

BCTF Newsletter

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BCTF to fight Bill 89 with lobbies, rallies

The BCTF will fight the provincial government's latest attack on teachers — Bill 89, the School Services (Interim) Act — through political lobbying and public information meetings rather than through province-wide job action.

Local work-to-rule protests, where local associations deem them appropriate, will also be supported.

But teachers will not be called upon — at this time — to stage a province-wide withdrawal of services despite, as President Larry Kuehn said, "the increasing sense of anger and frustration among teachers" which has led some to press for such action.

This was the main thrust of the response developed by the Executive Committee at a special meeting on Saturday, October 2. Following a morning-long meeting with the BCTF Bargaining Committee, the executive came to its decisions after exploring a variety of possible reactions to Bill 89, which effectively rolls back salaries and forces teachers to work between six and 11 days for nothing. (See story below.)

Province-wide withdrawal of services was specifically rejected, Kuehn told reporters later, largely because it was felt the government was trying to "provoke" such action to get an election issue. "We simply aren't going to allow ourselves to be provoked into that kind of a position." But the executive did not totally rule out a province-wide withdrawal of services as a future possibility. "It may well be," said Kuehn, "that teachers will get so fed up at some point that we might as well shut down the system because it's come to an end anyway."

The executive decided that, at this point, the better tactic was to continue federation efforts to publicize the damage the government's constantly-changing cutbacks program was doing to public

See "Bennett" page 2



What the fight is all about: opportunities for children to get a good education. Bill 89 will not prevent massive school board deficits coming in 1983 — with renewed pressure to slash programs, cut salaries, eliminate teachers. Ulli Steltzer photo.

"A political bill"

Touted as crisis "solution", Bill 89 will create chaos

It's unjust, it's cynical politics, it's destructive.

What is worse, an angry BCTF President Larry Kuehn declared, the provincial government's new School Services (Interim) Act forces teachers to work for nothing.

"No other group in the province has been forced to work for nothing in the name of restraint — but now teachers have," said Kuehn. "This is purely a political bill. It's a political bill designed to give the appearance of solving the crisis when in fact it will only create further chaos and an even greater crisis in future."

The new legislation, said Kuehn, represents the most serious attack on teachers, and ultimately public education, yet made by the Bennett government.

It effectively imposes a salary cut on teachers, forcing them to work without pay for from at least six to potentially as many as 11 days. For an average

teacher this would amount to a cut of about \$1,000 to \$2,000 in income.

Beyond this, the main damaging effects of the legislation are that it threatens continuance of hard-won professional days, destroys collective bargaining, ends local school board autonomy, exacerbates current low morale in the school system — and only puts off possible further imposed salary cuts and/or teacher terminations.

As introduced in the legislature on September 28, Bill 89, the School Services

(Interim) Act, has these main provisions:

- Bill 89 overrides all teacher contracts and overrides any protection teachers have in the School Act and Regulations;
- Every teacher will lose five days pay between January to June 1983;
- Five teaching days will be cut from the end of June 1983 but teachers must work longer hours so that the same instructional time (935 hours) is provided;
- There will be no paid non-

See "We could" page 2

Bill 89 — What it means:

- All teachers lose six days pay
- Teachers in some locals lose up to 11 days pay
- Loss of pay is without any reduction in time worked by teachers
- No guarantee that teacher terminations will not occur later
- School boards will still be short between \$152 million to \$217 million in 1983 — leading to a new round of crisis

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Editorial An Act of extortion

Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm would like to have the public believe that Bill 89, the School Services (Interim) Act, solves the education finance crisis. It does not.

How could it? There is nothing in the legislation to end the uncertainty in school financing or, more importantly, the outright starvation of the system. Certainly there is nothing in it to raise the low morale of teachers who have been under constant attack of late.

In fact, Bill 89 will only deepen the crisis on all counts. It is, in the first place, the most blatant form of extortion that the Bennett government has yet aimed at teachers. Under the act, teachers will lose six days pay during the remainder of 1982, unless teachers agree with their boards to take one or more unpaid non-instructional days. In 1983, the act forces teachers to give up five days pay and work the equivalent of that time for nothing.

