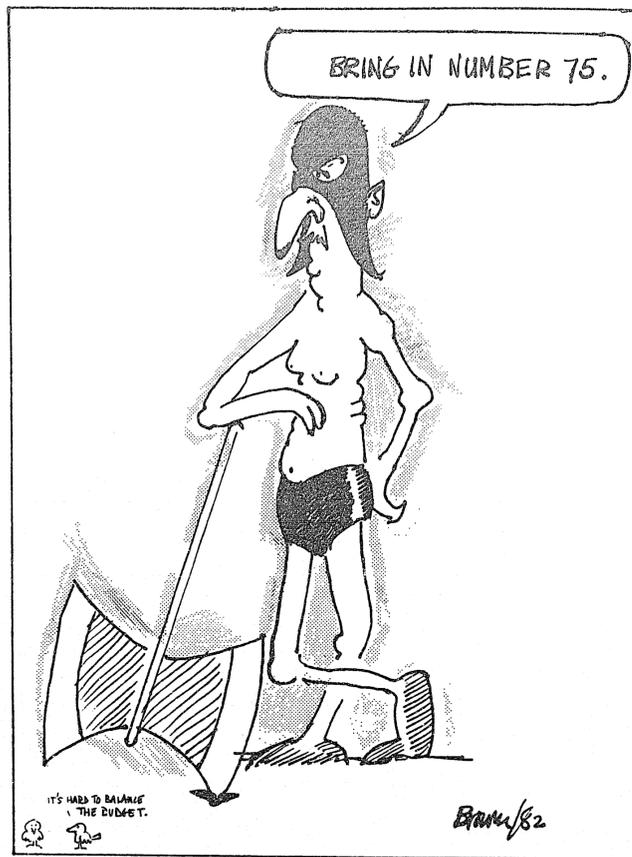
Minister of Education Brian Smith said there would be a definition of how the education finance formula will work after the restraint program ends. This will be discussed with the BCSTA and BCTF, he said, claiming there was no intention to interfere with the role of trustees or to have central collective bargaining.

Smith announced that he expected the legislation to be enacted early in April through an Interim Education Finance Act and that a new draft School Act and mandate statement would be filed as a white paper for public debate before their introduction as legislation. He reiterated his earlier statement that the government would be adding \$75 million in "new money" this year and \$175 million next year in addition to basic inflation "lifts." But this "new money" appears to be a result of taking over the lucrative non-residential tax base.

The B.C. School Trustees' Association has challenged several key ministry statements and refuted them with documentation. The BCSTA points:

1. The burden on residential taxpayers will increase by 32 per cent.
2. Assuming a 12 per cent lift in grants from general revenue, the provincial share of school costs will actually be 36 per cent, taking into account the shift of the industrial-commercial tax from local to provincial.
3. Equalization will be an arbitrary government decision — it is no longer built into the formula.
4. Local autonomy is seriously eroded. Since the government has arbitrary control over the local share of the shared 35 per cent of the budget, the tax room (autonomy range) is controlled by the government.
5. The 1982 and 1983 budgets must be revealed before it can be determined whether there is really an increase of \$75 million in "new money" this year and \$175 million next. BCSTA claims that the provincial share will still be only 36 per cent with inflation and new money.
6. Step 1 in the formula provides the provincial control mechanism. It establishes the "total amount of provincial money available for distribution in the 35 per cent shared portion."

In summary, the new system is highly suspect, provides central control and will lead to worsening conditions in public school education. This year is bad — next year will be worse.



Farmworkers ESL Crusade aims at dignity and justice

Linda Shuto
Professional Development

The BCTF Executive Committee has recommended to the 1982 AGM that the BCTF contribute \$1 per member toward financing of the "Farmworkers ESL Crusade". Now, you may ask yourself, what do we have to do with farmworkers and what is an "ESL Crusade"?

These particular farmworkers are members of the Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU). CFU is one of B.C.'s newest unions, founded in April 1980. The union is tackling an area of organizing which has the shameful reputation of being the last bastion of an exploited workforce — the agricultural industry.

Many of you have memories of picking berries, fruit or perhaps tobacco. Over the years, conditions have not changed and in some situations they have worsened. In the Fraser Valley, seasonal workers are faced with long back-breaking hours of work, exposure to inclement weather, cabins ranging from horse barns to chicken coops, no provisions for child care (four children drowned in 1980), and pesticide poisoning. All this for a job to support families. All this for less than \$3.65 per hour. All this being justified because it is mainly immigrant people harvesting our food. All these conditions exist because there has been no union of farmworkers until 1980.

In B.C., the majority of farmworkers are East Indian, Chinese and Quebecois

origin. The CFU is committed to English language training as the first step in addressing the exploitation and racism experienced by its members.

The "Crusade" is an exciting concept. The project design is one modeled in part on the Cuban and Nicaraguan literacy programs. It will be concentrated in south Vancouver and will involve the CFU members from the East Indian community.

The program, designed to take place in people's homes will involve many school-aged children in assisting their parents and other family members to learn English.

The success of this program will also enhance relations between parents and the school system. CFU is requesting assistance from BCTF members to not only support the project financially but also lend expertise in the development of materials and, to participate in the "Crusade". It is an innovative, creative challenge in our own backyard. Let's rise to meet it and contribute to the farmworkers struggle for dignity and justice.

An award winning film "A Time to Rise" is available to local associations through the Canadian Farmworkers Union. The CFU will also provide speakers to accompany the 40 minute film in the lower mainland and to discuss the ESL Crusade. For information contact the CFU at: 430-6055.

BCTF Newsletter
CLIVE COCKING
Editor

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
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Letters to the editor must be signed by and bear the address of the writer. The Newsletter may edit letters for brevity, clarity, legality or taste. Letters to the editor and signed articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF. Unsigned articles are the responsibility of the editor.

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BCTF joins education coalition to oppose gov't controls program

The BCTF has joined with students and employees in public education institutions throughout B.C. in a new coalition to fight the provincial government's budget and wage controls.

The federation has joined with five other organizations, representing a total of 142,000 members, to form the Defend Education Services Coalition (DESC). In addition to the BCTF, the coalition includes: The Association of University and College Employees (AUCE), the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the College/Institute Educators' Association (CIEA) and the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union (VMREU).

Representatives of the coalition met at the federation office on March 22 to plan a

campaign to block enactment of the controls.

"We are deeply concerned that the policies of the provincial government will permanently damage our education system," said Lid Strand of AUCE. "All of our bargaining units have already lost positions due to layoffs and attrition. These stringent new controls will accelerate the process, forcing universities and colleges to sacrifice entire programs, which would mean substantial reduction of support staff."

Gordon Moore of the Canadian Federation of Students said Education Minister Brian Smith and Universities Minister Pat McGeer have used "centralized control along with four years of under-funding of operating budgets to quietly change the face of post-secondary education in B.C."

Editorial board opposes Newsletter publication of RA roll-call votes

The BCTF Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board has decided not to request the editor to publish in the Newsletter complete district-by-district results of roll-call votes held at representative assemblies.

