

BCTF Newsletter

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Gov't newspeak hides reality of devastation

The provincial government is using a propaganda technique right out of George Orwell's novel, *1984*, to hide the political reality of the harm its education and economic policies are doing, charges BCTF President Larry Kuehn.

In an opening address to the Representative Assembly in Vancouver on January 27, Kuehn attacked the government for distorting language — using “double-think” and “newspeak” — to deceive the public. He revealed how the government's frequent use of its catchwords, “restraint” and “recovery”, was an attempt to conceal a reality that was the opposite.

“We get the language without the reality,” said Kuehn.

Kuehn also attacked the Agassiz-Harrison School Board for apparently adopting “1984 as their managerial bible” in taking punitive action against AHTA President George Grant for his leadership during the November walkout. Referring to support resolutions coming up later, he strongly urged the BCTF to “provide such support or it will allow 1984 to become reality by default.”

Citing as classic doublethink, Kuehn noted how Education Minister Jack Heinrich had told school boards to submit plans by December 15 on making up three days' instruction to qualify for money saved during the strike and then subsequently ignored these plans, informing boards that he would “improve education across the province” by removing \$12 million from board budgets.

“Not only was this a classic of double-think, but was also, according to former Social Credit candidate Kim Campbell, a case of ‘betrayal’”, said Kuehn.

The federation president then went on to say that the government must be

See “Gov't motto” page 3



Budget cutbacks are turning back the clock on school libraries, forcing education back to the old single textbook-dominated days, says Liz Austrom (above), BCTLA vice-president and Killarney Secondary School librarian in Vancouver. See story page 4.

Response to punitive action

BCTF commission to probe Agassiz personnel conflict

The BCTF will throw all necessary resources into fighting the Agassiz-Harrison School Board's punitive action against AHTA President George Grant.

The winter Representative Assembly made the decision after being told that a ministry of education investigation had concluded there was no evidence of punitive action in the board's arbitrary transfer of Grant, while both the local and the BCTF had found the circumstantial evidence to the contrary to be “damning.”

In making an appeal for strong support action, BCTF President Larry Kuehn quoted the BCTF report's finding: “We can draw no other conclusion than that the opportunity was seized to ‘punish’ Mr. Grant for his persistence as an advocate for teachers in his local during those years and particularly during the most recent one.”

One supportive action the BCTF promptly set in motion is the establishment, as earlier authorized by the executive on request of the local, of a commission to investigate personnel practices in the Agassiz-Harrison School District.

Kuehn presented the assembly with a full report, with supporting documents, backing the local's charge that Grant was being punished for his strong leadership over the past six years.

The RA then voted overwhelmingly to “condemn the Agassiz-Harrison School Board for the punitive action taken against Mr. George Grant” and to authorize the federation president and first

vice-president to “provide all possible legal, moral and financial support to the Agassiz-Harrison Teachers' Association and Mr. Grant in seeking a just solution to the problem.”

The controversy began on November 28, 1983 when, as the BCTF report revealed, without prior discussion or notice the Agassiz-Harrison board transferred Grant from his counsellor's position at Agassiz Elementary-Secondary School, which he had held for 14 years, to a position as industrial education teacher, a field in which he had taught only four years ending in 1969.

The I.E. vacancy was caused by the transfer of the incumbent Frank Hallam to teach a newly-created alternate program, despite the fact that the new position had not been advertised or opened to competition as required under board policy. In a brief to the education ministry inquiry, the AHTA raised a serious question on this point: “Can it not appear a serious conflict of interest and possible personal collaboration that the only teacher who was fully aware of the availability of a new position, and who eventually was appointed to that position, was also the husband of the then-chairperson of the school board. The decision to instigate all of these changes was made at the last board meeting at which Gretchen Hallam was an elected representative, although she had already lost her elected position effective the next day. Certainly, a serious conflict of interest appears to be the opinion of many people in the com-

munity as pointed out in an editorial in the local newspaper on Dec. 14, 1983.”

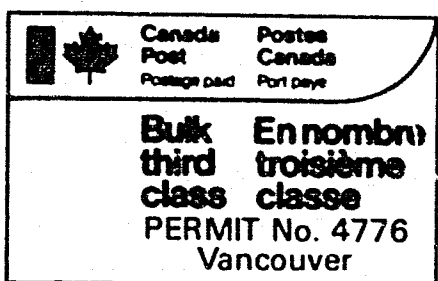
The report also pointed out that the school staff did not view the changes as educationally sound, not only because Grant was being transferred without time to update his knowledge of I.E., but also because the transfers will “virtually eliminate the personal counselling program” as school administrators are now expected to add that function to their current responsibilities. It was on the basis that additional counselling services would be provided that the school was granted accreditation.

In addition, the school metal workshop to which Grant was being posted had been condemned as a badly maintained, disorderly, unsafe environment for instruction by the Workers' Compensation Board and by industrial education consultant Rozell Smith, following inspections requested by Grant and the BCTF.

These points did not apparently carry much weight with former school superintendent Allan Stables who was sent in by the ministry to investigate the charges. This was in response to a BCTF request and in keeping with the agreement between President Larry Kuehn and Education Minister Jack Heinrich that no punitive actions would be taken by either side as a result of the strike.

In his report to the minister, Stables concluded: “There is no evidence to support or substantiate a charge of punitive intent or determined punitive action on

See “Reprisals” page 3



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

'84 AGM shortened to save hotel costs

The 1984 Annual General Meeting has been shortened one day to save over \$40,000 in hotel costs.

The AGM will begin on Sunday evening, March 18. Business sessions will be held in the morning and afternoon on Monday, March 19, with the traditional delegates' dance that evening. Business will continue during the morning and afternoon of Tuesday, March 20. The meeting will conclude at 17:30 Tuesday unless an evening session is required to complete the agenda.

In past years the AGM finished on the Wednesday.

Workshop available on children's rights issues

The BCTF Children's Rights Committee has developed a workshop on issues relating to the rights, interests and welfare of children in the public education system. Key areas the workshop focusses on include decision-making affecting children, special education placement, relationships among children, parents, teachers and others in the education system and the impact of the education bureaucracy. The workshop is designed to provide parents and teachers with a framework to discuss these and similar issues. For further information contact: Bridget Roberts, Professional Development Division, BCTF.

Credit union branches updated

The B.C. Teachers Credit Union has relocated another of its branches recently. Since they've had a number of moves this year, we thought it would be useful to print an updated list of their branches:

OAKRIDGE: 5594 Cambie Street, Vancouver (324-6655);
DUNBAR: 4445 Dunbar Street, Vancouver (224-2364);
BURNABY: 4162 Norland Avenue, Burnaby (294-5106);
SURREY: 9648 - 128th Street, Surrey (581-9828);
VICTORIA: 3023 Shakespeare Street, Victoria (595-5151).

This is not news, but . . .

Once again British Columbia has spent the lowest percentage of its budget on education of any province in Canada. Read and weep:

Percentage of provincial budgets spent on education in 1982-1983	
Newfoundland	25.3
Prince Edward Island	24.1
Nova Scotia	24.0
New Brunswick	23.6
Quebec	25.4
Ontario	20.6
Manitoba	18.3
Saskatchewan	15.9
Alberta	17.6
B.C.	15.5
Average All Provinces	21.2

Source: Statistics Canada

BCTF Newsletter

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

CLIVE COCKING Editor

The BCTF Newsletter is published by the B.C. Teachers' Federation pursuant to policy statement 36.26 in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*. The BCTF Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board, which reports to the Executive Committee, serves in an advisory capacity, assisting the editor in interpreting and implementing newsletter policy.

