

THE B.C. TEACHER

January-February 1984

Volume 63 Number 3



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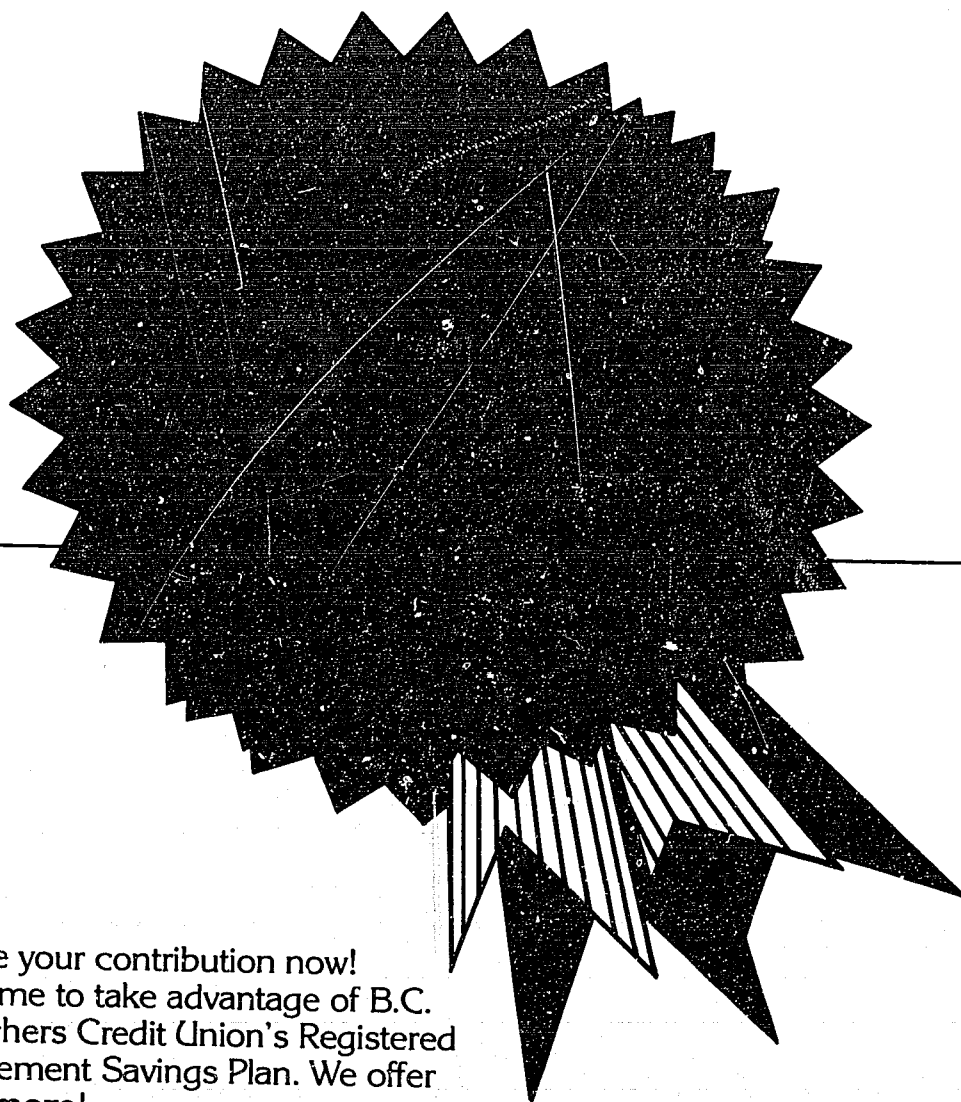
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Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation.

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From Our Readers

FIRST CLASS

●An "A" to Tom Hutchison on his article, "Reflections of an Examiner," in the November-December 1983 issue.

In fact, I thought that the whole issue was most comprehensive and very well-balanced. Thank you for your treatment of this topic.

Audrey Bragnolo,
Vancouver

●In your November-December issue Brian Tetlow makes the statement (page 76), "I think it bears repeating that for years such countries as England and Australia have had externally set final exams that are the only ones that count."

In Australia, at least, this is no longer the case. In fact, it bears noting that some Australian states have completely abolished all external exams for the very reasons that critics of their reintroduction here have noted — their total lack of reliability and very questionable validity. In those states that have retained external evaluation, nowhere does it count for more than 50 per cent of the final mark.

