

New, fair deal demanded in bargaining

Arnie Myers
Government Division

The B.C. Teachers' Federation has called for a new deal on collective bargaining for teachers and an end to the provincial government's CSP wage-control program.

The federation made its proposals in a brief to Labour Minister Lyall Hanson, who has called for suggestions from all

interested parties on how to improve collective bargaining practices in B.C.

The system that governs negotiations between teachers and their school board employers, is "an industrial relations backwater," according to the BCTF.

The brief calls for the replacement of this "outmoded, disruptive and unfair system" by "a sensible system that for the

first time accords teachers the fundamental rights" enjoyed by their colleagues in other provinces and by other workers in B.C. In addition, it urges "elimination of the bureaucratic albatross around the neck of all public-sector bargaining" — the five-year-old Compensation Stabilization Program.

B.C. teachers have long sought a

broadening of their bargaining rights. At present school boards are required to negotiate with teachers only on salaries and other money matters. And there is no means set out in the School Act for resolving any other disputes.

Teachers want to be able to bargain all conditions of their employment; they
See "CSP destroys" page 3

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PSA considers "withdrawal" motion

New talks sought on principals' dispute

The Representative Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to request principals to reject the idea of withdrawal from the BCTF in favour of continued discussions aimed at resolving problems in their relationship with the federation.

The RA took this prompt action at its January 23-24 meeting on being informed that the executive of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association would be presenting a motion to the PSA's February 6-7 Zone Council meeting calling for the association "to begin a process for withdrawal from the BCTF."

"The overwhelming vote of the Representative Assembly is indicative of the fact that the overwhelming majority of our membership is in favour of maintaining the unity of the organization and is certainly not prepared to see the administrators leave," the mover of the RA motion, Jim MacFarlan (Burnaby Administrators), said in an interview. "I see nothing but ill coming from division of the organization."

In the motion, adopted almost unanimously, the RA:

- expressed to the BCPVPA Executive Committee and the BCPVPA membership "strong disagreement with the BCPVPA executive recommendation to

begin a process to withdraw from the BCTF;"

- urged the BCPVPA executive and the BCTF executive to "immediately re-establish discussion relating to problems which exist;"

- urged, in the spirit of these proposed discussions, the BCPVPA execu-

tive to "rescind the motion to begin the process of withdrawal from the BCTF;"

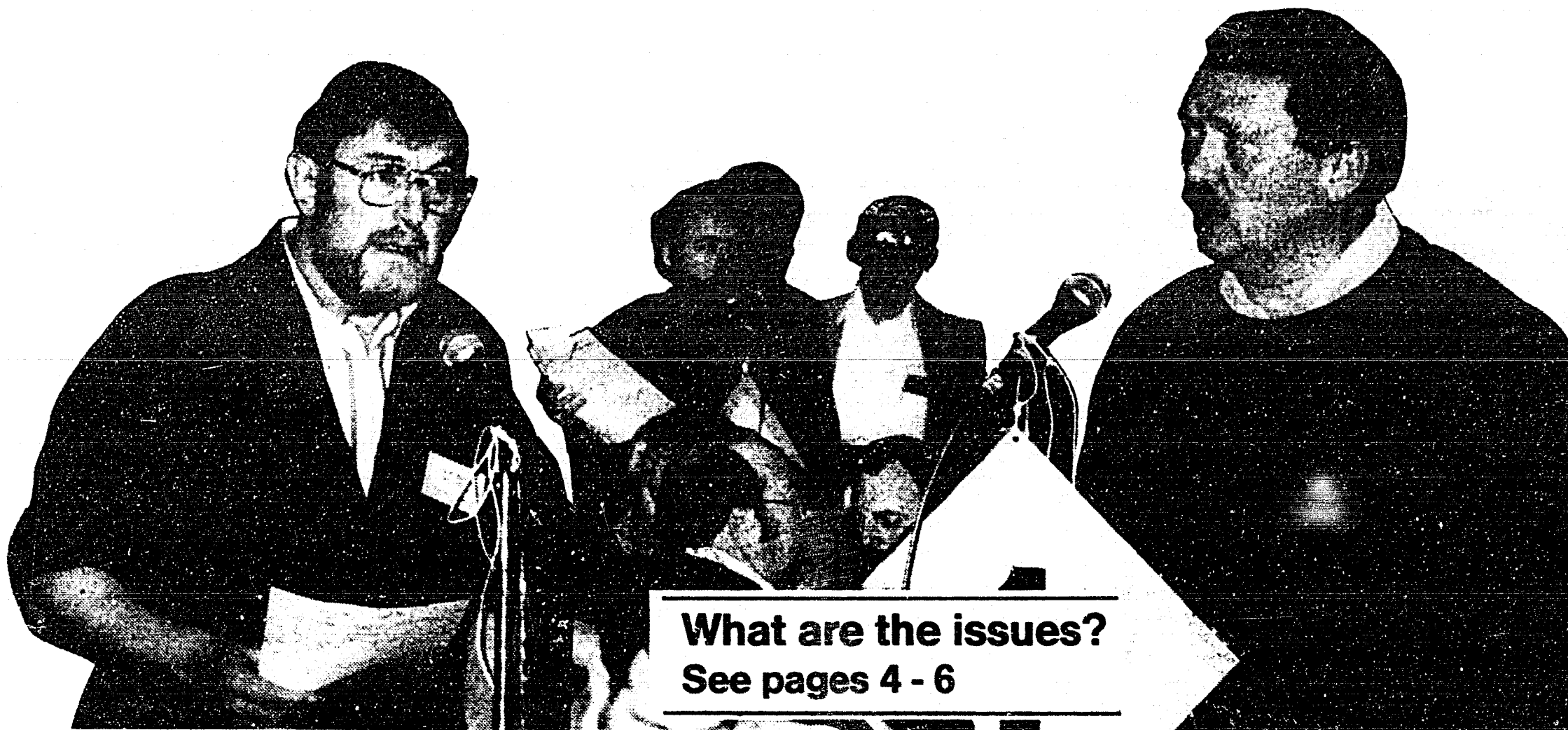
- and requested the BCTF president to include information on these positions in a planned letter from the Executive Committee to all administrators.

While the assembly strongly endorsed renewed efforts at reconciliation it was

not done without expressions of concern and criticism.

Jim MacFarlan admitted his initial reaction to hearing of the withdrawal motion was one of anger, believing the

See "Dialogue" page 3



Lineup at the mikes sees Colin Scott (Prince George), left, Rod Sherrell (Vancouver Island North), centre, and Jim MacFarlan (Burnaby Administrators) contributing to discussion of principals' issue.

CSP "Gordian knot" must be cut

British Columbia teachers are searching for the sword that will slice through the Gordian knot labelled "CSP," according to BCTF President Elsie McMurphy.

The Compensation Stabilization Program has been, for teachers, the most frustrating aspect of the provincial government's five-year-old restraint program. Grafted onto the collective bargaining process, the CSP has made both teacher/board negotiations and third-party arbitration meaningless. Salaries have effectively been set by the CSP rather than by collective bargaining.

Elimination of the CSP will be a major priority in the Executive Committee's Leadership Report for 1987. The strategy for achieving that elimination will include education of the public and of the government on the deleterious effects of CSP, McMurphy told the RA.

"CSP is not a natural act. It is not a given. It is not some irresistible political phenomenon," she said. "It is strictly a confrontative, political Gordian knot

that ties up real collective bargaining. I think our members are beyond trying to unfrazzle that mess and are searching for a sword."

Education — of the government, of the media, of the public, of ourselves — will be the keynote of BCTF actions over the next year, McMurphy said. She repeated that it is the federation's intention to take the new provincial government at its word on "openness" and the "consultative approach."