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

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HOLDING THE BRIDGE



The more things change, the more they remain the same... The Vancouver Sun published this tribute to Canadian teachers on April 13, 1936.

Education globally under-funded, Goble challenges UNESCO to act

WCOTP Secretary General Norman Goble has challenged UNESCO to respond to the reality of world education where many nations spend lavishly on arms while financially starving schools.

Speaking to hundreds of government delegates at the recent UNESCO general conference, Goble cited the widespread conditions around the world of inadequate school buildings, overcrowded classes and meagre learning materials as the reality hindering educational advances.

"If we believe half of what we say about the urgency of educational needs, we must look to the heart of the problem: the need, the morally imperative need, to mobilize public opinion, to generate the political will to release the necessary resources," he said.

Replying to the general debate, UNESCO Director General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow said the action of WCOTP affiliates provided a "particularly striking example of the role which international non-governmental organizations can play in relation to public opinion and national officials as well as the international community as a whole."

Meanwhile, in a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar at UN headquarters in New York, WCOTP President James Killeen stressed the work of WCOTP and its national affiliates in favour of disarmament and against apartheid and the value of WCOTP's campaign for Education for All.

Killeen pointed out that teachers are often activists in a range of community organizations and that many WCOTP affiliates are members of their national UN associations.

Pérez de Cuéllar agreed: "WCOTP and its members are ideally placed to foster in young people a special concern for the condition of our world and to develop in those young people a commitment to make this world a better place to be. Many WCOTP interests are parallel with United Nations' interests, such as peace, disarmament, the elimination of prejudice and the crucial need to improve living standards for all, especially in the Third World. We appreciate your extensive efforts."

PD associates sought

The BCTF Professional Development Division is looking for teachers who have been actively involved in the federation to become leaders of staff rep and staff committee workshops.

For further information, phone Karen Peterson or Gale Tyler in the Professional Development Division, BCTF.

Nominations for '84-'85 executive

The following members have been nominated for positions on the 1984-85 BCTF Executive Committee:

For President — one to be elected
Pat Clarke (Central Okanagan)
Doug Smart (Prince George)

For First Vice-President — one to be elected
Elsie McMurphy (Saanich)

For Second Vice-President — one to be elected
Christina Schut (Revelstoke)
Margaret Woodlands (Richmond)

For Member-at-Large — four to be elected for two-year terms
Don Bennett (Langley)
John Bergbusch (Sooke)
Bill Fite (Fernie)
Bill Friesen (North Vancouver)
Allan Garneau (Vancouver Administrators)
Bruce Gladwin (Mission)
Dale Gregory (Coquitlam)
Karen Harper (Kamloops)
Harry Janzen (Shuswap)
Maureen L. MacDonald (Vancouver Elementary)
Moir Mackenzie (Surrey)
Bob Meredith (Creston Valley)
Calvert Moore (Delta)

Campaign statements, biographical notes and candidates' photographs will appear in the next issue of the BCTF Newsletter.

Further nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual General Meeting.

UTAC seeks donations

The Unemployed Teachers' Action Centre is seeking donations of good quality used clothing, furniture, appliances, tools, books, records and other useful items. The centre would like to provide such items free to needy unemployed teachers. Donations may be brought into the centre at the BCTF building, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver; for large pieces of furniture or appliances it is requested that you phone ahead first. The UTAC phone number is: 736-9267.

B.C. Studies Conference set for February at UBC

The University of B.C. is hosting the third B.C. Studies Conference to be held on February 16-18, 1984. A bi-annual event sponsored by the province's three universities, the conference is multi-disciplinary and features presentations on literature, colonial history, archeology and trade, native Indians and industrial relations. Total cost including banquet, \$21.40. For further information phone: 228-2561.

Microcomputers in Education

Teachers are invited to apply for the position of Professional Development Associate — "Microcomputers in Education".

The position will involve serving as a workshop leader and consultant assisting fellow teachers in becoming familiar with the application of microcomputers to education.

PD Associates are expected to commit themselves to a maximum five days service during the school year. A two-year commitment is required. All expenses for workshop leadership and training will be covered.

Applicants are requested to apply on a BCTF curriculum vitae form by March 12, 1984. For further information contact Nancy Flodin or Betty Goto at the BCTF.

Gov't motto now: "Ignorance is Strength"

From page 1

referring to the newspeak dictionary in its use of the words, "restraint" and "recovery".

The word "restraint" applied to the 1983 provincial budget clearly has nothing to do with cutting overall expenditures, he said, when gross government spending is up more than 12 per cent.

"Rather, 'restraint' was newspeak for shifting government priorities away from services, privatization even when it is more expensive than efficient government services, and the creation of unemployment," said Kuehn. Pointing out that it would more correctly be termed an "unemployment-creating budget", he stressed that: "It has certainly become clear in the past few weeks that the aim of the government in education finance has not been restraint, but rather adding to the ranks of unemployed teachers."

There is just as much unreality to the government's use of "recovery", said Kuehn, quoting from a leaked government memo that admitted that "the shortfall between inflation increases and wage settlements will tend to limit consumer disposable income next year." Similarly, he revealed that the government's commentary on the August Statistics Canada unemployment statistics admitted that a decline in B.C. employment was caused in part "by the provincial budget."

But the government, he noted, did not respond by revising the budget to boost employment but instead created a new group to scan government publications before they are published. "The Central Editorial Services can then delete information which would let us understand the real impact of government policy," he said. "1984 indeed."

Kuehn also argued that it was no wonder that B.C. economic recovery was well behind the rest of Canada and the U.S. when the provincial Grade 12 examination forms — "another newspeak 'recovery' project" — were printed in the U.S.

In education policy, the government seems to have adopted one of the central

slogans from Orwell's 1984, "Ignorance is Strength," said Kuehn. In recognition of the fact that long-term economic health depends on investment in education, he pointed out that conservative California is increasing its budget for post-

secondary education by 30 per cent. "Our government, hoping to compete with California in high tech, is not only cutting budgets," said Kuehn, "but also closing one university and threatening other closings of institutions which make



The government promotes economic recovery alright, says President Larry Kuehn, but only in the U.S. — that's where it had the Grade 12 examinations printed.

Reprisals and patronage to mark B.C.'s New Order?

From page 1

the part of the Board or its Superintendent against Mr. George Grant."

Speaking to the RA, Kuehn attacked Stables for refusing to "draw the obvious conclusion from the evidence" despite the fact that his own report, as Kuehn quoted, identified "a general atmosphere of mistrust heightened by the strike and extremely poor management/staff communications." Kuehn added: "Because he could not find explicit statements of punitive intent in the official records he would not draw conclusions from the 'circumstantial evidence.'"

Later in the meeting, the RA gave over-

whelming endorsement to motions calling on locals to send letters and telegrams of support to the AHTA and similar missives urging reconsideration of the Grant decision to the Agassiz board.

George Grant, who has been ill, appeared briefly on Saturday and expressed his gratitude to the executive and staff for their support over the past two months. He then left the meeting with these concluding words: "It is the outcome of struggles such as these which will determine whether sound educational decision-making will prevail in this province or whether the new order will be reprisals, intimidation and patronage."

education a little more accessible for students outside the urban areas."

Turning to the Agassiz-Harrison issue, Kuehn said that while the BCTF-ministry agreement that there would be no punitive actions as a result of the strike was generally being observed, the Agassiz-Harrison School Board's action taken against the local teachers' president was a glaring exception.

