

# Terrace report hits School Act

Ralph Sundby  
Government Division

Major surgery to the School Act and a change in the senior district administration were key recommendations of the Terrace Schools Review Board in its 54-page report released November 12.

William Neilson of the University of Victoria chaired the review board which included Dr. Hannah Polowy, University of B.C. child study centre director and Dr. Louis Checov, a Vancouver management consultant.

The report labelled the School Act, "an inadequate and sometimes counter-pro-

ductive legislative framework for the public school system."

In suggesting major legislative changes, the reviewers supported the recently established personnel practices contract between teachers and the Terrace School Board.

"It is common ground, for example, that the act does not provide an appropriate basis for several important features of the Personnel Practices Contract entered into by the parties establishing this review board last June," said the report. "In terms of facilitating and regulating relationships between teachers,

administrators and school-boards around the province, the governing legislation is in need of major surgery."

Advocating an administrative reorganization and a systematic scrutiny of the work of administrators, the review panel appears to pave the way for replacement of the incumbent superintendent and secretary-treasurer, a change requested by parents and teachers. It was suggested that the school district eliminate "dual management" and adopt the chief executive officer concept in the superintendency. This would increase the responsibilities of the superintendent and subor-

dinate the role of the secretary-treasurer.

"It will be necessary therefore to mount a recruitment search to find the most qualified and suitable person for this important post," stated the report of the CEO position. The incumbent superintendent could be invited to apply "at the discretion of the board."

A similar process was suggested for filling the newly defined secretary-treasurer's position.

Extensive changes in the operation of the district were also recommended:

- trustees should re-establish themselves as the policy-makers utilizing an

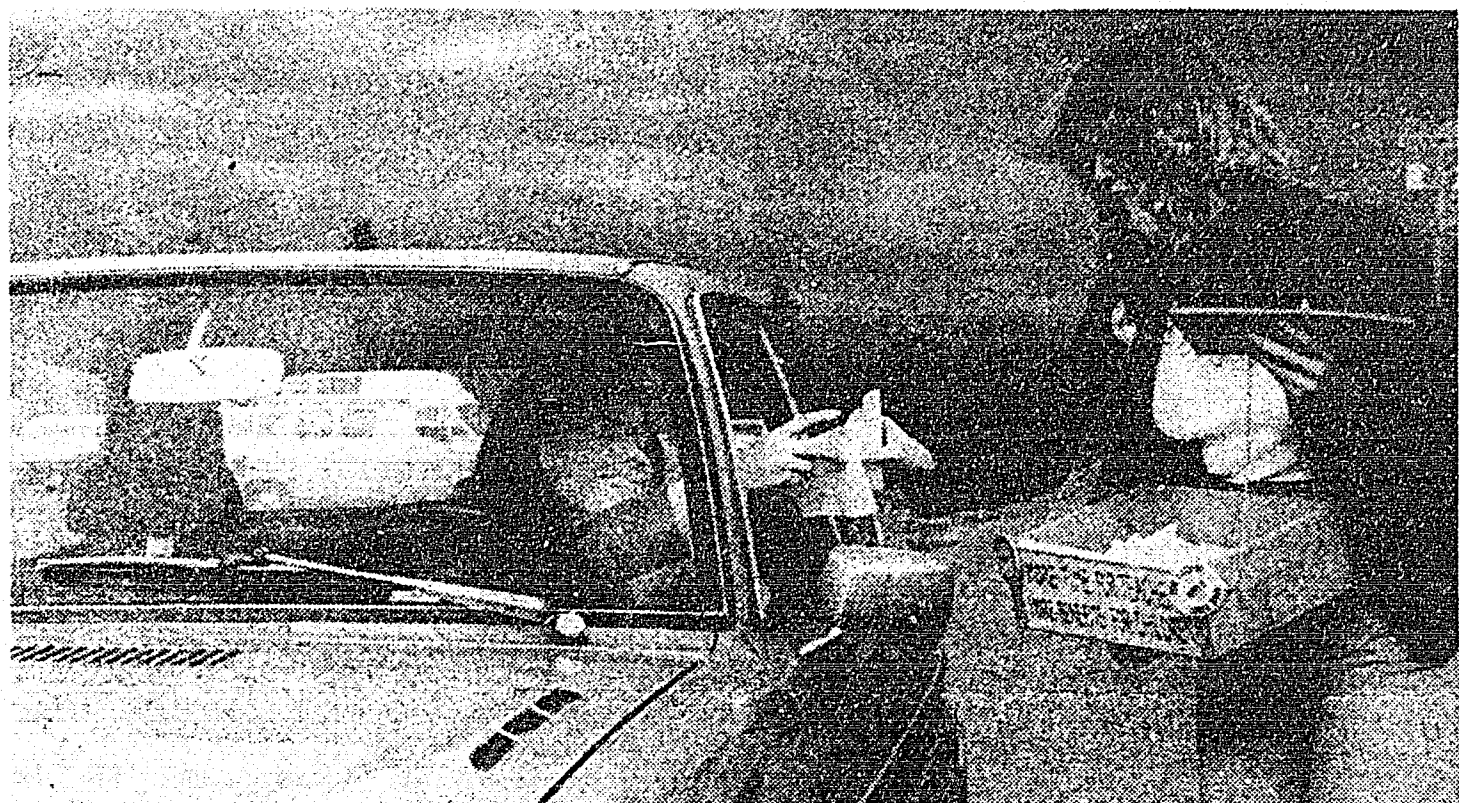
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## BCTF Newsletter