The editorial advisory board was responding to the February 6 Representative Assembly which had adopted a resolution submitted by the Richmond Teachers' Association calling on the board to "consider that motions and district-by-district results of all roll-call votes held at representative assemblies be published in the Newsletter."

The board has instead requested the editor, when reporting on roll-call votes, to include information on where and how members may obtain copies of representative assembly minutes which include detailed reports of roll-call votes.

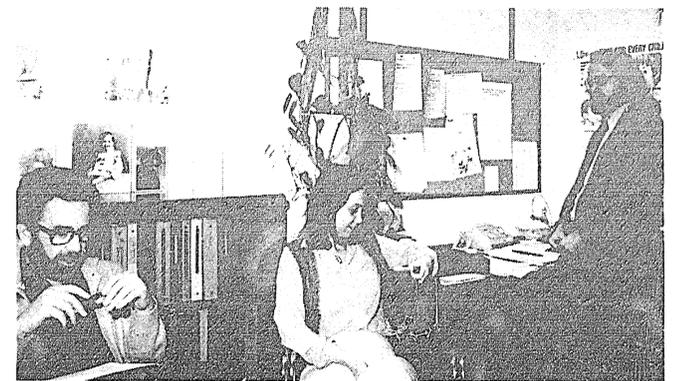
Three teachers win \$1,500 Hilroy awards for innovative ideas

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has announced that three British Columbia teachers have been awarded \$1,500 Hilroy fellowship awards in recognition of their classroom innovation.

Gary Poole received the award for a model for student-initiated research in the social sciences. Sandra Tully and Joan Harper both received the award for primary library activities.

The CTF National Advisory Council granted 21 Hilroy Fellowship awards to teachers across Canada this year. The aim of the program is to reward the enterprise of teachers.

The Hilroy Fellowship Program started with a personal desire of the late Roy C. Hill to make a contribution to Canadian education.



Participating in a telephone conference call breaking the news of the referendum result to the executive are (left to right) Past President Al Blakey, Referendum Technical Committee spokesperson Paddy Boyle and President Larry Kuehn.

Teacher salaries do not lead, but follow gains in B.C.'s No. 1 industry

Ken Smith
Economic Welfare

British Columbia's number one industry, forestry, is claimed to produce 50 cents of every dollar in the provincial economy. Add to that the value of the mineral, fishing and tourist industries and the bulk of our economic production is covered. Since the well-being of these major industries is determined by the well-being of our secondary sectors, which includes the public service sector, it follows then that the primary industries should set the pattern in product price levels and in contract settlements.

The basic premise outlined above has guided teacher bargaining for years. The accompanying table indicates that teacher wage rates have not only been following the increases in the forest industry they have in fact slipped behind.

The evidence indicates that teacher and school boards have negotiated in a responsible and restrained manner. There is no need for the unwarranted interference by the B.C. government in

teacher-school board bargaining. If the government needs a club with which to bargain with the hospital and government workers, then the government's bargaining capabilities are in question.

Wage Comparison IWA Journeyman vs. B.C. Teacher — Category 4 — Median (Max.)				
Year	IWA Journeyman ¹ (Rate x 52 weeks x 40 hours)	B.C. Teacher ² (Cat. 4 — Median (Max.)	Teacher as a % of IWA	
1971	\$10275	\$11373	110.7%	
1972	11242	12237	108.9	
1973	12210	13316	109.1	
1974	15610	14760	94.6	
1975	17774	17118	96.3	
1976	19448	18784	96.6	
1977	20831	20191	96.9	
1978	21923	21395	97.6	
1979	24471	23068	94.3	
1980	26801	25299	94.4	
1981	31782	28437	89.5	
1982	35911	33328	92.8	(est.)

Notes: 1. Wage year is June 15 to June 14 of the following year.
2. Wage year is January 1 to December 31 of same year.

Racism: our worst enemy is smugness

Ed May

BCTF Racism Committee

It's the phone again. This time it's not the expected request for a workshop on racism or multicultural strategies in the classroom. The voice is urgent: "We have a complaint from a native Indian father, a member of our union... His is the only native family in this small interior town and the children are being subjected to endless harassment at school. No one seems to care. The father has turned to us. Can you do something?"

It's the phone again. "Hey, just thought you might like to hear what I picked up on the car radio a few minutes ago. The KKK is transferring its headquarters to Vancouver." My mind drifts to those meetings where the theme so often is: "We have no problems here. Really, we don't. Oh, a bit of name calling and stuff like that. But nothing one could call racism."

Perhaps there is some truth to this latter assertion. But we cannot relax our defences. So often in the past we have learned too late that smugness is our worst enemy.

For this reason, the BCTF has presented a brief to the minister of education to join in a co-operative effort in combatting racism and in fostering plural education in our schools. You can help by urging your local school board to join us in pressing for action. A ground swell can't be ignored. We must attack complacency.

Perspective

Tax breaks for upper income members make flat fee unfair

Steve Norman
First Vice-President

The question of whether to have a flat fee or percentage fee will be debated at the upcoming AGM. One argument that has been strongly pressed in the past is that the flat fee provides equity in that all members should pay the same as they all receive the same service. However, this argument is only valid until you fill in your income tax forms. Then you find that a percentage of this fee is underwritten by the progressive taxation system. The net effect is that those with higher incomes pay less net fee than those with lower incomes. The difference is significant enough that the BCTF Executive Committee is recommending the fee be based on actual salary.

There are three alternatives for delegates to consider concerning the recommendations found on page 19 to 21 of the Reports and Resolutions.

Alternative 1 (pass A-6 to A-8). If these motions are passed the AGM will have chosen to collect fees on the percentage of actual salary basis. A-9 and the "B" motions would become unnecessary with this alternative.

Alternative 2 (pass all A and B motions). If these motions are passed then the principle of the actual salary would be adopted and A-9 would permit the new fee collection process to be delayed one year to allow for school district and federation procedures to be put in place, should it not be feasible this year. More details on this option will be available at the AGM.

Alternative 3 (pass only B motions). If these motions are passed then the delegates will have chosen to stay with the present fee system which is a flat fee for all full-time teacher members.

Additional supporting information for the "A" motions. The Executive Committee in recommending the "A" motions requested additional supporting information which had not been prepared early enough for inclusion

in Reports and Resolutions. George Reed, of the BCTF accounting staff, was asked to provide information to show the financial impact of changing the fee from the current flat fee to the actual salary system. His information is summarized in the chart shown.

As a result of testing the four assumptions (shown on the bottom of the chart) against various income levels the following marginal tax rates* were produced:

- 31.1% @ \$20,000 income
- 37.8% @ \$30,000 income
- 43.2% @ \$40,000 income
- 43.2% @ \$50,000 income
- 48.6% @ \$60,000 income

During previous debate on this question at both the RA and AGM some members have made much of the argument that a flat fee is fair because all members can receive the same services so they should pay the same fee. This argument is not nearly so persuasive now that the income tax implications are more obvious. The information on the chart clearly indicates that under the current system of flat fee deductions the teacher who has a higher than average income pays significantly less net fee than a teacher of lower income. The chart also shows that this difference will increase if the flat fee recommendation is approved for 1982-83.

