

# Teachers' silence "scandalous"

Teachers have been guilty of "scandalous" silence in the face of the provincial government's unprecedented attack on public education, charges Crawford Kilian, college instructor, education writer and novelist.

Kilian, a Capilano College instructor, former school trustee and education columnist with *The Province*, made the charge in speaking to the BCTF summer conference at the University of B.C.

While acknowledging the work of an activist minority, he lambasted the profession generally for lack of strong protests.

"One of the most astounding and disturbing facts about the derangement of B.C. education has been the eerie silence from educators," Kilian said. "I think it is nothing less than scandalous that teachers, as individuals, should leave it to others to defend education against the most sustained attack it has ever faced in

our lifetimes."

He said he got his first whiff of this attitude when Vancouver school administrators invited him to speak to a conference of principals with the ulterior motive of urging them to go to the news media and show the public what government cutbacks were doing to schools and students.

"The administrators had found out that their principals would sooner drink

hydrochloric acid than admit in public that something was wrong in their schools," said Kilian.

He said he gave "a classic half-time pep talk urging the principals to scream blue murder every time they got the chance" but might have been "singing the Swaziland national anthem" for the reaction he received. "Dead silence, and I mean dead, followed my inflammatory remarks," he

See "New" page 2

## BCTF Newsletter

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1

BROADWAY PRINTERS LTD.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1984

### Gov't attacks ease

## Clarke foresees chance of gains

BCTF President Pat Clarke has urged teachers not to give in to the "politics of despair" but to continue efforts to win the hearts and minds of the public in support of public education.

Noting the temptation in what appears likely to be a quiet year to give in to "quiet resignation", Clarke emphasized instead that gains could be made in bargaining and in defending public education through renewed commitment.

He made the comments in an opening address to the BCTF summer conference at the University of B.C. and elaborated on them later. About 450 local association officers and committee representatives attended the conference, aimed at preparing for the year ahead.

Clarke told the audience that the first indication he had received that this may be a quiet year came recently in meetings with Education Minister Jack Heinrich and Deputy Education Minister Jim Carter in which, far from announcing a new attack on teachers, it was revealed that the government was considering launching a public inquiry on education that would be close to what the BCTF had called for in its AGM resolution.

"I can say that this is good news and we

have indicated to the minister that, provided teachers are appropriately involved, we are most enthusiastic," he said. Clarke added that the government had not made any firm decision yet on the inquiry and that in the meantime the BCTF would continue planning its own education commission.

This news, together with the delay in implementation of the White Paper, indicate the value of strong teacher protests, said Clarke, noting that public opinion polls have probably warned the government to modify its stand on public education.

Clarke reminded teachers that if this is

to be a quiet year it will be due to "our ability and willingness to be a critical conscience for the education system" and to the fact that much of the damage has already been done.

"The New Reality has been visited upon us," he said, "class sizes are up, over 3,000 teachers are gone, support staff are gone, programs are cut, our collective bargaining rights are suspended indefinitely. It may be quiet because it has all been announced, the plan is in place. The greatest danger to education and to this organization is that a quiet year will be made more quiet by teachers' quiet resignation."

Clarke called on teachers not to give in to the "politics of despair" but to continue the struggle, first of all through a strong class-size and learning conditions campaign this fall aimed at demonstrating the damage that has been done to public schools.

This must be done in the realization that private schools are "sprouting like stinkweed" throughout the province ready to exploit weaknesses in public schools brought on by cutbacks. The effect of this trend, if it is not stopped, will be, said Clarke, that "the weaker that the public system gets, the closer this province comes to an education system where quality is only assured by wealth and privilege."

