

BCTF wants Noyes barred from teaching

The B.C. Teachers' Federation has called on the provincial cabinet to permanently revoke the teaching certificate of confessed child abuser Robert Noyes.

The Executive Committee decided to make this request following a lengthy discussion January 16 of the Noyes case and the general problem of child abuse in B.C.

If the government does not act by May 31, the executive also decided that it would begin disciplinary action against Noyes, under the Code of Ethics or constitutional provisions on prejudicial or harmful conduct, aimed at stripping him of his BCTF membership.

Alarmed at the apparent increase in child abuse, the executive further called

for the launching of a full-scale public inquiry into the problem of child abuse in B.C., in the hope of developing effective counter-measures.

Robert Noyes has pleaded guilty to 19 charges of sexual assault on students in four school districts where he taught over a period of 15 years. He is currently awaiting sentencing.

A group of parents in Ashcroft, where he was employed as an elementary principal at the time of his arrest last April, has called for a public inquiry into the Noyes case.

BCTF President Pat Clarke told a news conference that the number of similar cases reveals the urgent need for
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BCTF Newsletter

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Kitimat conflict

BCTF commission spurs board to launch its own district review

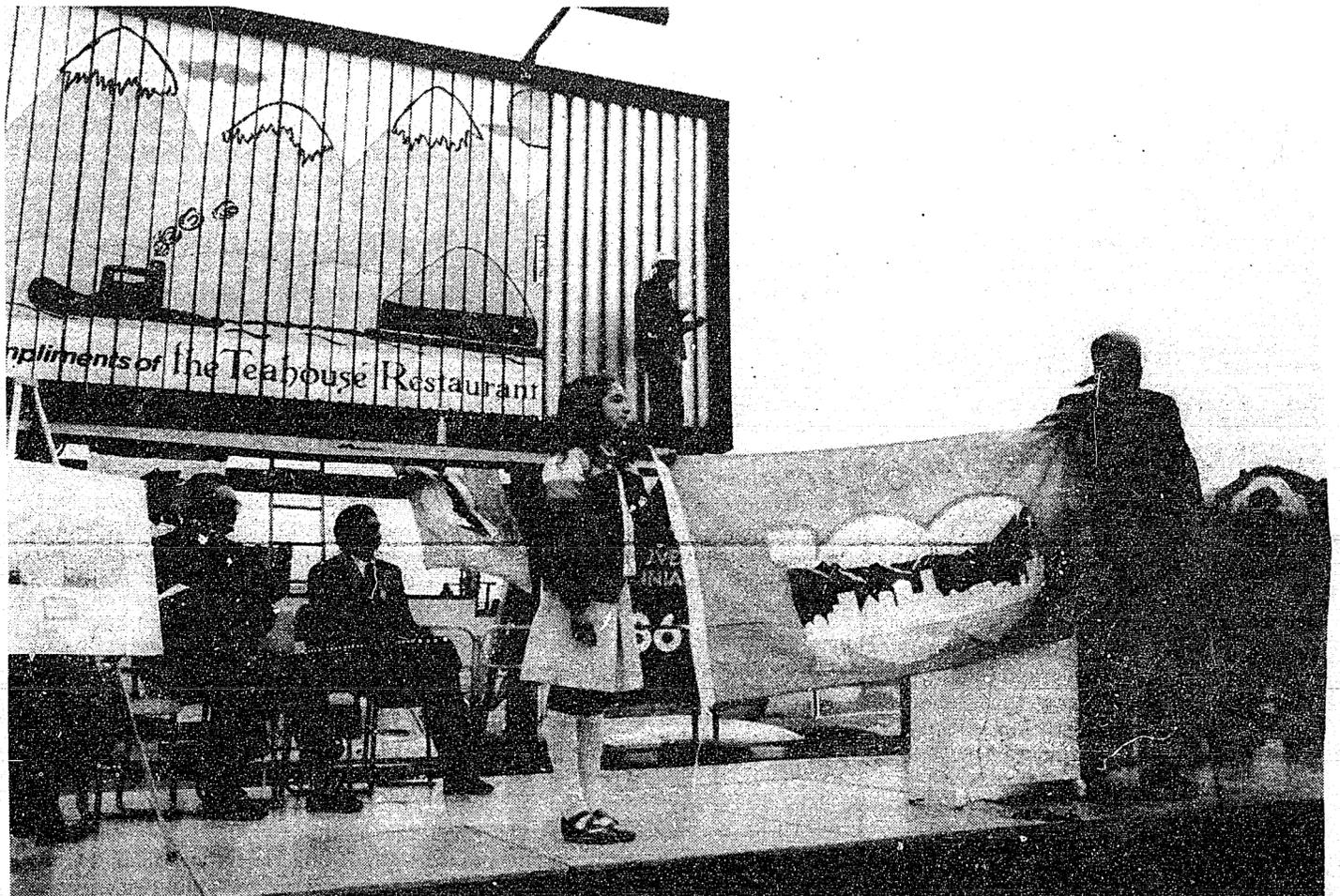
In response to a highly-critical BCTF-appointed commission of inquiry into district labour turmoil, the Kitimat School Board has decided to undertake "an independent review of educational, administrative and personnel practices."

Chairperson Rick Wozney made the announcement on January 17 after the board had reviewed the BCTF commission report, which had concluded that a major cause of the recent breakdown in school district labour relations was the "autocratic" management style of the superintendent.

The commission called on the school board to reassert control over the district, end the atmosphere of confrontation and restore an open, cooperative relationship with local teachers.

Wozney said the independent review will be conducted by a team of external consultants, to be selected next month and expected to begin work in early March. The board, he said, will give the team access to all school district infor-

See "Inquiry" page 6



Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt (right) presents Southlands Grade 7 student Lindsay Prentice with a city centennial flag in recognition of her poster art being chosen for erection on a series of billboards sponsored by the Teahouse Restaurant. Lindsay was one of 10 students whose artwork was selected for display on 100 billboards around the city, under a joint centennial project of the Vancouver School Board, Seaboard Advertising Co. and several corporate sponsors.

Avoid flawed arbitrations

Campaign to negotiate gains

George North
Bargaining Division

Teachers are charting a new course in this year's bargaining aimed at direct settlements with school boards on a phased basis starting with seniority/severance clauses followed by a range of expanded scope items and finally, improvements in salaries.

Clearly, the objective is to avoid going through an arbitration process that has been undermined by the provincial government. Pointing to the past year's experience, the BCTF Bargaining Committee reports that some locals went through as many as three arbitrations, or rearbitrations, in most cases ending up with "negotiated" settlements under circumstances forced on teachers by government interference through its wage control program.

"In virtually all cases," the Bargaining Committee notes, "positive arbitration awards were rejected by the Compensation Stabilization Program (CSP) commissioner and referred back to the parties. In some cases, further negotiation and mediation brought the parties to an agreement. In others, rearbitration led to further erosion of awards and difficulties that could only be settled by renegotiation."

In fact, the committee declares, "... government interference has rendered arbitration costly, largely meaningless

and ... an affront to the bargaining process."

The 61 arbitrations for the six-month contracts, the rearbitration of 15 awards and the 34 arbitrations for current 12-month contracts cost the BCTF and its local associations well over \$300,000 plus an indeterminate amount of members' time and energy. School boards spent considerably more. Two years ago, boards claimed that 65 arbitrations would cost about \$675,000.