Bill 89, in fact, arbitrarily imposes two pay cuts on teachers. With one stroke of the pen, the act breaks teachers' freely negotiated 1982 contracts and effectively cuts 1983 contracts that have not yet been negotiated. All this has been done despite Premier Bill Bennett's assurance last February that "we will honor all existing contracts." This same premier clearly believes in honoring only contracts written in his favour.

But even with these new pay cuts, the legislation will not solve the crisis. Even with boards' newly-enacted authority to divert non-shareable capital funds to operating expenses there will not be enough money to maintain our much-slashed education services in 1983. The system will still be short anywhere from \$152 million to \$217 million, depending on inflation.

This means that in 1983 teachers will once again face the prospect of further program cuts, demands for further salary cuts and threats of teacher terminations. Even with the extorted subsidy from teachers, the present level of funding will lead to greater deterioration in the quality of public education.

How could it be otherwise? This legislation is not fundamentally designed to improve anything — financially or educationally — in the system. It is a political bill aimed simply at defusing education as a hot issue for this election-bound government.

In all of this, as teachers, it is important that we not lose sight of the basic principles that we have been fighting for throughout the cutbacks crisis. That we provide an important service and we will not work for nothing. That we believe in the process of free collective bargaining. That we believe the children of B.C. deserve quality education and we will not sit idly by while they are being denied that.

Bill 89 has further damaged the morale of teachers and does nothing to solve the crisis. We must strongly resist it.

Doug Smart
First Vice-President

Bill 89 "crass, political" — Lauk

NDP education critic Gary Lauk has attacked Bill 89 as a cynical piece of political legislation that will create even more chaos in the public education system.

"This bill is a cynical, crass, political bill," said Lauk, during debate in the legislature on the School Services (Interim) Act. "It's designed to give the appearance of settling 'the education issue', but in fact exacerbates it and is deliberately designed to create more chaos and demoralization in the education system."

Lauk (NDP — Vancouver Centre) particularly slammed the government for

making "its fourth intervention [in education] in a dictatorial and centralized fashion" on the eve of voluntary cutbacks settlements being achieved by teachers and boards without terminations or rollbacks.

"The government argues for the need in bad economic times for cutbacks," said Lauk. "Yet the only area where government is making drastic cutbacks is in the education system — nowhere else. All other public sectors are receiving increases . . . That will be perceived, particularly by teachers, but also by parents and trustees, to be unjust."

Bennett invited to public meeting

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education. This campaign, it was pointed out, was beginning to succeed in making the public aware of the harm being done.

The executive accordingly decided to:

- oppose Bill 89 as "a further display of the government's disregard for public education and for the principle of free collective bargaining;"

- organize a provincial lobby by local presidents on Wednesday, October 6 to attempt to have Bill 89 withdrawn;

- encourage locals to organize public meetings to publicize the harmful effects of Bill 89 and government cutbacks;

- urge members to "refuse completely to co-operate with officials and procedures of the ministry of education", including serving on accreditation, as-

session and evaluation committees or administering tests;

- support any local which institutes a work-to-rule campaign in response to Bill 89;

- urge locals to designate one unpaid day as a Day of Protest and organize appropriate activities;

- publicize BCTF concerns about "increased demands made on parents, students and teachers for funds and fund-raising to maintain educational services" in the face of cutbacks.

As part of the effort to draw public attention to the government's destructive policies, a large public meeting will be held in Vancouver this month to which Premier Bill Bennett will be invited to attend and explain his education policies to teachers and parents.

"We could end up with less next year than in 1982"

From page 1

instructional days in 1982-83 and teachers will lose a further six days pay between October and December 1982 unless teachers agree with their boards by October 15 to take one or more unpaid non-instructional days and the boards make the demanded 1982 budget cuts;

- Administrators and supervisory personnel on term contracts can be transferred to teaching positions before end of term;

- Special education programs established under the School Act regulations may not be reduced without the consent of the minister;

- The minister of education must approve of teacher terminations under section 153(1) of the School Act.