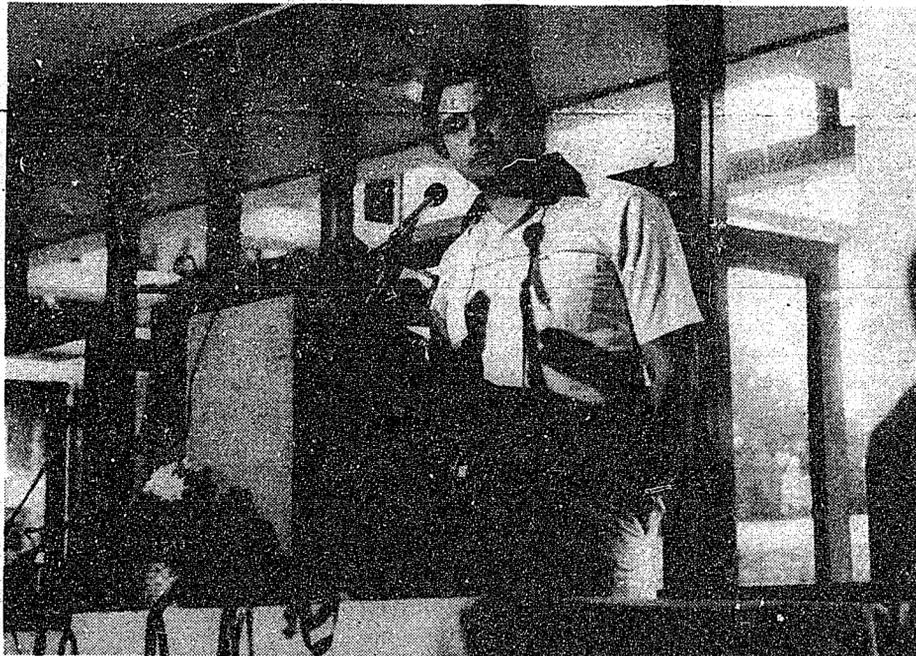
Another major effort must be put in bargaining, he said, to reverse the current trend whereby "we are fast becoming one of the lowest paid groups of teachers in Canada" and will definitely be near the bottom if no increase is awarded this year. Clarke pointed out that the federation will be pressing for a salary increase this year with the strong conviction that it is justified.

Among supportive factors, Clarke identified the fact that current B.C. salary increases for other groups are averaging about three per cent, teachers' salaries have been frozen for two years and, in many locals, salary concessions have been made. Another key factor, he said, is that "we've been under some form of restraint longer than most other groups."

The bargaining campaign is essential, Clarke stressed, in preventing further deterioration in the public education system.

"We have to avoid at all costs the situation that exists in the U.S., where teachers' salaries and working conditions are so miserable that last year throughout the U.S. there was a shortage of almost

See "Politicians" page 3



President Pat Clarke, speaking to the summer conference, urges teachers not to surrender to the "politics of despair" but to continue the struggle for public education.

## David Singh's battle continues

Beleaguered Lillooet teacher David Singh was in his classroom as usual as school opened after BCTF legal action forestalled school board attempts to fire or transfer him without due process.

But the battle continues as the board appears determined to oust Singh from his modern languages teaching position at Lillooet Secondary School on only vaguely-stated grounds relating to disciplinary habits.

The community has been rocked by controversy since April 24 when the board issued Singh, a probationary teacher, with a termination notice, giving no reasons for the firing. This provoked considerable outcry from parents, including a 200-name petition objecting to the action. It also resulted in the BCTF putting the position in dispute and sending in a commission of inquiry which concluded that the problem stemmed from the board running the system like "a family compact", revealing little information pub-

licly and accepting minimal staff or public input.

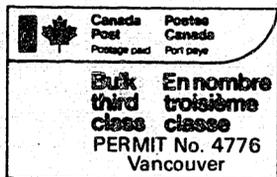
Teaching colleagues also supported Singh, one terming him "the finest French teacher we have had at Lillooet Secondary." Singh has taught in Lillooet for three years.

Subsequently, lawyers for the BCTF took the matter to the B.C. Supreme Court and won reinstatement for David Singh, the judge ruling that he had been improperly dismissed.

The Lillooet board appealed this judgment to the B.C. Court of Appeal and at the same time sought a stay of execution to bar Singh from returning to the classroom pending the outcome of the appeal. But on August 21 the appeal court judge rejected this request on the grounds that it would do an injustice to Singh.

In a significant elaboration of his reasoning, Mr. Justice Macfarlane observed: "In fairness, this teacher ought

See "Singh" page 2



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

## New education association urged as gov't counterweight

From page 1

said. "In the weeks that followed, no one, none of these principals, other than one or two of the predictable ones, the usual confident soreheads, went to the media to plead their case against the cutbacks."