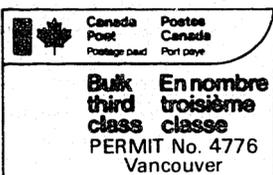
The committee's conclusion is that because arbitration does not settle

contracts, boards and teachers should resolve their differences across the bargaining table.

Some of the objective factors influencing the committee recommendations for negotiated settlements are:

- seniority/severance clauses must be resolved by negotiation since arbitration boards have said they are beyond their jurisdiction;
- most non-salary, non-bonus items fall into the same category;
- arbitrations take place after school board budgets have been set under a formula controlled by the provincial government;
- arbitration board chairpersons are named by the government;
- arbitrators are governed by CSP rules (chiefly ability-to-pay and arbitrary guidelines set by the commissioner) directed at thwarting salary increases;
- arbitrators are clearly influenced by government actions and statements during bargaining or arbitration pro-

See "Salary" page 3



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Education review to be made issue in provincial election

The BCTF intends to campaign vigorously to make government support for a public commission on education a major issue in the next provincial election.

This was one of three recommendations from the Task Force on a Public Commission on Education adopted by the Executive Committee at its meeting January 18. The task force pointed out that opinion surveys indicate public support for a commission and that the only provincial party not on record as favouring a commission is the Social Credit Party.

Task force chairperson Gale Tyler reported on the difficulties encountered in following up on the executive's December 6, 1985 decision to pursue a BCTF-driven commission on education.

After discussing some of these problems — timing, the reluctance of the trustees association to participate, and the lack of an available distinguished chairperson — executive members nonetheless expressed determination to pursue the commission as a vitally-needed project.

The executive consequently decided to take more time to ensure that the commission was developed and carried out properly, adopting recommendations to continue planning a full-scale public commission and seeking a prominent individual to head it.

RA approval sought for conference on quality of education

The Representative Assembly will be asked to approve a proposal for a BCTF-sponsored conference on quality education and effective schools.

The Executive Committee decided to recommend the conference as an opportunity for the BCTF to address teacher control of professional practice and to counter current ministry and school board initiatives in the areas of effective teaching and teacher competence.

In introducing the proposal, First Vice-President Elsie McMurphy said the conference would provide "an opportunity for the federation to adopt a preemptive strategy to exercise and demonstrate the ability and right of teachers to be self-determining professionals, expert in their chosen careers."

Among its objectives, the conference, tentatively planned to be held in Vancouver on March 7-8, would aim at presenting an analysis of effective teaching and effective schools, highlighting local and BCTF professional development initiatives, examining the resources and bargaining environment and developing strategies for policy and program directions.

"While recognizing concerns about competence," said McMurphy, "at the same time the conference would give us the opportunity to demonstrate that questions of excellence and quality of instruction cannot be separated from the issues of funding and autonomy (of teachers and school boards) and limited bargaining and statutory rights."

Members reminded of duty to report child abuse

Teachers are reminded of their responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse. If you have reasonable grounds for suspecting a case of child abuse, you are **required by law** to report to the local ministry of human resources office, to the local police and to inform your school principal. You should also note that reporting a case involving a colleague does not constitute a breach of the BCTF Code of Ethics.

22/JANUARY 23, 1986

Editorial

Propaganda wars about to resume

The recent announcement by the Minister of Education that he is restoring control over residential property taxes to local boards signals the beginning of the 1986 propaganda wars in public education. Here we go again.

After three years of an unemployment creation program called RESTRAINT we will now be sustaining a constant high level of unemployment called RECOVERY. Before I give you an outline of the script that will inevitably unfold in the months ahead let me give you a brief statistical picture of restraint B.C. government-style so that you can see from whence cometh my cynicism.

In 1982 the total cost of operating the B.C. public school system (including pension contributions) was \$1,867,000,000. By 1985/86 the total cost was estimated to be \$1,839,400,000, a decrease of some \$28,000,000 per year. I'll leave to the mathematicians the calculations of the real drop when inflation is accounted for, but a friendly researcher says it's somewhere between 16 and 17 per cent.

By contrast the provincial budget went from \$7,513,300,000 in 1982/83 to an estimated \$9,056,000,000 in 1985/86, a 20 per cent increase.

Given that backdrop you can see why I think that RESTRAINT and RECOVERY are horses out of the same mythical stable. But perpetuating myths is what the government's propaganda machine does very well and here's what they are gearing up to tell the voters this year.

Education costs were out of control. The provincial government had to take budget responsibilities away from wishy-washy trustees who were being outmanoeuvred by greedy teachers. Because of their farsighted acumen the provincial government has now set public education's house in order. The report, *Let's Talk About Schools*, commissioned by the government, noted that the public wanted greater autonomy for school boards and so in keeping with that, and with the great wave of RECOVERY sweeping the province, school boards have now had their rights to control residential property taxes restored. Amen.

Now residential property taxes cover about 10 per cent of the total costs of public education; the other 90 per cent comes from a combination of direct provincial grants and the commercial and industrial property tax, which was expropriated by the provincial government at about the same time they were starting their unemployment creation program. And if you think that RECOVERY means that they are going to dramatically increase the amounts of money provided to education from grants and the commercial-industrial tax base, I've got a bridge I can sell you — cheap. To be sure, they will make some grandiose announcements about "new" money being pumped into the system for textbooks and curriculum development, for internship programs and computers, for certification and in-service, and the evaluation of teachers. And they'll wrap a lot of high-sounding verbiage around that — about effective schools, teacher competency and similar buzz words that sound attractive to the public — to make the government's image look good and direct the voters' gaze away from the real villains in the drama.

Meanwhile on the back forty, your local school board, looking at its own recovery program, will no doubt have to consider increasing residential taxes. If residential taxes rose significantly the government could gallop to the rescue of the beleaguered taxpayer by increasing the homeowner grant. And if the teachers start muttering about salary increases they'll get the double whammy of being branded as avaricious and bad British Columbians in the media while the Compensation Stabilization Commissar belts them in the wallet.

All of this rhetoric and strategy will have nothing whatever to do with the needs of children, improving the practise of teaching, the importance of public education or building a better society. It will have everything to do with ensuring that if there is an election this year the education can will not be tied to the government's tail. I wouldn't bet against them succeeding.

Jim Bowman
Director
Government Division

"Immoral" to cut unemployment insurance

With thousands of British Columbians suffering in unemployment, any cutbacks to unemployment insurance would be "totally immoral", the coordinator of the Unemployed Teachers' Action Centre told a federal commission on unemployment insurance recently.

"We are in the midst of an economic depression that is tragedy for a large percentage of the population of this country," Mel Lehan told the Vancouver hearing of the six-member commission. "It's not a recession — it's a depression." Lehan pointed out that there are now

Noyes case

Full public inquiry into child abuse called for by BCTF

From page 1

a wide-ranging inquiry, involving teachers, social workers and other agencies involved with children as well as the provincial government. "This inquiry should cover the whole spectrum of child abuse and how to prevent it," he said.

Clarke expressed concern with the adequacy of administrative procedures as Noyes was able to sexually abuse children in his care and move from job to job without being caught.

He also criticized the inadequacy of provincial government legislation and support services, noting that the ministry of human resources had wiped out the child abuse teams.