Kuehn told the geographical representatives that the board had arbitrarily transferred George Grant from the counselling position he has held for 14 years back into teaching metalwork. The board took the decision in apparent haste on the board chairperson's last night on the board following her electoral defeat.

Subsequently, he said, the board has not seen fit to rescind its decision following protests by the local teachers' association, including reports from the Workers' Compensation Board and an independent consultant that conditions in the metalwork shop were "dangerous."

Kuehn also condemned the report of former district superintendent Allan Stables, sent by the minister to investigate, for failing to draw obvious conclusions and declaring there was no evidence of punitive intent on the part of the board. He said because Stables "could not find explicit statements of punitive intent in the official records" he could not draw conclusions from the overwhelming circumstantial evidence.

A BCTF review of the issue came to the opposite conclusion, as Kuehn quoted: "We can draw no other conclusion than that the opportunity was seized to punish Mr. Grant for his persistence as an advocate for teachers in his local during those years and particularly during the most recent one."

Kuehn told the RA that the Agassiz-Harrison local association was asking for support from the federation in pursuing justice for their local president and it must be given. "The BCTF," he declared, "must provide such support or it will allow 1984 to become reality by default."

News roundup

Fee increase sought to build defence fund

The Representative Assembly is recommending a membership fee increase to the Annual General Meeting, aimed primarily at building up a BCTF defence fund.

The RA, endorsing an executive committee motion, is urging the AGM to set the 1984-85 fee for active membership at 1.05 per cent of actual salary plus a .2 per cent allocation to the reserve fund. Based on estimated average salary, this is expected to increase the average member's fee to about \$454 (\$381 to the general fund, \$73 to the reserve fund), compared to the current rate of 1.075 per cent which produces an average fee of about \$383 (\$369 to the general fund, \$14 to reserve).

Fee revenue for 1984-85 cannot be accurately estimated due to uncertainty over layoffs, but the new fee is not intended to increase operating revenues. The federation has recently made a small reduction in staff and is studying further reductions in response to current conditions. The added fee revenue will primarily be directed toward defending teacher interests, including financing a constitutional challenge (outlined below) to obtain full bargaining rights for teachers.

Constitution to be used to get bargaining rights

The BCTF intends to use the courts to gain the collective bargaining rights

that B.C. teachers have been deprived of by legislation.

The rep assembly was informed that there is a legal weapon at hand in the Ontario Supreme Court ruling of October 24, 1983 which states that collective bargaining is a right guaranteed under the freedom of association provision of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The meeting accordingly approved a Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association resolution calling on the BCTF to "provide financial and legal support to a selected local association wishing to challenge the constitutional legality of the restrictions to bargaining rights imposed on teachers in British Columbia."

BCTF elaborates stand against nuclear arms

The BCTF has committed itself to nuclear disarmament and to keeping Canada nuclear weapon-free.

The rep assembly adopted four resolutions enunciating this commitment. They call for the federation to: support multilateral nuclear disarmament; urge CTF to lobby the federal government on nuclear disarmament; support designation of Canada as a nuclear-free zone; and endorse *Security and Disarmament: A Minority Report* (House of Commons, 1982) which outlines nuclear disarmament steps.

David Thompson closure will hit unique program

B.C. will lose a unique rural teacher training program if the government-

ordered closure of David Thompson University Centre in Nelson is not blocked.

Nelson GR Frank Burden gave this warning in urging the BCTF to protest the government's plan. He described the planned closure as "a grave blow" to the regional economy, to equality of opportunity for interior students and to a rural teacher program that had served B.C. education well.

The RA went on to strongly endorse a motion that the BCTF support the continued existence and future growth of David Thompson University Centre.

Role of administrators clarified by RA motions

The RA has adopted motions clarifying the role of principals and vice-principals as members of the BCTF.

This followed presentation of a report by a joint committee, comprising representatives of the BCTF Executive Committee and the executive committee of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, charged with examining the role of administrators within the federation.

The assembly held a wide-ranging discussion of various points that had caused tension between the PSA and the federation in the past and emphasized that, contrary to the government's apparent inclination, administrators should remain as equal colleagues and that schools should be administered on a collegial basis.

The RA adopted motions stating that:

- principals and vice-principals, should be members of the BCTF with the same rights and obligations as other members;

- the responsibility for school administration should be exercised on a shared-decision-making basis and School Act Regulation 91 should be amended accordingly;

- The BCTF should present more in-service programs on report-writing and personnel practices based on federation standards of practice;

- principals and vice-principals are expected to abide by majority decisions of local associations and/or the BCTF regarding participation in job actions.

Le style, c'est l'homme

Never let it be said that our provincial government doesn't have style.

Consider this. On January 6, a BCTF delegation met with Finance Minister Hugh Curtis and, presenting him with a detailed, closely-reasoned 14-page brief, argued the case for a "very modest" 3 per cent increase in school board budgets to maintain education services. The minister indicated he would give it consideration.

On January 25, he wrote to BCTF Executive Director Bob Buzza a three-line reply: "I wish to acknowledge the copy of the Federation's 'Presentation to the Government of British Columbia' dated January 1984. I appreciate your courtesy in making this document available to me."

What style.

EDUCATION SUFFERS A HEART ATTACK

Clive Cocking
Editor

Public education in British Columbia is marching steadily backward into the future.

Successive provincial government budget cutbacks, together with the destructive effect of the new fiscal framework, are combining to turn back the clock on the vital core of the education system — libraries.

All around the province school book-buying budgets are being chopped, library clerical assistance is being eliminated or reduced and, more and more, the ranks of teacher-librarians are under threat of decimation.

"They say we're heading into an information society and yet B.C. is reducing the very resources that prepare students for that," said Ken Haycock, Vancouver school library services consultant. "It's absurd."

It's not as though boards have been lavish in stocking and equipping school libraries: they have not been. In fact, it is only in the past few years that many school libraries have begun to meet minimum standards in staffing and collections. And that, it's worth noting, would not have happened were it not for a special upgrading allocation of \$7 million by the NDP government of Dave Barrett. But now these modest gains are being eroded and, unless the trend is soon reversed, the effects will be felt on the quality of education today's students receive.

The B.C. Teacher-Librarians' Association recently conducted a learning and working conditions survey — eliciting data from 1,144 schools in 59 districts — which reveals the dimensions of the decline from 1982-83 to 1983-84.

The survey found that, while the percentage of elementary school libraries meeting minimum BCTF professional staffing standards dropped only one point to 68 per cent, only 34 per cent — down 7 per cent — of secondary school libraries now meet BCTF professional staffing criteria. Significant inadequacies were

found in Delta, Richmond and Burnaby where none of the responding secondary schools (eight, nine and eight respectively), met the criteria, in Vancouver where only two of 18 and in Coquitlam where only one of 10 secondary schools met the standards.

Even worse is the level of clerical assistance, with only 10 per cent of elementary school libraries meeting BCTF minimum standards and only 16 per cent of secondary libraries, both down 4 per cent. Among alarming conditions revealed, the survey found that none of the responding elementary schools in Nanaimo (35), Langley (34), Coquitlam (29), Delta (26), and Greater Victoria (24) met clerical staffing



criteria; and among responding secondary schools, only two of 18 in Vancouver, two of 13 in Greater Victoria, three of 11 in Prince George, one of 10 in Coquitlam and none of the 11 in Central Okanagan measured up to minimum clerical staff levels.

The survey also showed how library budgets for supplies and books had suffered similar drastic cuts

ling \$564,000 and the board intends to cut even more in 1984.