In the face of the cuts, Kilian pointed out that he expected the same reaction from principals as from "mother bears and lionesses: the willingness to protect their own at any cost" — students first of all.

"The silence of our school principals is a scandal that none of them should be allowed to duck away from," he stressed. "I expect they will protest that their role isn't political, that they prefer to work quietly behind the scenes. Well, if they think their job isn't political, they don't understand their job at all and they ought to be turfed out."

Warning the applauding audience not to applaud too fast, Kilian went on to say that ordinary teachers were guilty of the same failing.

Recognizing that teaching does not "attract the kind of people who'd really rather join the Special Air Services regiment", Kilian nonetheless suggested to teachers that "if you are not prepared to join in public debate to defend your students, to warn the public that their children are in danger because of this government's actions, if you are not prepared to put your career on the line for your students, what the hell are you doing in a classroom anyway?"

There is a tendency for teachers not to make waves for fear of losing their jobs, but Kilian said he was not impressed with that attitude. "If you don't make waves, you'll lose your job and 3,000 former teachers are out there today to testify to that sorry fact. You won't be fired for saying disagreeable things; you'll be fired for being politically weak and, therefore, expendable."

## Class size campaign needs your help

Wes Knapp  
Professional Development

The BCTF's class size campaign begins this September in B.C. schools. The campaign is designed to seek a reduction in the thousands of classrooms which exceed federation limits.

Last year, over 9,000 classes were in excess of the BCTF class size limits. Even more violations are expected this year due to the loss of 1,500 teaching positions last June.

The layoffs in June have also hit support services in B.C. schools. Hundreds of staff assistants and teacher aides were terminated, weakening many school programs and devastating others.

This year's class size campaign harks back to the 1967 class size campaign when the federation declared war on large class sizes. Since then, considerable improvement has been made in class sizes throughout B.C. schools. However, those improvements are threatened today, and indeed, in some districts, class sizes are in the high 30s and low 40s, just as they were in the late 1960s.

The BCTF will support teachers who file class size grievances and back up local associations making "emergency aid" presentations to their school boards. A province-wide survey of class sizes will be conducted on September 28.

Teachers are reminded that the BCTF class size limits are as follows:

- Special Class (including ESL) . . . . . 10
- Kindergarten . . . . . 20
- Primary . . . . . 25
- Grades 4-12 . . . . . 30
- Splits (elementary) 5 fewer than above

2/SEPTEMBER 6, 1984



CRAWFORD KILIAN:

"If you don't make waves, you'll lose your job"

He said that he got another indication of teachers' attitudes last spring at the North Vancouver hearing on the White Paper when teachers gave politely-worded briefs and he gave his own brief that, in comparison, "was mean and vicious, ugly and nasty" — and received an ovation from the audience.

"Now they agreed with all those mean, vicious, intemperate things that I had said, but they hadn't said them," Kilian pointed out. "They still thought that they could reason with these people from the ministry. They were trying to be 'professional' and 'responsible' and all those other self-hypnotic words that we tend to use, and they were swallowing their true feelings about the White Paper and the whole sleazy anti-education mentality that produced it."

"Well, perhaps the teachers figured that any stick would beat a dog and I was a suitable blunt instrument. One way or another, educators did manage to slow the momentum of the White Paper. We may even have a breathing space before it is implemented. But obviously the government assumed it could foist this mess on the B.C. Schools with only minor objections from teachers. The government should have known before it started that putting forward that White Paper

would be asking for serious trouble, just as the Russians know better than to buzz the White House in Mig-21s.

"I suspect, in fact, the White Paper and the budget cuts and all the other insults are in part the consequences of teachers' own passivity in the face of each successive outrage. If you allow the government to treat you with contempt, you will be treated contemptibly."

Kilian went on to urge teachers to stand up for public education and to not let up in endeavouring to make the public aware of what is happening to its schools — through everything from letters to the editor to inviting non-parents into schools to enticing MLAs to visit schools.