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Langley executive member Karen Lafavour collects cards from teachers detailing extra hours worked, as part of her local's job action prior to settlement. / Peter Owens photo

### BCTF fed up with ministry committee selection process

Teachers continue to be fed up with the Ministry of Education having dominant control over who speaks for teachers on curriculum and assessment committees.

But at the fall Representative Assembly they decided that they would not walk out of such committees in protest over the profession's lack of major involvement in the selection process of teacher representatives.

Not yet, anyway.

Representatives postponed taking action on a recommendation for withdrawal of participation until the winter RA and instructed the Executive Committee to bring forward a plan then for effective teacher involvement in curriculum committees.

### President Kuehn says:

## Bargaining results vindicate campaign

The flexing of muscle by B.C.'s teachers has paid off handsomely in this year's bargaining results, says BCTF President Larry Kuehn.

The most important gain, he says, is that it has proved the basic principle behind the expanded scope of bargaining campaign.

"We have successfully established the principle that we can negotiate working and learning conditions," said Kuehn.

He pointed out that while many school boards initially were resistant, holding to the BCSTA line that they should only "consult" with teachers on non-salary matters, most of them ultimately swung around to negotiate improvements in personnel practices and in working and learning conditions. And they have done so primarily through contracts.

"There have been twenty-five settlements that include either one contract, a second contract or policy tied to contract, and there are thirteen that have a letter of intent to develop policy or a consultation process included," said Kuehn. "So it's basically two-to-one of contract over consultation. And in some districts the recognition by the board of the need to consult is an improvement for teachers over what has existed."

Kuehn made the remarks in reviewing the results of this year's bargaining, fol-

lowing the expiry of negotiations on November 16.

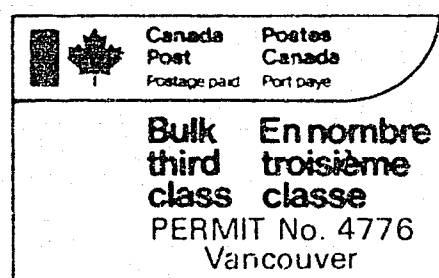
On that deadline, 48 negotiated agreements had been achieved among the 63 local teachers' associations that were bargaining this year. This has left only 15 disputes that are to go to arbitration.

"That's a relatively small number of arbitrations," said Kuehn, "especially in view of the fact that we were trying a new approach to bargaining this year, and one that the Ministry of Education and the B.C. School Trustees Association did their best to derail."

He said he believed teachers would not have been so successful this year without the clearly-expressed determination on the part of many local associations to resort to job action where necessary to back up demands. Several locals did take job action prior to the end of negotiations and, at press time, teachers in Grand Forks, Hope and Trail were employing a work-to-rule strategy.

"This is really the first year that teachers have negotiated in any kind of traditional bargaining sense, where there has been the implicit threat that if in fact there wasn't movement teachers would take some kind of action," said Kuehn. "And obviously lurking in the background in the minds of many boards was

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



Burnaby teacher Len Traboulay holds sway as chairperson during the fall Representative Assembly, held November 6-7 at Delta's River Inn in Richmond.

### Representative Assembly:

## Social Studies rewrite panned as "unteachable"

Slamming it as "appalling", "shoddy" and "almost unteachable", teachers at the fall Representative Assembly strongly rejected the Ministry of Education's proposed new social studies curriculum.

After a lively debate in which teachers bitterly complained of being left out, the RA called for revision of the social studies curriculum to begin again with a new development process in which teachers would be heavily involved.

At the same time, the assembly agreed that, as an interim measure, the existing curriculum should remain in effect with revised materials.

Chilliwack junior secondary teacher George Major, a member of a teachers' ad hoc committee who had written a serious critique of the proposed curriculum, told the meeting that the ministry's consultant had advised against involving committees of teachers in the revision because such groups' views tend to "represent traditional or conventional wisdom rather than those based on sound research."

He said the ministry had apparently accepted the consultant's view in establishing its curriculum management committee since "there is no practising social

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# Ministry saying "to heck with BCTF"

In introducing the recommendation on non-participation, President Larry Kuehn said that it stemmed from frustration in failing to get the Ministry of Education to accept the condition laid down by the May 1981 RA: that the ministry use the BCTF as the sole means of obtaining its nominations of federation members to curriculum committees.

He said that the ministry had insisted that it would continue to accept nominations from the BCTF and to get nominations of BCTF members from school superintendents also.