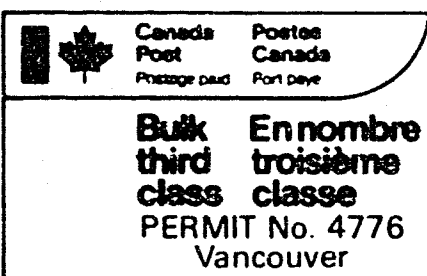
Teachers, said McMurphy, must use "a variety of teaching techniques: modeling, debating, demonstrating, questioning, experimenting, simulating, stimulating, challenging. Just as we try to move our student to the higher-order skills, beyond recall and comprehension, to creativity, synthesis, analysis and evaluation," so must we use the same skills in furthering the public policy debate on education.

That debate will involve:

- a promised Royal Commission on Education;

- a series of hearings on labour relations practices, being held by the Ministry of Labour;
- a series of hearings by the cabinet committee on social planning on health, social services, K-12 education, post-secondary education, job training, and corrections;
- local teacher association budget briefs to their school boards calling for a start on recovery from the effects of cutbacks;
- a "teach-in" of members of the legislature, in their own home ridings, by local teacher association members;
- community outreach programs like those being operated by a number of local associations and PSAs.

In all these forums the message is the same: teachers have been unfairly treated by restraint; we failed to keep pace with the cost of living; the CSP is an albatross around our necks; we need full bargaining and professional rights, partly in order to maintain teaching as an attractive profession for bright young minds.



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

CSP increments inclusion "unfair"

BCTF President Elsie McMurphy has again presented the B.C. government with the case that inclusion of teachers' grid increments in the Compensation Stabilization Program's costing formula reflects the unfair and arbitrary nature of the wage control law.

In a December 12, 1986 letter to Minister of Finance Mel Couvelier, she outlined the reasons that CSP guidelines, which add increments to the cost of teacher settlements, are an unwarranted and disruptive restriction. Below are extracts from the letter, setting out those views.

"The basic position of teachers is that the CSP should be repealed. We agree with the repeated findings of the United Nation's International Labour Office that the CSP is simply inconsistent with the principle of voluntary collective bargaining.

"In our submissions to the previous government, we put particular emphasis

on one aspect of the CSP that we regard as particularly unfair. That is the requirement that the 'cost' of normal career progress increments be added to any salary scale increase, for purposes of CSP review."

The increment system itself is not a cost to employers, but rather a significant saving. It means that teachers work for up to 12 years at less than full salary. Having been paid less than the full rate for our work *because* of the increment ladder, it is simply a double penalty to have the "allowable increase" reduced for the same reason. It just doesn't make sense.

"Secondly, the CSP rules systematically inflate the financial impact of increments by ignoring the real dynamics of a salary grid system. Employees at the top of the salary scale retire, and are regularly replaced by much lower paid employees at the bottom of the increment ladder. That differential offsets the

increments paid to those working their way up the scale. A change in the mix of employees means that in the short run, there may be either a 'cost' or a 'saving' — but in the long run the financial impact of a salary grid system is neutral. The 'cost' which the CSP assigns to it is artificial.

"Thirdly, increment inclusion leads to teachers' salary increases in some districts being even more restricted than those in others, based only on the fact that the former include more teachers still below full salary — that is, they are permitted a smaller salary grid increase *because* their colleagues happen to be lower paid in the first place.

"We think it's time B.C. got out of the negative thinking that gave rise to CSP, and returned to the positive principle of freely negotiated agreements for *all* employees . . ."

Nominations received for '87 Executive Committee

The following members were nominated for Executive Committee positions as of January 31.

For President:

Elsie McMurphy (Saanich)

For First Vice-President:

Alan Crawford (VESTA)

For Second Vice-President:

Moir MacKenzie (Surrey)

For Members-at-Large:

John Chisamore (Creston)

Maureen Ciarniello (West Vancouver)

David Denyer (Cowichan)

Kay Howard (Mt. Arrowsmith)

Ken Novakowski (Langley)

Gary Robertson (Victoria)

Peter Thomson (Surrey)

Ray Worley (Vernon)

Candidates' campaign statements, biographical information and photographs will appear in the next *BCTF Newsletter*.

Further nominations to the Executive Committee may be made prior to, and at the Annual General Meeting. Consult the Members' Guide for details.

ILO repeats call for fair bargaining in B.C.

The United Nation's International Labour Office (ILO) has again urged the B.C. government to "take steps to restore free collective bargaining in the public sector."

The ruling, released in Geneva shortly before Christmas, is the sixth in a series of ILO decisions against CSP. In previous rulings, acting on complaints from BCTF and other public sector groups, the wage control scheme has repeatedly been held to be inconsistent with internationally-accepted standards of freedom of association and the principle of voluntary collective bargaining.

The most recent decision holds that recent minor changes to CSP "do not address the concerns" of the ILO, which again urged the government to remove the requirement to have wage settlements approved by the CSP Commissioner.

BCTF photo contest wants your best

The BCTF Working and Learning Conditions Committee is holding a photo contest with Lesson Aids prizes for the best photos of children in learning activities.

The aim is to develop a top-quality collection of photographs of children in learning situations from K-12 for use in calendars, posters and pamphlets.

Prizes offered are your choice of BCTF Lesson Aids valued at: First prize \$100, Second prize \$75 and Third prize \$50.

Send black and white or colour photos by April 15, 1987 to BCTF Photo Contest, Bargaining Division, BCTF. Mark your name, address, phone and names of students on the back. Send as many photos as you like. All entries will be acknowledged and will become BCTF property.

BCTF Newsletter

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9

CLIVE COCKING Editor

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

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

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BCTF Newsletter
Editorial Advisory
Board

Lynne Hampson
David Handelman
Vincent-Jean Petho

"Dialogue, compromise essential"

From page 1

BCPVPA executive had acted precipitously and in error.

"There is no constitutional or legal provision which allows administrators to withdraw, and I think that the PSA executive is quite wrong in moving a motion to withdraw," he said. "But now is not the time for anger, what needs to be done is to re-start the dialogue."

Al Paterson (Vancouver Administrators), who seconded the motion, acknowledged that many members are concerned about the seemingly endless dispute between the principals' PSA and the BCTF.

"I'm disappointed in some respects to hear concerns that we talk and talk and talk and don't get anywhere," he said. "But it's important to talk, because even talking relieves frustrations and people at least feel they are being heard. And I think a resolution can be achieved."

Pat Brady (Prince George) also rejected defeatism: "It's going to take some work and it's going to take some time, but just because it is a difficult task, we can't throw up our hands and say it's unsolvable."

He said principal-teachers have many things in common with teachers and belong in the same organization. "It

CSP destroys real bargaining

From page 1

want the right to choose voluntary arbitration or to strike, if necessary, to resolve contract disputes; and they want to be able to appeal to an independent, expert body, such as the Labour Relations Board, to settle arguments about the rules of the bargaining process and to protect them from unfair school-board practices.

The BCTF brief says these objectives could basically be achieved by repealing the "discriminatory" provision that now bars teachers from being included under the B.C. Labour Code. But the brief asks for three modifications to labour code procedures to apply specifically to teacher bargaining. Two of these are merely continuations of present practices: bargaining at the local level, between individual teacher associations and their district school boards, and a fixed timetable for annual negotiations.

The third provision would allow teachers to decide whether they would strike if necessary to achieve a settlement, or whether they would prefer to submit

their case to binding arbitration (currently the only way of breaking an impasse). This is the model used in B.C.'s health-care negotiations.

The second major thrust of the BCTF brief calls for the dismantling of the Compensation Stabilization Program, which has controlled all public-sector wages since the provincial government introduced its restraint program in 1982.

The BCTF contends that the CSP has destroyed real collective bargaining. All public-sector salary settlements, whether arrived at by bargaining or by arbitration, must still be submitted to the CSP commissioner for approval. More than 120 teacher settlements have been thrown out.

The brief cites the most recent (November 1986) ruling of the International Labour Organization (ILO) against CSP, which again urges the B.C. government to "restore free collective bargaining."

As a result of CSP, B.C. teachers' salaries have fallen 12.2 per cent behind the rise in cost of living since 1982.