The percentage of net fee column shows that for 1980-81 a \$20,000 salary would pay .95 per cent of salary and a \$60,000 salary would pay .24 per cent of salary. The projections for next year indicate that this difference will increase to 1.11 per cent for the \$20,000 salary and .28 per cent for the \$60,000 salary. Granted these examples are taken from the highest and lowest paid among us, but even when the more typical \$25,000 to \$45,000 range is extrapolated it can be seen that the flat fee system gives a significant break to the higher-salaried teacher. In contrast, the actual salary calculation process produces a more equitable percentage with the \$20,000 salary

being .67 per cent and the \$60,000 salary being .49 per cent.

But even under the actual salary fee system the lower-salaried teacher is still subsidizing the operation of the federation, however not nearly to the extent of the current flat fee situation.

Fee based on actual salary				
Salary	1981-82 Possible Tax Saving	Net Fee Amount	%	
\$20,000	194	60	134	0.67
\$30,000	291	110	181	0.60
\$40,000	388	168	220	0.55
\$50,000	485	210	275	0.55
\$60,000	582	283	299	0.49

Fee based on mean salary				
Fee	%	Tax Saving	Net Fee Amount	%
322	1.61	100	222	1.11
322	1.07	122	200	0.67
322	0.81	139	183	0.46
322	0.64	139	183	0.37
322	0.54	156	166	0.28

Assumptions

1. The member is a single person with no dependents. The effect of two dependent children would slightly lower the tax saving for the \$20,000 salary earner but would not affect the others.
2. The income tax saving has been assumed to be at the taxpayer's marginal rate.
3. The marginal tax rate calculation includes basic Federal Tax, the federal tax reduction of nine per cent and basic British Columbia Income Tax of 44 per cent of the basic Federal Tax.
4. Deductions and tax rates of 1981 have been used throughout. Marginal income tax rate is the rate paid by a taxpayer on his top slice of income. That is to say, it is the highest percentage rate paid on a particular level of income. It has been assumed that a member's tax saving when deducting the BCTF fee from taxable income would be at the marginal rate.

The Newsletter asked representatives of PSAs to assess the damage that would be done to the education system by the provincial government budget controls program. The following are a selection of the answers.

English

It may have been some time since secondary English courses involved only the traditionally narrow study of basic reading and writing, but cuts in educational programs threatened by the recent budget announcement will do a great deal to push the study of language arts in our secondary schools back a generation or two.

Among the student problems which the English teacher in today's classroom is expected to deal with are great ranges in basic skills and ability levels, differing interests and needs, and vastly different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Attempts to deal constructively with these problems and to meet the needs of individual students have resulted in such programs as ESL, developmental and remedial reading, modified or "Minimum Essentials" courses, and Learning Assistance Centres. In many cases, these programs involve individualized instruction or small group work. The effects of severe budget cuts which force boards to increase class sizes and decrease teaching staff are potentially devastating to such programs.

Also threatened are other aspects of secondary English curricula. Speaking and listening can be taught and practised effectively only with great difficulty in a classroom crowded with well over 30 students. The study of literature loses much of its significance when budget restraints restrict the purchase of supplementary materials chosen for students' specific interests and reading skills. Finally, the study of language loses its relevance for students if the growth in class size and the subsequent increase in the teacher's marking load prohibit the desirable application of language study in frequent writing assignments.

Because of budget cuts, students may also lose their power to choose specialized or enriched courses for their needs and interests. Elective courses in English are Writing 11 and Literature 12. Both courses are an experience in studying the humanities which is an important part of what education should offer the young citizens of tomorrow's computerized, technological society. But once again, these courses may draw small classes and will perhaps be wiped out as the pressure to streamline the costly process of education increases.

Surely it should be the goal of our educational system to produce thinking individuals capable of making the intellectual and moral decisions necessary to cope with the world in which they will spend their adult lives. A step back to the kind of education we were able to offer a generation or two ago can only leave our students prepared to live in yesterday's world.

—Berenice Wood

Past President, B.C. English Teachers' Association and Editor of Update

Drama

Drama is a powerful means of educating our students. It attends to speaking, listening and thinking skills; it provides students with essential life skills that will aid them in their studies, their careers and their future lives. Through drama, we educate those with English as a second language, those with special problems and handicaps, those with special gifts and those who are in the so-called regular classroom. Participation in drama programs develops the feelings in addition to the intellect and so produces well-rounded, more eager learners. Drama programs themselves are viable transmitters of our culture, offering students a tool for learning about themselves, others and the world around them.

But here we are in B.C. again appealing to a merciful government that drama education is essential and must be supported both ideologically and economically. Just look at the strong government support for drama in other provinces, particularly Alberta and Ontario. These governments are far ahead of B.C. in acknowledging the value of drama. Many of their programs have been in place and supported for 12 years or more.

But the B.C. government can't even get its own priorities straight. While it nods agreement to the value of drama education, it pulls the economic rug out from under such programs.

Caught in the middle of this political game of School Budget Cutbacks are the children we teach. Their children too. Our future. We do not ignore that economic restraint may be a necessity. But we loathe the fact that the students we teach, whom we care about, will in the long run feel the negative effects of this game; that these students may miss out, from lack of funds, on a part of their education that is not only their right, but their heritage.

—Renee Norman

President, Association of B.C. Drama Educators

BUDGET CUTBACKS: THE IMPACT

Denying opportunity to our youth



Music

Arts programs need careful nurturing by helping teachers, consultants and coordinators. If these supports were weakened or removed programs would also weaken. A 1978 arts and education study done by B.C. Research at the request of the ministry of education showed that the subject in the curriculum requiring most support is music. Teachers feel least secure in teaching it and experience in the field shows that they won't teach it without support. Evidence lies in the fact that there are currently more than 30 helping teachers, consultants and coordinators of music in the province, more than in any other individual specialist subject. If this area is attacked programs will end.

In summary, the two most obvious avenues to cutting budgets in music are to remove specialist teachers and to remove support staff. Either course will mean the end of music programs in British Columbia schools.

—Dayle Piller

Newsletter Editor, B.C. Music Educators' Association

Learning assistance

Rick is not a good student. At 15, he is in Grade nine for the second time. He is not easy to teach. His I.Q. is above average, but he reads at about a Grade six level. In high school he is required to learn more and more independently, but he can't get information quickly enough from his textbooks. Rather than admit his ignorance, he adopted sullen, chippy and sometimes rude behaviour. Until recently, his teachers had learned to leave him alone. Until recently, he was labelled inattentive, lazy, even stupid. Until recently, he wouldn't last another year in school. But not now.

Rick has a learning disability, but because a learning assistance teacher was able to discover his difficulties, he is now receiving an appropriate education. His English teacher has assigned him a novel that he can read; his social studies teacher is preparing an individualized learning package on African history; his P.E. teacher has agreed to orally test his knowledge of sports, games and health; his learning assistance teacher is helping him improve his reading and math skills as well as develop some independent study skills and learning strategies. With persistence and a little luck, Rick may finish high school.

