

The latest provincial government-ordered school budget cuts are part of a concerted plan to force down teachers' salaries, increase class sizes and destroy the B.C. Teachers' Federation, President Larry Kuehn has warned.

Teachers must take a unified stand and fight the government, he said, or long-term damage will be done to public education and the ability of the BCTF to defend teachers' interests will be destroyed.

Kuehn made the remarks in opening addresses to the Presidents' Conference and to the Bargaining Conference, part of

the federation's summer leadership conferences held at UBC in mid-August.

Describing the crisis as "unequalled since the 1930s", Kuehn said that it is a crisis that not only affects teachers' salaries, working conditions and job security, but also the quality of education. "We face a crisis which threatens the very nature of the public school as an institution in our society," he declared.

Since Premier Bill Bennett first announced the cutback program last February, Kuehn said the government has tried to minimize and hide the real extent of the impact of the cuts.

In that first round, the government decreed that \$28 million be cut from school board budgets for the last quarter of 1982.

The result was the direct loss of 1,000 teaching positions, said Kuehn, as well as serious cutbacks in programs, supplies and school maintenance. But the resulting unemployed teachers more likely totalled 2,000, he suggested, due to the displacement of qualified teachers on temporary appointments by teachers returning from leave and the non-hiring of newly-graduated teachers.

A second round of cuts were ordered

July 30, with the government giving boards notice that they must begin chopping a further \$37.5 million from their budgets starting August 1. Brian Smith, then education minister, held out the choice of teachers taking voluntary salary cuts of 10 percent effective September 1 — or 3,000 teachers would be laid off.

The government then began its cuts, giving boards less money than promised when final budgets were approved last spring — despite a BCSTA legal opinion that the government had no legal authority to make such arbitrary changes in

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BCTF Newsletter

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Victoria's budget decrees may be illegal

Jim Bowman
Government Division

The provincial government's latest financial demands may be illegal.

The Vancouver School Board, supported by a number of other boards, is taking the government to court.

An opinion from the BCSTA's lawyers says in part:

"We have reviewed the provisions of the Education (Interim) Finance Act and the School Act concerning the question you raised and we have come to the following conclusions. We are of the opinion that the Minister of Education does not have the authority under either of those Acts to require now that School Boards make reductions in the expenditures side of their 1982 annual budgets. We are of the further opinion that the Ministers of Education or Finance are not authorized in these circumstances by either of those Acts to reduce the amounts of the grants payable to each

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New Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm (left) and BCTF President Larry Kuehn face news media following two-hour closed-door meeting. The exchange of views was described as frank and amicable but the minister did not back down on his destructive cutbacks. (See story page 4.)

BCTF to fight back

Cutbacks crisis threatens survival of public education

Clive Cocking
Editor

Public education and the teaching profession in B.C. today face a crisis of survival.

It is a crisis of survival of schools and programs, jobs and salaries, learning and working conditions — of hard-won professional and educational advances.

It is a crisis brought on by the new rounds of school budget cuts ordered by the provincial government late this summer.

The new announcements mean that — carried through to the end of 1983 — the cutback program will have chopped \$121 million and possibly 5,000 to (in the worst scenario) 9,000 teachers from the school system since it was first announced by Premier Bill Bennett last February.

Cuts of this magnitude, as President Larry Kuehn told the BCTF Summer Conference in August, can only have a devastating impact on the public school system. "We face a crisis," he declared, "which threatens the very nature of the public school as an institution in our society."

These are the cuts, made or impending:

- A \$28.3 million cut in 1982 school board budgets imposed in March which eliminated 1,000 teaching positions, most held by temporary teachers;

- A further \$37.5 million cut imposed on board budgets effective August 1

through December 31 which could lead to the loss of from 2,000 to (depending on the timing) as many as 8,000 teaching jobs;

- Another \$22.5 million cut ordered for the first quarter of 1983, followed by a further \$33 million later that year which could result in the loss of another 2,000 teachers — even with a projected zero increase in 1983 salaries.