In reviewing the new legislation, President Kuehn and First Vice-President Doug Smart could find nothing positive to say about it. They rejected, first of all, Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm's claim that it would "solve" the education finance crisis.

"It solves the problem for the fall by taking money out of teachers' pockets," said Doug Smart. "But it does nothing to solve the problem coming in the spring."

"In fact," added Kuehn, "the problems of the fall had already been solved by teachers who had agreed to give up \$15 million through withdrawal of services or by giving up non-instructional days on a no-pay-no-work basis."

Kuehn went on to say that the statements Vander Zalm had been making about Bill 89 were "fraudulent." For one thing, the minister has implied, he said, that the legislation will stop terminations of teachers, when it appears only likely to delay them until 1983.

The full-time table officers pointed to analysis done by the BCTF Bargaining Division which shows that, while Bill 89 may have given boards authority to transfer non-shareable capital funds to operating budgets, this will not be enough to avoid the crunch next year. The analysis reveals that if boards combine their 1982 and 1983 capital monies they could have a total pool of \$34.4 million, but (assuming 6-10 percent increases in per pupil operating costs) they would still be short between \$152.6 million and \$217.6 million.

This will inevitably lead, they agreed,



A disappointed Government Division Director Jim Bowman (left) and President Larry Kuehn come away from a September 24 meeting with Premier Bennett, which Kuehn panned as "a charade."

Doug Smart photo

to renewed pressure for salary rollbacks and teacher terminations.

Vander Zalm was also being "fraudulent," said Kuehn, in claiming that the new legislation will protect special education programs. "What is happening is a sophisticated shell game," he said. "Special education is being starved and the only way it can be protected is by making cuts in other programs."

Bill 89 also represents a large leap backward in its elimination of paid professional days, Kuehn said. "The bill takes away PD days we achieved 10 years ago when the school year was modified to accommodate them. The whole concept of PD days is now threatened — and that is part of the destruction of morale that this bill increases."

Equally alarming is the fact that Bill 89 completes the destruction of free collective bargaining for teachers that had begun with the launching of the government's cutbacks program last February. The act not only breaks 1982 contracts, said Doug Smart, but also makes a grab at possible 1983 gains.

"The cut of five days in June rolls back an increase that we don't even have yet," he said. "We could end up being paid less than we were a year ago. In fact, we're the only group in the province that would be in that position."

Cutbacks arouse public

Dan Mullen

DESC researcher-writer

Cuts in education services forced by provincial government spending controls have backfired politically by creating a concerned and angry public.

Nowhere has this been more apparent than at a public meeting sponsored by the Abbotsford District Teachers' Association on September 20.

An overflow crowd of 2,000 parents, students, teachers and taxpayers jammed into the gymnasium of the W. J. Mout Senior Secondary School to listen to three speakers: local MLA Bill Ritchie, school board chairman Dr. Deane Downey, and ADTA president John Shewan.

When the three men finished brief introductory statements on a financial crisis that had caused the school board to issue termination notices to 66 teachers, dozens of people went to floor microphones to pepper Ritchie and Downey with questions and criticism.

After one questioner implied that the audience was suspiciously pro-teacher and pro-education, Shewan replied: "You heard the emotion here this evening. I didn't manufacture that. I didn't bring the people here."

What had attracted the throng was clear from the remarks of numerous speakers. A member of the audience who identified herself as the mother of a Grade 12 student said: "If you think it's going to be disruptive to our children to have these teachers let go now, you just think what's going to happen to them when you let a whole bunch more go in January."

"While Dr. Downey finds it 'unpalatable' to ask teachers to take money out of their own pockets, away from perhaps their own families, to subsidize my child in an education system that I thought I had already paid for through my taxes."