Without the supportive and integrative services provided by the learning assistance teacher and the district resource people who tested, identified and described Rick's learning abilities, he would have become just another drop-out.

Many teachers have had to teach learning disabled students without having the means to assist them. Only recently have teacher training programs included courses on learning disabilities and other special needs students. The vast majority of teachers, while sensitive to the needs of these students, are not trained in identifying and correcting learning disabilities.

The ministry of education has recently adopted a policy of integrating not only learning disabled but also other, more visibly, handicapped students. The evidence is that heterogeneous grouping of special needs students is far better at improving their learning and attitude than is homogeneous grouping. But this integration requires support services. Fortunately, the ministry has also established clear guidelines and funding for learning assistance teachers, at a ratio of one learning assistance teacher to 350 students. As the enormous benefits of having L.A.T.'s become obvious throughout B.C., teachers and administrators are accelerating their demands for increased support services.

One of the primary functions of the supportive personnel in schools and in districts is to inform classroom teachers of, and provide them with, alternate methods and materials appropriate to educating special needs students. This consultative role is just now burgeoning throughout B.C.'s schools. School-based resource teachers are effective not only in assisting a relatively small group of students in need of individualized programs but also as catalysts in changing educational practice in all classes.

Many of these supportive services — learning assistance teachers and district resource teachers — are only recently established. If school boards, as a result of the B.C. government's economic programs, are required to dilute or eliminate the programs these people provide, education for any but the average student in B.C. will be set back significantly. What will the Ricks of this world do on the streets?

—Wayne Wiens

President, Secondary Learning Assistance Teachers' Association

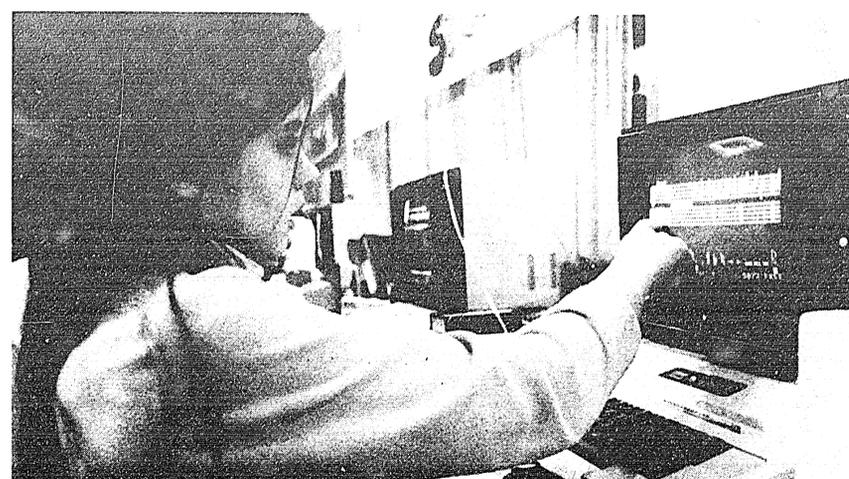
Primary education

School budget cuts in early childhood education will likely mean larger classes and reductions in services and materials. This happens in a period in our history when students and their families have come to need, depend on and expect our personalized instruction and attention. Any decrease in the quality of instruction given and loving care expended may well contribute to increased learning problems and social and emotional difficulties which are likely to multiply and intensify as these youngsters progress through the system.

During this past decade, school populations have greatly changed, thus creating new challenges for teachers and the system. With less time and fewer resources, can we ensure that we will adequately provide for the ESL student, the gifted student, the mainstream student? Children are our future resources and our most valuable investment. Can society afford not to develop each child to the best of his/her ability? Can it afford not to enable and encourage its use to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to become confident, responsible and independent adults?

—M. Shore

B.C. Primary Teachers



Computer education

I contend that the budget cutbacks will have a most dramatic effect on computer education as it is just being born. The province held a pilot study in 1981 and has been planning an extensive provincial computer education program. Other programs that are established may be able to withstand a period of negative or no-growth. But a newborn, such as computer education, may be unable to withstand severe cutbacks at its birth. It is my belief that our province can ill afford to postpone the introduction of a provincial computer education program because when one compares what our province is doing to what the rest of our country and world is doing, one has serious doubts whether our children will be adequately prepared for the world of tomorrow.

—Barry Underwood

President, Computer-Using Educators of B.C.

Library services

Losses in all areas of library service — from organization of materials to cooperative instruction — will occur if budget increases are held to 10 per cent, although the impact will probably not be uniform across the province.

If library budgets are held or cut at the school level the quality of collections will suffer. The current inflation rate for books is 23 per cent. Periodicals have inflation rates between 25 and 40 per cent. More disturbing is the inflation rate for audio-visual software — 47 per cent. These materials have been purchased more and more as teachers have become more aware of the varied modes of learning; cuts will affect the child whose learning is mainly non-verbal.

Where capital budgets suffer, there will be fewer equipment replacements and schools will postpone or cancel the purchase of the newer technology. Microcomputers and microfiche readers will not appear in school libraries. Children, besides being denied the content offered by the software associated with these tools, will not gain experience with the equipment.

Library materials and equipment are important, but the library program is a teaching program and the success of the program within a school depends on the teacher-librarian. Minimum standards for the professional and clerical staffing of school libraries have been published by the ministry of education in their school library handbook, *Sources and Resources*. Similar standards have been approved by the BCTF Learning and Working Conditions Committee. Not all districts have yet attained these standards and proposed budget cuts make their attainment less likely.

It is in the area of professional service that the greatest losses may be felt in the quality of library programs. If teacher-librarians' time allocations are cut due to the loss of clerical assistance, there will be less time to plan and perform the integrated subject area/library skills programs which have become features of school libraries. This kind of program —

whether it is a one-to-one enrichment activity or a unit for a class — requires time for planning and time for implementation. If teacher-librarian time is reduced, the educational system in B.C. will be the poorer.

—Katharine Picha

Newsletter editor, B.C. School Librarians' Association

Business education

As business education teachers, we realize that in times of economic crisis we have perhaps more of a responsibility than ever to equip students for economic survival. Business education is one of the few departments which offer students an opportunity to learn job-related skills. To that end we have instituted these specialized programs:

Career Preparation. After completing preparation courses in secretarial, clerical, marketing, accounting or business management students may go on to advanced placement in a post-secondary institute or directly to work.

Work Experience. Students spend periods to time receiving on-the-job training with various employers, a program that results in many job offers.

Introduction of Data Processing and Word Processing. Many of our schools are offering training in the very expanding field of data and word processing.

If we are to lose any of these programs or they are to be cut back to the point where once again our equipment becomes obsolete, then we will only be adding to the province's economic problems by putting unqualified students on the job market who, instead of finding jobs, will immediately become part of the unemployment statistics.