As a result, Kuehn said the executive felt impelled to recommend that federation members no longer serve on ministry committees and that, as part of this policy, the BCTF should set up a new structure through which its members could develop curriculum proposals independently of the ministry.

Speaking in favour of teachers refusing

## Bid to change wording of referendum rejected

The wording of the bargaining referendum members will vote on in February will remain as it has been publicized, the fall Representative Assembly decided.

Representatives turned back proposals to change the wording, seeing them as offering no improvement on the present question.

Most of the discussion at the RA centred on an amendment proposed by Richmond teacher, Amrit Manak. He urged that the question be changed to read: "Are you in favour of adding the option of strike action as a means of resolving contract disputes?"

He suggested that the ballot as currently worded is a "non-question" that will not lead to a clear answer from the membership.

"If we get a 'yes' response, fine, everything is clear, but if we get a 'no' response, is it clear?" Manak said. "I would contend that a 'no' response would lead to indecision as to what it means. A 'no' response could mean that people wish to have strike only but not arbitration; or a 'no' response could mean that we do not want strike, that we want arbitration. And at the end we're going to be left where we are now, with division still within the BCTF."

## Terrace strike big influence

the Terrace strike of last year. The reality is that the reason negotiations went so smoothly was that that was there in people's minds."

He said that teachers had achieved a provincial average salary increase of 17 percent. The increases ranged from 20.62 percent in Prince Rupert to a low of 15.25 percent in Fernie.

On working and learning conditions, Kuehn said 19 local associations have negotiated improvements in noon-hour supervision, 18 in preparatory time or hours of instruction, 10 in personnel practices, while six have new sick-leave provisions and 20 have grievance procedures written into their contracts. Most also have negotiated improvements in leaves.

One result of the year's bargaining, he said, is that there is now quite a disparity in working conditions for teachers around the province.

"Some teachers have made significant gains in bargaining this year; other teachers have made no gains at all in terms of their working conditions," said Kuehn. "So I suspect that we will see a push in future to achieve parity in terms of the working conditions of teachers around the province."

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ing to serve on ministry committees, Frances Worledge, a Vancouver elementary teacher, described the ministry's insistence on the dual nomination method as "a neat backdoor way of denying the existence of the professional organization ... They're saying to heck with the BCTF!"

On the opposite side of the issue, Doug Smart, second vice-president, said he had voted against the non-participation recommendation at the October executive meeting because he felt it was not a satisfactory way of dealing with the problem.

"I think this recommendation is saying to our members that we don't want you to be involved in curriculum development under the present conditions," he said, "and we're not suggesting, other than a pilot project which we haven't seen yet, how we propose that teachers will be involved in curriculum development."

Victoria teacher Bill Broadley pointed

Noting that he had served on the executive sub-committee which has recommended the current referendum wording, Second Vice-President Doug Smart pointed out that the wording was based on three principles and that Manak's proposal would not comply with these.

He said the principles were that: the question needed to reach a decision — there could be no three-part questions; it had to be consistent with the 1981 AGM recommendation; and it had to emphasize locals having a choice.

Paddy Boyle, West Vancouver, argued that Manak's proposal contradicts the AGM motion and should be defeated on that basis.

"The recommendation of the AGM is very clear that the choice mechanism is the one that should be pushed," she said. "I feel that if we do not recognize that decision, we are in fact overriding the decision of the AGM and that as a body

## Critic found course goals "shoddy"

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studies teacher on it even at this point." Vancouver elementary teacher Frances Worledge, another member of the ad hoc committee, said that the present K-12 social studies curriculum is better than the rewritten version.

"The draft is inarticulate, it can't be defended academically, it's confining in terms of teacher process," she said. "We've got to turn it down."

She said the draft curriculum makes inappropriate demands on children and fails to give sufficient recognition to the multicultural nature of Canadian society. "This is an appalling document," Worledge declared. "You may bring it in if you wish but I tell you now, I won't teach it and neither will anybody else because it's basically, in the elementary years, almost unteachable."

During the debate some secondary teachers, however, were much less vehemently opposed to the ministry's revised curriculum, maintaining that at the secondary level the new version, while not ideal, was adequate.

out that he had voted in favour of withdrawing from committees at the spring RA but was now under strong direction from his local to vote against such a motion. Victoria teachers had expressed to him some serious concerns about the BCTF being the sole nominator of federation members to ministry committees.

"They don't trust the organization to select the most competent persons in the curriculum area," he said. "The other concern is that they do not believe that the people sitting at the executive table have as good knowledge of the professional expertise of people in the various curriculum areas [as they need]."

Executive member Marion Runcie countered that if teachers are going to have a say in curriculum matters then they must have the right to choose who represents the profession on curriculum committees.

"I don't think the minister of education has the right to say that somebody that he thinks will agree with his personal viewpoint is going to represent the teachers of British Columbia," she said. "The fact of the matter is that if he picks the people we don't have a say."



Paddy Boyle, West Vancouver, speaks to referendum wording motion. Edgar photo

we should be impeached for doing such a thing."

Also speaking in opposition, executive member Elsie McMurphy said the Manak motion fails to stress the option of choice available to locals.