"That proved to be a false economy," he said. "The government must provide the investigative and support services needed to protect our children from abuse."

Clarke pointed out that for several years the BCTF has been taking a lead in pressing for more action to counteract the problem. He said the federation has long advocated (without success) the introduction of family life education, urged closer scrutiny through internship before would-be teachers are certificated, held workshops on children's rights and child abuse, and lobbied the government to try to get the effective anti-abuse CARE program into more schools.

In answer to a reporter's question, Clarke admitted that the federation found itself in a difficult position giving legal aid to a confessed child abuser, but present policy requires that he be given assistance. He said the way the bylaws are now worded, the BCTF is obligated to subsidize Noyes' legal expenses from the time of arrest "up to and including the time of trial." He added that this support will end when Noyes is sentenced.

Robert Noyes, he pointed out, is the first teacher ever to apply for legal aid in a case of child abuse and since then there have been others.

"This is a fairly new development," said Clarke. "It's not something we've had to deal with until now."

The BCTF, he said, regularly reviews its procedures for providing legal assistance to members and this will continue, particularly regarding cases of child abuse.

12,000 unemployed teachers among B.C.'s 200,000 unemployed.

He said he was "sickened" hearing presentations by business executives calling for cutbacks in benefits to the unemployed, arguing that many families are suffering as badly, if not worse, than in the Thirties and it is only our "social safety net" that keeps them going.

"The cornerstone of that whole foundation of safety is unemployment insurance, and that is why we cannot in any way, shape or form cut back on unemployment insurance," said Lehan. "Cutbacks to unemployment insurance are totally unacceptable and totally immoral — and I hope you take that message back loud and clear to the government of this country."

Instead of cutbacks, Lehan proposed a number of improvements to unemployment insurance provisions, including shortening the qualifying period to 10 weeks, increasing benefits, paying benefits until the claimant finds a job (instead of just for a fixed period), developing more complete, accurate statistics on unemployment and making it mandatory for the rules to be explained to claimants.

Salary gains set as key goal

From page 1

ceedings as exemplified by the illegal "Curtis directive" that set out penalties for boards granting salary increases where staffing levels were alleged to be below arbitrary government figures.

Loss of increments in some 15 local arbitrations and successful local action taken to restore them are key factors underlying the Bargaining Committee recommendations which have so far won considerable support.

The committee sees full membership involvement in the bargaining objective-setting process as crucial to strong local support for achieving improved conditions in contract. And the same support is required where specific local actions are necessary to arrive at negotiated agreements for the 1986-87 term.

In support of the Bargaining Committee recommendations for phased negotiations, locals will be opening early — no later than February 1 — with the aim of concluding seniority clauses by the end of the month followed by non-salary issues by March 31, and salaries by late April, prior to the May legislated arbitration dates. In the view of the Bargaining Committee, local action plans must be predicated on "clear objectives, strong membership backing, firm bargaining timelines and local actions to enforce them at each stage of negotiations." And these objectives must include much-needed salary increases which locals will soon be making clear to their boards.

To help facilitate local actions, the BCTF Executive Committee has endorsed a committee recommendation to the Representative Assembly providing for payment of strike pay effective on the first, rather than the third, day of a local withdrawal of services. "In any situation arising from negotiations, increments, personnel practices, professional rights, Bill 35, or grievances against school boards."

Local presidents, bargaining chairpersons, and members of the provincial Bargaining, Professional Development, Status of Women and Working and Learning Conditions Committees recently participated in regional meetings to deal with the bargaining focus and

some of the skills required to implement the plans.

Teachers are determined to negotiate contract improvements in employment security, basic working conditions, fair personnel practices and salary increases that begin to redress some rather serious losses suffered over the past three and one-half years. If school boards really want to establish improved relations in the workplace, they will have to bargain seriously to meet teacher concerns in contractual terms. Trustees will only exacerbate the situation if issues are left unsettled in the vain hope that arbitration will sweep them aside. Teachers are emphatically rejecting a process that is flawed and unfair under conditions imposed by the provincial government.



Burnaby job action forces settlement

George North
Bargaining Division

Bargaining for 1985-86 contracts has all but concluded 16 months after it started with only one unsettled contract, a .6 per cent re-arbitrated award that Revelstoke teachers have refused to give up following its referral back to the parties by CSP Commissioner Ed Peck. The six-month agreement was arbitrated, with the arbitration board first awarding a three per cent increase, then re-arbitrating the figure to .6 per cent, only to have Peck refer it back to the parties when the school board convinced him of its inability to pay.

In a sense, this situation illustrates the box into which teachers have been placed by a combination of government underfunding, legislation that makes "ability to pay" a basic criterion for salary increases, an appointed agent who executes the government's intent, an arbitration process that has become subservient to CSP, and a school board that avoids the responsibility of negotiating fairly with its employees.

How the matter will be resolved is an open question. Technically, the commissioner could place teachers under the regulations and arbitrarily set a salary figure. If this occurred, it would be the first time in the over 3,000 public sector salary settlements that automatically go before the commissioner. The local has rejected mediation as pointless under the circumstances, so the .6 per cent figure sits in limbo, a symbol of how unfairly wage controls work.

Both the Chilliwack and Agassiz-Harrison contracts appear to be settled, subject of course to the vagaries of the CSP commissioner. Teachers in Chilliwack originally won a 2.65% arbitrated award in December of 1984 which was rejected by Peck on grounds that it exceeded his guideline figure of 1.75 per cent and also on the school board's claim of inability to pay. The award was re-arbitrated on December 2 with a board majority scaling it down to 1.52 per cent on grid. The school board which showed a \$123,000 surplus, claimed inability to pay. Following the award, however, the

matter was settled over the bargaining table following a local decision to carry out a campaign in support of its implementation.

Agassiz-Harrison teachers will receive the same percentage increase according to an earlier agreement reached with their school board.

As this issue went to press, agreement was reached between Burnaby teachers and their board on a contract providing a .5 per cent salary increase effective December 1985, a 1.15 per cent increase effective in June 1986, and a grievance procedure with third-party arbitration.

The agreement ended the "instruction only" campaign teachers launched in November when negotiations reached an impasse over a board demand that teachers include a clause precluding job action during the life of the contract in exchange for a grievance procedure with arbitration of issues in dispute as a process for their resolution.

The issue of payment of increments has finally been resolved in all districts where the matter was in dispute.

How B.C. teacher salaries are falling behind

B.C. teachers' salaries are falling dramatically behind — both the rate of inflation and what colleagues are earning in other provinces.

In the three years that the Compensation Stabilization Program has restricted bargaining, BCTF members have seen 10 per cent of their real incomes lost to inflation.

Now a Canadian Teachers' Federation study, analyzing growth in salary grids for 13 jurisdictions from the 1970s to the present, has shown that teachers in this province, under the impact of the CSP, are rapidly slipping down among the lowest paid in Canada.

Vancouver is the jurisdiction used in the CTF study, *Summary of Major Teacher Salary Scales in Canada*, to reflect trends affecting B.C. teacher salary scales. The following shows how seriously government bargaining constraints affected salaries.

YEAR 1

Vancouver salaries tended towards the higher end of the comparative scale during the first year, 1983, of CSP.