On July 30, when Brian Smith, then education minister, announced the new cuts, he pointedly suggested that teachers voluntarily accept a 10 per cent pay cut in order to stave off massive teacher terminations and disruptions in school programs. His successor, Bill Vander Zalm, and some trustees, have picked up on that theme and have been pushing strongly for teacher salary rollbacks.

But in response, the BCTF Executive Committee has unanimously adopted a tough hold-the-line position, calling on members to refuse to make any contract concessions, to fight terminations and to preserve the right to quality education for all students. The executive made this decision on August 16 following a period of extensive examination of the options and after an extraordinary advisory plenary session of the BCTF Bargaining Conference had almost unanimously recommended this position.

President Larry Kuehn told the Summer

Conference that teachers were not in a situation where "we can buy our way out by agreeing to give up some salary." He pointed out that with the impending 1983 cuts, school boards would not have enough money to pay "a zero percent salary increase" and still employ the current number of teachers. Noting that no guarantees were being offered, Kuehn warned that, "the government intends to force us to make that choice of salary cuts or layoffs for a third time."

The decision to reject any salary rollbacks and to fight the cuts was made as the implications of the government's program became clear. These are the main effects:

- Acceptance of salary rollbacks would mean permanent loss of income. A 10 percent cut in an average teacher salary would (assuming no salary increase in 1983, 5 percent in 1984 and 6 percent thereafter) result in lost income over 10 years of \$71,262.

- Salary rollbacks would mean a permanent loss of pension income. A 60-year-old teacher retiring in 1988 after 30 years' service with average salary history (and the same assumed salary increases as above) will lose \$310 a month in pension income.

- Projected teacher terminations would lead to serious deterioration in the pupil-teacher-ratio and increase in average class

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There is an alternative

Times are tough. British Columbia is in a severe recession. Interest rates remain unacceptably high, consumer spending is down, unemployment is at record levels. Thousands of British Columbians are suffering.

But will the provincial government's response of reducing expenditures on social services help solve this economic crisis?

The government is trying to sell the view that it will. There are other economic views that argue that the government's approach is counter-productive.

The first problem is that the Bennett government has an obsession with budget deficits. Clearly in the long-term excessive government debt is a drain on the economy. But, contrary to this government's view, there is no magic in a fiscal year.

Government revenue and expenditure could well be brought into balance over a two to five-year period — instead of over an artificial fiscal year. Government has a responsibility to smooth out the rough spots in the inevitable swings of the economic cycle. But rather than accepting this responsibility, the actions of this government, as economist David Schreck, general manager of CU&C Health Services Society, told the BCTF Bargaining Seminar, are serving to exaggerate those rough spots. "Government spending," he said, "has increased in good years and has been cut back in bad years."

B.C.'s teachers are being asked to make permanent cuts in the public education system as a solution to a short-term problem.

The second problem is that this government wants the public to believe that reduced government expenditures on social services will lead to economic recovery. Teachers are being asked to take pay cuts or face terminations in order to supposedly save the economy. But that, as David Schreck stated, will not solve a single problem.

"What it's going to do," he said, "is to drive the economy further into depression."

Either of the choices — pay cuts or terminations — will lead to less disposable income. The small businesses in your community will not benefit from further reduction of consumer purchasing power. The government will not benefit from further loss of sales and income tax revenue. The addition of 3,000 unemployed teachers will not stimulate economic recovery.

Would it not help more to put the recent university graduates and unemployed teachers to work to meet some of the needs of the children of this province?

The social costs of not meeting the needs of children are far greater than the \$60 million the government wants to save through its latest school board budget cuts.

There are alternatives to the Bennett government policy.

Education must be viewed as an investment — an investment in children, an investment in the future of our province. It's time the government adopted this policy: it's the wisest for education — and the economy.

Doug Smart
First Vice-President

Decision to fight not made lightly

The federation's decision to fight the government's latest arbitrary budget cutbacks was made only after extensive serious examination of the crisis.