"I think that's the key question," she said. "It's not whether or not you want to go to arbitration, or whether or not you want strike. The question is: do you want the choice? And this doesn't ask that."

One secondary teacher said that most of his colleagues feel that "this is a significant improvement and that we should continue with it. We should seek more input, modifications, but we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater." But Chilliwack teacher Ed Fritsch said teachers in his area were so strongly opposed that they had directed him to support a move to start the revision process all over.

Chilliwack teachers, he said, had engaged John Patton, a former official of the Canada Studies Foundation and currently head of social studies at Sir John A. Macdonald High School in Ottawa, to examine the draft curriculum.

"He found the goals shoddy, dubious and general," said Fritsch. "He found the proposed curriculum lacking in time sequence. He found the curriculum compartmentalized into little cupboards which would start from nowhere and go nowhere ... But his strongest criticism was that this curriculum was strong on content but lacking in attitudes and values."

First Vice-President Steve Norman pointed out that the RA would put the executive in "a very strange spot" if it now rejected a proposal it had endorsed last May and that the assembly must find a way of dealing with the issue without defeating the motion. Defeat, he said, would put all federation members at the whim of the ministry's control of committee appointments.

"We will have the ministry going forward with the same dual nomination role, we will have the same problem of co-optation, the same problem of members speaking for the federation and against the federation," Norman said. "Federation members should represent the federation and the members at large."

The RA will deal with the issue again at its January meeting.

## Report justifies teachers' actions

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extensive consultative process in doing so;

- trustees should undertake professional development programs to improve their functioning and especially their communication;
- purchase and distribution of equipment should be decentralized and streamlined;
- concrete steps including funding should be taken to foster operation and involvement of parent committees;
- selection, training and evaluation of administrators should be improved;
- more authority and responsibility should be transferred from district level to school level;
- teachers and parents should be involved in selecting school and district administrators;
- teacher skills in relating to the community should be developed.

Terrace teachers' president Glenn Grieve expressed satisfaction with the review board's report.

"Teachers' and parents' actions have been vindicated," said Grieve. "The extensive recommendations show that substantial changes are needed."

Grieve indicated that the TDTA would offer its full co-operation and assistance to the school board in implementing the report.

## Ona Mae Roy memorial fund

A scholarship fund has been established by the B.C. Home and School Federation to honour the memory of former president Ona Mae Roy.

Those of us who were privileged to work with Ona Mae knew her as a great champion of teachers. Despite her affliction, she continued to work incessantly to improve education for students through cooperation between parents and teachers. She is missed.

Contributions to the memorial fund should be sent to the B.C. Home and School Federation, No. 4, 774 Columbia Street, New Westminster, B.C. V3M 1B5.

## RA elections

The RA elected the following to BCTF positions:

- **RA Agenda Committee** — Barb Parrott (Langley);
- **RA Triennial Review Committee** — John Chen-Wing (Terrace);
- **Ombudservice** — Howard Robens (Vancouver Secondary);
- **Federation Appeals Board** — Janet Doubt (Kamloops), Logan Morrison (Grand Forks), Robert Wilson (Victoria), Ivan Johnson (Burnaby), Sam Lim (Saanich), Dale Townsend (Shuswap), Leslie Lennox (Burnaby), Roy Davidson (Lake Cowichan), all for three-year terms; Rick Joyce (Kamloops), one-year term;
- **AGM Nominating Chairperson** — Kitty O'Callaghan (VESTA).

# Monty Python author of consumer ed?

The Ministry of Education's implementation plan for the new consumer education program "must have been written by Monty Python," says BCTF President Larry Kuehn.

Kuehn made the remark in his address to the Representative Assembly while speaking of teachers' needs to bargain conditions of employment.

He pointed out that teachers seem to have broken through their own psychological barrier and have "decided that it is legitimate to ask for improvements which affect teachers as human beings, rather than thinking that it is only legitimate to ask for things which could directly improve conditions for students."

Another factor which is influencing teachers' move to expanded scope bargaining, he noted, is the fact that the demands on teachers and the hours that they work have been increasing while the trend in the rest of society is toward shorter hours and more manageable jobs.

But Kuehn particularly homed in on centralized direction in curriculum matters, delivering a scathing attack on the Ministry of Education for announcing changes that drastically affect the lives of teachers without consideration for how they might be affected, and without the provision of time to properly implement the changes.

The new consumer education program, Kuehn maintained, is a prime example of

unilateral decision-making that will affect the lives of hundreds of teachers.

Kuehn cited these "Pythonesque" elements:

- at least half the consumer education sections will be taught by teachers without training in business education; they will be prepared by viewing Knowledge Network programs or videotapes;
- because of the speed of implementation, only one textbook has been considered and will have to be purchased out of the Credit Allocation Plan;
- no faculty member at any university faculty of education has been involved in discussions with the ministry about teacher education in consumer education;
- and the decision to go ahead with the new program was made without any apparent regard for the logistics of introducing such a compulsory course into the secondary curriculum.