Letters

Editor "derelict" in not eliminating "racist" statement

I do not doubt the editor's explanation (*Newsletter*, December 18, 1986) that it was not his intention to make a racist statement regarding expectations of behavior of ESL students. Nevertheless, the statement in question could be read to mean, "A predominantly ESL class might be expected to behave more poorly than a 'regular' class." This meaning clearly has racist overtones.

The editor has a professional responsibility to recognize statements that a reasonable person might consider racist, and to ensure that such statements do not appear in the *Newsletter*. Therefore, having accepted the editor's statement of non-racist intent, I can only conclude that he has been derelict in his duty to properly edit the *Newsletter* for clarity, and that censure is appropriate.

Rick Sullivan

President

Kitimat District Teachers' Association

Editor should apologize for "racist" statement

On November 25, 1986, I wrote a letter on behalf of the Committee Against Racism to the BCTF Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board with copies to you and to the executive expressing our shock at a statement in the article "Teachers' reactions mixed" (*BCTF Newsletter*, October 29, 1986). The statement concerned Dianne Guild's "predominantly ESL" class, and I quote, "While her youngsters

behaved themselves about as well as might be expected, she expressed some grave concerns." The committee feels the statement is racist because it is a fact that most ESL students are from visible minorities, and because it promotes the false idea that ESL students cannot be expected to behave as well as other regular students. This is, of course, not true, and such a statement should not have found its way into the newsletter. The committee feels that a mistake was made.

The Committee Against Racism is very happy to learn that it was not your intention to write a racist statement. However, the statement which was published in the October 29, 1986 newsletter is a derogatory presumption with racist implications about the behavior of all ESL students. Your explanation in the December 18, 1986 issue is not satisfactory because the statement in question was not merely a badly-constructed sentence. The committee believes that the content was in error.

Incidentally, I was very amazed to see the editorial explanation and the three positive letters to the editor in the December 18, 1986 issue about this matter because I have not as yet received a reply from the Newsletter Advisory Board.* I naively believed that this matter would be dealt with privately by the people concerned before it was aired publicly in the newsletter. As the matter is now public the Committee Against Racism believes that a printed apology would be in order.

Charlotte Gyoba

Chairperson

Committee Against Racism

Kitimat

would be a sorry day that we lost part of our teaching force to another organization," he said. "It hasn't worked across Canada, it rarely works in other countries."

While there is some inflexibility on both sides, Bill Broadley (Victoria) warned against the majority trampling on the minority. "While a majority of 50 per cent and a little bit can always dictate to a minority, they ought not to in a democratic organization that is going to stay united," he said. "Dialogue and compromise is essential."

Ron Warder (Sooke) expressed concern that the BCPVPA executive was inflexible and had "a hidden agenda" to withdraw. He suggested that the PSA executive was not representative of administrators and that it was important for the BCTF to "talk more directly with the principal-members of our federation and that local presidents should also open the dialogue so that there is a better understanding."

Rod Sherrell (Vancouver Island North) also backed renewed efforts to find a solution, he maintained it was inappropriate for the BCPVPA executive to present a withdrawal motion when the AGM had not yet discussed and decided on the task force recommendations.

RA: evaluation not vice-principals' job

Following reports that in some school districts vice-principals and administrative assistants were evaluating teachers the January Representative Assembly passed the following motion:

Recommend to all members that they not participate in evaluations other than as specified in the School Act and in BCTF policies and that administrative assistants and vice-principals be advised that they are not to conduct such evaluations of teachers.
Advice given by the Teacher Person-

Editorial note:

* *The BCTF Newsletter Editorial Advisory Board dealt with this matter at its meeting on November 28, 1986. At that meeting, acting chairperson Dave Manning was instructed by the board to reply to your letter and to those of others. He resigned from the board on January 5, 1987 without doing so. — Ed.*

Comment on ESL class has been misconstrued

As the teacher of the class referred to in the article "Teachers' reactions mixed" (*BCTF Newsletter*, October 29, 1986) I would like to make two comments.

First, your words "... her youngsters behaved themselves about as well as might be expected" have been misconstrued. I do not believe that any racist statement about my predominantly ESL class was intended. Neither do I feel that your comment criticized my classroom control. Rather, I felt that you were restating the "kids will be kids" adage. I do believe that your statement has been misinterpreted and that this has unfortunately tended to draw attention away from one of the main concerns that I voiced in the article.

Secondly, I would like to comment again that I do not believe that maintaining predominantly ESL classes at "regular" class size is a fair policy. Heavy demands are made upon the ESL students in such classes. The ESL Grade one and Grade two students that I have taught in my "regular" size classes for the last 3½ years not only have had to work at



AGM Chairperson Debbie Gregg announces Executive Committee nominations at RA.

Membership study set

The advantages and disadvantages of compulsory membership are to be studied by a five-member task force commencing July 1987.

The BCTF Representative Assembly approved Executive Committee recommendations that a task force be struck at the meeting on January 23/24. As well as studying compulsory membership the group will be charged with looking at existing membership bases, policies and procedures as well as potentially new membership sources.

Terms of reference will be developed for consideration by the Executive Committee at its April meeting and task force nominations will be invited in the spring.

nel Committee of the BCTF states that reports by vice-principals and administrative assistants have no legal sanction under the School Act but that legal sanctions often follow the institution of practices if they become widespread over time.

The committee noted that although agreement of the teacher is sought, "it is questionable how true a choice a teacher has when the request comes from someone in authority."

learning the difficult skills of reading and arithmetic, but they also have had to work in a second language. This is very tiring.

Pause for a moment and think how more challenging reading is for an ESL student who cannot always use context clues or picture clues to decipher a new word in a sentence. Often, before doing a phonics exercise, such a student may have to learn the word describing the pictured object.

I like my students very much and I enjoy teaching them. I think that we should realize the extra demands made upon ESL students and concentrate on ways and means to support their efforts.

I believe that smaller classes would be one step in this direction.

Dianne Guild

Moberly Elementary

Vancouver

Proud of BCTF policies

I have just read with interest the letters from Ms. Lapine, Krische and President McMurphy in the November 19, 1986 *BCTF Newsletter*. Please register my 100 per cent support for the clear and firm articulate position President McMurphy expresses so well.

It seems very apparent to me that the BCTF policies are ones to take us into the 21st century as self-directing people. I am uncomfortable with the views expressed by the other writers as I fear that vision is found in *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. On a personal level I am proud of these BCTF policies.

Juaneva Smith

Quadra Elementary

Campbell River

FEBRUARY 4, 1987/3

PROJECT OVERSEAS II 1987-88

Sponsored jointly by the

**Canadian Teachers' Federation
and its member organizations**

Canadian teachers are required for Project Overseas II which will operate in Africa from mid-November 1987 to mid-January 1988. Their assistance is given to improve teaching skills and strengthen professional teacher organizations.

In 1986-87, Canadian teachers were requested teach primary methods, English, mathematics, school administration and science to teachers at the primary and secondary levels.

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

Requirements

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

Applications

Deadline date for applications: **APRIL 17, 1987**. Further information and application forms are available from: Judy Davis, Government Division, BCTF.

Principals ponder an unprecedented "withdrawal" motion

What are the issues in this long-simmering dispute?

Clive Cocking
Editor

Despite a year-long effort within the federation to find a formula for reconciliation, the long-simmering dispute between the administrators' PSA and the BCTF has not been resolved.

It may in fact be about to enter a new, highly critical stage.

At the February 6-7 Zone Council meeting of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, to be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Vancouver, about 45 geographical representatives of the administrators' PSA will discuss and vote on the following motion:

That this Association begin a process for withdrawal from the BCTF and that the process include an examination of other professional organizational models, membership services and economic welfare, and a referendum of our members.

The Executive Committee of the BCPVPA decided at its December 5-6 meeting to put forward this recommendation after strong dissatisfaction was expressed with the November Representative Assembly decisions on the recommendations presented by the Task Force on the Membership of Principals in the BCTF.