Robert Peard,
North Vancouver

●Congratulations on the excellent most recent issue, with its discussions on the pros and cons of centralized government exams.

As a teacher, I and my classes faced departmental exams first in 1935. Since I taught (except for four years in the RCAF) senior history until 1968, and for some years, senior English also, I gained considerable experience on the effects of exams of this kind on both teaching and learning.

Any external examination forces a "teacher" to become merely an instructor. Pupils learn to memorize, never to think. To think is to fail on a departmental exam. The science of passing exams is to swallow information and then to regurgitate. The process of digestion — that is, of truly understanding the information — is not required.

For several years I worked as a "marker"

of examinations in Victoria. The problem of establishing standards acceptable to the markers was almost insurmountable. Even for so-called objective questions requiring merely checking the response thought adequate by the maker of the examination, there was often discussion first, on the validity of the question and second, on which, if any, of the possible answers provided was correct.

My first criticism of departmental exams was in Social Studies 30 in 1935, when 20 marks out of a possible 150 were allocated for an essay, "The Modernization of Japan," which was subtopic "f" of topic 10 of the course outline. Although I communicated to the department my dissatisfaction with that allocation, all my pupils (all six of them) passed. Since I was teaching all the "content" subjects from 9 to 12, we had pretty well to stick to the course and the text.

A neighbor teacher, who had spent the previous summer in Japan, had much less satisfactory (sic) results. In gaining a thorough knowledge of Japan, her pupils had missed some of the other probably 50 topics in the course outline. Yet those pupils may well have profited more from their detailed knowledge of Japan than did my class, who had confined their studies to the course and the text.

In my final year as head of the social studies department at Sentinel Secondary School in West Vancouver, John Williams and I "team-taught" our History 12, the modern history course for junior matriculation. We did not attempt to follow the course.

We were fortunate to have one large classroom where all our pupils could assemble and to have an excellent library and most co-operative librarian.

We started out having the entire group in the large room and posed the question to the students: "This is a course in modern history; what do you want to study?" We had two periods of discussion and the pupils finally settled on wars of the 20th century, causes, duration, effects, nations involved, etc. That topic kept us going well into the new year.

Then the principal came to us and said, "Some of your pupils want to write the

history exam for scholarship. You haven't been teaching the course; what will you do?"

We called the group together and told them, "Some of you will have to write departmental exams since you have been wasting both your time and ours. How many of you want to write for scholarships?"

The class was divided approximately equally by this. John and I had collected all the old History 12 exams across the years; we had had them duplicated, then bound them into booklets. John took the "exam writers" into one classroom and for the last two months of school that group did nothing but work on those exams. The average marks were the best ever and there were no failures. On their work during the year we would have failed at least four.

I took the remainder of the students and we decided that we would study racial discrimination in various countries, including our own. From my point of view — and from the point of view of the students (except for one lad) — this was an exciting experience, for we learned together, we dealt with problems with which we were concerned and that were important to us. Students reported to the group on the countries they had studied. Then there was discussion and some really hot debates.

No departmental exam could evaluate the results of studies conducted in this manner. In fact, departmental exams would tend to prevent this type of teaching or, at best, force teachers to use the "cramming" process for the final two months of term and thus waste valuable time for genuine learning.

Frank Snowsell,
Kelowna

BOOK SERVICE USEFUL

●I have recently discovered a service that I'm sure would be of interest to other teachers.

Through a friend who shares my interest in books, I received the fall catalogue from Lukus Mail Order Books. Although the catalogue was small, Lukus offers to deliver

"any book in print post-paid book rate to anywhere in Canada. The price you pay is publisher's suggested retail price or less."

I immediately tested the claim by ordering a book I haven't been able to find on store shelves for five or six years. I was pleasantly surprised when my copy arrived in just over three weeks!

This service could be invaluable to teachers in the more remote areas of the province. The address: Lukus Mail Order Books, Box 252, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2.

R. J. C. Tyrrell,
Nanaimo

PHOTOS INACCURATE

●Thank you for sending me copies of the special issue on computers (September-October). I am very pleased to see my article included.

I do want to share one observation about an otherwise excellent treatment. I believe that the photos and captions on pages 29, 31 and 32 do not reflect the spirit of my message. In particular, I did not use as an example of school programs classrooms composed almost entirely of girls learning to type in order to compete for jobs, nor did I suggest that girls should or should not choose to study word processing as a sound career option. My intent was to emphasize the broad range of options that should be available to girls and boys; that is what I meant by speaking about *all* students.