"Bargaining won't change the minister of education or reverse the centralization of decision-making in education in this province," said Kuehn. "Both of these must be addressed in the political arena ... But teachers, through bargaining, can have an impact on those decisions which affect the day-to-day life of the classroom and we must succeed in our current task of creating a new bargaining system."

# Letters

## Upcoming referendum a two-edged sword

I just received the *Newsletter* today and read the article about the upcoming referendum. While I am in favour of negotiating working and learning conditions, and believe they should be in our local contracts, your referendum idea is a double-edged sword.

You recommend, first, arbitration for a contract dispute, which we already have, although it should be extended to cover all working conditions. I would of course vote YES, on that basis. However, you add the words "or strike action" in the same sentence. I do not agree with striking, so I would vote NO, on that basis.

You will have to re-word the referendum or I'm sure it would be easily rejected on the basis of the wording.

Robert A. Bucker  
Penticton

## Strike costs far outweigh benefits

We agree that an open debate on the referendum question, as you suggested, is an excellent idea. We also feel it would be a positive step if people having both pro and con opinions on the subject are allowed to select and place the articles presented in the *BCTF Newsletter*.

However, we have grave reservations about wasting more of our money having forty teachers wandering the province, preaching the Executive Gospel on impasse mechanisms. Surely the *BCTF Newsletter* has done a more than adequate job in the propaganda arena.

Teachers in Nanaimo can look with some cynicism at the democratic process used in the adoption of the referendum motion at the AGM. We had selected our delegates prior to the resolutions being published. On noting the referendum motion when the agenda was published, we overwhelmingly urged our delegates, at a general meeting, to vote and speak against the motion at the AGM. Some of our delegates refused to be guided by the membership and voted contrary to our will. It is to be hoped that we, and other

associations, will be more careful in our selection of delegates in the future.

We believe that the problems inherent in following the strike option course far outweigh the benefits which might be accomplished using it. The possibilities of school closures and pay loss due to lockouts, closedowns, picket lines from other groups, intentionally provoked strikes, and foot-dragging in settlements, should be seriously considered.

To date, the one-sided coverage on the strike option has had a negative and divisive effect. A truly open debate, with balanced coverage on this issue, is long overdue.

Jim Howden	Karin Kaese
Bonny MacDonald	H. Sandison
C. G. Knight	Mabel E. Pearson
Michael Ireland	Mrs. N. McKenzie
Linda J. Wyman	Nancy Oxford
Gerry Boulter	G. F. McCraw
Lorie Owens	Rob Hutchins
Woodbank Elementary School	Nanaimo

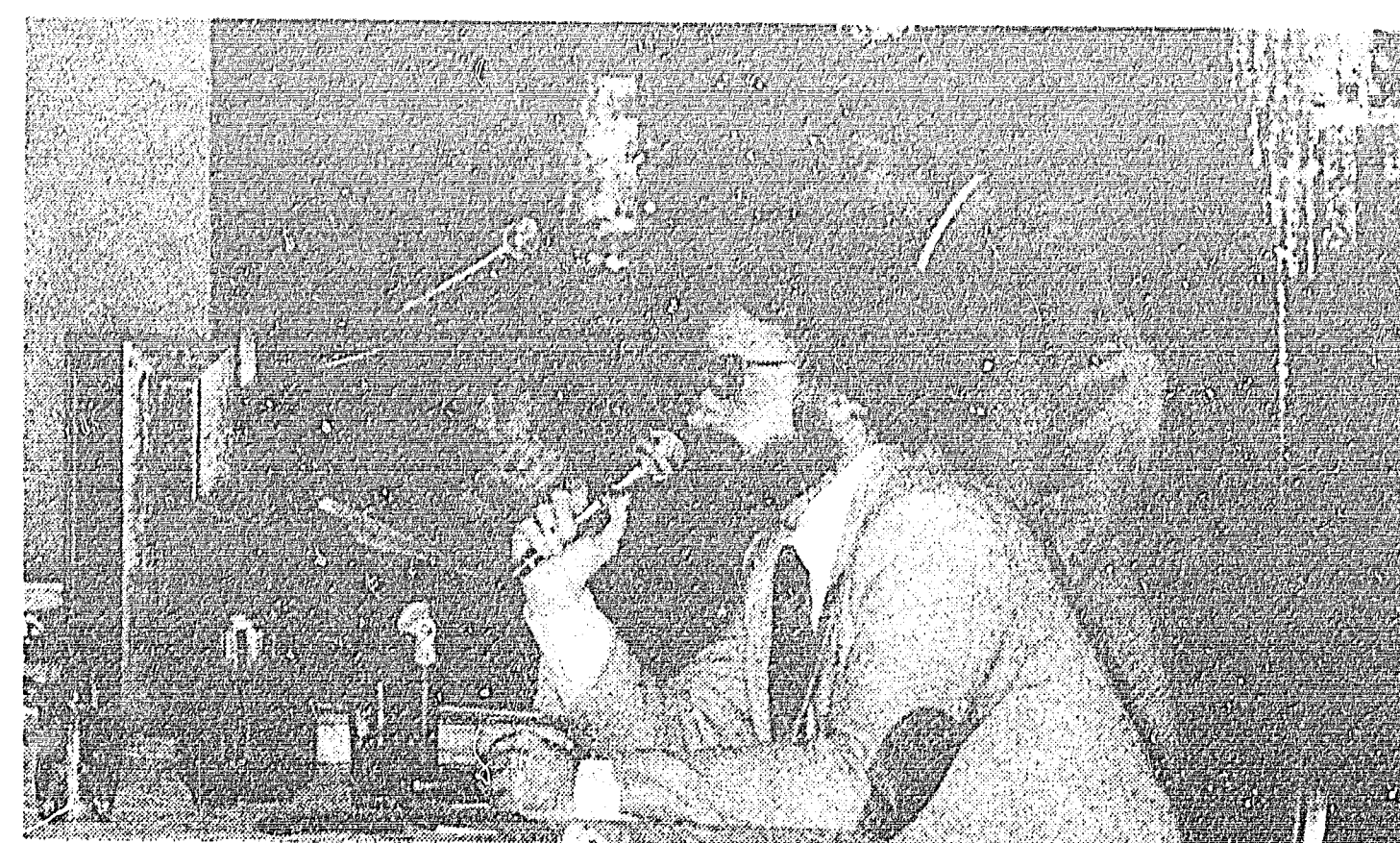
## Use reserve fund to back strike action