It began in the zone bargaining coordinators conference on August 12-14. The Executive Committee continued the process at its August 16 meeting, drafting some alternate possible responses. Then, in an effort to obtain representative feedback, the executive asked the BCTF Bargaining Conference being held that week at UBC to offer advice on the federation's position.

In a plenary session following a day-long discussion, the nearly 600 local representatives attending the conference were almost unanimous in recommending that the BCTF dig in its heels, rejecting suggestions for a softer approach. The executive unanimously adopted the recommended position.

The decision to fight was based on the realization that the education system is already severely cut-back and there are many unmet needs, that the projected teacher terminations are intolerable, that the terminations would lead to serious deterioration in the pupil-teacher ratio and increases in average class sizes, that any acceptance of salary rollbacks would mean permanent loss of income and pensions — and that there is no end in sight to government budget-slashing.

First Vice-President Doug Smart summed up what seemed to be the clinching argument: "There are no guarantees that if we agreed to concessions now, that we wouldn't be put in the position of having to make further concessions in the future."

This is the position adopted by the Executive Committee:

1. That the primary objectives of the federation in response to the government cutback program should be:
 - (a) no contract concessions;
 - (b) preserve existing PTR and prevent terminations;
 - (c) build and maintain a committed membership;
 - (d) preserve the right to quality education for each student in the public school system.
2. That the federation provincially make clear to the government and the public that no cuts to education in British

Columbia are justified or necessary; that funding at the very least must be restored to the level promised by the government in May; and that the present course of government can only result in short-term chaos and long-term disintegration of the public school system.

"3. That locals be urged to hold informational meetings in the first week of school, to study all aspects of the short-term and long-term consequences of the government controls program.

"4. That locals be advised while the legality of the government's action is in question and the final position at the provincial level is unclear, that they not make any arrangements with their school boards, other than to inform the board that teachers are not prepared to re-open the binding 1982 agreements.

"5. That locals be advised to conduct bargaining for 1983 contracts in as normal a fashion as possible.

"6. That the BCTF recommend to local associations that they not set specific monetary objectives for 1983 negotiations until after the October Representative Assembly."

As part of the firm position, the Executive Committee has also unanimously agreed that BCTF members will play no part in selecting colleagues for termination. The adopted policy is:

"That no BCTF member shall identify individual teachers to receive termination notices under Section 153 (1) of the School Act."

In a memo sent to local presidents, GRs, school administrators, and school district central office staff, President Larry Kuehn warned that members who disregard this policy may be subject to charges by other members that they acted in a manner "harmful or prejudicial" to the BCTF and face consequent judicial proceedings under the federation's constitution and by-laws. The memo was endorsed by the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association.

"Our survival depends on our solidarity," he said. "We cannot have members suggesting that other members' jobs are expendable."

Kuehn also emphasized that the federation will provide backing in any conflicts arising from supporting federation policy.

Average teacher would lose \$71,000 with 10% rollback

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sizes. Assuming the ultimate loss of 5,000 teachers, the PTR would rise from 16.57 to 20 and average class sizes could be expected to grow back to the 1974 levels.

Letter

Thanks — for the help

I would like to express my thanks to the many BCTF members and staff who so generously helped me to be able to attend Building Sub-Committee, Bargaining Seminar, Executive Committee, and Summer Conference meetings August 10 to 21. Without their assistance in driving me to meetings and pushing me around in my wheelchair, I would not have been able to participate in these important annual events.

I now have a heightened awareness of two things — the kindness of people, and the need for handicap access facilities.

My broken leg and dislocated shoulder are mending on schedule. I expect to be able to return the kindness offered to me should others need a push at future meetings!

Again, many thanks.
Maureen L. MacDonald
BCTF Executive Committee

• The provincial government, according to a BCSTA legal opinion, has no legal authority to order the new budget cuts. Based on that, the Vancouver School Board has launched a court action against the government's edict and a number of other boards have supported Vancouver in this action.