1983 SALARY RANKING BY TEACHER CATEGORY

	4 min.	4 max.	5 min.	5 max.	6 min.	6 max.
Vancouver's ranking	4th	5th	2nd	6th	2nd	1st (of 10)
Above Vancouver	Calgary	Calgary	Nfld.	Calgary	Nfld.	
	Edmonton	Edmonton		Edmonton		
	Nfld.	Sask.		London		
		Winnipeg		Toronto		
				Ottawa		

YEAR 2

A year later, with teachers denied a salary increase for 1984, Vancouver's relative ranking dropped substantially.

1984 SALARY RANKING BY CATEGORY

	4 min.	4 max.	5 min.	5 max.	6 min.	6 max.
Vancouver's position	5th	8th	4th	8th	3rd	1st (of 10)
Above Vancouver	Calgary	Calgary	Winnipeg	Calgary	Winnipeg	
	Edmonton	Edmonton	Ottawa	Edmonton	Nfld.	
	Winnipeg	Sask.	Nfld.	Sask.		
	Nfld.	Winnipeg		London		
		Toronto		Ottawa		
		Nova Scotia		Nova Scotia		

YEAR 3

With Vancouver teachers under restraint, in the third year, 1985, Calgary and Edmonton teachers consolidated their leads over Vancouver while Ontario, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland teachers also moved ahead.

1985 SALARY RANKING BY CATEGORY

	4 min.	4 max.	5 min.	5 max.	6 min.	6 max.
Vancouver's ranking	7th	9th	7th	9th	4th	4th (of 10)
Above Vancouver	Calgary	Calgary	Calgary	Calgary	Winnipeg	Calgary
	Edmonton	Edmonton	Edmonton	Edmonton	Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia
	Winnipeg	Winnipeg	Winnipeg	Sask.	Nfld.	Sask.
	Sask.	Sask.	Ottawa	Winnipeg		
	Nova Scotia	London	Nova Scotia	London		
	Nfld.	Ottawa	Nfld.	Ottawa		
		Toronto		Toronto		
		Nova Scotia		Nova Scotia		

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CLIVE COCKING Editor

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Opposition parties outline education proposals

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LIBERAL PARTY believes that the opportunity for education is a fundamental right for all citizens. Furthermore, educational opportunity should be available on a lifelong basis.

The B.C. Liberal Party will assume full responsibility for ensuring that elementary, secondary, and most post-secondary programs of the highest quality are in place. However, given the changing structures and needs of society, we will also develop innovative means of providing lifelong educational opportunities through creative partnerships with traditional educational institutions, business and labour organizations, other community resources, and, of course, the individual citizens.

3. Instruction and Curriculum. The most important element of education is the interaction between teacher and learner. Well-trained, professional teachers are the key to maintaining and improving educational programs provided to children and adults.

A Liberal government will upgrade pre-service and in-service programs for teachers. This will be done in consultation with trustees, teachers, administrators, and the universities.

Teachers will be fully involved in the development and implementation of improved curriculum and resource materials. This will be done at the provincial and local levels. Adequate funds will be provided for curriculum and professional development programs.

TODAY'S EDUCATION DEBATE is between those calling for a return to simpler (and cheaper) academic-centred schooling of the Thirties and those advocating schools with curricular offerings capable of responding to the needs of every child regardless of talent.

The New Democratic Party favours the second approach because a multi-racial student body coupled with current high retention rates demand broadened choices as the only fair and equitable way of serving B.C.'s young people. We seek education excellence through improved matching of student and subject, not by returning to yesterday's subject-centred philosophy in which society takes no responsibility for the system's casualties.

A royal commission

There has been no comprehensive examination of education in B.C. for a quarter century. A royal commission with a broad mandate to examine all aspects of public education is needed. Full participation by the public and all players in the education community will enable the commission to make sound recommendations for the long-term.

But this will take time. Education needs some quick action now.

Liberal Party

Society's structures and needs have changed. The education system must gradually but constantly change to meet these needs. This implies a regular process for the review of the goals of the public education system. Unfortunately, recent provincial governments have not seen fit to incorporate such a process into the overall structure. A fresh viewpoint is needed.

A B.C. Liberal government would establish a broadly-based, independent commission to conduct a thorough review of the education system, to redefine its goals and methods of achieving those goals. The commission would also recommend a structure and process for ongoing improvement of the system so that we do not wait 25 years for the next re-examination.

The commission would be directed to present recommendations in the following areas:

1. Governance. The balance must be restored between local and central control. The process of centralization of power should be reversed. In the short-term, a Liberal government would restore democratically-elected school boards to Vancouver and Cowichan, and would ensure that, through genuine trust and consultation, such situations would not re-occur.

2. Finance. The funding of education will be reorganized in such a way as to be free from political manipulation. It will be based on a formula which provides equality of opportunity throughout the province yet does not unfairly burden the homeowner and commercial property owner.

Discussion will take place with the federal government to eliminate misunderstandings concerning federal funds for post-secondary education. A Liberal government would match federal funds dollar for dollar. We will begin the recovery of our post-secondary system and will return it to its rightful place as a leader in North America. Above all, education will be funded as a high-priority activity. It will be considered as a long-term investment for the future, not a short-term cost.

A Liberal government will not simply pay lip-service to computer literacy as an integral part of the school curriculum. Funds will be provided to ensure that this can happen. This is one area in which creative partnerships could be developed with the business community, colleges, and universities.

Finally, a Liberal Ministry of Education would ensure a high degree of accountability at all levels within the public education system. The public and students have a right to receive value for money invested in education.

4. The Teaching Profession. The Liberal Party considers teaching to be a worthy profession. A Liberal government would consult with teachers to develop a system of governance for the professional which will ensure the highest possible level of professionalism and dedication from teachers who will therefore earn and deserve the respect of their peers and the community at large.

The B.C. Teachers' Federation is considering a proposal to expand the scope of bargaining and professional rights for teachers. We can support many recommendations in this report and will be prepared to conduct discussion on the report. The Liberal Party believes that the compulsory arbitration process, unsullied by the interference of the Social Credit government, would be a good place to start. It has its faults but these could be eliminated over time through genuine consultation.

In conclusion, the B.C. Liberal Party agrees with the large majority of respondents to the *Let's Talk About Schools* survey. Public education must be better funded, it must be governed in a cooperative way by the ministry and school districts. It must be accountable at all levels and it must be staffed and administered by competent, professional educators.

A Liberal government can and will achieve all these goals, not through confrontation and unilateral action, but through decisive action taken after genuine consultation. Decisions will be made for their educational efficacy, not for political advantage.

There is a better alternative.

Art Lee
Leader
B.C. Liberal Party

New Democratic Party

Since 1982 in all our public education institutions, classes have become larger, course offerings reduced and support services like libraries, aides and maintenance have been cut.

In real dollars, education has been cut 23 per cent since 1982.

By failing to provide our students with the essential knowledge and skills to cope with an increasingly complex and technological world, we shall all be losers. Investment and jobs will be lost. B.C. young people will be unable to compete for available jobs on equal terms with students across North America.

Education is a lifelong process. The person who will cope best with tomorrow's society will be the person with a broad general education, including a strong liberal arts and humanities component.

Policy from principles

The principles underpinning NDP education policy are:

1. Education is the key to our provincial well-being, for the good of individuals and society.

2. For the individual, education is the key to understanding the world, to developing the personal skills essential to survive in it, and to maintain job skills.