The Executive of the Revelstoke Teachers' Association has directed me to inform you of our support for the actions of the Representative Assembly and the BCTF Executive Committee in authorizing the use of the reserve fund to support strike action.

We feel that it is necessary that teachers achieve the right to bargain their working and learning conditions and it is imperative that we support each other. If this means that a local is in a situation in which there is no alternative other than striking, then knowing they have the support of their colleagues will only help that local achieve their objectives.

As a local, we feel no pressure from either the RA or the BCTF Executive to strike, but if the situation warrants it, we will certainly consider it. We do not feel that the BCTF is telling us what to do, as we are members of the BCTF and support the scope of bargaining campaign.

Bill MacFarlane  
President  
Revelstoke Teachers' Association



President Larry Kuehn answers questions from floor during Representative Assembly.

# New in-dispute guidelines

The Representative Assembly has greatly broadened the conditions under which the BCTF may place a school district in dispute.

A new set of guidelines was adopted after the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association asked that its district be placed in dispute because of a personnel problem.

The in-dispute mechanism is provided in policy statement 2.D.02 which allows it to be used only where a board insists on changing a contract without the consent of the local or without an order from an arbitration board.

The new criteria allow the BCTF to place in dispute any district in which:

- the board repudiates any agreement on terms of employment or withdraws any benefit from teachers;
- the board terminates an employment agreement and refuses to negotiate a new one;
- the board refuses to negotiate contract provisions providing due process and fair personnel practices;
- the teachers are taking part in a job action approved by their local and authorized by the BCTF;
- or the board has taken any action that prejudices the rights or tenure of teachers.

The BCTF may also declare in dispute any teaching position made vacant by an unjust dismissal.

## Face strike question

As someone who has taught previously in a district where rational debate with, and fair treatment from, the local school trustees could not be taken for granted, I feel we have to face the question: what is to be done when a school board will not honour due process? Certainly, none of us would wish to strike; but what are we to do when faced with an intolerable situation?

Even in the current situation, when we are debating tactics and strategies, I feel the BCTF must continue to protect and support all of its members.

Wayne Wiens  
Argyle Secondary  
North Vancouver

## Don't be fooled by referendum wording

I urge my fellow teachers to vote NO on the upcoming referendum.

The referendum entices you to approve a choice of either arbitration or strike. Presumably a school board would also have a choice — arbitration or lockout. Which side gets its choice? If a local association chooses arbitration and a school board chooses lockout, then what happens?

How long are you prepared to be out on strike or lockout? Recent labour disputes in the public sector have not been quickly resolved ...

Do you really think the provincial government is going to change legislation to let us have our cake and eat it too? The referendum wording is a clever device to get you to approve arbitration or strike. But what is hoped is that the referendum will be approved, and then arbitration can be put on the back burner while the right to strike is made the focal point of demands for changes in legislation ...

You'll hear pro-referendum types vow that strike action would be a last resort; they'll conjure up visions of striking as almost unthinkable. But don't be fooled. If the right to strike exists, it will eventually be used. And then once both sides dig in, neither side will give up very quickly in

order to save face. And if you think taxpayers will be on our side, think again. These are not the economic times to be thinking that a strike would be over quickly.

We have something unique in labour-management negotiations. A nice set of deadlines that wraps our new contract up by December 31 each year.

Vote NO to the dual trap wording and underlying intent of the referendum.

David E. Waldie  
Victoria

## Patent nonsense that conditions intolerable

To pick a buzz issue involving the right to strike at a time when the economy appears to be crumbling about our heads strikes me as folly. The notion that working conditions have all of a sudden become intolerable is patent nonsense. I have taught many subjects and grades in a variety of schools and almost everywhere things have become better rather than not. We are certainly obliged to provide the best possible education. If the community wants the kind of schooling you get with thirty students in a Grade 12 English class that's their business.