"We're facing a reduction in three full-time equivalent teacher-librarian positions at the elementary level, three full-time equivalents at the secondary level and a 12 per cent reduction in the materials budget," said Ken Haycock. "And that doesn't account for inflation,



While Killarney Secondary School librarian Liz Austrom (above) is anxiously concerned about the survival of adequate school libraries, teacher-librarian colleague Pat Parungao (right) shares that concern and has a more personal one — whether she will have a job next term.

over the 1982-83 period. On a per student basis, district library budgets dropped from an average of about \$16 to \$14 at the elementary level and from about \$17 to \$13 at the secondary level. The survey turned up a number of alarmingly meagre budgets, including, for elementary and secondary: Surrey \$7.03 and \$10.66, Nanaimo \$9.45 and \$4.57, Shuswap \$9.70 and \$10, and Sooke \$2.93 and \$2.30.

But what is worse is that the trend for 1984-85 is for even more, deeper cuts. "We're seeing that those budgets are going to be decreased at least 10 per cent again and in some districts by as much as 20 per cent," said Alan Knight, BCTLA president and librarian at Hillside Secondary School, West Vancouver. "We'll be lucky if we can buy half a book per student."

so in effect it means a reduction in purchasing power of 25 per cent."

There is a bitter irony in this, in that Vancouver school libraries (undoubtedly like many counterparts elsewhere in B.C.) have only recently, in 1982, met the minimum standard of library holdings (15 volumes per student) as set down by the Ministry of Education in its *Sources and Resources*. But now, without the ministry having rescinded that standard, government financial policies are inexorably reversing that improving trend. Similarly, Vancouver school libraries have not yet met the ministry's own minimum standards for professional staffing — and that day will be postponed even further with this year's indicated cuts.

Another bitter irony is that school libraries are much

"We're heading into an information society and yet B.C. is reducing the resources that prepare students for that — it's absurd."

School library services in the Parksville-Qualicum area were among the first victims at the beginning of the new year of the latest fiscal framework-dictated cuts. The Ballenas Secondary School librarian in Parksville took early retirement and was not replaced, one teacher with no library background being assigned to cover part-time. The half-time French Creek Elementary School librarian was laid off due to low seniority and the school library was closed. And the library clerical time was reduced in one secondary school and three elementary schools.

Nanaimo felt the crunch at the same time. Sixteen library aide positions serving elementary and secondary schools were cut, leaving only three library aides and one technician to serve the district libraries. In addition, 2.5 full-time elementary teacher-librarian positions were eliminated and the library materials budget cut from an average of about \$10 per student to a mere \$1.

But it is in the Vancouver school library system, the largest and most fully-developed in the province, where the full impact of the regressive fiscal framework is beginning to merge. Since March 1982, the district's library services budget has suffered three chops total-

busier places than ever before, now that they are more closely integrated into school teaching programs. Since 1976, despite declining enrolments, circulation in Vancouver school libraries has tripled. On any one day, about 14,000 students use the school libraries.

Ken Haycock pointed out that while materials budgets for Vancouver school libraries provided \$35 per secondary student and \$27 per elementary student last year, that was barely adequate for maintaining the collections and with the coming cuts the collections will begin to deteriorate.

"What people forget is that library resources are acquired to be used and they wear out, become unusable and obsolete," he said. "Our materials are wearing out faster than we can replace them, not because of misuse, but because of extensive, well-integrated, planned use."

All this was plainly evident one morning at Killarney Secondary School where a steady stream of students trooped through the library, working on class research projects or individually gathering material for essays. At one point there was a line-up of about 25 students checking out books.

Librarian Liz Austrom, who is also BCTLA vice-president, suggested that the provincial government

does not really understand the seriousness of cutbacks on school libraries. As for library materials budgets, she pointed out that, once basic supplies are bought, current budgets do not leave much for maintaining, let alone improving, school collections. When the average hardcover book now costs about \$20 and reference books can cost about \$65, and when special needs (such as for the city's many ESL students) must be met, it's extremely difficult to keep up to date. To compound the problem, the cuts are coming just as the introduction of new curriculum — in art, social studies and science — are placing new demands on school libraries.



"Science, particularly, is a continuing problem because the science collection has to be very up-to-date," said Austrom. "You have to be continually buying for science, particularly maintaining a really good selection of magazines. This is a critical area, but in all education there is no point in presenting students with information that is 10 to 15 years out of date."

The library collection is important, said Austrom, but for school libraries to be a really effective, integrated part of the school instructional program, the personnel in the library are equally important. This is particularly true today when teacher-librarians are closely involved with classroom teachers in planning and developing course units aimed at developing students' research skills — and assisting in the instruction. And the function of teacher-librarian cannot be adequately fulfilled unless school libraries have adequate clerical assistance to handle routine typing, cataloguing and circulation tasks.

Without adequate library clerical assistance, Austrom said teacher-librarians would no longer be able to serve students as well as they now can, but would be inundated with clerical functions. They would essentially become clerks. She said many of her colleagues regard that as a waste and have indicated that if the cuts are to be that severe they would rather be back teaching in the classroom. "But if it gets to that point," she said, "I would quit and get another job."

BCTLA President Alan Knight suggested that the continuing undermining of school libraries is indicative of an alarming trend: the approach to education in B.C. It is clearly a move away from variety, diversity and the encouragement of alternate viewpoints.

"You do away with teacher-librarians and teachers will be down to whatever support they can find themselves — and the textbook," he said. "Then we'll really be back to indoctrination when education is reduced to relying on one source."

Why new Physics 12 will flop

In the summer of 1963 many of us took a course called Education 565 (Physics), with Derek Livesey instructing. It was an introduction to PSSC Physics, which was about to be introduced in British Columbia (in a somewhat modified form). The B.C. version of PSSC physics stayed in the schools for 20 years, with one revision of the text written by Livesey, Cannon and Ryniak.

PSSC Physics did not try to teach "all about physics." It stressed the really big ideas and pursued those in depth. The experiments had a unique flavour. Instructions were kept to a minimum, so that students had to think about what they were doing and why they were doing it.

PSSC Physics was a tough course to teach, especially the first time through. It was definitely not a "teacher-proof" course with "pat, recipe-type" experiments and five pages of teacher's guide for every page of textbook (the trend in the new junior secondary textbooks!). The teacher had to try the experiments himself and struggle through the problems at the end of each chapter. It was hard work! The PSSC textbook was very difficult reading for most students, and the Labtext did not contain much in the way of straight "teaching" material to which a struggling student might refer.

With all the problems, however, PSSC physics had a personality to it: an appealing philosophy with its emphasis on the human aspects of physics and physicists. Somehow the struggle to make the course work seemed worthwhile. And without the straightjacket of provincial examinations, a good physics teacher could make the B.C. physics course "work" with his students.

How about this new Physics 12 course? On paper, it looks great! You teach a certain core content (not too different from the old course), then spend a fair percentage of your time on an optional topic or two. Sounds great! I bought the idea when I heard about it in the reaction panel meetings.

Unfortunately there are a few problems. First of all, the core material requires far more time to teach thoroughly and properly (an old fashioned habit some of us still have) than the committee anticipated it would take. Of 24 teachers whom I have asked, 23 said they did not have time to do the core units and an optional unit with any depth at all.

Secondly, the textbooks selected for the course do not adequately match the course of studies. Giancoli covers everything ever discovered in physics since

Thales, but in a scattergun approach which does not match our course. It is also written for college level. It has no experimental work for the optional topics, and neither does Miller or the laboratory textbook.