He suggested that there will be no going back to "the good old days" in public education as that era had been ended by the attitudes and actions of the provincial government. He described that time as being marked by an "ecumenical" philosophy of education favoured by educators which sought "to accept, respect and teach every child regardless of background or abilities", while the present government and its supporters might be called "schismatics" in education, in that they are fond of classifications, divisions and streams as "a way of shaking out those who do not match some arbitrary ideal of merit or excellence or whatever the latest buzz-word happens to be."

Kilian warned that the "ecumenical philosophy of education" will survive only if education change according to the views of educators and the public, and he suggested that this thrust might come from "a new majority — the great bulk of the public — informed and advised by the majority of educators."

Toward this end, he urged teachers to start working for the formation of a coalition of groups with an interest in education — from teachers to trade unionists to employers — which might be called the B.C. Education Association. He envisaged it as being a non-partisan organization that would serve as a forum for the exchange of members' views on education and for the development of educational alternatives for public consideration. The association, he suggested, might also play a role in fostering controlled experiments that would lead to greater diversity and change in the education system.

It's a radical suggestion, he agreed, but he believes it's essential.

"If we can't create a major political counterweight to the provincial government," Kilian argued, "we will live and die by that government's untrammelled foolishness."

## Inquest calls for safety rules on school bus trips

The coroner's inquest into the deaths of two Victoria students in the Mount Washington bus crash has called on school boards to enact strict policies to ensure the safety of students on field trips.

This was the key education-related recommendation to come out of the inquiry into the January 30 crash following a school ski trip which left two students dead and 62 injured.

In its findings, the coroner's jury was strongly critical of the bus company and government regulatory authorities for lack of concern for public safety, detailing numerous faults with the bus operation and mechanical condition and with safety inspections. "This inquiry," the jury reported, "has exposed a flagrant disregard for the safety provisions encompassed by the Motor Vehicle and Motor Carrier Acts."

The jury found a lack of school board and individual school policies governing bus trips, inadequate trip planning and organization, teachers were unaware of motor vehicle regulations on bus transportation, particularly pertaining to standing passengers and that teachers had inadequate knowledge of their role in school bus trips, especially in accidents.

The coroner's jury concluded that "school boards must have policies to ensure the safety of students on school-sponsored trips involving bus transportation and these policies must be transmitted to individual schools for compliance."

## BCTF conference set on peace education

The BCTF is presenting a Peace Education Conference at the University of B.C. on October 19.

The day-long event, being held in the Student Union Building, has been planned in conjunction with the "Canadian Conference on Nuclear War: The Search for Solutions" on October 19-21.

The BCTF conference includes feature speakers, morning and afternoon workshops, a panel discussion and an open forum, "Pitfalls and Peaks in Teaching Peace: Case Studies." For more information contact Sandy Godard at the BCTF.

## Singh now fighting board transfer edict

From page 1

not to be deprived of his employment without being advised of the case against him and of having an opportunity to be heard. That has not yet occurred. On that general basis I would not want to exercise my discretion in favour of granting a stay when there is a real question whether the basic rules of natural justice have been observed."

The school board's next move was to give Singh a notice of transfer from his classroom position to a non-teaching position in the district resource centre. But Singh has rights to transfer appeal under section 120 of the School Act and BCTF lawyers sought an injunction to prevent him being shifted from the classroom until the transfer validity was determined.

Just before the first day of school, the board indicated that no further action would be taken until the transfer appeal process was completed.

But the School Act appeal process requires Singh to appeal to the school board for reversal of the transfer; if that fails, he may ask the minister of education to review the board's decision.

The minister has rarely overturned board decisions in such matters except where "discipline or loss of status" are involved.

It looks like the battle for David Singh's job is far from over.

## Parent-teacher networks needed to defend education

BCTF President Pat Clarke has called on teachers and parents to form a mutual defence pact to save public education.

It is in the interest of both groups that this be done through creation of supportive parent-teacher networks, he said, speaking to a BCTF summer conference panel on community involvement in schools.

"We have something to offer parents in terms of strengthening the public school system and they have something to offer us in terms of the strength they can provide teachers in doing that," said Clarke. "We have a common objective and that's the preservation or the defence of the public school system."