It would be much more sensible to organize an exchange program for B.C. teachers. In the years when economic conditions permitted us to change schools and districts after a job had become humdrum and routine, the challenge of a new position rekindled enthusiasm and dedication in many. Conversely, if a teacher stays with a school for no better reason than an economic one, his frustration will show in his work and he then begins to muse on impasse resolution mechanism, or strike, if he or she still speaks English. Why not divert all the hoopla that goes into organizing the referendum to setting up a workable and attractive exchange plan within B.C. which would provide new challenges at no economic risk. We might never hear about stress and burn-out again.

V. Bassewitz  
Librarian

Mission Senior Secondary School  
NOVEMBER 19/3

## BCTF Newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION  
2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

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

MEMBER: EDPRESS

ISSN 0709-9800

CLIVE COCKING  
Editor



# New letters policy approved for Newsletter

A provision of *Newsletter* policy governing letters to the editor which the editorial advisory board protested was unworkable and unfair has been eliminated by the BCTF Executive Committee.

The policy change, approved by the executive on October 24, removes the previous guideline whereby individuals or groups criticized in letters to the editor were to have their replies printed simultaneously with letters criticizing them whenever possible.

That policy, 38.28.8, stated: "Any member of the BCTF or its staff, or any group within the federation, who or which is criticized in a letter to the editor shall be given ample opportunity to respond. Whenever possible, such critical letters and the responses shall be published simultaneously."

Lawrence Lavender, chairperson of the *Newsletter* editorial advisory board, told the executive, in a statement urging elimination of the simultaneous reply provision, that while the earlier letters policy had been intended to "mitigate the effects of unfair or unwarranted criticism," it had not proven to be effective. It required the editor, he said, to "rely on his own interpretation in implementing it, and some groups and individuals who believed that they had the right to simultaneous response were not offered the opportunity, generally because the editor

failed to realize that certain passages would be considered critical."

Lavender said the editorial advisory board felt that it would be better for the letters policy to put the onus on the reader to respond to criticism after publication than to put the onus on the editor to recognize all possible critical material, identify its targets and to seek out responses.

"The editorial board feels that the existing policy also favours the fulltime table officers, members of the executive, staff members and others with whom the editorial staff has quick and easy communication," said Lavender. "The board feels that the effect of this, although obviously not intended, is unfair in practice."

At the same time, he emphasized that the editorial board believes that any BCTF member, employee, or group who or which feels criticized in the *Newsletter* should have the right to respond and that right should be explicitly stated in policy. The board consequently recommended that the previous policy statement 38.28.8 be deleted and be replaced with a more appropriate statement.

That new statement 38.28.8, which the executive adopted, reads: "Any member of the BCTF or its staff or any group within the federation who or that is criticized in the *BCTF Newsletter* shall have the opportunity to respond."

## BCTF-run disability plan under study

**Jim Cairnie**  
*Economic Welfare*

A report to the Representative Assembly outlined a federation-administered plan for providing long-term disability salary continuance protection for all members.

The report was prepared by the Income Security Committee following a year of study.

"The federation has all the financial and administrative capabilities to operate a plan successfully," said Les Phillips, committee chairperson. "The members must simply decide whether or not they want their organization to operate its own plan."

Most members are now covered by insurance company plans. The report says the federation could operate a plan offering better benefits than most insured plans at less cost.

The proposed plan would apply to all members, although it would allow members aged 64, or with 35 years of pensionable service, to opt out voluntar-

ily. Benefits would be 60 per cent of annual salary and would be non-taxable. They would be increased annually by an indexing factor. The plan would be financed by allocating a portion of the annual federation fee to the plan.

The report was generally favourably received. Members commented upon or questioned Phillips on a number of issues. They wanted assurances that:

- the basic benefit would be adequate — particularly for members in lower salary brackets;
- the level of indexing would be sufficient to combat inflationary erosion of the benefit;
- the definition of disability would be comprehensive and fair to teachers;
- monies would be controlled through a trust fund.

The RA adopted motions providing for a further report on the plan to the February meeting and for distribution of the plan outline to the membership for discussion at the local level.

## Dramatic change in pension investments

**Bruce Watson**  
*Economic Welfare*

Investment practices for the teachers' pension fund have changed dramatically over the past eighteen months: no longer is our money being invested in low yield crown corporation bonds.

In response to federation initiatives the Minister of Finance is now investing to bring maximum returns to the pension plan and not to finance provincial government programs.

As an example, the rate of return from April to October this year for the short-term investments of all contributions was 17.3 per cent while the Inflation Adjustment Account earned 18 per cent. The return on the old long-term investments

in government and crown corporation bonds for the same period was 9.3 per cent. Short-term investments account for 30 percent of the fund with the remainder in long-term investments.

By continuing the current investment practice the percentage in short-term investments will become greater.