However, formal federation discussion goes on. The 1987 Annual General Meeting, March 15-18, will debate the RA and will also consider a resolution from Kamloops teachers, arising from the debate on the task force report, which deals with the role of administrators in possible job actions.

BCTF President Elsie McMurphy suggested that principals should think carefully about the withdrawal motion.

"I think they would lose bargaining power, political power and professional power," she said. "I think it would be a loss to the federation: they add to our collective wisdom, our collective expertise and our collective ability to influence. But I think that the main loss would be to education itself. What we know about effective schools is that they are most effective where you collegial decision-making, where you have an effective staff working together to make effective decisions about the school and learning environment. In other jurisdictions, where the principals are out, they become primarily administrators and collegiality breaks down, and from what I hear, it's a disaster."

In order to give members a clearer understanding of this continuing issue we sought the views of principals on both

sides of the withdrawal question and those of BCTF President Elsie McMurphy.

It appears that what has triggered this new crisis is the outcome of the task force process. The task force was appointed in April 1985 to make recommendations concerning the role and responsibility of principals, following a series of internal disputes concerning PSA communications with outside bodies, adequacy of services to the PSA and concerns whether the legal responsibilities of principals were being taken into consideration by federation policies.



BCPVPA President Dean Paravantes ... "startled, disappointed and frustrated" at executive and RA decisions on the task force report.

Dean Paravantes, president of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, who now favours separation, said his association had been "optimistic" that the task force process would seriously deal with the disagreements and produce some accommodation. He believed the recommendations in the report represented a compromise that would have been acceptable to the PSA.

"We were startled, disappointed and frustrated," he said, "when the Executive Committee amended whatever little accommodation was offered us in the task force report and those amendments were subsequently endorsed by the RA

and thus we found that we were back to where we were six years ago when we started initiating the process for reform."

Elsie McMurphy noted that the BCPVPA's view of the task force report had shifted significantly from that of August 1986 when Paravantes wrote that the task force "has not adequately dealt with or has been silent on a number of serious issues."

Gordon Moffatt, principal of Dallas Elementary School, Kamloops, and president of the B.C. School Administrators' Association, also felt that the task

force had gone a long way towards resolving the problem.

Moffatt, who also favours separation, explained that the BCSAA was formed under the Society Act as an independent body to represent administrators at a time two years ago when it seemed that the government was about to legislate principals out of the BCTF. He said the association, which has about 200 members from the ranks of principals, directors of instruction, assistant superintendents and superintendents, has intentionally kept a low profile, but recent events had stimulated the organization to seek more members and become more active.

Noting that the task force had made "an honest attempt" at resolution, McMurphy suggested that the principals' PSA did not have the right to pursue taking some members out of the BCTF.

"I'm not surprised that this has come forward because I think there are some administrators in British Columbia for whom nothing less than special status — in other words, more rights and fewer responsibilities — would suffice," said McMurphy. "I'm not even sure that they would want to stay in what is essentially a teachers' union, even if they had those additional rights with fewer responsibilities. They don't see themselves as teachers, they see themselves as being manage-

ment."

It was the November RA's decisions on a recommendation defining the responsibilities of principals and on another concerning job action that have caused many administrators to begin seriously considering separation, said Paravantes. The task force had recommended adoption of a policy statement declaring: *That principal teachers have some specific legal responsibilities different from those of other teachers.*

The RA reaction to the task force's proposal on job action was the other fundamental decision that has brought the issue to a head, said Paravantes. In accepting that administrators have additional legal responsibilities, the task force had proposed the following scheme:

That principal teachers be given the opportunity to decide, on a local level for local withdrawal of services and on a provincial level for provincial withdrawal of services, if they will participate in the withdrawal of services before any recommendation is debated at a general meeting.

That, if principal teachers decide to participate, they be expected to comply with the majority decision of the membership.

That, if the principal teachers decide not to participate, they remove themselves from the debate and the vote on the withdrawal of services. Should the job action result in a loss of salaries for the members, the principal teachers be required to forward to the local association salary and allowances earned during the withdrawal of services.

That, when principal teachers are involved in a withdrawal of services, local association establish guidelines for ensuring the safety of the children and the security of the schools.

The assembly, however, also had before it for consideration a motion from the Executive Committee that the RA not support this task force recommendation. The executive's recommendation was adopted in a recorded vote by 266 to 238 votes.

"I've always adhered to the principle of compromise," said Paravantes. "I've always believed that majorities should operate in a way that respects the rights of minorities. I think the action that we saw at the RA was a violation and contradiction of both those principles. Not only did we lose just the majority vote but basically we had the majority telling us that our sense of grievance was not going to be listened to and that they were not going to grasp the issues that were of concern to us."

As a result, he said he has now come to the view that it would be better for school administrators to withdraw from the BCTF. "I say that with a lot of pain and difficulty," he said, "because three years ago my teachers' association granted me lifetime membership, and I am very proud of that, and because I have worked in the federation a long time."

Margaret Woodlands, principal of Sidaway Elementary School, Richmond, was also disappointed with the RA decisions, but not to the extent of advocating the withdrawal of principals, a proposal she opposes.

"It's unfortunate that the rep assembly didn't accept the so-called compromise position," she said. "That would have at least been another starting point to keep working on because I don't think we have finalized the right to strike for teachers or for principals. So I think it was a little premature to just reject that without putting another process in place for

either looking at the problem further, or to give an alternative suggestion as to how it could be resolved."

Norm Ornes, principal of Vancouver Technical Secondary School and a long-time active member of the federation, also welcomed the task force recommendations as "a step in the right direction," but does not feel that the RA decisions are sufficient grounds for separation. While affirming his belief that principals and vice-principals should remain in the BCTF, he acknowledges that there have been many sources of friction over many years that have led to the current crisis.

He cited such problems as: "the firm position the federation took with respect to limiting, restricting, not bargaining on behalf of the principals and vice-principals;" the change from a fixed fee to a percentage fee; "the apparent unwillingness to provide professional development support for administrators;" the failure to encourage participation of principals and vice-principals in instructional and curricular matters, and briefs to the ministry; the communications problem that "in some parts of the province is a form of censorship" whereby "principals and vice-principals, individually and as organizations, get themselves into positions of conflict in dealing — as part of their jobs — with boards or superintendents;" and the fact that some federation members "see the industrial model as the best model for our profession and that workers and managers — principals and vice-principals are managers — should not be in the same organization."

But Norm Ornes emphasized: "The most serious frustration that has existed is the unwillingness or inability of some of the federation leadership to recognize that, during periods of withdrawal of service, that if principals and vice-principals walk out they could be punished, indeed possibly dismissed. Some principals and vice-principals did support the federation activities in the November 1983 strike and were called in and reprimanded by their superintendents, and had derogatory letters placed in their files. The federation, in settling the strike, appeared to stay silent on this issue."

According to McMurphy, Ornes's view on this point is inaccurate. Published BCTF records, she said, show that the federation and the then minister of education, Jack Heinrich, agreed at a meeting on November 21, 1983 — 10 days after the strike — that "reprisals against individuals for either participating or not participating in the strike would be opposed by both the government and the BCTF."

Elaborating, Ornes said that during that strike Vancouver principals and vice-principals received orders from their superintendent that they were to be on duty in their schools, but "the federation made no effort to intercede in that singling out of a small group within the Vancouver system and indeed, from my perspective, didn't appear to provide the kind of support that would have prevented punishment."

Again McMurphy maintains that Mr. Ornes's "perspective" is inaccurate. She said that a great deal of effort by BCTF staff, documented and on file, was put into supporting administrators who had received reprimands. To the best of the federation's knowledge, all such reprimands were ultimately withdrawn.

Dean Paravantes agreed that the position of administrators in job actions is at the heart of the dispute. He pointed out that under regulation 91 of the School Act principals have the responsibility, among other things, for the safety of students and the security of the school

building and would be required to obey lawful orders of their boards concerning these responsibilities.