Many other important factors also entered into the federation's determination to dig in its heels. For one thing, the school system has already been seriously cutback and there are many educational needs still unmet. And some vital programs are likely to be among the first hurt by the new cuts: BCSTA has identified such programs as French immersion, learning assistance, counselling, elementary music and ESL. In addition, the cuts might well come down hardest on female teachers as they make up by far the majority of temporary, part-time and substitute teachers. And then also to agree to rollback negotiated salary agreements would seriously undermine the principle of collective bargaining.

Finally, there was wide agreement that for the BCTF not to fight back would be destructive of the federation.

"If we don't stand up and fight," Kuehn told the Summer Conference, "we could be destroyed in that we would have no credibility as an organization which can protect teachers."

Where "law ends tyranny begins"

From page 1

Board during the 1982 calendar year pursuant to budgets adopted by each Board by by-law under Section 14(2) of the Education (Interim) Finance Act. In our opinion, specific amendments to either the Education (Interim) Finance Act or the School Act would be necessary to give the Minister of Education or some other Minister the authority to require School Boards to reduce their expenditures at this time and to reduce the amounts of the grants otherwise payable to the Boards."

The court action is expected to proceed in the second week of September.

Notwithstanding Pitt's dictum that where "the law ends, tyranny begins," the minister of education expects boards to do his bidding whether it is legal or not. Echoing the words of his predecessor, Bill Vander Zalm said that school boards should not be concerned with the legality of the situation. If the courts find against the government, he said the legislature will be recalled to pass retroactive laws.

School boards have been further advised by BCSTA lawyers not to terminate the jobs of teachers until the court has determined the legality of the government's demands. Their opinion says:

"With respect to the question of School Boards taking action such as terminating teachers prior to a determination of the Vancouver Board's legal challenge, we recommend that School Boards not take such action because their whole authority to do so could be called into question in subsequent court proceedings. For example, if a School Board terminated a number of teachers pursuant to Section 153(1) of the act, that decision could be challenged by the teachers affected under the Judicial Review Procedure Act. The basis for the board's action would be the grant reductions implemented by the Minister of Finance. The teachers in those applications could raise the argument that the board had no authority to terminate them for that reason because the grant reductions themselves were not authorized. We recommend that any action be delayed until such time as the Vancouver Board proceeding is determined."



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Teachers made scapegoats for government mismanagement

From page 1

grants. "What the government is now telling school boards," said Kuehn, "is that they must cut their budgets and it is telling us that we must take pay cuts or layoffs — all without any legal authority."

Kuehn emphasized that this is apparently not the end, the government is ordering another round of cuts.

"The government has given notice that 1983 school board budgets will be reduced by an additional \$55.5 million over the twice-cut 1982 budgets," he said. "The effect of this is that all but two school boards in the province, those with

large increases in enrolment, will receive fewer dollars in 1983 than they received in 1982."

This means, he said, that boards will not have enough money to employ the same number of teachers as currently employed, let alone pay any salary increases. "The government intends to force us to make that choice of salary cuts or layoffs for a third time," he said.

There are five reasons, Kuehn suggested, for the government's attack on education and teachers.

The first is to force a rollback in teacher salaries — particularly at the present time to bolster the government's position in negotiations with the B.C. Government Employees Union.

The second is to increase the pupil-teacher ratio, which has been an ambition of the Social Credit government since it returned to power, he said, citing statements from former Finance Minister Evan Wolfe, current Finance Minister Hugh Curtis, new Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm and Premier Bill Bennett, who argued in the legislature during the last session that an increase in the PTR by one would save the province \$45 million. "I think the evidence is overwhelming that the government has an interest in increasing class size and increasing the pupil-teacher ratio, which requires teacher layoffs," said Kuehn.

The third objective, he said, is to destroy the power of school boards and to centralize financial control of education —

recently achieved through the Interim Education Finance Act — and the fourth is to provide a confrontation with teachers — and the new minister, Bill Vander Zalm is just the person to do that.