Clarke reminded his audience of about 100 conference participants that the public system is in "significant danger", not only through government cutbacks but also the proliferation of private schools keyed to exploit perceived weaknesses in public schools and through the spread of misunderstanding about public schools.

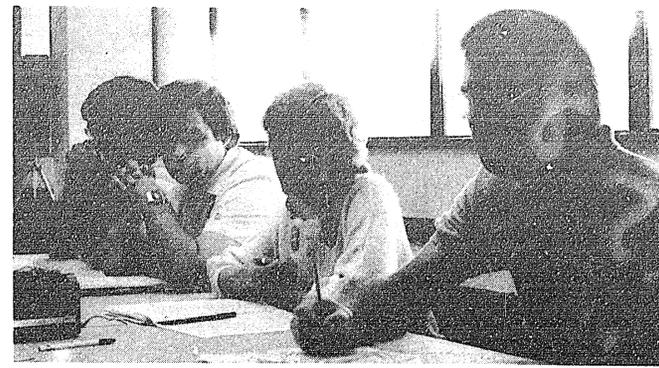
"What really worries me is that a lot of people have forgotten what public education is, what it is supposed to do," he said. "It has become a shop-window idea. What the real ideal is in our society is that it basically provides all children with the same kind of opportunity to succeed. It doesn't provide differing opportunities, or shouldn't, like a private school system would, where some children have better advantages than other children."

Clarke urged local associations, by tapping existing relationships, to reach out and build alliances with parent groups. He suggested that one model worth considering was Vancouver's school parent consultative committees, "a very effective parent lobby group" which works closely with teacher associations, is highly visible in the news media and is very active in making representations to the school board and ministry.

This drive should be focussed initially on sending representatives to the BCTF parent-teacher conference this fall, he said, which is intended to form a province-wide network that would become a major lobby on behalf of public education.

"I think we are in that sense opening some doors, we are coming out of the ivory tower," said Clarke. "Teachers for a long time have been afraid to do this kind of thing and I don't think we can be afraid of doing it anymore."

Claus Spiekermann, principal of Queen Mary Community School in North



Teachers need to find ways to act in partnership with their communities, was the consensus expressed by summer conference panelists (left to right) Clause Spiekermann, principal of North Vancouver's Queen Mary Community School, BCTF President Pat Clarke, B.C. Home and School Federation President Gwen Chute and chairperson Jim Skinner, Fraser Valley PDAC.

Vancouver, another panelist, pointed to community schools as another model for attracting greater public support.

He defined a community school in general terms as where "you act in partnership in addressing the needs of your community." For example, he said, at Queen Mary the school is involved with a wide variety of municipal, provincial and community agencies in presenting programs to serve the whole community — such as dental clinics, daycare, adult ESL classes, college courses and assisting families in crisis and combatting child abuse.

Spiekermann suggested that teachers and schools must particularly get involved in helping families in poverty and in crisis. "My contention is," he said, "that it is the teacher who has to speak for them because you deal with those children and families more than anyone in our society, more than a social worker or anyone else. You're their last best hope. Once we start speaking up for those people then I think that we, as an organization and as teachers, will again be honoured in our society."

Another panelist, Gwen Chute, a Coquitlam school trustee and vice-president of the BCSTA, but who was speaking in her role as president of the B.C. Home and School Federation, pointed out that parents tend to believe that while "their school is terrific, their teachers are great and their children are learning well, the rest of the system is going to hell in a handbasket."

## Politicians now must pay for cutbacks

From page 1

200,000 teachers," said Clarke. "What we must try to stave off is the ghettoization of the B.C. school system that will come if it is so neglected that it simply begins to implode and fall into a cycle of deterioration. Viewed in that light, there is no advantage to schools or to children in concessions or acquiescence on our part. We have reached the point where the politicians must pay the price for what is being done to our schools. It is sheer folly for teachers to bail them out."

Recognizing that the Compensation Stabilization Program still presents an obstacle, he said that teachers nonetheless must press their case before arbitration boards and he was confident that arbitrators would see its merits.