"There was not one teacher disciplined for his or her participation in the 1983 job action," he said. "All of the disciplinary actions were taken against principals — 20 to 30 of our members around the province received censure. So in the views of their superiors, the boards and the ministry, principals and vice-principals clearly have additional responsibilities that they were censured for not discharging in the last job action."



BCTF President Elsie McMurphy ... principals' separation would mean a loss to education.

We just want some accommodation on that."

He acknowledged that the federation did everything possible to support principals who received censures and to have letters of reprimand withdrawn from their files, but he did not believe that administrators should be caught between the rock of the School Act and the hard place of BCTF policy.

On her part, Margaret Woodlands maintains that the School Act does not give principals additional responsibilities, just different ones. While she acknowledges that principals can be placed in difficult positions during walk-outs, she believes that the federation can work out an accommodation to allow principals "to fulfill the requirements of the Act and still remain members."

Elsie McMurphy suggested that the real root of the problem is with the attitudes of individuals.

"The conflict, I think, occurs not in the School Act and in the policies of the federation, but in the minds and hearts of the individuals who are in those situations," she said. "Before when we were involved in job action we had situations in the province where every single principal was out walking the line with the teachers. We had other school districts where every single principal was inside and wasn't out supporting the teachers and in other districts we had combinations, some in and some out. And I guess what that tells me is that the problem has more to do with the choices made by individuals than it does with any kind of School Act/federation policy conflict. Because the same was true of teachers."

There are also other stress points. Gordon Moffat argues, for one thing, that there is conflict between the School

Act requirement for regular reports on teachers and federation policy, which now calls for reports to be written only when competency is questioned.

"Principals will continue to be expected to write regular reports on teachers and I think that most principals and most teachers agree that that's appropriate, despite the policy of the federation," said Moffatt. "I don't believe that you can take the position that you only write a report if competency is in question. There has to be regular monitoring of the process and I think it's important for those teachers who are doing a good job,

you know, it's simply a straw argument that they're trying to set up."

Another source of friction, according to Paravantes, is bargaining. The first irritant to many administrators, he said, is the BCTF policy calling for a reduction in the differential between teachers' salaries and the salaries and allowances paid to principals. "Since bargaining is a local concern, we think it's simply inappropriate for the provincial body to exert a policy on something which is a local matter," he said. "We also don't think it should discriminate against us."

Another irritant, Paravantes suggested, is that principals have been denied access to the bargaining table to present the case for improvement in their salaries and administrative allowances. "Some local associations, in attempting to follow the BCTF policy on reducing the differential have basically said that they will not negotiate administrative salaries and that they will continue to try to reduce the gap," he said. "We're prepared to live by the negotiation process but we think we should have access to it."

Norm Ornes agrees that this is a problem, but adds that salaries and allowances are not the only concern. There are also concerns about working conditions, professional development and tenure, which is "the most ridiculous" in B.C., he said. "We have no tenure essentially as principals and vice-principals, we only have tenure as teachers." These issues must be dealt with, principals and vice-principals have a right to have their interests represented at the bargaining table, Ornes said.

Elsie McMurphy does not believe there is much substance to this complaint: "To my knowledge, the administrative allowances that are paid to principals in British Columbia are the best in Canada."

She cited the CTF bulletin, "Summary and Analysis of Administrators' Salary and Allowances," published in April 1985 and based on information as of June 30, 1984, which surveyed 39 major school jurisdictions in Canada. She said that on every indicator noted, the administrative allowances of BCTF members were higher than those of their counterparts elsewhere in Canada.

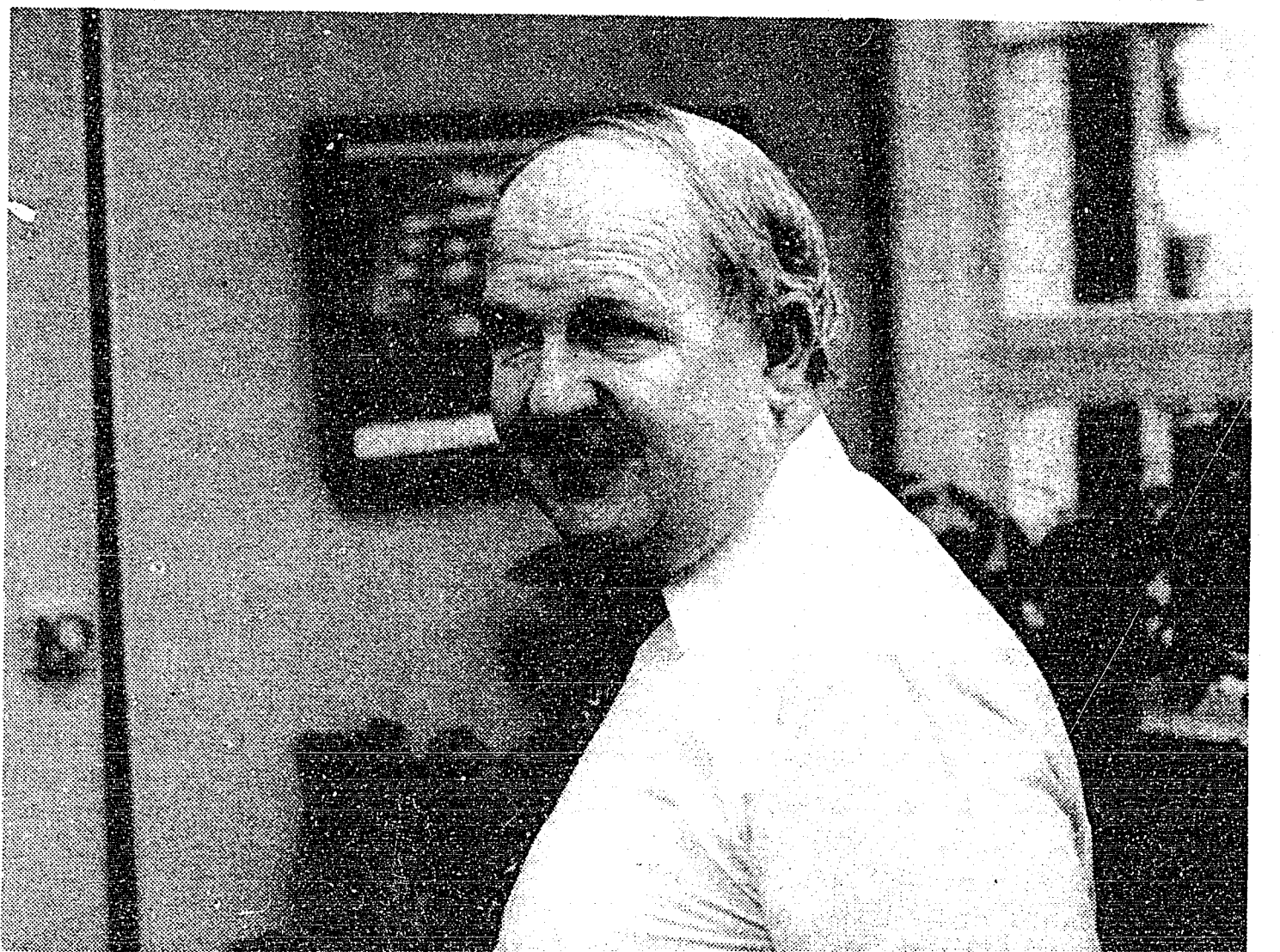
PSA communication with outside bodies: this issue, which a few years ago brought the BCPVPA into collision with the BCTF when the administrators' PSA submitted a brief to the government on the consumer education program that

Continued on page 6



Richmond principal Margaret Woodlands ... problem won't be solved by principals separating — or by maintaining the status quo.

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Vancouver principal Norm Ornes ... time for the majority to "hold out the hand" of conciliation to the minority.

"No solution in separation or status quo"

From page 5

offered opinions contrary to the federation's position, is still a strong point of contention.