3. Within provincial goals, while ensuring pupils' rights are protected, many if not most important decisions are best made locally.

4. Each child, whatever his or her talents, is entitled to an education according to personal needs and interests.

5. Every child's needs are best served by wider rather than narrower course offerings.

6. Canada is a multi-cultural country. Diversity of culture and values must be recognized and respected in our schools.

7. While teachers remain alert to innovation, effectiveness and accountability, B.C.'s outstanding public education system cannot be starved into greater efficiency without sacrificing objectives 4 and 5 above.

8. Since B.C. spends less of its wealth on education than other Canadian provinces, we can well afford to fund public education adequately.

One hundred days of action in education

An NDP government would, on election, declare 100 Days of Action in Education and:

1. assess the damage caused by Social Credit to schools, colleges and universities;

2. take remedial action that would restore services to the level of 1982 (or some other identifiable, mutually agreeable year) after negotiation with school, college and university communities;

3. restore school board authority over budgets and property taxation to empower them to meet their community needs;

4. restore the ability of community colleges to deliver a comprehensive range of university transfer, vocational and continuing education programs, and

5. restore the independence of universities and guarantee academic freedom for faculty.

The state of the treasury, and the point in the fiscal year relative to the transfer of power after an election will influence the negotiations envisaged in #2 above. There does not have to be an election until 1988. Programs cannot be created at the drop of a hat.

We must talk to people in a moderate, practical way and co-operate in finding ways out of the present imbroglio.

Long-term access to colleges and universities

British Columbia has the smallest proportion of young people going on to higher education of any Canadian province. In 1968, it was equal highest with Ontario.

An NDP government will raise the participation rate to at least the national average in five years by:

• restoring the grant portion of the B.C. Student Assistance Plan, and adjusting the maximum award annually for inflation;

• removing barriers to the participation of students living outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria by developing a comprehensive strategy of decentralized program delivery: degree programs through the local community college is one alternative; a boarding and travel assistance program to help students attend an urban centre if studies require it is another;

• reaching out to those groups under-represented in the university population — women, single parents, mature students, cultural minorities, native people, the handicapped and the disabled — in consultation with educational institutions and people affected.

Mark Rose
Education critic
New Democratic Party

Progressive Conservative Party

The Progressive Conservative Party of B.C. has endorsed four philosophical cornerstones of government which will dictate the spirit of all party policies:

1. The economic system is based upon private enterprise and individual initiative.

2. The government system will enhance democratic principles.

3. Government will demonstrate a social conscience that respects human dignity.

4. Government must be open and accountable.

Our party believes that the field of education has for some time exemplified the need for much more listening and much less fighting. We had hoped that the significant findings of *Let's Talk About Schools* might have signalled an end to confrontation and that the clear messages of this study would have signalled the need for more reasoned, consultative, new approaches. Apparently it has not.

To begin to repair this damaged and most important people-intensive enterprise, our party offers the following specific policies and beliefs:

• education spending must be thought of as a key investment on behalf of all our citizens and not thought of as an expense to society.

• a strong education system and well-educated citizens are necessary to inspire much needed capital investment in our province.

• a consultative climate involving educators, parents and the community at large should be given every encouragement allowing all, in conjunction with government, to better understand the existing system and to recommend system improvements.

• an independent Royal Commission on Education should be appointed to follow up the many clear findings of *Let's Talk About Schools* with recommended improvements.

• equitable funding of districts, taking into account all reasonable local cost factors, must be a target which, for the next few years, will involve raising the base amounts given to lowest cost-per-pupil districts while the finance formula is fine-tuned to assure more equitable and sufficient province-wide funding in future.

• the Compensation Stabilization Act should be repealed and free collective bargaining restored on a province-wide basis that recognizes local costs and isolation factors and respects local agreements until relative salary equity is ultimately achieved.

• a basic education or core curriculum must be defined so that all schools using public money will be expected to meet minimum standards or make necessary adjustments to qualify for continued funding.

• management of funds must become more school-based to realize administrative savings, to become more locally responsive, and most importantly, to maximize services to students.

• an independent College of Teachers should be established to set teacher training and performance standards, to enforce professional ethics and to appropriately discipline educators in breach of their obligations.

• any necessary staff reductions should be effected by transfers within districts, between districts, through natural attrition or early retirement incentives.

• special education programs and funding must address the needs of the gifted as well as those of physically, mentally or behaviourally handicapped children.

• provincial funding for higher education should to a much greater extent match federal funding so that the spirit of the federal-provincial agreement on Established Programs Financing is respected.

• on-site direction of post-secondary institutions should be provided by elected boards of governors at each institution who will be held accountable by the ministry for annual budgetary proposals based in the known five-year financing provisions given them by the ministry.

• the responsibility for post-secondary education in British Columbia shall be returned to the Ministry of Education with the department of one deputy minister responsible for the general administration and long-term financing of all post-secondary education.

"The citizens of British Columbia have expressed a deep interest in and commitment to what takes place in schools" (*Let's Talk About Schools: Summary and Highlights*, 1985).

It is the obligation of government, in conjunction with all concerned, to assure that education is once more accorded the treatment deserved.

Peter Pollen
Leader
B.C. Progressive Conservative Party

Social Credit Party

The Social Credit Party was invited, but has not supplied the BCTF Newsletter with a statement of education policy.

A spokesperson for the minister of education indicated, in early December, that a statement would be provided to be published with those above. In early January, he reported that the minister had decided not to supply a statement to run alongside those of the other parties. He said the minister "did not want it to look as if there was an election on."

Inquiry points finger at superintendent

From page 1

ation, encourage community participation and will make the report public.

KDTA President Rick Sullivan welcomed the decision and expressed the hope that the local would be invited to participate, as the board had been invited (unsuccessfully) to join in the BCTF-funded inquiry.

"I am very pleased that the board seems to recognize that the findings of the BCTF commission of inquiry are far too serious to be ignored," said Sullivan. "I welcome an independent review but would caution that the review must not only be independent, but must also be seen to be independent. Otherwise it might be viewed as merely a whitewash."

After a period of job actions and labour relations turmoil climaxed by the school board's suspension of former KDTA president Steve Cardwell, and on request of the local, the BCTF in June 1985 appointed a commission to examine the district's personnel practices and recommend how good relations could be restored. (The courts subsequently overturned Cardwell's suspension, see adjacent story.)

The commission was composed of Frances Fleming, a former teacher, principal, school superintendent and ministry of education assistant superintendent, and Leo McGrady, an experienced labour lawyer; the Kitimat School Board declined an invitation to nominate a representative and refused to recognize or participate in the inquiry. The commission held hearings in Kitimat in June and September, received briefs, reviewed relevant documents and conducted interviews with teachers, administrators, clerical staff, parents and union and business representatives.

In reviewing the role of the school board, the commissioners reported that it heard many criticisms of the board for failing to support teachers and for allowing an autocratic and punitive management style. The commissioners made these key statements:

- "With the board's apparent concurrence and with or without its full knowledge, its administrators have struck fear into the teachers of this community, intimidating many people. Examples were offered of harassment, of manipulation, attempted or successful, of threats being made, of 'deals' made or offered under extreme pressure."