Downey defended the board's issuance of termination notices as an effort to find \$450,000 of an overall cut of \$690,000 required by the government spending restrictions announced July 30. He said the 66 notices went out in early September because "for every day we waited in effecting this cutback, one additional teacher was going to have to receive a termination notice."

He said "the bottom line" is that "we don't want to see these teachers go — not



Abbotsford teacher Laila Pope attacks board for endangering Grade 12 students' graduation by cancelling courses.

Dan Mullen photo

a single one of them," but the board wanted to dramatize the need for some kind of concession.

Juleen Cattermole, a teacher at Abbotsford senior secondary, said teachers would have welcomed an opportunity during August to seek some alternative to terminations as a way of saving the \$450,000.

"If we were a union right now," Cattermole said, "this whole province would be shut down, because no union would put up with the way that the layoffs have been done in this district."

She said many of the teachers who got termination notices felt they'd been "kicked" after years of hard work both inside the classroom and outside in extra-curricular activities.

Downey replied that "to terminate any teacher is anathema as far as we're concerned, but . . . to terminate teachers who have given many years of sincere and dedicated service is, we recognize, outrageous."

Ritchie, the Social Credit MLA for Central Fraser Valley, said the board's hands were tied by "silly" 1924-vintage legislation that required it to close programs or classrooms to reduce teachers, and pledged to lobby for seniority provisions "should it be necessary [to impose] restraint again in the early part of next year."

Substitutes: an essential service

Substitute teachers have been hit hard by the budget cutbacks.

"Thousands of us across the province have lost our jobs," said Maxine Boag, President of the Provincial Association of Substitute Teachers. "Many of us are now living solely on unemployment insurance or welfare."

Budgets for substitute teachers have been cut in all districts, and completely eliminated in some.

"Many school boards have told the teachers to cover for colleagues away because of sickness, which accounts for 90 percent of our work," Boag said. "The remaining 10 percent — release time for teachers to attend Pro-D activities — has also been drastically cut."

Support for substitute teachers was expressed at the September Representative Assembly, when the delegates passed the motion: "That the BCTF is opposed to any reduction of substitute services." During discussion, many delegates showed sympathy for the plight of substitute teachers, and appreciation of the

essential service they perform in the schools.

However, the September budget cuts have already sounded the death knell for substitute teachers' chances of employment in many districts:

- Sooke teachers are not allowed to call substitutes for the first two days away, and as well as covering internally for colleagues taking their five days' leave without pay.

- Kamloops teachers are not to call substitutes for the first five days away.

- Terrace, Arrow Lakes, Central Okanagan are not using substitutes at all.

However, in some locals, teachers have been prepared to make sacrifices in order to retain substitute service. Victoria and Comox teachers are taking sufficient leave without pay to cover the substitute budget. Burnaby Teachers' Association has recommended to members that they file a grievance if classes are not covered by a substitute teacher when absences occur. Armstrong and Mount Arrow-

On September 24, the board withdrew the notices. The legal issue is still to be resolved, in connection with claims that the school board used the termination notices to intimidate District 34 teachers.

In other districts where termination notices have been issued:

- **Castlegar** rescinded 37 notices after legal action was commenced and in the face of intense public opposition fuelled by a publicity and advertising campaign by the local teachers' association. John Eggleton, the CDTA's public relations officer, described community support for teachers and schools as "incredible." School-by-school meetings supplied parents with the names of teachers who received notices and with information on what the loss of their positions would mean to education offered in the schools. When the notices were rescinded, the legal action was discontinued.

- **The South Okanagan** district quickly rescinded 16 notices after legal action was begun by the BCTF, and that action was then discontinued.

- **Quesnel's** school board rescinded 24 notices after the BCTF threatened legal action. The mood of at least part of the community before the board gave in was reflected in an editorial in the Quesnel Nugget, which said: "A spineless Quesnel board of school trustees gave 24 local teachers the bag this week . . . Why, o' why do we lie up with such a gutless bunch who lie down and play dead when the education minister says 'boo!'"