Paravantes maintains that the present policy is too constricting, inhibiting expression of legitimate professional concerns and even freedom of speech. Procedure statement 33.14 reads: *That it shall not be the right of any provincial specialist association to make representations to any authority or agency outside the BCTF on any matter that is properly the concern of the BCTF.* Paravantes argues that the principals' PSA should have the right to make official representations to outside bodies, such as school boards and the ministry, after consultation with the federation and only on matters for which principals are directly responsible under regulation 91 of the School Act.

Gordon Moffatt agrees, pointing out that: "Principals are in a line-staff situation at the district level and as such we are responsible for giving advice to our superintendent and this happens every month. We meet with the superintendent to give advice which may, or may not, conflict with the advice of the local teacher association. I see that same analogy at the provincial level that sometimes this should occur." But he added that this communication should only concern matters for which principals are directly responsible — it would be "inappropriate" in other areas.

While noting that there are matters about which the principals' PSA, and other PSAs, feel the need to make outside representations, Woodlands emphasized that such communications should be in line with BCTF policy and that out of "common courtesy" the federation should be kept informed. "I don't necessarily hold the position that every brief must be read and sanctioned before it's presented, but I think we should all be cognizant of BCTF policy and be fulfilling those policies," she said. "I don't think that if you're a member of an organization that you can put forth an absolutely opposite point of view."

Ornes agrees that it is not appropriate for the principals' PSA to present a brief to government that is contrary to the federation position. But he believes the federation must consider the professional views of principals, and other members, in preparing a presentation to government. "That must not only be a fact," he said, "it must be seen to be a fact."

Other PSAs do not seem to have a problem, McMurphy noted, in consulting with the federation and making representations that have the sanction of the BCTF. She pointed out that the counselors' PSA recently wanted to present a

brief to the minister, but first they consulted with the federation, made a few revisions, and as a result presented a brief that was acceptable both to the PSA and the BCTF.

"When the principals take a position, as they did in the infamous consumer education case, that is contrary to that of the federation, then it destroys everything we're trying to do," she said. Then McMurphy added: "There are obviously circumstances where it's to the benefit of education to have everyone, PSAs and individuals, putting forward their own points of view. But there are other circumstances where it is better to put forward a unified point of view and we simply can't afford, for the good of the organization and for the good of educa-



Kamloops principal Gordon Moffatt ... "most of our members believe nothing much is going to change."

tion, to leave that door open when it needs to be controlled."

One other stress point is whether sufficient effort is made to appoint principals to BCTF committees in area of concern to them. Paravantes and Moffatt maintain that too often principals are not represented on such committees. Paravantes suggested, for example, that the recent BCTF committee on teacher evaluation should have included a principal as a member. "We were never invited to become full-fledged members of that committee," he said. "We were given observer status and it was sort of a back-door approach." He acknowledged that the committee did draw on work that the PSA had been doing in this area, but stressed that they did not believe this is the way the system should work.

"What we say," said Paravantes, "is that on those committees that will write

policy statements and procedures that will directly impact on our role, that we should have the right to make the PSA's point of view known through our representatives on those committees."

Margaret Woodlands disagrees that a PSA should have automatic representation on committees dealing with their concerns. She suggests that the wise practice is to seek broad representation on federation committees. "I think you would be foolish, for example, if you were examining the question of management of school budgets and did not have both teachers and principals on the committee," she said.

Ornes also disagrees with automatic representation, but notes that it is his perception that there is a tendency in the

again going into the realm of 'we're different, we're special.'"

There are undoubtedly other points of disagreement, but these seem to be the flashpoints that have brought the BCPVPA-BCTF relationship to a crisis. What are the chances for a resolution?

Among administrators inclined to favour the withdrawal motion, there does not appear to be much optimism.

"I think that most of our members believe that, as a result of the fall RA, nothing much is going to change in our relationship with the federation," said Gordon Moffatt. "In that case, it is our belief that legislation should be brought down to either clarify those things under law that are a little shady, or to make some type of new association or affiliation with the federation."

Dean Paravantes suspects that the situation may be beyond retrieval. "I don't think it would take very much on the part of the federation to keep administrators in," he said. "One or two accommodations on one or two issues would have done it. It appears to me that the federation is adamant in not negotiating these issues, so that it appears that we're leaving rather than being excluded."

The situation is not beyond retrieval in the view of Margaret Woodlands. "It won't be resolved either by principals separating or by them staying and maintaining the status quo," she said. "Some very active steps have to be taken by the leadership of the federation and the leadership of the BCPVPA." She suggests that there needs to be a switch to a problem-solving approach.

The majority of principals and vice-principals, in Norm Ornes's view, would like to remain in the federation. They will decide to, he said, if there is a clear indication that their needs and aspirations will be recognized and met within the BCTF. And this does not, and should not, mean special status, he said. What is needed is the creation of an environment indicating that principals are welcomed and valued members.

"I personally think that now is the time for the federation leadership to wrestle with this situation, to hold out the hand," said Ornes. "The big must always hold out to the small, the majority must always hold out the hand to the minority. Now is the time to hold out the hand and to forge a strong, united federation that is going to encompass principals and vice-principals for many, many years to come."

BCTF President Elsie McMurphy says she is willing to hold out that hand, but is worried that the only thing principals want to see in that hand is special status. She rejects this: "For me, it's important that our organization maintains the fundamental democratic principle that all of us in this organization are equal."

ped and were content as the BCTF merely networked in response.

It is no wonder that politically we received little respect. It is because there are no principles, save one, for which the BCTF is willing to risk anything except the occasional attack of laryngitis. In 1983 we went out on strike in the only provincial action undertaken during restraint. We went back in when we were no longer subject to arbitrary firing. It is hard to see how that helped students, or improved the educational standards.

Local associations have shown that local action can often resolve local issues. For the provincial problem of educational restraint, provincial action is necessary. Until the organization acts, despite Ms. McMurphy's loyal words, the BCTF's strength will be mere image.

Garth Holmes
Anne Stevenson Junior Secondary
Williams Lake

Principals' dispute has complex history

Al Crawford
First Vice-President

The Zone Council of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association is about to consider a recommendation from its executive to "begin a process for withdrawal from the BCTF."

What led to the current situation? The report of the Task Force on the Membership of Principals in the BCTF was recently dealt with by the Executive Committee and Representative Assembly. The report's recommendations were substantially endorsed. Not endorsed was a proposal that principals be permitted to choose to opt out of local job action decisions and, consequently, the resultant job actions. Principals' PSA representatives expressed displeasure with the decision of the Executive Committee and the RA. This displeasure, however, does not seem sufficient cause to promote opting out permanently. So what is the background?

There is a longer history.

Consumer Education

We can go back at least to December 1981 when the PSA presented a brief to the Ministry of Education on the implementation of the then-proposed consumer education program. This representation directly to an outside body by a PSA contravened BCTF policy 35.14. During the fall the BCTF had been opposing the implementation of consumer education. The RA had adopted such policy. By December 1981, BCTF Government Division Director Jim Bowman said that the ministry's curriculum branch was "slashing learning outcomes to make it more acceptable" and that prospects of an additional \$600,000 to \$700,000 for the necessary textbooks was remote." Bowman argued at the time that prior to the BCPVPA representation, all evidence suggested that "a retreat" was likely. Instead, a so-called "back-up" position, one of the options proposed by the BCPVPA in its brief, was later used by the ministry when it implemented the program in September 1982.

In early February 1982, based on a PSA Council recommendation, the Representative Assembly reprimanded the principals' PSA. The PSA admitted it had "erred in procedure," consequently the RA also withdrew the brief. Even though the federation lost the consumer ed battle, later that same month BCPVPA activist and later PSA president Gerry Powlik said: "The federation waged a war of opposition against the concept instead of trying to alter the negative impacts through persuasion and co-operation. The federation won the battle, as we well know, and in so doing, it lost, lost, lost."