Finally, he said, teachers are victims of a general attack on the public sector. "We are being made scapegoats for government mismanagement, for its inability to predict the economy in the future and for its unwillingness to borrow to maintain social services," said Kuehn.

Kuehn emphasized that among the public sector teachers have been singled out for a particularly harsh attack — and there is a reason for that.

"This government would like to destroy our organization," he said. "We have had at times a political profile in the past, but, even more significantly, if it really wants to reduce our incomes, and if it really wants to increase the pupil-teacher ratio they have to destroy us, as an effective organization anyway, not necessarily doing away with our statutory authority to exist, but to make a shell that has no power out of this organization."

Kuehn pointed out that capitulation to government pressures to reopen contracts and accept salary rollbacks would have permanent penalties — in cumulative income losses due to a reduced salary scale and in diminished pensions.

Kuehn ended on a call for members to stand together and fight. "If we don't maintain unity, we face a very real potential for destruction," he declared. "Our strength as teachers, our strength as an organization in this province, is based on two things: on our commitment, and on our vision and the fact that we do care about each other, and we do care about children and about education."



Larry Kuehn... government out to increase pupil-teacher ratio.

Teacher settlements not out of line

Teacher settlements for 1982 were fair and reflective of the economic context in which they were negotiated.

- B.C. teachers negotiated an average 17.3 percent salary increase for 1982.
- Most 1982 teacher contracts were negotiated in late October and early November of 1981. The remaining six were arbitrated.
- In November 1981 average wage settlements in the B.C. public sector were 16.2 percent and in the private sector were 17.4 percent.
- In October 1981, the Vancouver Consumer Price Index was running at 15.1 percent over the same month of the previous year.
- Between 1976 and 1981 B.C. teacher salaries went up by 54.2 percent while skilled settlements increased by 58.3 percent, I.W.A. settlements by 60.7 percent and the Consumer Price Index increased by 56 percent.
- 1980/81 teacher salaries in B.C. ranked fourth in Canada while B.C. ranked first in cost of living.

The economic context of November 1981 more than supports the increases B.C. teachers received in 1982 salaries.

DESC plans fall campaign against rising cutbacks

The Defend Education Services Coalition (DESC) is preparing a fall campaign against rapidly escalating cutbacks by the provincial governments on education spending.

DESC gave quick support to a resolution of the B.C. Teachers' Federation against re-opening contracts and making concessions.

On August 23, just three days after the federation executive's action, DESC's four other employee organizations said they are committed to the same stand, and will take this message to every one of their locals throughout B.C. These organizations are the Association of University and College Employees (AUCE), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the College-Institute Educators' Association of B.C. (C-IEA), and the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union (VMREU).

Tom Beardsley, general secretary of the C-IEA and spokesperson for DESC, said:

"The government is proposing to remove so much money from the education system that no amount of effort or concessions by workers could maintain the calibre of education services for the children of B.C."

DESC has also produced posters and pamphlets for distribution by the Canadian Federation of Students, Pacific Region, during post-secondary registration periods.

The materials make it clear that over-worked staff and queued-up students should put the blame for their plight on the provincial government.

"The provincial government is reducing support for all aspects of education," says the student-written poster. "Students are being shut out; staff and faculty are being cut back. We're all victims."

The theme is echoed in a counter-top message on behalf of clerical staff, which says in part: "Don't blame us... The provincial government has slashed funds."

BCTF Newsletter

CLIVE COCKING
Editor

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
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Terrace settlement underway following commission report

Ralph Sundby
Teacher Personnel Services

A committee of teachers, parents and trustees has been working to implement the recommendations of an external review board which examined the Terrace School District in the fall of 1981.

Administrative restructuring and possibly a change of administrative personnel were suggested by the external examiners in addition to extensive changes in the way the school district is operated.