Many of the problems in this new course could be resolved with a lot of work by a creative, energetic teacher. What will kill this course, however, is the provincial examination. To make a course like Physics 12 work with your kids you need a certain amount of freedom to try new approaches. I am not talking about throwing out the curriculum or ignoring it. I mean one should be able to substitute alternative laboratory experiments when it is obvious that the prescribed one is impracticable.

Possibly one of the stronger features of the new Physics 12 Course of Studies was the inclusion of optional topics from which each teacher could select a field which appealed to him because of his unique background and interests. It is unfortunate that the ministry did not follow through with this and develop modules based on these optional topics, complete with laboratory experiments. The idea might have worked.

Unfortunately, the whole idea of optional topics is purely academic now. Most Physics 12 teachers find that the core material requires almost the whole school year to cover. If a teacher completes the core material and has but a few weeks left to go, what choice will he make? He can dabble with one of the optional topics for a lesson or two, or he can choose to use the remaining few lessons to drill students for the provincial examinations. If he knows that the majority of his colleagues across the province will choose the latter route (since they feel that their primary responsibility has now shifted to "getting the kids through the damned exam"), you know which choice he will make!

Physics 12, I fear, is dead. It wasn't a bad idea, fellows. If you had a textbook that matched the course of studies, labs included, and a set of modules for the optional topics and a reduced core so you had time to teach optional topics — it might have worked.

Unfortunately, there isn't much hope of doing anything about it. It has become very obvious to me that the top decision-makers are not prepared to listen; and if they did listen, they really wouldn't understand.

Gordon R. Gore
Westside Secondary School
Kamloops

Is peace education possible?

Peace education: what are the problems and the possibilities?

The question foremost in our minds is how best to achieve security. In most people's minds security has become synonymous with defense — the military capability of deterring an attack and, if provoked, of engaging in whatever escalation of attack is thought to be necessary in order to preserve the nation state or protect its interests.

What groups claim to be supporters of peace? Without ignoring the complexity of the issue and falling into the trap of over-simplification, I will divide "peace workers" into two groups: those favoring peace and national security through military preparedness; and those choosing a position which ranges for accepting a limited military deployment to absolute pacifism. In today's world we generally think of peace supporters as being those who oppose any arms build-up and who favor a reduction in military spending. As many peace supporters hold a position contrary to that of their governments, they have come under attack — from the media, police and security forces, and by economic reprisals and accusations of treason.

Is it possible to teach peace? Confronted with this official opposition, many teachers feel uneasy about embarking upon teaching a new and controversial subject, particularly when no curriculum is available. Teaching about the peace movement could become a subversive activity! There is also the question of who should teach peace and whether or not the schools may be the best place to do this.

At the August '83 Summer Conference seminar on peace education, Kit Krieger (of Sentinel Secondary in West Vancouver) addressed this question by expressing eight considerations which may be summarized, albeit too briefly, as: Who bears responsibility for educating about peace? What point of view toward peace should be expressed or implied by attempts to educate people about peace? What ethical considerations apply between those who are teaching and those who are learning? Is there readiness for acquiring knowledge and skills associated with being educated about peace? What developmental characteristics of the learner should be taken into account in designing programs to promote peace education? What framework of concepts, principles and generalizations

should guide the development of peace education? How much knowledge of the technological aspects of nuclear armament do the students need, to be considered educated? What relation should peace education bear to other forms of education?

Each of these considerations is answerable, though the variety of opinions and priorities may be quite diverse. If you support the proposition that peace should be taught then it becomes necessary to establish certain goals and strategies. In the absence of a curriculum or appropriate lesson plans many teachers have found the use of current news or media presentations (i.e., "The Day After," "If You Love This Planet," "War") as a successful method of initiating discussion on peace-related issues. Certainly film clips of past wars and live coverage of present battle areas have dramatized the horrors of war. Less obvious is the adverse effect that the armaments expenditures are having on the socio-economic structure of those nations burdened by an aggressive military-industrial complex. As this increasing diversion of money, manpower and materials into armaments production has contributed to some destabilization in the arms-producing economies and the impoverishment of some weapons-purchasing countries, some effort should be directed to determining the relationship between inflation and increased military expenditures. Not to be ignored are the aspirations of our students, who, despite their expressed fear of nuclear war and unemployment, wish to have a future in a world that is neither depleted in resources nor bereft of hope.

What are the options before us? Certainly present attitudes about how to achieve security, and present confrontational methods for resolving conflicts must be revised or abandoned. It is to be hoped that as people become more knowledgeable about the consequence of continuing an arms race, that they will choose those policies which support a reduction in armaments, while not jeopardizing national security. To this end, the schools must be prepared to participate in the dialogue about peace and the prevention of war. Let us together learn and teach about peace.

Denis Ortwell
Teachers for Peace Action
Moberly elementary
Vancouver

BCTF urged to prepare for long fight

The BCTF will be asked to dig in for a long fight for quality education if the 1984 Annual General Meeting adopts the Executive Committee's leadership recommendations.

This is the central theme of the executive's report to be presented to the annual meeting to be held in the Hotel Vancouver on March 18-20.

Towards this aim, the executive is calling for the reserve fund to be developed into an effective defence fund, backed with substantial long-term funding. In addition, the executive is recommending greater cooperation with parents' groups, highlighted by a jointly sponsored conference on education this fall, and the establishment of a public commission on education. Also recommended are continued BCTF membership in Operation Solidarity and Solidarity Coalition and renewed efforts to restore professional development days.

The following are the Executive Committee's leadership recommendations:

1. (a) That the BCTF establish the Reserve Fund as an effective defence

fund, through long-term commitment to substantial funding.

(b) That the RA be authorized to develop guidelines for the use of this fund.

2. That the BCTF establish a program to assist locally based parents' groups in resisting cutbacks in education services and in working toward equality and excellence in the schools.

3. That the BCTF, in cooperation with parent organizations, sponsor a provincial parent-teacher conference on public education in the fall of 1984.

4. That the BCTF continue as a member of Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition.

5. That the BCTF conduct a campaign on class size and support services as a means to protest and improve working conditions for teachers and to maintain and improve education quality and equality for students.

6. That the BCTF seek to restore time and funding for professional development.

7. That the BCTF request the provincial government to join with the

BCTF and other interested parties to structure a public commission on education. If this request is refused, the BCTF will organize a public commission on education during 1984.

8. That the BCTF undertake a legal challenge of the School Act on the basis that it denies certain fundamental rights to collective bargaining guaranteed in the Charter of Rights.

9. That a major thrust of the professional development program for the coming year be the development of a program which will give teachers and the public the opportunity to understand the present social and economic situation and how it relates to and affects the public education system, and to explore alternatives to this situation.

10. That the BCTF conduct a study of changes in the structure and policies of the BCTF necessary to influence education policies, teacher salaries and working and learning conditions as a result of the B.C. government's centralization of decision-making in education.

Students could win computer for school at '84 science fair

Computer whiz kids could possibly win a computer for their school at the Second Annual Regional Science Fair, April 13-14, 1984, at Vancouver's Arts, Sciences and Technology Centre.

This year the best overall entry in the computer sciences category (at the discretion of the judges) will win a Texas Instruments Professional Computer for the school of the student involved. Donated by Texas Instruments and Key Computer, this grand prize includes a Texas Instruments Professional Computer with 256K RAM memory, a keyboard, 13 inch colour monitor, dual 320K floppy disk drives, high resolution graphics card and software.