- **Trail** teachers followed the example of colleagues in the neighbouring Castlegar district and mounted a campaign featuring public meetings and media advertising. Janice Androssoff of the TDTA publicity committee said newspaper ads were used to profile the nine teachers who received termination notices, describing the classes they taught and the number of children affected.

And Langley teachers, who never did receive up to 100 termination notices the school board said were prepared, found overwhelming public support during a five-day closure of schools in late September. Even the Langley Advance, known for regular teacher-bashing, conceded that "teachers may not be entirely to blame for the present predicament" and pointed an accusing finger at the provincial government's spending controls. Parents inundated the local teachers' association office with phone calls of support, and brought coffee and donuts to teachers on picket lines. The LTA also won points with the public by operating a child care service during the shutdown.

The effect of the new School Services (Interim) Act on substitute teachers is as yet unknown, but PAST President Maxine Boag doubts that Vander Zalm's solution will save enough money to avoid terminations of regular and substitute teachers.

"By January, many schools will have been without substitute teachers since June," Boag said, "and school boards should know by then that we are not a 'frill'. We provide an essential service necessary for the smooth running of the schools."

Sanctity of contract — Social Credit style

Premier Bill Bennett, news conference, February 18:

... We will honor all existing contracts, and the program has to, to be equitable and fair.

Education Minister Brian Smith on contractual commitments at a news conference on February 19:

I also emphasized that the program does not interfere with the negotiated or arbitrated settlements of any teacher or

employee, that those existing salary commitments are not being rolled back.

School Services (Interim) Act, September 28, section 2(1):

In order to maintain the quality and diversity of educational services in the province and to preserve jobs of employees, where there is a conflict between this act and a provision of a contract, this act prevails.

BCTF Newsletter
CLIVE COCKING
Editor

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION
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Vacancies

Certification Advisory Committee

A BCTF representative is sought to serve 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.

W. R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund Committee

This new BCTF committee, to be known as the W. R. Long Fund Committee, will be a three-member provincial committee. The terms of reference are:

1. To consult and co-operate with the Canadian Teachers' Federation on international projects.
2. To evaluate requests and to recommend grants from the W. R. Long Fund, consistent with established criteria.
3. To work with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other agencies to gain matching funds for grants from the W. R. Long Fund.
4. To make recommendations of BCTF members to serve on Project Overseas and other international projects for which BCTF is asked to make recommendations of individuals.
5. To carry out activities that promote international understanding and that make members aware of BCTF participation in international projects.
6. To report to the Executive Committee and the Annual General Meeting on expenditures from the fund.

G. A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustees

Two BCTF members are sought to serve three-year terms as G. A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustees. The five trustees meet each year in March to review nominations and to name the recipient who will receive the award at the Annual General Meeting.

Application deadline for all of the above committees is **November 15**, with appointments scheduled for the November 26-27 Executive Committee meeting. For more information contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

Other vacancies: Vancouver Island South PD Co-ordinator — application deadline is **November 1**. Working and Learning Conditions Committee — application deadline is **October 25**.



Vancouver parent (left) protests program cuts but board chairperson Pauline Weinstein (right) and superintendent Dante Lupini warn that despite Bill 89 deeper cuts will be needed in 1983.



Joshua Berson photos.

Vancouver trustees favour pay cuts to meet '83 deficit

Vancouver school board would rather confront its teaching and support staff with a huge pay cut than dip into a \$13 million capital fund to cover a 1983 budget shortfall, board chairperson Pauline Weinstein told the media on October 1.

Weinstein said the provincial government's School Services (Interim) Act puts District 39 about \$10 million short in its 1983 budget, and only salary "rollbacks" can save that amount.

Education Minister Bill Vander Zalm has suggested that Vancouver take the \$10 million from a trust fund built up

from proceeds of the sale of board property and lease monies. But Weinstein said the board rejects this idea because the money has been used — at the rate of \$2 million a year — to reduce the tax burden for local property owners, and to spend it as the minister suggests would be to place upon taxpayers 100 per cent of operating costs it would cover.