Policy 4.F.01

This policy (formerly 2.F.22) was adopted at the 1975 AGM. It reads: "That the differential between the salaries of classroom teachers and those of administrators should be much smaller and therefore more realistic." Frequent attempts, supported by the BCPVPA, to remove it have failed. This has been a constant source of concern for the PSA. The task force proposal to incorporate this policy into 4.F.03 so that it reads, "that the differential between the salaries of teachers including administrative and other responsibility allowances should be much smaller," has been supported by the Executive Committee and the RA.

BCPVPA concerns

In early 1983 "A Time for Change" was drafted as an expression of the PSA's concerns. Solutions for the concerns were proposed. In May, the Executive Committee set up a joint committee to address the concerns. The joint committee met between June 1983 and January 1984. The BCPVPA was not satisfied with the results. The paper "A Time for Decisions" in February 1984 was their response. At the 1984 AGM the membership's response to the impasse was to adopt our current policy 20.01: "That principals and vice-principals should be members of the BCTF with the same rights and obligations as other members."

In May, the BCPVPA adopted a six-point position paper entitled, "The Role and Responsibilities of Principals and Vice-Principals within the BCTF." The Executive Committee produced for the RA "A Time for Resolution" which stated, "whatever the intention, the effect of the six-point statement is to set up the BCPVPA as a separate organization ..."

In June, the RA reminded the BCPVPA of 1984 AGM policy, stated its expectation of adherence and requested withdrawal of the six-point paper. The paper was not withdrawn.

The fee issue

The 1983 AGM approved for the first time a fee as a percentage of a member's actual salary. Previously, the fee had been based on a percentage of the average teacher's salary. Some members, including many administrators, were vociferous in their opposition to this fee structure. Subsequent AGMs have continued to endorse calculating the fee as a percentage of actual salary.

The Task Force

In January 1985, the RA requested the Executive Committee to set up a task

force to examine and report on the role and responsibilities of principals in the BCTF. After consultation with the BCPVPA president, members were appointed to the task force in April. The task force report was circulated to the BCPVPA, the EC, the RA and all locals in May and June of 1986. The report was dealt with in October by the EC and RA. Prior to the EC and RA decisions Gerry Powlik reported to the BCPVPA Zone council that: "... the BCPVPA Executive Committee considered the Task Force Report to be inadequate and incomplete and that the Executive would continue to pursue the Six Points and a fee change as legitimate demands of our Association."

B.C. School Administrators' Association

According to Vol. 1 No. 1 of the B.C. School Administrators' Association Newsletter, November 1986, this separate society was formed nearly two years ago, although it has come to our attention only recently. President Gordon Moffat, who is also president of the Provincial Specialist Association Council executive, stated: "It was our intention to have in place an organization that could represent the interests of school administrators without the constraints imposed ... by the policies and procedures of the BCTF."

He continued: "We have maintained a low profile over the last two years ... We did not wish to take any actions that might precipitate any moves by the federation while the task force was reviewing the role of the principal ... Recent events make it clear that we must ... engage in discussions with both the Ministry and the BCSTA ..."

The association's executive is comprised of eight principals, a director of instruction and an assistant superintendent.

Recent history indicates that the relationship between the BCPVPA and other bodies of the BCTF has been turbulent. All of us who teach in British Columbia face serious problems related to our work. We need to build a strong, effective and unified federation in order to gain what is clearly necessary for us and our students. As the debate over membership intensifies, reflected by both the BCPVPA executive's motion to conduct a vote of its members to withdraw and by the existence of a "shadow" organization dedicated to perceived self interest, it is important that all of us, school administrators and non-school administrators alike, understand the context in which that debate will occur. The intention of this article has been to aid that understanding.

school boards to inform and familiarize parents and guardians about the prevention, detection and reporting of child abuse.

Recovery budgets sought by locals

Geoff Peters
Bargaining Division

Can you imagine a school district without any teachers?

Surrey President David Chudnovsky asked just that question to highlight the district's need for more teachers.

Since 1981 Surrey's enrolment has grown by 4,333 pupils but the number of teachers has dropped by 22, that is the equivalent of adding the entire 1985 pupil population of Cranbrook (4,327) without adding a single teacher.

Surrey teachers were making their recovery budget presentation to their school board. The STA asked that provision be made to return pupil teacher ratios to the 1981-2 pre-restraint levels. This would mean adding 517.2 teachers. The recommendation was to start on a three-year plan with 170-5 to be added each year.

STA also let the board know that a reasonable teacher salary increase would be bargained for and must be in the budget. Increased budgets for support staff and supplies were also requested.

School districts have until March 15 to send their preliminary budgets to Victoria for the 1987-8 school year. It is critical that those budgets be high enough to support necessary improvements because by law after March 15 budgets can only be decreased prior to final adoption May 1.

The preliminary budgets, and necessary lobbying of government, are required in order to convince the Ministry of Education to include adequate money in the fiscal framework (the government's share of education costs). Due to last year's return of limited school board budget autonomy, districts have the power to raise local residential taxes if the government grants do not increase adequately. Last year districts added about \$120 million of of supplementary taxation.

Quebec pension changes may benefit former teachers

Recent amendments to the Quebec Teachers Pension Plan and the RREGOP may be of benefit to ex-Quebec teachers who are former members of religious orders and were laicized either before or after June 30, 1965.

This group may now pay into the RREGOP for all non-contributory years when they were teaching as members of orders or as laicized teachers working for private schools governed by a religious order. This applies to those who have transferred to other provinces, or to those who took refunds when it appeared that this was the only thing they could do and even to those who are already on pension.

If you think you can benefit from these provisions, contact the Quebec Pension Department at 1-800-463-5533 or write to: CARRA, 2875 boul. Laurier, Ste-Foy, Qc. G1V 4J8.

Workshops offered teachers on child abuse and neglect

The BCTF Professional Development Division offers teachers workshops to help them respond to the problem of child abuse and neglect. The emphasis is on clarifying responsibilities and rights, and in preparing teachers to play a role in detection and prevention.

The program features:

- practising teachers as workshop leaders sensitive to the range of attitudes and feelings in this area;
- workshop leaders knowledgeable about the issues so that workshops can be designed to meet the "particular needs" of participants;
- workshops can be provided for school staffs, district PD days or groups of interested teachers;
- workshops are five hours in length, minimum 12 participants, booked one month prior to date.

For more information, consult your 1986-87 PD Book or phone Bridget Roberts in the BCTF PD Division.

Letters

Pro-choice cause should be our cause

Having just received and glanced through my copy of the November *BCTF Newsletter*, I feel compelled to comment on a letter that appears there entitled, "Leave life and death issues out of BCTF."

That the writer of this letter appears to be suggesting that to ban abortion would be a way of filling the classrooms and ensuring jobs for teachers is, at the very least, appallingly petty and narrow-minded. Moreover, that the person making such an irresponsible statement is a retired member of our profession is embarrassing. Surely the world is already overflowing with enough children to fill our classrooms many times over. The problem never has been the population of children, except that it is increasing at an astronomical rate.

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The writer suggests, further, that abortion is somehow related to euthanasia of the elderly. Such a statement sounds like paranoia, not to mention grasping at straws to rationalize an untenable argument.

The main point of the letter was, however, to express disagreement with any BCTF involvement in abortion clinics. Although our philosophical points of view differ vastly, I, too, feel that it is not the place of the BCTF to involve itself in financing such controversial social services as that. If the pro-choice side of the discussion is the will of the membership, as I should hope it is, then let us support the cause subtly, but financial involvement should be beyond the scope of our organization.

Laurence Hall
William Konkin Elementary
Burns Lake

Action against restraint would give reality to image of "strong" BCTF

Our president recently (*BCTF Newsletter*, December 18, 1986) claimed that the BCTF is often not aware of its strength, that others view us as strong and that we should build on that image. Unfortunately, the claims are inaccurate. The BCTF has spent the years of restraint proving that it is extremely weak, politically. Given a violent, unmistakable attack on us and on the children for whose education we are responsible, the organization reacted in the usual fashion. It did nothing as a provincial body.