Grades 7-12 students may enter one of the three categories in the junior or senior age group. The three categories are: computer science, physical sciences and life sciences. Various prizes will be awarded to junior and senior entries in all three categories.

Deadline for entries is April 8, 1984. For more information contact: Patti Leigh, Arts, Sciences & Technology Centre, 600 Granville St., Vancouver, B.C. V6C 1Y9 (687-8414).

Parliamentary pension task force taken to task

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the report of the Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform.

The Federation was particularly critical of the report's proposals on taxation, portability and the Canada Pension Plan. "We are most disappointed", said CTF President Brian Shortall, "that the Task Force has not recommended an increase in the CPP retirement benefit. The major flaw in the pension system is that CPP is the only plan to which many employees have access. But the CPP benefit does not provide an adequate retirement income. First priority in pension reform should be an increase in this benefit, a move which would have unanimous support from employee groups across the country."

"We also find the recommendations on regulation of private pension plans unacceptable. In particular, the Federation is opposed to any proposal for enabling terminating employees to transfer the cash value of their benefits into individual savings plans or personal estates. This proposal could create inequities between

terminating and continuing employees and ultimately might undermine the financial stability of existing pension plans."

The CTF was also critical of the task force for introducing a series of complex taxation proposals, none of which had been outlined in detail in the Green Paper. "In our view", said Shortall, "all employees should have the right to defer tax on sufficient income to ensure adequate replacement income in retirement. In particular, no contributor to a duly registered pension plan should be required to pay tax on any part of the premium. Our first reading of the report suggests that the proposals advanced could disrupt existing pension arrangements and create situations involving double taxation."

The CTF did, however, commend the Task Force for proposing an increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement, equal benefits for men and women, and a central register of vested pension benefits.

The CTF had presented a brief to Finance Minister Marc Lalonde arguing



CTF President Brian Shortall

for greater equity in income tax provisions. Among key recommendations, CTF urged the government to:

- return to full indexing of personal exemptions and tax brackets to inflation;
- allow full income tax deductions for professional and employment-related expenses (such as tuition fees, professional development expenses, books and materials, registered educational leave plans);

• allow as a tax deduction tuition fees paid to post-secondary institutions on behalf of a dependent spouse or child;

• increase maximum allowable income tax deduction for payments to registered pension plans or registered retirement savings plans;

• increase maximum permissible deduction of pension income from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Faculties thank teachers

Teachers last fall, despite the pressures of their job action, did not stint their responsibilities to student teachers. The organizers of student school experiences at the three university faculties would like to convey their thanks to sponsor teachers and school staffs. They report with appreciation that teachers went out of their way to make the students welcome, put them in the picture without pressure to take sides, and tried to ensure that despite the unusual circumstances, the students did not lose out on this vital aspect of their training.

Letters

Teachers should protest anti-children thrust of B.C. Place scheme

Recent events surrounding B.C. Place development prompt me to write. Teachers need to be vigilant and outspoken towards government policy which seems tangential but, in fact, is central to our concerns as educators. City planning, for example, affects teaching more than we think.

In 1981 families comprised 32.6 per cent of all households in Vancouver and 6.6 per cent in the west end. This percentage will continue to decline if B.C. Place provides the kind of housing it intends. The original proposal was that NO families be accommodated. This has now changed to 15 percent family units.

Vancouver teachers need to be concerned at this not only because it threatens teaching positions in the future, but also because it is symptomatic of an anti-children anti-education attitude which pervades Social Credit policy.

At a time when a baby boom is occurring, while city schools are closing, those in power should attempt to attract families, not discourage them.

I worry for the fate of children, teachers and the educational system in B.C., not only for the short-term implications but for the future ones as well. We must be vigilant, outspoken and united.

Reva K. Dexter
Education/community
consultant
Associate member, BCTF
Vancouver

Nanaimo layoffs due to gov't reneging on Solidarity deal

There seems to be some dispute over whether or not the government's reneging on its commitment to Solidarity over the use of "protest savings" was a factor in recent layoffs.

In several documents originating from the BCTF it has been stated that by the time the government refused to return the money to school boards, it was too late for boards to lay off employees.

The board in Nanaimo had grave reservations about the likelihood of the "protest savings" being returned to it. Therefore the board laid off teachers knowing that it could revoke those layoffs if the funds were indeed returned. Public statements by the chairperson of our board made it clear that a return of the "savings" could be used to avert layoffs until

6/FEBRUARY 3, 1984

June. Newspaper reports confirm this statement.

The NDTA's position was, that if the government lived up to its agreement with Solidarity local layoffs would have been avoided in December and January.

Our faith that Solidarity would insist on the government honouring what we were assured was an agreement made in good faith, was ill-founded. However, provincial rationalizing that the money's return to the system would not have avoided local layoffs is even more ill-founded and also untrue.

We are not suggesting that Solidarity and the BCTF shut the province down over education positions lost through one guise or another throughout this province. We understand the difficulties involved in carrying off a successful general strike. However, we do have much difficulty in watching Solidarity and the BCTF passively rationalize the breaking of an agreement we were assured had been made on behalf of public education in B.C.

For the record, the NDTA did actively oppose layoffs in Nanaimo and had some of them revoked. At the same time we felt that a goodly amount of publicity had to be focussed on the effects of provincial cutbacks and acted accordingly.

I would suggest that just because it is 1984 we not fall into the trap of using "newspeak".

James A. Howden
President
Nanaimo District Teachers' Association

North Vancouver trustee disputes interpretation of Bill 3 controversy

Your reporting (January 12, 1984) on the North Vancouver salary agreement concerning the seniority clause deliberations serves only to further confuse your readers. As a participant in all aspects of the events, allow me to present a different analysis for the record.

Firstly, the North Vancouver School board directed the superintendent to phone the Deputy Minister of Education for advice on the proposed seniority clause.

Secondly, there is no proof of any sort that this seniority clause was the specific event that initiated a strike. I asked that direct question during negotiations with North Van reps and BCTF reps and no such assurance was given. Sounds great in hindsight but it is balderdash and not even consistent with the six conditions

that were to have been met for solution of the strike set by the BCTF executive and Representative Assembly.

Thirdly, the basis for my petition to the Supreme Court was that the school board had not complied with Section 86 of the School Act nor their own board regulation in calling a special meeting. If you will but read the court's decision, it is very clear that Madam Justice Proudfoot fully endorsed my assertion on this point. To quote "[the board's] argument that ... the Chairman can call a special meeting and tell no one what is to be discussed at that special meeting is totally without merit and I reject it completely." And further she states, "In the circumstances of this case, I am satisfied, there was an irregularity, however, no injustice was done." How can you interpret that this was a ruling against me? The judgment points out that I was not prejudiced by the decision of the school board to endorse the seniority clause for the salary agreement. Therefore, the resolution of the school board was allowed to stand even though the meeting was not properly called. My petition to overturn this seniority clause was lost but my opposition to it continues and my opinion was formed as soon as I saw the proposed wording — not after advice from any source.

The seniority clause is so badly worded that it will cause more trouble than it will ever solve. The parents who supported the costs of my court case are adamantly opposed to the provisions and I am still appalled that a general meeting of North Vancouver teachers could pass the motion without having read it. Only a few copies were available at their meeting and I doubt if very many understand it even today. The whole exercise has cost teachers a great loss in the esteem in which they were once held by the public of North Vancouver.

Dr. Ross Regan
School trustee
North Vancouver

Willow Tegart
Secretary
Creston Valley Teachers' Assoc.