- "Parents seeking stability and accountability in the schools their children attend, joined teachers in regarding many teacher transfers as excessive and often 'political'. Parents joined teachers in deploring the unusual number of punitive actions taken by this board, actions such as suspensions, loss of pay, letters of reprimand."

- "It was also stated that rather than the superintendent being responsible to the board, it often appeared that the board was responsible to the superintendent."

Reviewing the role of the superintendent, the commissioners reported that most of the persons interviewed said the main source of the problem was Mike Heron's management style and that various documents examined (letters, memos, speeches, transcripts and news clippings) seem to support that view.

"The commission observed an extraordinary and intolerable level of unrest and dissatisfaction, much of which appears to relate to a style of management," the commissioners wrote. "The mere fact alone that so great and so varied a number of complaints has been directed to the superintendent suggests severe problems with his management. These problems must be addressed by the school board and must be addressed urgently."

The commission cited a number of cases, ranging from "a literal tempest in a

teacup" to the more critical maternity leave replacement issue and the Steve Cardwell suspension, prompted by his allegations of sexual harassment.

Explaining the maternity leave issue, the commission noted that the local agreement required the hiring of substitutes in maternity leave situations, but the KDTA had not enforced that right for a number of years in order to ease the district's financial problems. The teachers' association informed the board in October 1984 that it would require substitutes to be hired in the coming year. When the board printed the agreement omitting the maternity leave provision, this led to the KDTA staging a work-to-rule in January 1985, which succeeded in getting the provision restored.

The commission expressed concern at

"Commission observed an extraordinary, intolerable level of unrest and dissatisfaction"

the superintendent's role in this dispute, quoting documents in which Heron told the KDTA that the non-replacement of maternity leaves was part of a package deal he had negotiated with the ministry of education to prevent teacher layoffs, and a letter from the deputy minister in which he denied there had been any such negotiations or deal.

"There can be no question that the statements made by the superintendent in print and on tape do not agree with his comments reported by Mr. Jim Carter, deputy minister of education, in a letter to the commission," said the commissioners, noting that in the midst of the

dispute, "the KDTA was misled, innocently, or otherwise."

In its main points, the commission recommended that:

- the school board and administration end the confrontation and adopt a more cooperative approach to bargaining with the teachers' association;

- the board recognize the KDTA's right to pursue the legitimate interests of its members and refrain from threatening or using discipline against local officers or members in order to bend its will to that of the board;

- as the board, not the superintendent, has been elected to run the district, "the duly elected school board re-establish its control over the school district";

- the board, superintendent and administration give teachers, parents

and electors more open, meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making;

- so long as present senior management remains in place and with no change in management style, the BCTF keep Kitimat in dispute with a further personnel practices review to take place in June 1986;
- a neutral third-party hold an open investigation into the printed statements made by Mike Heron and the ministry "to determine if in fact the superintendent deliberately misled the teachers' association, the school board and the electors of Kitimat" and if that is found to

Court overturns Cardwell suspension

The June 1985 suspension of Kitimat teacher Steve Cardwell has been quashed by the Supreme Court of B.C. Cardwell had been suspended seven days for "misconduct and/or neglect of duty" in refusing to discuss with Superintendent Mike Heron his public statements about personnel and administrative problems in the district.

Cardwell refused on the ground that the statements were made by him in his capacity as president of the KDTA and that discussion of concerns about his statements should more properly occur in a meeting of the board/association joint committee. When Cardwell declined to discuss the matter he was directed to appear before Heron as an employee and threatened with misconduct and neglect of duty proceedings. He appeared but refused to talk about the statements and was suspended shortly thereafter.

In the Supreme Court review, Cardwell's solicitors, Bruce Laughton and Harry Rankin, advanced two grounds in arguing that the suspension was invalid. First, it was submitted that the board had improperly restricted cross-examination of Superintendent Heron by Cardwell's lawyer at the suspension hearing. Second, it was argued that the board had no power to discipline Cardwell as an employee for activities appropriately undertaken as association president.

Justice Beverley McLachlan concluded that Cardwell's right to put relevant evidence before the board was breached by the chairperson's refusal to let him ask questions of Heron on matters other than those raised by the superintendent "in examination-in-chief."

"I find that the proposed cross-examination was relevant," said McLachlan in her reasons for judgment. "The issue before the board was whether Mr. Cardwell was justified in refusing to

discuss his public pronouncements with the superintendent. Mr. Cardwell wished to cross-examine the superintendent to establish that the subject of these statements to the press was labor relations matters which he had discussed with the superintendent at previous meetings. Such evidence was relevant to the question of whether the statements pertained to labor matters as distinguished from matters touching on Mr. Cardwell's employment, as well as to whether the superintendent already had full particulars of the matters referred to."

Although she laid out these parameters for a more substantively based decision, Justice McLachlan said she found it "unnecessary" to consider the question of whether the board had power to discipline Cardwell in his capacity as an employee. This was because she had already decided in his favor on the more straightforward issue of improper restriction of cross-examination by the school board at the suspension hearing.

Justice McLachlan reasoned that Cardwell was "entitled to the opportunity to present the evidence of witnesses other than himself."

"That includes, in my view, the evidence of witnesses called by the board," McLachlan said. Mr. Cardwell was entitled to obtain from the superintendent corroborating evidence on the events leading to the public pronouncements and the superintendent's subsequent demand that he discuss those pronouncements with him.

The case is considered by the federation to be important in establishing the distinction between the role of association president and that of teaching employee, as it relates to the disciplinary powers of school boards. Further, the judgment helps to clarify what constitutes a fair hearing and the responsibility of school boards to provide due process and to make decisions based on all the evidence.



Former KDTA President Steve Cardwell (left) and lawyer Harry Rankin on the way to board hearing in June on Cardwell's suspension.

be so, "it is sufficiently serious to justify the termination of the superintendent;"

• and that the \$65,000 contribution to the KDTA professional development fund traded off by teachers, on an "innocent or deliberate" misrepresentation, or order to regain maternity leave replacements, be restored to the teachers forthwith with interest.

The commission's report has been greeted with both delight and shock by Kitimat teachers, said KDTA President Rick Sullivan.

"We were delighted that the commission was able to come to the same conclusion that most of us had already come to, that the problem resides in the superintendent's office," he said.

"But we were shocked to learn of the controversy that seems to exist between Mr. Heron and Mr. Carter. We had no idea that we were deceived. We had taken the superintendent at his word that he had negotiated a package deal with the ministry and we understood that it left no negotiating room for the school board — and we believed that local trustees had the same understanding. To learn through the commission, and to have it confirmed by the deputy minister, that all that was not so — no package deal had been negotiated — astounded people here."

Officially, the local has endorsed all the commission's recommendations except the one calling for maintenance of the indispute designation, he said. The district had been placed in dispute because of the Cardwell suspension, but that designation was lifted when the courts overturned the suspension. Sullivan said the local has postponed consideration of the in dispute recommendation until February.

Charged cuts making education "shoddy"

BCTF backs fired college instructor

The BCTF has joined the College-Institute Educators' Association in defending the right of free speech of a Cariboo College instructor fired for publicly criticizing the quality of education at his institution.

Psychology instructor Al MacKinnon was fired in December for refusing to stop making statements in the Kamloops newspaper attacking the college for offering a "shoddy" quality of education.