—B.C. Business Education Teachers' Association

Environmental education

Environmental education programs in B.C. teach many basic "3R" skills in an outdoor setting and also promote environmental awareness, mental and physical health, group cooperation, safety, and effective use of leisure time.

No longer can leisure time be left to chance. It is, and will be, an ever-increasing part of our lives. It seems people have to be educated to use it effectively and wisely. How could a province whose economy depends on forestry, tourism, fishing, and mining consider reducing its outdoor education budget when so many of the programs have returns to the economy, for example, salmonid enhancement projects, winter sports with their consumer impact, and forest and marine studies that provide training and background of career benefit?

—Ruth Foster

Editor, Environmental and Outdoor Education Association

Counselling

In this time of budget cutbacks, the British Columbia School Counsellors' Association is concerned that many counsellor-designed and implemented programs to meet student and community needs may fall by the way. We are concerned that career education programs which enhance self-awareness, decision-making skills and career awareness may suffer. Instructional programs such as CHOICES, work experience and career centres do require funding support. We are concerned that group and peer counselling programs which develop student communication and interpersonal relationship skills, and emotional development, may decline. We are also concerned that areas relevant to educational planning, such as articulation and orientation programs, study skills, attitudes programs and post-secondary information meetings, may deteriorate if underfunded.

Finally, we wish to emphasize our concern that elementary counselling in B.C. continue as the vital service it has become. If a child is denied access to counselling at the elementary level, he or she may later be beyond the capacity of secondary counselling and the resources of the community to deal with — a potentially massive expense indeed.

—P. S. Penneff

B.C. School Counsellors' Association

Physical education

The fitness level of our children decreases from the time we put them behind their school desks. Postural defects and obesity are rapidly increasing among our children, while cardiovascular disease remains a leading cause of death among adults. Physical education can, and is, playing a vital role in improving this situation.

What are the positive programs and changes occurring in physical education in B.C.? Daily physical education is now required and is being implemented. Elementary and secondary curricula are now emphasizing seven activity areas in teaching: team games, individual activities, gymnastics, dance, aquatics, fitness and outdoor pursuits. The secondary curriculum is stressing an individualized approach to teaching. More time is being suggested for secondary students and P.E. will soon be required every week of the year instead of just one semester.

These are needed changes in an educational system that has to date constrained our children during the vulnerable period of active growth and physical development. It would be a shame if budget cutbacks eliminated or reduced these many positive programs. Money spent now in encouraging a healthy active lifestyle is insignificant compared to the cost of treating the results of an inactive lifestyle.

—Al Thomas

Provincial P.E. Teachers' Association executive and editor of Newsletter and Journal

Industrial education

Required funding for industrial education programs has not kept pace with costs in recent years — many of which have increased by a third, if not doubled. A 10-12 per cent ceiling will seriously curtail many excellent programs offered in B.C.'s junior and senior secondary schools.

Prime examples are the career preparation programs which usually require several industrial education teachers to carry out the necessary supervision in a school district. The proposed ceiling will cut back on necessary personnel and make it virtually impossible to offer and supervise adequate programs. Yet these very programs are being pushed by the ministry of education as highly desirable.

To offer proper up-to-date courses expensive equipment is often mandatory. In electronics, for example, industrial education teachers are very, very hard pressed to keep up to date. Practically everything we touch today has some form of electronics in it, but new funds to upgrade such facilities have not been allocated to B.C. schools in the past 10 years. It is only due to local industrial education teachers' initiative that most programs survive.

A 10-12 per cent ceiling on such important programs will present such a shortfall of candidates for careers and vocations that B.C. will be forced into importing skilled technicians. We need to train our own young men and women — not import necessary talent!

—G. Michael Sojko

President, B.C. Industrial Educators' Association

The Newsletter would like to thank all PSA representatives who took time off to draft a reply to the request for information on the impact of controls. The assistance is greatly appreciated. — Ed.

Premier turning school clocks back

Bill Davison
President

Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

One of the most significant aspects of the minister of education's tours of the province during his forums had to be his meetings with the various student groups. I chanced upon one of these encounters at Prince of Wales Secondary School in Vancouver. If I were the minister, that meeting with students would have had a most profound impact on my preconceived notions about the school system of the 1980s.

There certainly were no surprises about the nature of many of the questions asked or attitudes expressed by these students. They were exactly the questions I would have allowed to run rampant in my adolescent cerebral cortex or, more daringly, snickered to my friend sitting next to me in the bleachers 20 years ago.

Twenty years ago, however, the minister of education would not have addressed a student assembly and what is more important, the students of that day would not have displayed such repressed thoughts and feelings to a man who represented the prime authority in a system of which they were servile to lesser authority figures.

What must have been abundantly clear to the minister during those meetings was that the client of the system is indeed a new breed. Authority in the school system has always been challenged but never so openly, never with an absolute honesty which defies not with malice, but with a genuine wish to know.

Mr. Smith should have, therefore, taken with him a feeling of the new client of the system, a client unaccepting of injustice, inequity, or irrational orders. A client who is not afraid to share introspective conclusions with the teacher or to criticize what he or she feels does not measure up to expectations of the instruction being offered in the classroom.

Current criticism leveled against the system falls basically into two categories: "profligate" spending to lower class size and teacher accountability.

Teachers have never in the history of modern mass education been so accountable for what is produced in the classroom setting. The teacher is no longer a mere instrument of a society which accepted the school as an institution designed to determine the life goals of its citizens. The curriculum was one of pre-determination — a screening system which efficiently, if not judiciously, directed its clients to their designated station in the social and economic strata of society. There are

two significant factors to note here. One is the fact that in past economies the social and economic strata were quite flexible and the other is that accountability was indeed a finite measure based upon very clear expectations.

Not included in the process of accountability was the students' evaluation of what he or she was receiving in the classroom. The claim on the part of the student was



The system is (or was) becoming humanized

that he or she be treated in essentially the same manner as every other student. The obligation, therefore, on the part of the teacher was to ensure that this would occur.

There is no suggestion here that teachers in the former system were not dedicated professionals or that they ignored the needs of the individual student. What is suggested is that the demand upon the teacher to reach beyond the curriculum was not as prevalent.

We as teachers are no longer required to respond to a one-dimensional institutional directive. The new mes-

sage is quite clear — attend to the needs of the individual client. Mainstreaming, integration and individualization are the catchwords of the 1980s. No longer are we to categorize children in a manner leading to failure syndromes. No longer does the system place a student who has a "disability" in an institutional setting, removing that child from interacting with his or her peers in a healthy, normal environment. In short, the system is becoming humanized — an admirable trend.

What we are witnessing is a clash between a 19th century concept of education and the 20th century demands upon this system. There is not one curriculum in the classroom but several. We are not expected to "screen" or label our students, but rather to meet the needs of each of them — an incredibly demanding task. The recent influx of students from a non-English-speaking background is certainly a prime factor in this situation. What must be considered is the impact that non-European cultures have upon the system. We are not dealing only with the mechanics of English as a Second Language programming, or the transitional problems which occur beyond that, but also with the delicate situation which arises when a child is trying to cope with the problem of living in two cultures at once.