These points aside, this is a timely and informative publication. It raises relevant and important educational issues.

Sylvia Gold, Director,
Professional Development Services,
Canadian Teachers' Federation

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

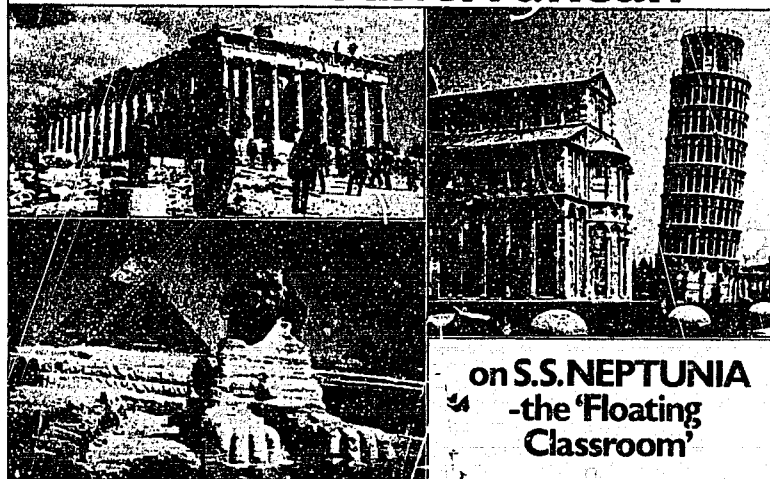
●I crossed a picket line again today
Past frozen, friendly figures near a fire
Across a wintry field
To eager, anxious
Children.

This is not theirs
This militant mouthing of an adult world.
They came — to learn.
Count me among the countless
consciences

Who, plagued by troubled sleep,
Have come to teach.
So, by example, tomorrow's leaders see
That courage has many faces.

Elizabeth Richards,
Fort St John

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FROM CIVILITY TO WARFARE — in just 16 years

KEN AITCHISON

● This issue could be the most significant one we have ever published; it is my hope that it will become a document of major historical importance in the years ahead.

It deals with relationships between the BCTF and the provincial government over the last 16 years, a period during which those relationships have varied from being honeymoon-like to being virtual warfare.

The federation has had disagreements with provincial governments since it incorporated in 1919. Why concentrate, then, on the last 16 years? I chose that period because it is the one during which the antagonism between the two groups has been most evident and most persistent. Although the details of disagreements have changed during the 16-year period, several common threads are woven through all of the years.

It is inevitable that the BCTF and the provincial government will disagree from time to time, but the disagreements have been mounting in intensity for the last decade and a half, and they culminated in November 1983 in a province-wide strike by teachers. To say that the strike was an event of monumental importance is to understate its significance. Except for a one-day strike in 1971, staged to publicize the niggardly pensions being paid to teachers already retired, the recent strike was the first real province-wide teachers' strike in B.C. Certainly it was the first with no indication when teachers walked off their jobs of when they would be going back to teaching.

One of the most significant characteristics about the strike was that it was not against our employers. Teachers struck to protest policies, practices and legislation of the provincial government.

In the belief that we should not lose sight of the importance of the strike, and what led up to it, I decided to devote this issue of the magazine to an account of the background of the strike, what happened during it, and a look at where teachers stand now that it is over.

To make the background as accurate and as interesting as possible, I asked each of the BCTF presidents who have served during the last 16 years to write an account of his (they are all men) year(s) in office. You will find their articles fascinating reading. Although each of them was written independently of the others, one can easily trace several issues through the entire 16-year period. Indeed, several of those issues are still unresolved even after the strike.

Some of the matters the BCTF has pushed for years are:

- the involvement of teachers in decision-making in education, to make use of their expertise;
- improving learning and working conditions in the schools — such factors as the size of classes, curriculum, discipline, centring education on the child rather than the subject;
- establishing a workable formula for financing education, one that funds schools adequately, yet is fair to the taxpayer;
- defending local control of education through elected boards of school trustees.

The government, on the other hand, has had positions it has consistently advocated and/or defended:

- It has attempted to place controls on the amount of money devoted to education. Time after time the government has cut back on its funding of

education, and several times has transferred more of the costs of education to the local level, where they have to be borne by the local property owners. Governments have adopted a variety of methods for controlling school costs, including cuts in grants, attempts to control the level of teachers' salaries, freezing school construction, and making education costs above basic levels subject to the approval of local ratepayers in referenda.