In the past the government has been known to shift its investment policies to suit its own financial needs. However, Ministry of Finance officials advised the federation's observer on the Teacher Pension Plan Investment Committee last month that there has been no change, or no indication of a coming change, in its current policy of investing for the maximum benefit of the fund.

## Letters

"Oh dear, what now!"

As a retired teacher I am writing to commend the recently published letter of Frances M. Fagan. She speaks for many of us who were disappointed to see the BCTF supporting the pro-abortion rally. Did you have an all-member vote on this?

I remember with gratitude the part played by BCTF in its early years, how professionally helpful its publications were. However, for some considerable time there has been a change in the character and tone of the organization and it now seems to have become a labour protest movement with never-ending demands.

When the *Newsletter* comes each month, one's reaction is, "Oh dear, what now!" May the day soon come when we shall have wise, reasonable leadership representative of us all, not just a segment.

Kathleen B. Toben  
Victoria

### Discrimination too big for one committee

I would like to respond to Mr. Fulford's letter regarding his suggestion to strike a new committee that would encompass all forms of discrimination including racism and status of women.

I agree that we should do our best to combat all forms of discrimination, but to combine all these in one committee presents a very formidable task. Unfortunately, the Status of Women Committee alone has more to do than it can possibly accomplish in the very near future. Elementary discrimination is an ongoing task. If a Status of Women Committee is to be expected to take on racism and other forms of discrimination, the committee would find itself spread too thinly and would become less effective.

The Status of Women Committee is dealing with issues that are affecting women in our federation and the students we teach daily — sexual harassment, integration, women's studies, non-sexist curricula and women in bargaining to name a few. Many of these issues are very different from those being tackled by the Racism Committee. To lump them together into one committee could quite possibly result in too much bureaucracy and not enough action.

The Status of Women Committee should remain a separate entity for the purpose of dealing with women's issues.

Jean M. Vallance  
Clinton Elementary School  
Clinton

### AGM'81 supported freedom of choice

At the 1981 AGM, I stood in line along with about fifty others, to speak in support of women's right to choose whether and when to have children. It didn't matter that I never reached the microphone, because the debate which took place clearly indicated the right and necessity of such a choice and the motion received substantial support. Since then, this newsletter has included letters of concern from people who feel that the acceptance of Recommendations 35 and 36 unfairly interferes with their personal ideologies.

It is easy to understand why one might be upset if a BCTF policy would attempt such interference. I, too, would find it objectionable to have any particular group dictate their belief system to me. But the motions presented by the Status of Women Committee at the AGM did not make any such attempt. We recognize and uphold the right to personal ideologies, including those who cannot accept any interference with the union of sperm and egg. Conversely, that right must also extend to those women whose moral and religious convictions encompass all forms of birth control. They too must be free to make a personal choice based on conscience.

The freedom to choose can only truly exist when all conditions are equal. It must therefore be possible for all women to have access to full medical attention, and to information and counselling. Support should exist, regardless of the decision that has been made, social agencies must help both the women who choose to complete their pregnancies, and those who feel they cannot. Only when such conditions exist will women be free to fulfill their potential; to be all that they can be for themselves, the children they already have or may have in the future, their partners, and their community.

Ulla Martin  
Co-chairperson  
Status of Women Committee

## Vacancies

### University of Victoria Centre for the Study and Improvement of Teaching\*

A BCTF representative is sought from the South Vancouver Island area to serve on the policy board of the proposed University of Victoria Centre for the Study and Improvement of Teaching.

South Vancouver Island is defined as Greater Victoria, Sooke, Saanich, Cowichan, Lake Cowichan and the Gulf Islands.

Term of office will be for one year. Application deadline is December 18, and selection will be made by the Executive Committee at its January 14-16 meeting. For more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

\* This is a second posting.

### Education Finance Committee

There is a vacancy on the BCTF Education Finance Committee. Applicants should have considerable interest, background and knowledge in the area of education finance. The recent Fleming Report may have an impact on the work of this committee in redefining BCTF policy on education finance.

Term of office is for three years. Application deadline is December 18. For more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

### Certification Advisory Committee

A BCTF representative is sought for a three-year term on the Certification Advisory Committee. This Ministry of Education committee is required to:

- advise the ministry and the Joint Board of Teacher Education on the effectiveness and appropriateness of provincial certification policies;
- ensure that programs leading to certification which have been approved by JBTE have in fact been completed by all candidates for certification and that out-of-province candidates have completed comparable programs;
- advise the ministry on all cases referred to it involving suspensions, cancellation, and awarding of teaching certificates and inform JBTE of cases which may relate to policy issues;
- review and give advice to the ministry of all certification appeals and procedures to be followed.

Application deadline is December 18. For more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

### G. A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustee

The November 1981 RA passed a motion to open applications from all BCTF members as the terms of the G. A. Fergusson Memorial Award trustees expire. One new trustee is sought to serve a three-year term. The five trustees meet each year in March to review nominations for the award and to name the recipient.

Application deadline is December 18. For more information, contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.