It does cost money to run such a multi-dimensional institution. But of all the costly institutions of this country, and the police, prison and welfare systems spring immediately to mind, the school system is the only one which is preventive.

The premier's proclamation of February 18 would most certainly indicate that Mr. Smith was not deeply affected by his meeting with the students of this province. Either that or he did not effectively carry the message to his political leader. The premier obviously expects to turn back the clock and in doing so, erase the slight humane direction the teachers of this province have managed to turn the school system in the last decade.

Does he expect that the demands upon the classroom teacher will diminish proportionately? Does he wish to ghettoize those who don't fit into the molds? Does he expect that we will return to a curriculum which serves an economy no longer existent? Is it his wish that we disenfranchise a segment of the student population because economically we can no longer take care of their needs?

I do not think that the premier thinks any of these things will occur. We will simply go along with a few more students in our classrooms. After all, it is 1952.



Formaldehyde gas fumes forced a Rayleigh Elementary School (Kamloops) class to move into the gymnasium. Kamloops News photo.

Formaldehyde gas emissions in portable classrooms raising health concerns

Wes Knapp
Learning Conditions

A few school districts are continuing to wrestle with the problem of formaldehyde gas emissions. The most serious problems have been reported in Kamloops, Richmond, Langley, Vancouver Island North and Cranbrook. It is the same gas that, found leaking from foam insulation, has driven numerous homeowners from their homes, creating a nation-wide controversy.

Parents, students and teachers in Kamloops have been struggling with the problem for several months. Twenty-four Grade five and six students at Rayleigh Elementary School were moved from a portable classroom to temporary quarters on January 12, 1982. Earlier 17 kindergarten children were transferred to the main building after some showed signs of illness. The decision to move the students was made following meetings with parents who maintained that formaldehyde gas levels in the portables were hazardous

to the students' health. The symptoms included red eyes, running noses, headaches, sinus problems, stomach aches, swollen glands, nausea and vomiting. Chemical tests revealed that the formaldehyde gas is emitting from adhesives in the walls, ceiling and floor.

The Kamloops School Board has undertaken an ammonia treatment process in the portables in an attempt to lower the emission level. However, ammonia leaves an odor in the classroom and is considered to be a temporary measure at best. Re-testing of the classrooms is taking place this month to see if there is any change in the formaldehyde gas levels. The testing is being done by Can-Test Ltd., a Vancouver firm.

A number of portables are also being tested regularly in Richmond after formaldehyde levels forced closure of several classrooms. Richmond returned five portable classrooms to the supplier, Atco Ltd., after tests revealed excessive levels of gas emission. Portables supplied by

Britco have replaced the Atco classrooms. The medical health officer in Richmond has established a safe level of .001 ppm (parts per million) for the classrooms affected. To date the Richmond School Board has spent \$69,000 testing classrooms for formaldehyde emissions and expects to recover \$50,000 of this from the ministry of education.

Jim Doyle of the ministry's facilities division indicates that the ministry is very concerned about the problem and is willing to share the treatment and testing costs. He reports that the ministry is optimistic that the ammonia treatment process will "prove itself" in the next few months in Richmond. "One of the major problems", he said, "is that we don't know exactly where the emissions are coming from. Tests conducted to date indicate a certain amount comes from particle boards, vinyl covered materials, furniture and carpeting. Consequently, it is possible to minimize the amount of formaldehyde emissions by selectively choosing the lowest level building materials."

An article in the May 2, 1980 issue of *Medical News* indicates that between four per cent and eight per cent of the population could become sensitized to formaldehyde and experience increasingly severe and prolonged reactions to diminishing levels of the substance. Still another concern, according to the article, is that some persons may experience chronic respiratory tract problems or possibly even cancer.

In view of the severity of the issue, the BCTF is developing guidelines for teachers to follow in reporting the problem. Teachers will be seeking support from their school boards in acting swiftly to remove children and teachers from classrooms affected by the emissions. The deep concern shown already by parents in a number of school districts indicates that they will not tolerate any delay in actions to eliminate the problem. The medical health officers in school districts also must be brought into action to close the classrooms and to insist that a high standard of health and safety characterizes all classrooms. The formaldehyde issue is an extremely important one as it has serious implications for the health and safety of children and teachers. We will have to move forcefully to ensure that no one's life is jeopardized.

BCTF reorganization shuffles personnel and responsibilities

The creation of a new BCTF bargaining division has resulted in major reassignment of responsibilities and personnel at the federation office.

The work previously performed by the economic welfare and learning conditions divisions will now be carried out by the new bargaining division, with the exception of income security responsibilities which will be undertaken by government division personnel.

Bargaining and professional development field service arrangements will be parallel. A bargaining committee will be established by the BCTF Executive Committee on March 27; its field service support system will be consistent with that of the professional development advisory committee. Significant improvements in services to the field, and in communication is anticipated.

The following are the administrative staff assignments to divisions for 1982-83:

Bargaining. Al Cornes, Jurd Kirby, Mavis Lowry, Mike Midzain, George North, Ken Smith and David Yorke.

Professional Development. John Church, Nancy Flodin, Peggy Hall, Dale Kelly, Ed May and Mike Zlotnik.

Teacher Personnel Services. Des Gray, Mohammed Shamsheer and Ralph Sundby.

Government. Ken Aitchison, Jim Bowman, Jim Cairnie, John Hardy, Tom Hutchison, Arnie Myers and Bruce Watson.

Finance and Administrative Services. Derek Holden.

Management. Bob Buzza and Art Broomhall.

Wes Knapp will be assigned to either bargaining or PD divisions.

Federation staff positions in professional development and bargaining divisions will be advertised in April. PD positions are available through the expiry of term appointments or contracts.

To fully appreciate the internal changes, members are advised to refer to the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, pages 74-76.

Letters

Teachers Viewpoint attacked for trying to make BCTF a union

By chance I received a copy whose identity was not denied by a member within our local, of the minutes of a meeting of a group of teachers called "Teachers' Viewpoint". The more I read of it, the more surprised and angry I became.

David Chudnovsky, a member of the steering committee for "Teachers' Viewpoint", writes in an article "The New Viewpoint" that "... among the members of Viewpoint are supporters and members of the NDP, people who distribute and defend the newspaper *Leftwords*, members and supporters of 'In Struggle', people who are associated with Trotskyist groups and others who are 'independent' or see themselves essentially and simply as trade unionists".

Judging from this statement we have here among the members of Viewpoint quite a number of will-o'-the-wisps of the left. Looking at the minutes of the meeting of "Teachers' Viewpoint" one wonders where such people as Geoff Peters, Al Blakey and one named Kuehn (no initials given — could this be the president of the BCTF?) fit into this coterie of the left that tries to usurp my professional organization.

6/MARCH 25, 1982

Let's not kid ourselves that we are seeing here just an ad hoc committee of teachers, this is a rival organization of teachers with their own mailing address (Teachers' Viewpoint, 4971-55B Street, Delta, B.C.), their own officers, fees, publication, meetings and especially their own goals!