Implementive recommendations developed by the joint committee flow directly from the review commission's report. All but eight of numerous recommendations were agreed to unanimously by the two teachers, two parents and two board members on the joint implementation committee. Areas dealt with included policy-making, gathering and disseminating information, school board decision-making processes, communication and consultation among parents, teachers and school board, support and recognition of parent advisory groups and the selection, assignment and evaluation of senior administrators.

The sole area of disagreement was that involving restructuring the senior administration and filling the redefined positions. The two parents and two teachers voted in favour of expanding the role of the superintendent to one of "chief executive officer" and subordinating the secretary-treasurer's administrative role. The two trustees on the JIC voted against the concept and the full board has since shown its determination to continue with the dual administration system which has been practised generally in B.C. but is becoming less common.

Terrace District Teachers' Association President Glenn Grieve expressed disappointment that the restructuring recommendations were not being carried out. "The suggested changes got at the basis of many of the earlier problems in the district," said Grieve.

But he said the TDTA was pleased with some significant changes in attitude and style of management. Many of the policy and practice recommendations have already been put into effect," Grieve said. He cited:

- a tremendous increase in the willingness to initiate communication and consultation with the TDTA and parent groups;
- the provision of moral support and some financial support to parent advisory groups;
- a more open style of decision making by the board;
- meaningful participation by teacher association representatives in selection of administrators (including the new secretary-treasurer);
- efforts to increase knowledge and communication skills of both trustees and teachers.

Applicants sought for Hilroy awards

The Roy C. Hill Foundation, through the Canadian Teachers' Federation, each year awards two Hilroy awards to B.C. classroom teachers who have developed new ideas for improving teaching practices. The awards are worth \$1,500 each.

Three additional awards are available across Canada for great merit at \$3,500, and one for \$5,500 for outstanding merit. If successful, an applicant can receive one award only, whichever is the highest.

The deadline for receipt of applications at the BCTF is **October 31**. Awards are made in the new year. For application forms, contact Thelma Weinreich at the BCTF office in Vancouver.

4/SEPTEMBER 2, 1982



In a frank closed-door session, Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm (left) told First Vice-President Doug Smart (centre), President Larry Kuehn and (not in picture) Government Division Director Jim Bowman that pay cuts would not necessarily prevent terminations of many teaching positions.

No guarantees pay cuts will save teacher jobs

Jim Bowman
Government Division

President Larry Kuehn, First Vice-President Doug Smart and Government Division Director Jim Bowman held a two-hour meeting with Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm on August 26 at the BCTF to discuss the financial crisis in education caused by the government's demands that a further \$60 million be cut from 1982 budgets.

At the outset Vander Zalm stated his belief that teachers should be well paid because of their importance to society. He said that he could appreciate the federation's problems in being faced with a proposal to either cut salaries or face mass terminations.

But he also said that there was no way around the fact that budgets must be cut. He indicated that he was sympathetic to the idea of not wanting to touch the base salary. He did not approve of the idea of shortening the school year as a way of

reducing costs. However, he was less dogmatic about the suggestion mooted by some trustees that teachers could save the money by accepting professional days without pay.

President Kuehn said that either of the proposed solutions was unacceptable. The federation's very existence depended on upholding the principles of responsibility for the economic welfare of its members and quality education for children. Pay cuts would ravage the first principle and layoffs the second. Kuehn presented information to the minister that showed that the problem was not a simple one of a pay cut in 1982 to save people's jobs. Using budget figures announced by the government, Kuehn showed that pay cuts now and pay cuts in 1983 would have deleterious long-term effects on salaries and pensions. The standard of living of teachers could fall by as much as 25 per cent in the next 18 months if the draconian measures were implemented.

Alberni board chastised for mishandled budget cutbacks

Ralph Sundby
Teacher Personnel Services

An external review commission has recommended ways of picking up the pieces from Alberni's badly handled response to the budget cutback program.