Weinstein said the board's only alternative at the moment is to reduce 1983 salaries to 108 per cent of the 1981 level, which board officials calculate would cost the average teacher \$2,640. That loss would be in addition to an average pay

Rep Assembly to decide on BCTF land study

The October Representative Assembly will be asked to approve continued study of options for the disposition of federation land holdings leading to possible development of a new BCTF building.

The Executive Committee agreed to seek RA approval for further study after the building subcommittee presented a progress report on September 25 from Devencore Real Estate Consultants, a company engaged last year to analyze how to achieve maximum benefit from the federation's property.

The assembly, to be held October 22-23, will be asked to give Devencore the

go-ahead to examine the merits of two options:

- redevelopment of the federation's present Sixth and Burrard site to include a new BCTF building and disposal of all other properties;
- relocation of the BCTF to a new building in Burnaby Metrotown and disposal of all federation properties.

The Devencore report pointed out that the BCTF is sitting on about \$10 million in non-producing real estate assets (consisting of the Sixth and Burrard office site with undeveloped residential land behind and a parcel at Broadway and Fir) and that the present BCTF office building is "inefficient, uneconomical [and] does not reflect the highest and best use of the land on which it sits." The report also noted that, with the real estate market currently depressed and having these assets, the BCTF is in a good position to make a very favourable deal on any building development.

The issue was extensively debated by the Executive Committee, much of it focussed on timing. Some executive members opposed further work, arguing that now was not the right time psychologically for the organization to be pursuing the study. Others argued that the opportunity for a good deal might not be present in a few years' time and that the study should continue to ensure proper management of assets and efficiency in federation operations.

Following approval of Devencore's continued study, President Larry Kuehn proposed a procedural motion calling for the study to be delayed a year. The motion was defeated and the vote was recorded: affirmative — Larry Kuehn, Elsie McMurphy and Christina Schut; negative — Doug Smart, Pat Clarke, Trevor Calkins, John Mackie, Maureen MacDonald, Margaret Woodlands and Paddy Boyle. Al Blakey was absent.

cut of \$850 for the five-day school closure ordered under the new legislation.

Weinstein said the board will seek a meeting with Vander Zalm in a bid to have him withdraw or modify the new act. She said allowing school boards six per cent for inflation in 1983 — as had been done for all other public sector groups — would provide the \$10 million Vancouver needs.

New terms proposed for strike pay

The current education finance crisis has prompted the BCTF Executive Committee to recommend to the October Representative Assembly some changes in the terms under which strike pay is to be paid.

The executive has recommended that the following serve as an interim policy and be submitted to the RA as amendments to procedure statement 11.F.10 (c):

"1. Withdrawal of services need not be on consecutive days.

"2. Withdrawal of services on a staggered basis must be directly related to the same basic issue and occur within a reasonable period of time.

"3. An agreement between a board and a local association that services be withdrawn shall not be considered as 'withdrawal of services' qualifying for BCTF payment."

The RA will decide on this issue on October 22-23.

CTF tells politicians: economic policy must put people first

Teachers across Canada continue to give governments at various levels, but particularly at the federal level, a failing grade for their performance on the Canadian economy.

In an on-going campaign which has included an appearance before the Parliamentary Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, letters to the Prime Minister, meetings with labour and teacher leaders, Canadian Teachers' Federation President, Greg O'Keefe has been persistently hammering away at a single theme: people are more important than price tags.

Says O'Keefe: "The government has obviously decided that Canadians exist to serve its economic policies, and not the reverse. The prime minister should listen to the record number of unemployed, the record number of people who have lost their business and investments, instead of listening to the same five or six men whose main purpose seems to be a defense of their failed economic policies. If he had any regard for the hardship and despair being caused by his government's economic policies, he would change those policies tomorrow."

A national conference on the subject of teachers and the economy is planned for November 1 and 2 in Montreal.