"Cariboo College's dismissal of Al MacKinnon is a serious violation of free speech and a dangerous precedent for public employees in B.C.," said CIEA President John Waters in announcing association determination to defend the outspoken instructor.

The BCTF is sending letters of protest to the college administration and to the Kamloops News, and calling on federation locals to join the campaign.

The controversy began in April when, apparently fed up with the rosy picture of college conditions being presented publicly by Dale Janowski, the board chairperson, and Charles Brewster, the principal, Al MacKinnon wrote a letter to the Kamloops News disputing the administration's claims that current cutbacks would not harm the quality of education, arguing that Cariboo College was a "second-class institution" putting out "a shoddy product and getting worse each year."

Quickly becoming a local cause célèbre, the dispute escalated as:

- the college principal gave MacKinnon a formal letter of reprimand, charging that his letter to the editor had been "a clear breach of fidelity" to the college and warning of further discipline if he went on making statements injurious of the college's reputation;

- MacKinnon joined a letters debate in the News in mid-May, taking issue with his critics and making further, milder criticisms of the college;

- claiming he had been "wilfully insubordinate", the college principal suspended MacKinnon without pay for three days;

- MacKinnon's union launched a grievance of the suspension which went to non-binding arbitration, where Kamloops lawyer Mervin Chertkow on December 4 found in favour of the college;

- MacKinnon told a Kamloops News reporter that he would not be "muzzled" by the arbitration award, saying he had the right to free speech;

- when the college administration circulated an excerpt from the arbitration award to faculty department heads, MacKinnon responded with a memo to the heads disputing the points made in the arbitrator's findings;

- charging that MacKinnon was continuing in "inappropriate, insubordinate and defiant behaviour" and being "openly defiant of the lawful authority of the college" in repeating his criticisms in the newspaper and in his memo, the college principal formally fired MacKinnon on December 11, 1985.

CIEA President Waters said the MacKinnon firing is currently being pursued in arbitration, but that it was doubtful that it would be resolved by this process and might well have to be fought in court, for which the association has set up a voluntary legal defence fund.

"We think that this case is significant for all public sector employees," said Waters. "Essentially the issue is not whether one agrees 100 per cent with what Al MacKinnon said in his letter —



CIEA President John Waters ... violation of MacKinnon's free speech poses "dangerous precedent for all public employees."

although his criticisms echo those that faculty groups have been making for years now — and not even with whether

CIEA votes on new union structure

The College-Institute Educators' Association will vote this spring on a restructuring proposal aimed at making it into a stronger, more provincially-coordinated union.

The main impetus behind the plan, said CIEA President John Waters, comes from member frustration over setbacks in income, workload and job security issues suffered in recent years.

"We're being out-gunned by the employer," said Waters. "The contest has become unequal and this plan is designed to bring us closer to equality."

CIEA is currently an umbrella organization serving 12 independent unions representing 13 colleges and institutes (one union representing Kwantlen and Douglas) and about 2,800 faculty. Each union has a certificate under the B.C. Labour Code and pursues its own bargaining and grievances; CIEA provides coordination, political lobbying, information exchange, and some professional development and labour education.

Waters explained that CIEA is being "out-gunned" essentially because, as a loose federation of unions with minimal

staff and funds, it now faces an employer benefiting from more resources, expertise, coordination — and the backing of government authority.

Originally the colleges were community institutions independently operated by boards elected from the community served, he said, but since 1977 the provincial government has increasingly centralized control through appointed boards, formula funding and directives on program offerings.

"Now, in effect, the real employer is the provincial government," said Waters, "and because of that we think it's more and more important for us to present a common front."

The upshot of the new, tougher conditions, he said, is that college boards have been able to seriously erode faculty contracts in the last few years — increasing workloads, reducing employee rights and protections, and giving below-inflation salary increases.

Waters pointed to a number of factors underlying the contract erosion: faculty bargainers' lack of experience and expertise, inability of faculty unions to agree on bottom-line positions, lack of a central strike/lockout defence fund, and reluctance of faculty to resort to strike action.

Faculty, he said, have been particularly hurt by employers' whipsaw tactics. "If there's a concession at one institution, it ripples all through the system," he said. "This has happened most noticeably with workload."

After studying several options, the CIEA Presidents' Council recommended this fall that the association become a centrally-coordinated provincial organization of autonomous unions. Member unions will vote on this plan in local meetings in April and early May, and then will send instructed delegates to the CIEA annual general meeting May 31 to formally accept or reject the scheme.

If the proposal is approved, Waters said CIEA will continue to do what it has been doing — but with more provincial coordination and greater resources in bargaining and contract administration, and in legal matters.

The main change, he said, will be the hiring of staff representatives who will, on request, assist member unions with

one would have written in the way that he did, but rather whether a public employee has a right to engage in public criticism of his own institution in the community where he lives."

He said the proper response of the college administration in the case would have been to offer a public rebuttal of MacKinnon's criticisms — if they could.

"The college, in our view, should be strong enough, and is strong enough, to withstand the criticism of one faculty member," said Waters. "In fact, MacKinnon is not uninformed about the issues and he was particularly unhappy in his letter about the way in which the public statements of the board chairperson and the principal were all upbeat, positive, Pollyanna-like, claiming that restraint hadn't hurt the college. He was very much bothered by the disparity between those public statements and the reality in the college. He felt very strongly that the public should know that it was not like that, that restraint had hurt the college."

Seminars aid retirement planning

A reminder to all teachers and spouses over age 45 — the seminars to assist you in your planning for retirement will be held in the following locations this spring.

There is no charge for the seminars and no pre-registration. Just mark your calendars and attend.

School district

Langley, Surrey, Richmond, Maple Ridge, Coquitlam, Delta

Vancouver,

New Westminster, Burnaby, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Howe Sound

Kamloops,

North Thompson, Lillooet, South Cariboo, Nicola Valley

Victoria, Sooke, Saanich, Gulf Islands

Site and time of seminar

Surrey — February 15, 1986

Surrey Inn — 09:00-16:00

(Junction of King George and Fraser Highways)

Burnaby — February 22, 1986

Sheraton Villa — 09:00-16:00

(near Willingdon and Canada Way)

Kamloops — March 1, 1986

The Place Inn — 09:30-16:30

Victoria — March 14-15, 1986

Harbour Towers

Friday — 19:00-21:00

Saturday — 09:00-13:00

BCTF leads children's rights fight

Members are asking what has the BCTF been doing about child abuse? Here are some of the activities, both long-term and short-term, undertaken by the federation:

Child abuse and neglect workshop

For the past 12 years, the professional development division has offered a child abuse and neglect workshop that deals with teachers responsibility in this area, legislation, clues to identify abuse and neglect and procedures for reporting suspected cases.

Status of Women workshop

Strands of prevention of child abuse are threaded through a number of workshops, i.e., "Violence against women and children."

Rights of teachers workshop, "Family and Child Service Act"

This workshop, from Teacher Personnel Services shows teachers what their responsibilities are for reporting child abuse.

BCTF Rights of Children Program

The Children's Rights Committee networks with many outside agencies, sharing information, promoting the rights and well-being of children. The committee has initiated two conferences that have brought together social workers, pediatricians, health and welfare agencies to deal with preventive services for children.