The commission, consisting of Norman Robinson, professor of administration at UBC and Michael Suddaby, executive assistant to the superintendent in Maple Ridge school district, was the initiative of the Alberni District Teachers' Association with assistance from the BCTF. Its terms of reference called for an investiga-

tion of personnel practices and budgetary processes. There were to have been three members on the commission with the Alberni board selecting one member, the ADTA selecting another and the chairperson being selected by the nominees of the two parties. However, the board withdrew early in June from a commitment to participate in the joint venture after receiving advice from the BCSTA to set up its own commission with assistance from the trustee association.

Long-simmering problems came to a head last spring when the Alberni board was faced with the provincial government's cutback program. In an attempt to cut \$130,000 in 1982 and a further \$335,000 in 1983, the board decided to close five schools and terminate a number of programs in the district. The program losses and the resulting displacement of personnel caused considerable anguish to teachers, parents and students.

To make matters worse the decisions were taken in camera and without consultation with those affected. A number of teachers who were on the staffs of the closed schools told the commission that they had first heard about the closures through radio reports.

The commission credited the board with sincerity of motives in facing the restraint crisis but sharply criticized its handling of the whole situation.

"To the extent that this information is correct, it appears to the commission that the board acted unwisely in its handling of the school closure issue," said the commissioners in their report. "The closing of any neighborhood school has enormous educational and social consequences. The educational lives of children are affected.

Both Kuehn and Smart outlined to the minister the impact that thousands of teacher terminations would have on school programs and the lives of students. They indicated to the minister that the complexities of modern society, exacerbated even more during poor economic times, resulted in learning and behavioral problems that teachers had to cope with daily. Schools cannot be regarded as factories where "productivity" can be measured and children processed like widgets.

Three or four times during the discussion the minister stated that there would be no guarantees of any kind. The government is facing a massive deficit, he stated, and even if teachers took pay cuts there was no guarantee that their jobs could be saved.

Vander Zalm said that if the court action (initiated by the Vancouver School Board) went against the government, legislation was already drafted that would give them the authority to order the cuts. He said that the question of seniority, when related to teacher terminations, had not been fully discussed with his officials.

Kuehn questioned the use of one-year financing for school systems when economic cycles do not observe anyone's budget year. He stressed that the minister has a responsibility to defend the public schools and be their chief advocate both in public and in cabinet.

Kuehn stressed particularly that if education was really a priority with the provincial government, school boards would not have been singled out for a second and third round of cuts that would dismember the system if implemented. He asked the minister why school financing in 1983 could not be placed on the same basis as municipal financing (no more cuts in 1982 and a 5 per cent increase in budget for January 1, 1983).

The minister promised to take the federation's views to cabinet and respond in a week's time. Both parties, who immediately after the meeting attended an unusual joint press conference, said that though no resolution to the crisis was forthcoming the talks had been frank, honest and amicable.

Programs which children are currently following at a particular school (e.g., Montessori program at Riverbend) may not be available at the school to which they are being sent in the next school year. The lives of families are also disrupted. Children who once would walk to school must now be bused or driven. The professional careers of teachers and administrators are also affected. Teachers who have invested a great deal of time and energy in developing a grade specialty are now faced with the prospect of accepting a teaching assignment for which they feel ill-prepared."

There was controversy among board members themselves on whether the decisions were correct. The commission chose not to comment on the validity of the board's actions but granted the possibility argued by one trustee and members of the community that other ways could have been found to save money. Instead it suggested the establishment of a multi-representational committee to monitor and review. The committee would be charged with recommending to the board any future re-adjustments regarding school closures, re-openings, boundary adjustments and facilities use.

Personnel problems in the district were said by some to be long-standing. The handling of staff relocations resulting from the school closures became the "last straw" as teachers were subjected to career disruption, loss of salary, loss of status and inadequate transfer procedures.

According to commission most of the problems came about as a result of a lack of board policy and procedures of personnel matters. As a result, re-assignment of administrators and transfers of teachers were handled badly. The commission recommended negotiations between the board and the ADTA to resolve inequities and to implement a suitable plan of compensation and career re-establishment.