On a broader front, Clarke pointed out that while much of the public is hostile to teachers, believing that public employees are the source of much of the province's economic difficulties, there is still a great deal of support for public education. "There are thousands of people in this province who care as much about public education as we do," he said, noting that a great many people did not accept the

myth of government "restraint".

Clarke said that if the public education system is to be saved, teachers cannot do it alone, but local associations must reach out and form alliances with parent groups and other community groups concerned about defending public education. He suggested they could learn from the experience of the status of women and anti-racism programs about how to develop supportive community networks.

The basis of widespread support was laid through involvement with Solidarity and locals should expand on that, he said, leading to the BCTF's parent-teacher conference this fall which is planned as a means of building a provincial network of support for public education.

"We can't just quietly accept what's happened," said Clarke. "We have to get involved building those alliances, those networks and working in a public way that we've really never had to before to defend the system. If we don't, I'm afraid that a significant part of the public system is going to be lopped off. The public system will be less viable and the private system will appear more attractive to many people."

## Court upholds BCTF right to enforce Code of Ethics

The B.C. Supreme Court has upheld the right of the BCTF to enforce its Code of Ethics against a challenge based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The court on May 22, 1984 rejected a Smithers parent and teacher's petition seeking a stop to BCTF ethics violation proceedings against her on grounds that the proceedings infringed her right to freedom of speech.

The case grew out of the controversy provoked in January 1983 when Chandler Park Middle School counsellor Madeleine Sauve distributed a sex questionnaire to a Grade 8 class. Dian Cromer, a teacher at another Smithers school and mother of two sons, one a Grade 7 student at Chandler, made comments at a public meeting that Sauve found objectionable.

Sauve subsequently charged that Cromer was in breach of clause 5 of the BCTF Code of Ethics: "The teacher directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related duties of a colleague to that colleague and then, after informing the colleague of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence the criticism to appropriate officials who are in a position to offer advice and assistance."

In her court action, Cromer argued that, as she was speaking as a parent and not as a teacher at the public meeting, she had a right to express herself as she did and that to be called before the BCTF Judicial Committee infringed her rights as a parent to freedom of expression guaranteed by section 2 of the Charter.

In rejecting Cromer's argument, Mr. Justice Mackoff emphasized the importance of maintaining professional codes of ethics in order to preserve continued public confidence in the profession.

He pointed out that "regardless of the capacity in which the professional person acts or speaks, he or she is bound at all times to conduct himself or herself in accordance with the profession's Code of Ethics." Mr. Justice Mackoff concluded that "the Code of Ethics does not preclude the petitioner from acting as a concerned parent, nor does it deny her the right of expressing those concerns ... it merely provides that she must express them by following a certain procedure."

The judge added that whether or not Cromer was in violation of the Code of Ethics was a matter to be decided by the BCTF Judicial Committee.

## Hilroy Fellowships

The Hilroy Fellowship program, established by the Roy C. Hill Charitable Foundation and administered by the Canadian Teachers' Federation Trust Fund encourages and rewards active classroom teachers who have developed new ideas for the improvement of teaching practices.

Applications may be considered from individuals or small teams of teachers, ordinarily not more than six in a group.

Recommendations for the award of fellowships of \$1,500 each at the provincial level will be made by the provincial teacher organizations. Recommendations for the award of \$5,500 for outstanding merit, and three national awards of \$3,500 each for great merit, will be made by the National Advisory Council. The final selections in all cases will be made by the Roy C. Hill Charitable Foundation.

Applications must be made in English or French on the official application form and must reach the Hilroy Fellowship Committee of the provincial teacher organization not later than October 31. Application forms and full instructions on submitting applications may be obtained from Secretary-Treasurer, CTF Trust Fund, c/o Canadian Teachers' Federation, 110 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2P 1B4 or Thelma Weinreich, Professional Development Division, B.C. Teachers' Federation, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9.

## Lesson Aids offers awards for computer materials

Awards of \$700 are available from the Lesson Aids Service through its 1985 Materials Development Fund for the development of curriculum materials and microcomputer software.

Information and application forms can be obtained by contacting the BCTF Lesson Aids Service, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9, or by telephoning 731-8121 or toll-free 112-800-663-9163. Deadline for submission of applications is December 31, 1984. All projects are to be completed by August 31, 1985.