What are the to me, upsetting aims of this covey of "progressives"? Two particularly upsetting aims are:

a) the transformation of my professional organization into a "union" with all that implies and

b) the usurpation of my professional organization and the potential misuse of my dues for the 'political and social issues of the day'.

Among the illogical "progressive" mumbo-jumbo of their aims, as stated in their minutes, one discovers that they want greater professional decision-making power in regard to curriculum on the one hand and at the same time they want a "union"...

Should these "activists" ever succeed in the usurpation of my professional organization into a "union" they will in effect have succeeded in destroying the BCTF.

Moles do surface — sometimes involuntarily — as they did as "Wafflers" in the NDP: most of the time they are given the desired boot. If these "activists", these would-be politicians want to be politically active let them play in the playpens of the

registered political parties of their choice but *not usurp my professional organization*. This BCTF is neither training ground for political party operatives nor home for members of "Teachers' Viewpoint!"

Siegfried Puetz
Cape Horn School
Coquitlam

Socials teachers still seek larger role in curriculum revision

... As for Ms. Cristofoli's protestations (*Newsletter* January 7, 1982) that there was teacher involvement in the social studies revision process, one can give an agreeable shrug. Yes, there were all sorts of strange animals known as reaction panels, consulting groups, etc. running amuck through the province gobbling up "input". Yet for all that effort and energy expended what was the result of the management committee's deliberations? A curriculum in April 1980 which despite several drafts, many social studies teachers could only look at and "gag." Even the ministry's own November 1980 figures showed that only a little more than one-third of the social studies teachers found that April effort acceptable.

... Was the management committee suitably chastened? Did they significantly change, alter, etc. the proposed draft to

meet the other concerns of social studies teachers? No, instead they buff up their efforts and send it off to the publishers in October 1980. Furthermore, in April 1981 that same committee recommended that even the limited reaction process then in place be shut down with such a supine reason as "a reaction process would revive a controversy which is dying down."

Her comment that the long standing allegation that "there is no practising social studies teacher on the management committee" was incorrect I am sure will draw long lusty cheers from those in the trenches. However, the following explanation will make clear for many how such an "allegation" came forth. The allegation is not hard to accept when one hears it over and over (and by people much closer to the committee than this writer). What is one to say when it is heard at a provincial social studies conference in the presence of no less than the minister of education (with no correction). Furthermore, the veracity of such an allegation could have only been strengthened when it was similarly reported in that prestigious journal *History and Social Science Teacher*, summer 1980, page 262, with the additional comment by one of Ms. Cristofoli's own committee colleagues that "she did not see how a person could teach a class and be an effective member of the Management Team too; there was simply too much to do."

Letters

Unfortunately, Ms. Cristofoli's comments on "practising social studies teacher" only muddles the issue. One is left as a result having to use a very large verbal sledge hammer to drive home a very small professional tack. Many social studies teachers sought (and still seek) a management committee composed of social studies teachers — full time, continuing professionals who are acknowledged by their colleagues for their expertise, experience and commitment to the subject; individuals who have contributed to the P.S.A., C.A.S.S. and other similar professional organizations; organized into a committee which would represent a cross section of that professional community.

As for her wish to be invited to the Representative Assembly that only leaves this writer somewhat bemused. I am not familiar with the protocols of the Representative Assembly but I have lately had thrust upon me the fact that members of the management committee have apparently been "reluctant", themselves, to be involved in public gatherings dealing with social studies.

Members of the committee were invited to the Fraser Valley East fall conference on the revision. Over 90 teachers attended but no committee members appeared. At the Teaching of Geography Conference held at SFU on October 30 there was a hasty address by the curriculum consultant and some brief explanatory com-

ments by one committee member. Given these two lamentable examples the Representative Assembly surely might be forgiven in assuming that the management committee was not really all that interested in participating in the assembly's deliberations.

George Major
Chilliwack Jr. Secondary

Time to end unfair burden of BCTF fees

It is time to stop claiming that the current BCTF fee structure is fair because it provides equal benefits to all members for an equal fee.

The actual cost of the BCTF fee is not equal for all members. The actual cost to a particular member is the amount by which his/her "take-home pay" is reduced as a result of paying the fee. If we carefully examine the impact of income tax savings which result from paying the BCTF fee we can compare the actual cost of the fee for various members. For the following examples I have assumed that each member has the same tax deductions (totalling \$5,000) and I have used the current 1981-82 fee and the 1981 tax rates:

Gross Salary	BCTF Fee	Tax Saving	Actual Cost
\$55,000	\$274	\$142	\$132
40,000	274	126	148
25,000	274	95	179

Is this what we claim to be an equal fee for all members?

As a member at the top end of the salary scale, I support a graduated fee which would require me to pay my fair share to the BCTF. We must no longer require the lowest paid members to subsidize the highest paid members.

To claim that each member derives equal benefits from the BCTF is similarly illogical. The most significant benefits, including salary increases, pensions, sick leave and professional development release time, are all factors of the member's salary. These benefits, in dollar value, are not equal. These benefits are significantly greater for members with larger salaries.

It is time to face the facts — we do not levy an equal fee for all members and we do not provide equal benefits for all members. We must no longer impose the greatest cost on the members who receive the smallest benefits.

Les Phillips
Port Moody Sr. Secondary

Substituting not same as full-time teaching

With regard to Maxine Boag's article, "Substitutes deserve no deal" (*Newsletter*, February 15, 1982), there are many assumptions and comments that do not seem entirely valid to me.

While a few large schools could possibly employ "permanent subs", who would get to know the students and routines, most

substitute teaching is, by definition, insecure, unpredictable, and piecemeal. It cannot usually be scheduled in advance. A person who cannot accept that reality should possibly try some other work.

Without knowing about all the "disgraceful" personnel practices, I find it hard to argue against the right of a school board to not employ a sub whom they find unacceptable.

Yes, a sub working every day of the year would make less than half the average tenured teacher's annual salary, but the average tenured teacher probably has many more years of experience than all but a few substitutes.

I am presently doing some substitute teaching to support myself while on a year's leave of absence from my own classroom and I also did a lot of substituting many years ago. As a substitute, I am not expected to do the same quantity or quality of preparation or marking, I do not write report cards or meet with the parents, I do not sit on school committees, and I do not design programs for any "exceptional" children (whom the regular classroom teachers now encounter more often).

I am not saying that substitute teaching is a breeze, but it is not the same job as teaching full-time. It's a cliché, but still valid: "Let's not compare apples with oranges."

W. Stephen Lebel
(On leave)
South Sa-hali Elementary
Kamloops

MARCH 25, 1982/7.

Bill Allester winds up 43 years service to teachers and education

Bill Allester, one of the "rocks" on which the B.C. Teachers' Federation has been built, is retiring this spring after four decades of service to public education and the federation.

In June he leaves his position as director of Teacher Personnel Services, capping a career that has seen him serve as teacher, principal, BCTF president and a stalwart member of federation staff for more than 25 years.