We watched as the level of education services dropped and our leaders merely talked. We watched as our students received less attention in growing classes and we merely complained. We watched as our families' standard of living drop-

Pension plan changes discussed with gov't

A number of federation proposals for improvements to the Teachers' Pension Plan were discussed with the Provincial Secretary, Elwood Veitch on December 10.

"The meeting was an open discussion of our concerns," said BCTF President Elsie McMurphy. "Although no commitment was given by the Provincial Secretary to implement our proposals, he agreed that the Superannuation Commission, the Pensions Committee and staff should continue their work to arrive at a package to be reviewed at subsequent meetings in 1987."

The proposals included improved early retirement, the level of government contributions, the investment policy, phased retirement, improved reinstatement rules, recognition of common-law spouses, vesting and lock-in after 11 months of service, full government payment of the Medical Services Plan, Extended Health Benefits and Dental Plan.

Pension contribution rules clarified for teachers on leave

The Superannuation Commission has clarified some of the rules relating to contributions while on leaves of absence. The changes include:

1. If you are on a leave of absence with partial salary, for example, reduced assignment and on unpaid leave of absence for the balance of the original assignment, you may make an extra contribution to the pension plan and receive pension credits as if you had been working full-time.

2. If you are on maternity leave, you may make a single contribution to the pension plan for up to 18 weeks (or possibly 24 weeks if unable to return to teaching) and receive pension credits. Thereafter a double contribution may be possible under the general leave provisions.

3. Teachers may apply for pre-retirement leave to expire not later than June 30, 1988 and purchase the service without having to return to teaching after the leave.

Full details on all the rules relating to these leaves are available from your school board, the Superannuation Commission and the Income Security section of the BCTF.

Pension fund returns beating inflation rate

As of September 30, 1986 the annual rate of return on the total teacher pension fund of \$1.9 billion was 10.2 per cent. After deducting for inflation the real return was 6.4 per cent.

The rate of return on September 30 on the securities purchased prior to January 1981 (\$5.26M) was 9.4 per cent, on securities purchased since that time (\$1,187M) was 11.6 per cent and on the inflation account (\$146M) was 9.8 per cent.



Representative Assembly Chairperson Jane Turner (centre) laughs at her slip of the tongue in prematurely (but accurately) announcing defeat of the motion.

Students live in poverty, graduate in debt, study finds

The student assistance program in B.C. is in crisis, a study by the Canadian Federation of Students has found.

"We believe that it is time that the provincial government made a serious commitment to post-secondary education by providing a student assistance program which makes post-secondary education accessible for all qualified applicants," said the CFS in its report.

The report, the result of a series of hearings at B.C. educational institutions, reveals that the government does not provide enough money in total for student aid and its student loan plan does not recognize a number of legitimate expenses (rent of more than \$220 a month) or provide realistic maximums for recognized categories.

The result: students are either forced to live in extreme poverty or give up on higher education altogether.

The students' federation finds that students need more assistance these days because of higher tuition fees, higher living costs, scarcity of summer jobs — and low pay for available jobs. It adds that, because they must borrow so much (more than \$20,000 in some cases), students are finding themselves with heavy debt loads they are sometimes unable to pay.

The report points out that the provincial government provided \$33 million in student assistance in 1982-83, but only about half that today.

In addition to cuts in the program funding, a change to an all-loan scheme from a mixture of loans and grants, and increased emphasis on academic achievement rather than need has contributed to the financial crisis for students.

The report has been submitted to the student assistance advisory committee of the ministry of advanced education. Among its 46 recommendations, the report urges:

- provision of adequate summer employment for students;
- an increase in the minimum wage to \$5;
- more funding for post-secondary institutions to enable elimination of tuition fees for the first two years;
- student loan interest rates be subsidized to keep them below prime;
- increased government funding to provide student assistance on a par with other provinces;
- and establishment of a full degree-granting interior university.

The CFS study was given financial assistance by the BCTF and the Defend Education Services Coalition.

Class sizes have shrunk, but long way yet to go

Al Blakey
Bargaining Division

Class sizes have shrunk.

Not a lot and not in all districts but for the first time since 1981 class sizes went down rather than up. Elementary classes this year average 24.5, a drop of .6, while secondary classes sank to 25.0, a reduction of .4.

Clearly the efforts of teachers, parents and others in the community to pressure and support school boards in adopting recovery budgets have been rewarded with some success. That's the good news.

The bad news is that 44.2 per cent of all elementary classes and 34 per cent of all secondary classes are in violation of BCTF criteria, that K/1 splits and Grade 7 classes have even more violations this year than last (some K/1's were even bigger than the School Act allows), and that 65.9 per cent of intermediate splits and 85.6 per cent of primary splits also violate our standards.

Secondary English and lab sciences, which had new, lower maxima established at last year's AGM, more than doubled in violations. Industrial education classes, also with a lower maximum, jumped to 54.5 per cent violations.

Forty-two per cent of kindergarten classes have more than 20 pupils. Hardly the best welcome to five-year-olds venturing into the new world of school.

These are the "highlights" of the federation's Working and Learning Conditions Survey results. Better, but yet so far to go. In 1980 the average elementary class had 22.8 pupils and in 1981 the average secondary class had 22.4 compared to his year's 24.5 and 25.0.

Yet, depressing as the reality can be, the fact that this year saw a reversal of the recent trend is significant. It is better than a further growth in class size and it does indicate that something can be done. The question on the agenda now is whether this year is the beginning of a new trend or just a temporary aberration.

Left to chance the latter is likely.

Applicants sought for Peace Associates

Qualified candidates are invited to apply for positions as peace associates. Peace associates are professional development associates of the BCTF who have special skills in teaching teachers, designing and facilitating workshops and serving as consultants. Following special training, Peace Associates will serve as volunteer workshop leaders assisting teachers in learning about methods and materials for teaching peace.

Criteria: Consideration will be given to professional and academic credentials, leadership qualities, commitment to and experience in peace education, ability to design workshops and geographic location.

Training: Teachers selected will be available for initial training in May 1987 (2 to 3 days) and to undertake periodic retraining.

Commitment: Successful candidates are expected to commit themselves to at least five days service each school year and to serve two years. There is no honorarium, but the BCTF pays all workshop expenses, including substitutes.

Applications: For information and applications contact: Holly Watson, Professional Development Division, BCTF.

Program Against Racism seeks associates

The BCTF Program Against Racism is looking for qualified candidates with backgrounds in multicultural and anti-racist education to be trained as Professional Development Associates with the program. PAR PD Associates design and facilitate workshops on a wide variety of topics relating to multicultural and anti-racist education.

A training program will take place from Friday, February 27 through to Sunday, March 1, 1987.

Applications may be made on curriculum vitae forms (available from your local association office), and sent to: June Williams, Program Against Racism, B.C. Teachers' Federation, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3H9.

Manitoba eases pension fund transfer rules

Manitoba has recently amended its teacher pension act to permit ex-Manitoba teachers to re-instate refunded service for the purposes of the interprovincial transfer agreements without having to return to teach in Manitoba. The cost of re-instatement is two times the contributions plus interest.

The previous restriction that a person had to transfer employment after July 1, 1973 to participate in the pension agreements between Manitoba and provinces east of B.C. has now been removed. However, to come within the terms of the Manitoba-B.C. pension transfer agreement at the present time, a teacher must have had one year of service in Manitoba after June 30, 1969.

All teachers to whom these changes could apply should contact Manitoba for further information. All inquiries should be directed to: Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Board, Room 115, 1200 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0T5 (204) 945-6199.

Pensioners get raises

Teacher pensions were increased in January by 4.1 per cent, the full amount of the Canadian Consumer Price Index increase as of last September. Teachers who retired on non-reduced pensions or who are 60 or older receive this amount unless they had been in receipt of the pension for less than a year.

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

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Staff-reps: Please inform us of any changes in numbers needed at your school.

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