## 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 39.26 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.

MEMBER: EDPRESS      UTFE      ISSN 0709-9800

BCTF Newsletter

Editorial Advisory

Board

Barbara Perrott

Chairperson

Margaret Chitrenky

Lynne Hampson

Gabriella Moro

Virginia Shaw

# In memory of "Mr. BCTF Pensions"

John S. Church

D. J. S. Smith, who died June 21, 1984, after a brief illness, was known to thousands of retired B.C. teachers as "Mr. BCTF Pensions." As a BCTF staff member for a decade after 1968, Dave Smith counselled hundreds of teachers as they prepared to retire. Time and again one heard praise of his knowledge, understanding and patience. To other teachers caught in despair and personal tragedies, he brought hope and support through his work with the BCTF Benevolent Society.

Long before his appointment to staff, Dave Smith had been a tireless worker to have pensions improved. The first improvement came in 1961.

As a volunteer worker on behalf of his colleagues, Dave Smith stands at the forefront of many developments. In 1945, for example, as Max Cameron was beginning his survey of education financing, he engaged Smith to type the report and to prepare the charts and graphs which accompanied this landmark report. The present pattern of school districts as recommended by Cameron with advice and assistance offered by Dave Smith has remained largely intact for almost 40 years.

When in 1949 the BCTF established its first Education Finance Committee Smith was an obvious choice as a member. So too was John Sutherland, long-term activist and former president, 1939-40. Many stories have been told of how

Dave, John and Allan Spragge, then a BCTF staff member, were able to hold their own and occasionally outfox that wiliest of financiers, W. A. C. Bennett, when he served as premier of the province. Smith and colleagues never left any stone unturned when a submission to government was prepared.

In the Fifties and early Sixties, Dave Smith was a long-serving member of the BCTF Executive Committee, including one year as second vice-president. At that time the 29-member executive represented various regions or district councils and Dave's area was Vancouver Island North and Powell River.

In the early Sixties, Dave was a leading activist in promoting political restructuring of the BCTF, which culminated in the establishment of an 11-member Executive Committee with members all elected by the Annual General Meeting and in the creation of the Representative Assembly. The specific functions assigned to each body were largely the creative work of Dave Smith, always an authority on our constitution.

In recognition of outstanding service to the federation, the 1966 AGM conferred on Dave an honorary life membership. It is indeed a unique honour when this is conferred in mid-career. This was proved two years later when he was appointed to the BCTF staff.

Dave's teaching career spanned 31 years from 1937 to 1968 — three years as



Dave Smith

sole teacher in isolated Peace River region rural schools, five years in Abbotsford, two in both Hedley and Ladner and the final 19 in Port Alberni as commercial specialist at Alberni District High School. In addition, Dave found time to write a textbook which became the prescribed text for Law 92.

In retirement, he served as volunteer counsellor at 411 to the needy, the destitute, the helpless. He visited incapacitated former colleagues. He gave regularly to

the food bank for the needy, the hungry. Always the Christian and the humanist, always the socialist and the activist, he laboured on behalf of his church and his political party. His own personal affliction he never allowed to interfere with or to stop the pursuit of his own "good works." He was a devoted and loyal husband to Clara, father to daughters Irene and Louise, and grandfather to five grandchildren.

Dave Smith was a challenging and inspiring friend to many. The owner of a keen, quick mind, and a fantastic sense of humour, he was yet at times stubborn, and at other times he could be dogmatic. That was however part of the Dave Smith his friends came to love, respect.

The history of the BCTF that he and I had just started to write I now hope to complete as a partial memorial to his myriad labours. I shall always remember how consistently he maintained a unity between his faith and his actions, his belief and his occupations.

I hope, I believe, that a small part of that history will help future teachers and volunteers to remember too that David J. S. Smith was a true pioneer who laboured at the frontier of new developments in public education and in teacher affairs for nearly 50 years.

John Church, the recently-retired former BCTF professional development division acting director, is working on a history of the BCTF.

## Letters

### Universities to blame for upgrading failures of science teachers

Dr. Gaskell should not blame the public school system for the inadequate training in science of elementary school teachers (*BCTF Newsletter*, June 6, 1984) when the blame, in fact, lies with the universities.