Creston record corrected

As reported in the article "Three Days on the Picket Lines" (November 22, 1983), regarding the 100 per cent walkout of teachers in the Creston Valley Teachers' Association, we would like to inform you that one member received sick pay for the three days. The executive felt that we should set the record straight.

Willow Tegart
Secretary
Creston Valley Teachers' Assoc.

Time to join together in defence of education

I was heartened to see the proceedings and results of the Vancouver Elementary Schoolteachers' Association (VESTA) General Meeting on January 24th because it proved to be a learning experience for all.

I was one of the BCTF convention candidates who got caught up in the bandwagon to state "Yes" or "No" if I had supported the VESTA and BCTF decisions last November. What baloney! I'm a professional teacher, proudly ready to serve my associate bodies in whatever courses of action the memberships democratically choose to take, no matter what my opinion. I had my own chances to go to meetings, learn, and speak out; of course I support my association and federation!

At the end of the meeting a young man asked, are we going to continue having meetings like this, a polarized, split-apart association? He summed up the lesson we may all be learning these days: whether you portray yourself at meetings as a sweet-voiced image of liberal decency or a hard-edged incantation of thunder, none of that matters. What matters is this: will you defend education and our jobs, or let the situation rot?

If ever there was a time for a unified association it is now. Colleagues, don't give us your images, give us your hands for unity.

Ruth Lowther
Kingsford-Smith Elementary
Vancouver

Teachers' strike threat caused Kitimat board to rescind layoffs

I note in the *Newsletter* of January 12 that "Kitimat withdrew their termination notices" last December. This statement is indeed true, but I think your readers may be interested in a brief summary of events leading up to that withdrawal.

The November strike was very strongly supported in Kitimat. In fact, only one unauthorized member crossed the lines on the first day and therefore all schools were closed on the second and third days. Thus for the last two days we were 100 per cent out!

Back to the termination notices. These notices were served individually by the Superintendent of Schools on November 30.

On Tuesday, December 6, the KDTA executive met and unanimously recom-

mended to the general membership that services be withdrawn on January 3 if the termination notices were not withdrawn.

On Wednesday, December 7, the Terrace/Kitimat Operation Solidarity promised full support for our position — support up to and including recommendations to member public-sector unions that they too withdraw services.

On Friday, December 8, the BCTF executive authorized strike pay to the KDTA providing the standard regulations were observed.

On Monday, December 11, the school board met at noon and rescinded the termination notices.

Now it is possible that the growing pressure on the board had nothing to do with its decision to withdraw the notices, but I do not believe that to be the case. I believe that as the board became aware of the resolve of our members to prevent these terminations and saw the magnitude of confrontation they were about to initiate, they were forced to re-examine their position and seek moderation.

Clearly this episode demonstrates the effective and proper use of group pressure in a democratic society, and I believe therein lies a lesson for many local associations.

Rick Sullivan
Kildala Elementary
Kitimat

Teachers of the past would not use children to gain education goals

I wish to reply to a John H. Sutherland who writes in your November 22 issue on the topic of a "great debt owed to 'radicals' of the past."

Most teachers of the past would not gain their ends or goals by using the children, which is what the three-day strike did. It brought on animosity between the teachers and parents and school boards. I leave it to each person to consider what effect it had on the children.

These are difficult days for the government and when funds are not available to satisfy the wishes of teachers who regard "quality" education as their goal, then I would say take what you can get and do the best you can with it. Quality education depends more upon the teacher than upon the amount of money thrown at the schools.

The little red schoolhouse on the prairie did a very good job with very little money from 1930-39, but many of our present-day teachers were not around to

know anything about it. Schools were kept open by our "grandma" teachers for the pay of \$1.50 a day (the school grant) and nobody considered staging a strike or a protest to close down the school. A teacher took personal responsibility for the quality of education in her school. If a good percentage of her Grade 8 students did not pass the government set examinations in June the school board would fire her. The pay was poor and the load was heavy but the teachers of that day were determined to do the job. And most considered it an honour to serve — a teacher was somebody to be respected and who set an example for others to follow and shame on any teacher who failed to come up to expectations of those in her community. Many teachers were judged by the quality of the annual Christmas concert. If the children gave good recitations and sang well that night, she would be considered an excellent teacher.

I have no use for Solidarity. I see it as a form of anarchy and it can only cause great harm to education because it supports nothing. It does not sign anybody's paycheck.

George McKenzie
Retired teacher
Surrey

Gov't emasculates school, hospital board powers without whimper of protest

I found your September 21st front page article concerning centralization of control of B.C.'s education system interesting and disturbing but not too surprising. Events concerning this matter appear to parallel increased government control of hospitals. In 1978 the Vancouver General Hospital board was replaced by an appointed board. In 1980 a medical doctor was sent to run the Surrey Memorial Hospital. More recently Royal Jubilee was amalgamated with Victoria Hospital. The board of the amalgamated hospitals is now appointed. Centralization of control has also taken place at Grace, Children's, and Shaughnessy, Eagle Ridge, St. Mary's, and Royal Columbian are in the process of amalgamation.

I am of course opposed to this growth of dictatorial power. What is particularly disturbing is that both school boards and hospital boards are being emasculated without so much as a whimper.

Frank Wagner
Gladstone Secondary
Vancouver

Teachers' donations help Nicaraguan aid campaign

On behalf of the Coalition for Aid to Nicaragua, I would like to extend our thanks for the substantial support given to our 1983 campaign by the BCTF.

As you may know, the project was very successful in raising funds for the purchase of supplies and equipment for many of Nicaragua's popular organizations. Educational materials were an important part of the more than \$1 million worth of goods collected across Canada.

As well, we consider the public educational aspect of the project to be a crucial component, and were very pleased at the amount of support for Nicaragua that the campaign stimulated. The provincial tour of Darwin Juarez from FOMCA was a major factor in the project's success throughout the various communities he visited. Darwin's enthusiasm for this type of direct aid/public education campaign was obvious to all who met him and this personal contact encouraged many communities to participate in the collection of goods and cash donations. This support

by the teachers' federation helped to make known the high level of solidarity between the people of British Columbia and Nicaragua.

Elizabeth Abbott
Coalition for Aid to Nicaragua
Vancouver

For the record

There is nothing staler than stale news and the *BCTF Newsletter's* January 12 report that Nanaimo had only cut 5.5 full-time positions at year-end was pretty moldy. The report was based on an internal document that clearly was not up-to-date: Nanaimo had in fact suffered a cut of 28.32 full-time equivalent teaching positions as of December 31, 1983. The editor regrets this inaccuracy.

There was also a similar inaccuracy in the report on the Agassiz-Harrison controversy in the same issue. The Agassiz Secondary School alternate program had enrolled 12 students not seven as reported. The editor apologizes for any confusion.

PROJECT OVERSEAS II 1984

Sponsored jointly by the
Canadian Teachers' Federation
and
its member organizations

Nine Canadian teachers are required for Project Overseas II which will operate in Zimbabwe and Uganda from mid-November 1984 to mid-January 1985. Four Canadian teachers will be needed to teach mathematics, science (agriculture), English and primary methods to elementary school teachers. Their assistance is given to improve teaching skills and strengthen professional teacher organizations.

Administrative, travel and living expenses are borne by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the provincial and territorial teachers organizations which are Members of CTF, the government of Alberta and the Canadian International Development Agency. No salaries/honoraria are paid.