Task Force on Child Abuse

The BCTF has representatives on the task force on child abuse, which was initiated by the BCSTA to examine and evaluate child abuse prevention and treatment programs. The task force has a focus on three elements: protection of children in public schools; protection of the rights of all individuals involved in cases of child abuse; and preservation of the ability of school districts to operate efficiently in the absence of fear and suspicion.

Inquiry into the child welfare system

The BCTF in December endorsed a

call from the B.C. Association of Social Workers for an independent inquiry into the child welfare system in B.C. The BCASW holds that public confidence in the Ministry of Human Resources has been seriously eroded by the content of criticism from educators, judges, pediatricians, coroners, unions, children, families, day care operators, academics and social workers. The inquiry is expected to shed some light on the impact of the government's elimination of staff trainers, family support workers, and child abuse teams.

Vancouver administrators brief

The VSAA (Elementary) last year pre-

sented a brief to the ministry of human resources calling for a reinstatement of school-based child care workers in 16 Vancouver elementary schools. The principals argued that by their prompt intervention, school-based child care workers play the key preventive role in the lives of troubled children and that elementary school staff, reeling from education cuts, do not have the resources or expertise to deal with severe problems.

CARE package

BCTF supported development of the CARE package, a sophisticated anti-abuse information program, which has been one of the more helpful approaches to child abuse. The program has been given in numerous districts in the province mainly by federation members.

Family life programs

A longstanding objective which has been pushed with little success to date has been the incorporation of family life programs into B.C. school districts. We have been urging the ministry to issue the family life handbook to districts and recommend programs based on it.

Employee assistance programs

Another objective which has not yet been successful is the introduction of employee assistance programs into school districts.



The BCTF has been holding children's rights conferences (as above) for more than a decade.

Letters

Newsletter should focus on the positive and the professional

I am very happy to see that the *BCTF Newsletter* is under review and contemplating changes.

I would like to see a more professional focus to our newsletter: a focus that would emphasize B.C. teachers' abilities and accomplishments, provide information and innovation to help me as a teacher feel proud of my profession, and indeed, motivate myself and my colleagues to become professionally involved, not politically involved.

I was so pleased to see your recognition of Harold Gopaul, Canada's outstanding biology teacher for 1985 and the article on the science teachers' association awards to teachers in the December 3, 1985 issue. After reading "The Pessimist's Lament" on the last page of the same issue I put the newsletter down with my usual disappointment. Please, let's stick to the positive and the professional.

Sally Warner
Cavell Elementary
Vancouver

Administrators stress need for task force report to 1986 AGM

At the Representative Assembly almost a year ago, our PSA was most pleased at the result of the vote which requested the Executive Committee of the BCTF to establish a task force on the "Membership of Principals and Vice-Principals in the BCTF."

The interim terms of reference for the task force included, as a final point: "to complete the work outlined in the terms of reference as soon as possible, but not later than in time for a report and recommendations to the 1986 AGM." The task force subsequently recommended that the terms of reference be amended to read: "to attempt to develop recommendations in time for consideration by the 1986 AGM." (Approved at December 6, 7/85 Executive Committee meeting.)

8/JANUARY 23, 1986

Our PSA is concerned that the amendment appears to remove the urgency of requiring the task force to bring forward recommendations to the 1986 AGM. We understand the pressures of time under which committee members work but we are most anxious that this matter be handled with expediency. It would seem to us that the least that should be expected would be an Interim Report with recommendations to be in the hands of the membership before the AGM. A discussion on the recommendations could then take place at the AGM and approval in principle be given at that time.

Our PSA considers the work of the task force to be of vital importance to us and to the federation as a whole. We hope it will move quickly to bring forth a report.

Joyce Anderson
President
B.C. Principals' and
Vice-Principals' Association

Jobless teachers urged to think carefully about teaching in New Zealand

During a recent visit to New Zealand, I came across the *Auckland Star* which contained useful information for some of our well-qualified unemployed teachers interested in investigating the possibility of employment "Down Under."

Let me caution would-be immigrants that the cost of living in that rugged, awesomely beautiful country is horrendously high. The annual inflation rate is 14 per cent, housing mortgages run at 25 per cent and cars are about two to three times what they sell for in Canada. Teachers' salaries run \$25,000 to \$30,000 maximum, so it probably would not be expedient for a married teacher with a family to contemplate such a move especially when airfares and moving costs have to be taken into consideration. However, a young married teaching couple could make it with a two-salary income. If one likes the great outdoors, together with a generally pleasant year-round climate, then I would highly

recommend a year or two teaching in New Zealand. It is just possible that the immigrant teacher would stay for a lifetime.

Hal Cairns
Retired teacher
Penticton

Did caption indicate changed BCTF status?

I noted with interest, in the *BCTF Newsletter* (October 9, 1985), a reference to the BCTF as a "union." If this ad occurred in any other source, I would simply have put it down to a lack of information on the part of the writer. However, for it to appear as a photo caption on page 8 of the *BCTF Newsletter*, Vol. 25, No. 2, causes concern.

I was under the impression that our membership had, on more than one occasion, voted against such a change and wished to remain a professional association.

Hopefully this reference was simply an oversight and not intended to misrepresent what our status actually is.

Lynn Shoop
Library services coordinator
Nanaimo

Oversight: photo and caption supplied by *Solidarity*. — Ed.

Members should not misrepresent policy in abortion debate

In her letter in the December 3, 1985 *BCTF Newsletter*, Daragh Truscott described BCTF policies 42.25 and 42.29 as "pro-abortion policies" and criticized the federation for supporting such policies.

In my opinion, neither policy is a pro-abortion policy. Policy 42.25 simply supports the right of women to "decide whether or when to have children." Policy 42.29 seeks "to have abortion removed from the Criminal Code of Canada." The result of such a legislative change would not be to endorse abortion, but rather to make abortion a purely moral issue. In supporting such a policy the BCTF is not making a moral decision on behalf of its members.

Whether or not to have abortion would remain the choice of the individual.

If you do not like policies 42.25 and 42.29, by all means lobby to have them deleted, but do not misrepresent them by labelling them "pro-abortion" policies.

Alan Wilkinson
Glanford Elementary
Victoria

Why no coverage of Co-op problem last issue?

I was disappointed not to find an article on the Teachers' Investment and Housing Co-operative in our last newsletter. For those of us who have invested thousands of dollars, perhaps our entire retirement savings, in the Co-op, I can assure you no newspaper story would be of greater interest. Speculations as to why you chose not to cover this issue led one to some disquieting thoughts.

Virginia Clover
Lloyd Crowe Secondary
Trail

The *BCTF Newsletter* reported on the financial troubles of the Teachers' Investment and Housing Co-operative at the time (November 7, 1985) the co-op announced its intention to develop a restructuring plan. It was decided then, because of the importance of the issue to many members, that the Newsletter would confine its reporting to official releases from the Co-op. When the Co-op has an announcement to make, the Newsletter will report it. — Ed.

Tax changes affecting RRSP, pension plans postponed one year

The federal government has announced that most of the taxation changes affecting retirement savings and pension plans announced in its May 1985 budget will be delayed by one year.

However, commencing with the 1986 taxation year, the \$3,500 limit on the required contributions to the teachers' pension plan which are deductible for taxation purposes is removed.

The dollar limit on RRSP contributions for teachers remains at \$3,500 less any employee contributions to the teachers' pension plan.