The Science Council of Canada complains that 75 per cent of elementary teachers have not taken a science course since leaving school; yet from 1970, when I registered, to 1979, when I gave up waiting, UBC sold no physics courses at summer school. Just how does a teacher take a course which is not offered by the university?

The council claims to want more technology in schools. At least one university has failed woefully to offer physics education to practising teachers outside the lower mainland; I found my technical education superior to my academic education

in the same field. Consequently, I suggest that science teacher training be put in the hands of BCIT.

Dr. Gaskell, as a professor of education, is supposed to be a resource for teachers in the field. However, when he blames the school system for his own institution's inadequacies, he is merely a resource for teacher-bashers.

W. S. Aspden  
Cranberry Lake elementary  
Powell River

### Surrey parents' group surprised by "leaders"

The members of the executive of District No. 36 Council for Education read the article, "Surrey parents leading fight against layoffs" (April 18, 1984), with great interest. Since one or more of us attended and spoke at every informational meeting held in Surrey, urging parents to speak out against "restraint" —

and have been doing so for the past two years — we were surprised to learn that Mrs. Allinger and Mrs. Kerr are the leaders in the defence of children's education in Surrey.

I enclose copies of the information and briefs that District Council has compiled and distributed to all school parent groups in an effort to make our Surrey parents more aware. It seems we were successful.

Melody Sawkins  
Chairperson  
District Council for Education  
Surrey

*The author, David Handelman, referred to Mrs. Allinger and Mrs. Kerr as "key examples of parents getting involved and showing leadership in defence of their children's education." He did not intend to slight others who also played prominent leadership roles. — Ed.*

### Of what bird issueth the imperial "yolk"?

As an erstwhile teacher who's paid his BCTF dues, lit. & fig., I continue to read your federation's house organ with interest, though the warmth of my enthusiasm for some of the BCTF's pet windmills is admittedly only luke at best.

Nevertheless, I occasionally come away from a "read" of the *Newsletter* having been provoked out of intellectual inertia and into a state of energized contemplation.

Singly the best bit of reading encountered in some time was J. Exner's letter re Ms. Dimsdale's letter on civil disobedience wherein Exner reports that "Ghan-

dhi, though not a Christian, used civil disobedience to free the Indians of India from the imperial yolk of England."

Tell me, Sir Editor, of what bird issueth said "yolk"? I'm advised the starling is the national bird of England (thanks to its uncharming squawk in lieu of song, its homely appearance and dubious social value), but surely an "imperial yolk" has more majesty to it than that lowly pest. Then again, "Ghandi" (is it not spelled "Gandhi"?) did indulge in hunger strikes to protest the Brits, so maybe he was in fact opposed to eating omelets, or ...?

In all, thanks, folks, for some probably unintended humour to help me digest the other stuff that adorns your pages.

W. Baird Blackstone  
White Rock

*The "yolk" is on the editor for missing the classic typo. Blush, blush... Blackstone taught in Surrey from 1970-1974; he is now employed in the Surrey School Board employee relations department. — Ed.*

### Are you getting your Newsletter?

Address errors can be costly — please help us keep up-to-date.

All members: If your home address has changed, or if we don't have it correctly, please give us your proper address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social insurance number \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ postal code \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Staff reps: If the number of Newsletters that should come to your school has increased or decreased, or if for some reason we are not supplying the right number, please give us the correct quantity:

Number of Newsletters needed \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Staff rep \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this coupon to: Member Records, B.C. Teachers' Federation, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9.

## Vacancies

### Certification Advisory Committee

Three BCTF representatives are sought for this ministry of education committee. The term of office is two years. The committee has the following functions:

Review appeals and advise ministry about certification decisions;

Discuss and advise universities — and other agencies — about implications for certification of university teacher education programs;

Review decisions and advise the minister about decertification of teachers;

Advise the minister about certification policies and procedures;

Enquire about and investigate specific aspects of certification practices and procedures.

Applications, with curriculum vitae, should be submitted to Jacquie Boyer at the BCTF not later than Wednesday, October 10, 1984.