REQUIREMENTS

- membership in a provincial or territorial CTF member organization
- an appropriate teachers' certificate
- a minimum of five years teaching experience in Canada
- Canadian citizenship
- excellent health
- evidence of flexibility and mature judgement

APPLICATIONS

Deadline date for applications: APRIL 13, 1984.
Further information and application forms are available from: Berniece Fender at the BCTF office.

BCTF team holds talks on education crisis with NDP caucus reps

On January 23, at the invitation of the New Democratic Party, President Larry Kuehn, First Vice-President Pat Clarke and Government Division Director Jim Bowman met with a group of MLAs and officials to discuss problems in education.

The discussions were part of a program of consultation initiated by the NDP with groups in the education field, such as CUPE, BCSTA, BCTF, and with groups in the health care area.

Among specific areas explored at the meeting were education finance, potential terminations of teachers and support staff in the spring of 1984, volunteers in schools, provincial curricula, testing programs, and the growing restriction of student access to post-secondary institutions.

MLAs present were Mark Rose (Coquitlam-Moody), the official opposition "centre" for education, Colin Gabelmann (North Island), Rosemary Brown (Burnaby-Edmonds), and Gordon Hansen (Victoria).

Kuehn congratulated the MLAs for conducting a principled fight against unprincipled legislation between July and October 1983, noting that the vigour of their opposition allowed Solidarity time to organize public opposition to the government.

UIC changes maternity, adoption benefits

The following changes to the unemployment insurance regulations become effective for all claims initiated on or after January 1, 1984.

Maternity Benefits

1. The "magic 10" rule is eliminated and claimants will only have to meet the regular UI rule by having 20 weeks of insurable employment in the qualifying period.

2. Pregnant women may now claim regular UI benefits up to the time of birth and immediately thereafter if they meet all other requirements, i.e., unemployment, capable and available for work and looking for work.

3. Pregnant women who are already on regular UI may now switch to maternity benefits and, if otherwise eligible, receive up to 15 weeks of maternity benefits.

Adoption Benefits

1. Either parent may be able to claim adoption benefits if he or she has at least 20 weeks of insurable employment in the qualifying period.

2. Benefits would be paid for up to 15 weeks after the child arrives in the home.



Enjoying a light moment in an otherwise serious business are HELPLINE counsellors Bob Campbell (left) and Lorraine Kokoska (right), both Vancouver elementary teachers.

HELPLINE responds to new stress inflicted on embattled teachers

Teaching is one of society's most stressful occupations and the continuing crisis in education is only making it worse, according to the coordinator of the BCTF's stress counselling program.

Susan Crowley said that the past year saw an increasing number of teachers phoning BCTF's HELPLINE anxious and upset about job security, worsening working conditions and political action issues stemming from the provincial government's attack on public education.

"The predominant causes of stress for classroom teachers have been discipline/disruptive students and difficulties with administrators," she said. "But now we're also getting a lot more calls related to the crisis, concerns over lack of resources, larger classes, personal job security — 'Am I the one going to be laid off?'"

Crowley said that the teaching profession ranks only behind air traffic controllers and surgeons in levels of stress experienced and that she would not be surprised if it had not become more stressful in the past couple of years. In 1979 a major BCTF study identified stress in the classroom as a serious problem needing action, which led a year later to establishment of a federation stress counselling program.

The Teachers' HELPLINE, now in action every Sunday to Thursday evening 5:15 p.m. to 10 p.m., is a central element in this program. Staffed each night by two volunteer counsellors (of a pool of 40 trained in conjunction with the Vancouver Crisis Centre), the HELPLINE is designed to assist teachers from all around the province in dealing with professional and personal problems on a confidential, anonymous basis. The counsellors' role is to give support to teachers

under serious stress and, where necessary, direct them to specialized resources within the BCTF or the community for further help.

The HELPLINE is backed by a network of local teachers' support groups, comprised of experienced teachers, available to help teachers under stress resolve their problems. This is further buttressed in some locals by district employee assistance programs whereby teachers can get counselling or treatment for personal problems.

Crowley pointed out that from January to December 1983, a total 257 calls were made to the HELPLINE, an increase of about 25 per cent over the previous year. The majority of calls came from outside the lower mainland.

Conflict with, or perceived lack of support from, administrators and classroom management problems continued to be major sources of teacher stress, according to the frequency of calls to the HELPLINE. In this category, many callers expressed anxiety over administrators' report-writing and over maintaining classroom control.

Concern over job tenure, overwork, unemployment and aspects of last November's walkout were also major sources of stress for many teachers.

In addition, personal problems figured prominently, with many callers seeking assistance for such problems as heavy drinking, divorce, burnout and depression over job conditions.

Crowley pointed out that "to the callers who get help, the HELPLINE is absolutely vital," but much more needs to be done to get at the roots of teacher stress. In addition to obtaining more resources for education through a better-financed system and greater teacher involvement in decision-making, she suggested that it would be valuable for each school district to have a "helping teacher" on staff who would have the authority to give teachers under stress time off and who would assist them in resolving stress problems — and who would not be involved in writing reports on teachers.

If you have a stress problem and would like to talk it over in confidence with a sympathetic counsellor, don't hesitate to call the HELPLINE. In Vancouver metro, the number is: 731-8120; toll free long distance is: 112-800-663-9166.

Vacancies

Administrative Handbook Revision Committee

The Ministry of Education has asked the BCTF to appoint three BCTF members to work with ministry staff on the Administrative Handbook Revision Committee. Because there was some urgency to begin working on the revisions, the Executive Committee appointed three members on an interim basis. Applications are now invited from classroom teachers and administrators. Application deadline is **February 29**; appointments are scheduled for the March 3 Executive Committee meeting.

BCTF Assistance Society

Ten BCTF members are needed to serve one-year terms as "special members" of the BCTF Assistance Society. These members attend the annual general meeting and special general meetings of the society. At least four directors are elected from society special members. Applicants must be from the Lower Mainland. Application deadline is **February 29**; appointments are scheduled for the March 3 Executive Committee meeting.

Bargaining Committee

First terms of the bargaining coordinators in the following zones expire this spring: Vancouver Island South, Metro, Central Mainland, South Okanagan and East Kootenay. Application deadline is **March 7**; appointments are scheduled for the April 13-14 Executive Committee meeting. Applicants must be nominated by a local association within their zone or by the district council.

Applications for the above committees should be submitted on BCTF curriculum vitae forms. For forms or more information, please contact Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF office.

"Children in Crisis" conference topic

"Children in Crisis" is the theme of a BCTF Children's Rights Committee conference set for May which will develop an inventory of support services lost to children and families through government cutbacks.

Participants will include representatives from child advocacy groups, professional organizations and unions throughout the province. The conference, to be held at UBC, is scheduled for Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday, May 10, 11 and 12.

For several years the children's rights committee has been developing a network of child advocacy groups and it is known that children have lost home and school services, said Nanaimo teacher Nelson Allen, who chairs the committee. "We know from discussions with these groups that there is a growing concern about what is happening to children in this province and the conference is well-timed to gather the information."

The conference will also be reviewing existing legislation from other provinces.

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Planning for retirement

Retirement planning seminars will be held in early 1984 in:

Vernon — to include Revelstoke, Shuswap, Armstrong and Kelowna

— **February 11**

Burnaby — to include all Lower Mainland — **February 14, 28, and March 6**

Kamloops — to include Lillooet, South Cariboo, North Thompson and Merritt

— **February 25**

Victoria — to include Sooke, Saanich and Gulf Islands

— **March 9-10**

Seminars are for teachers and their spouses. Full details on time and place will be sent to schools.