It was in 1938-39 that Bill Allester received his first preparation as a teacher, attending the old Provincial Normal School in Victoria. On completion of the course, he went on to teach for two years at Chemainus Elementary School.

Former BCTF assistant general secretary Stan Evans, then principal of Brechin School near Nanaimo and later to work with Allester at the federation office, has favourable recollections of Allester from that time.

"He was always an innovator," said Evans. "I remember at that time he and Archie Mercer, from the Lantzville school, organized a travelling music appreciation library to serve island schools."

Allester left his first school to serve four years with the RCAF during the war. Following this he completed a B.A. at the University of B.C., then served 11 years as

principal of elementary and secondary schools in Duncan and Cobble Hill.

Throughout his teaching career he was active in local association and federation affairs and he served as president of the BCTF in 1953-54. Four years later he joined the staff, where his initial responsibilities were for curriculum, in-service and salary matters. Later he organized Provincial Specialist Associations, worked on public relations, teacher education and personnel problems and played a key role in developing the BCTF's brief on the Chant royal commission on education.

Charlie Ovans, BCTF general secretary during that time, recalls Allester as a dedicated staff member who was always steady as a rock. "Any time there was a crisis or an upheaval in the organization, Bill was there as a steadying, calming influence," said Ovans. "He was always calm, rational and full of good sense."

Bill Allester was the federation's first director of the Professional Development Division from 1965-74, but he also worked on major federation initiatives such as the BCTF Commission on Education in 1967-68 and the campaign against a wage freeze in 1972. In 1974 he took on responsibility for political action and teacher personnel services.



Bill Allester . . . noted for his steadying influence and his stirring baritone.

"I've never seen Bill lose his temper," said Stan Evans. "People could meet with him easily and I suppose that was part of his success in dealing with personnel matters."

In retirement, Bill will be spending more time with his wife, Joy, his three children and two grandchildren, and with his mother and three brothers on Vancouver Island. "I also want to do some reading and some writing," he says, "and some volunteer organization work."

Although he's expressed a willingness to "pinch-hit" when needed, Bill Allester will be missed in the BCTF office where he has become well-known to many members for providing sound, knowledgeable and sympathetic guidance to members embroiled in difficulties with their employers or in their professional relationships. He will also be missed at federation social gatherings where he is famous for his stirring baritone rendition of all the many verses of "On Ilkley Moor Baht' At", a souvenir of his air force days in Yorkshire.

Time to take policy action against sexual harassment

Norma Mercer
Status of Women Committee

The topic of sexual harassment is dealt with more and more in publications and is a subject of both drama presentations and documentaries on television. Earlier this year, the Human Rights Commission of British Columbia held hearings on a document that was being prepared on human rights. Sexual harassment was a topic that was being carefully studied, and on which the commissioners were seeking public input.

Recently, the B.C. Government Employees Union negotiated a clause in their collective agreement which protects employees from sexual harassment. Their definition of sexual harassment is "persistent sexual solicitation or an advance made by a person of authority who knows

or ought to know it is unwelcome; or a reprisal by someone in authority after a sexual advance is rejected." Attached to this is a grievance procedure employees can follow if they feel they are objects of sexual harassment.

This year, the BCTF Executive Committee is putting forth to the AGM recommendations on sexual harassment. The recommendations have arisen from the work done by the Status of Women Committee and, later, TPAC and a representative from the Rights of Children Committee. The recommendation is based on the premise that all people, at all levels, should be able to work in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. This includes students, teachers, para-professional and support staff and administrators.

The statistics available are not good. A B.C. Federation of Labour study, for example, indicates that around 70 per cent of women workers have at one time or another experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace. One result of this is increased stress for women who are afraid of reprisal or of the need to continue to work in an environment that may become even more strained. Another is the frustration of feeling powerless when being harassed by a person in a position of authority. Teaching jobs, especially in large urban areas, are not easy to get and one may feel powerless to deal with a problem that might result in the loss of a job.

The number of employee groups now negotiating contract clauses indicate that sexual harassment is indeed a growing problem. This fact alone demonstrates the need to have policy statements so that all employees and students are protected from sexual harassment in the educational workplace.

Another factor which points to the need for policy is that sexual harassment has for too long been a hidden problem, treated as a joke or blamed on the victim. Because of a long history of silence on the subject, many women (the overwhelming majority of victims are female) feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or ashamed when they talk about personal incidents of harassment. They are afraid that it will reflect badly on their characters, or that they will be seen as somehow inviting the propositions. We have to believe that a policy on sexual harassment will give strength to people who are being harassed to enable them to speak out and seek help to correct negative situations.

We all need to be more aware of the problem of sexual harassment. We can learn to be more sensitive to people's needs to be treated as individuals rather than as groups or as stereotyped people who are programmed to accept certain unwelcome behaviours.

As educators, we need to look at our treatment of others and be sure that our actions are not causing our colleagues to feel uncomfortable. It is not only administrators who might be harassing teachers; teachers may be harassing other teachers, or even more difficult to understand, teachers may be harassing pupils. There is a strong need to support Recommendation 36.

Vacancies

Committee Vacancies

The following BCTF committees have vacancies. Unless otherwise indicated, terms are for three years effective July 1. Application deadline is May 15 and the Executive Committee will make appointments in June. For more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

B.C. Teacher Editorial Board (1 vacancy); **BCTF Newsletter Editorial Board** (3); **Ombudsperson** (vacancy is for the Peace River South region, to be elected by the June RA to serve a five-year term); **Rights of Children** (1); **Education Finance** (3); **Finance** (1); **Income Security** (1); **Investigation** (3); **Judicial** (3 to be elected by the June RA. Applicants must be approved by a secret ballot of a local association general meeting or a local association delegate assembly); **Labor Liaison** (3); **Pensions** (3); **Policies and Procedures** (4 vacancies for Lower Mainland, 2 for corresponding members); **Professional Relations Advisors** (6); **Racism** (3); **Status for Women** (4); **Teacher Education** (2); **Teacher Personnel Advisory** (2).

Please note that members of the Executive Committee, Investigation Committee, Judicial Committee, Federation Appeals Board and RA are excluded from membership on the Committee of Ombudspersons. No member may serve on more than one of the BCTF Executive Committee, Judicial Committee or Investigation Committee at one time.

PD Co-ordinators

Professional Development co-ordinators are sought for the following zones: West Kootenay, East Kootenay, Peace River and Metro. Application deadline is May 15.

Action days backed on abortion rights

The BCTF Executive Committee has given its endorsement to the province-wide days of action on abortion rights planned for the weekend of Mother's Day, May 8-9.

The days of action are being jointly organized by the British Columbia Federation of Women and the Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion.

It's up to
YOU
to get on the voter's list

By now you should have been enumerated for the new B.C. provincial voter's list.

If an enumerator did not visit you, contact your local constituency office.

If you were out and a registration card was left — don't forget to mail it in.

Don't assume that because you were on the last voter's list that you will be on this time — the old list is being ignored.

Remember you will have no vote unless you're properly registered on the new voter's list.

And there's nothing automatic about it: the onus is on you.