- For several years the government has made more generous grants to the independent schools than it has to the public schools. Moreover, several cabinet ministers have publicly commended the independent schools while criticizing the public schools. At least one minister of education sent his children to independent schools.

- The government has made several moves over the years to remove the control of education from local school districts and give it to the ministry of education. The fiscal framework introduced last year, for example, controls spending on education and at the same time increases the government's control of the public school system.

- Perhaps the basic factor underlying all of the moves of Social Credit governments, at least, has been a very deep suspicion of the BCTF, which dates from the federation's involvement in the 1972 provincial election, when the BCTF, exasperated by

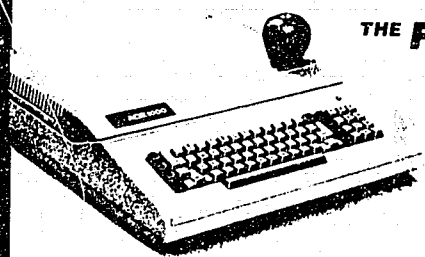
what the government of that day was doing, became actively involved in supporting any candidate who had a chance of defeating a Social Credit candidate. That marked the first time the BCTF had engaged in "partisan" political action, and the Social Credit party has never forgiven the federation for its role in helping to defeat the Social Credit government of W. A. C. Bennett. To this day Social Credit governments seem to have a political need to retaliate against the BCTF, especially its leaders, to avenge the defeat of W. A. C.

Up to the late 1960s the government regarded the BCTF as just another pressure group, and treated it accordingly. Generally, governments were willing to listen to BCTF proposals; they did not always agree with or always implement the BCTF suggestions, but they did not have an antipathy to the organization. That state of affairs has changed dramatically.

This issue of the magazine, then, examines how the federation became more and more involved politically to advance education and the interests of teachers, how that involvement resulted in the recent province-wide strike, the position Operation Solidarity has taken in support of teachers, and the position teachers are in now that the strike is over.

I hope you will find the issue as interesting and as informative as I do. ☺

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1967-68



Teachers' pensions were an important issue in 1967-68. One of several BCTF meetings with government occurred on January 15, 1968. Shown, left to right: Leslie Peterson, Minister of Education,

Des Grady, then BCTF Director of Economic Welfare, Premier W. A. C. Bennett, and Bob Buzza, then BCTF president.

Relationships between the BCTF and the provincial government began to deteriorate in 1968, when the government made major changes in the formula for financing schools and stopped school construction.

BOB BUZZA

● *Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people.*

The mid '60s featured a seller's market, in which quality suffered. The Sun described recruitment of teachers abroad as "rapacious," and bidding for them as an auction in which low bidders took what they could get. Their editorial plea? "Give the art and skill of teaching the status it deserves."

Huge classes were the norm. A mid-60's report revealed 507 classes over 40, 3,080 with more than 35. Then, as now, bargaining rights were severely limited.

But, on the surface, halcyon days for many teachers.

Why?

Partly because of the involvement of hundreds of B.C. teachers with the international teaching community during the summer of '67. Three years of work by BCTF

Bob Buzza, BCTF president in 1967-68, is now the federation's executive director, the senior BCTF staff position.

members on behalf of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, official hosts of the 16th Assembly of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, paid rich dividends. Over 1,000 teachers representing more than 60 countries jammed the B.C. Ballroom of the Hotel Vancouver for opening ceremonies. The secretary-general of WCOTP lauded the pivotal role of Charles Ovans, then the BCTF general secretary, in setting out internationally recognized training standards and working conditions for teachers during his secondment to the ILO. Municipal and provincial governments hosted receptions and dinners. The media featured the meeting as the most diverse international gathering in B.C.'s history. Sir Ronald Gould, president of WCOTP, and education minister Leslie Peterson officiated at the opening of the new wing of the BCTF building. Even the weather co-operated, providing nine cloudless days and nights.

Halcyon days partly because of the BCTF's September meeting with Raymond Laliberté, president of the 60,000-member Corporation des Enseignements du Québec, to explore the bases on which his organization would join the Canadian Teachers' Federation. French Canadian nationalism was on the rise; tough questions were posed: "What do you mean by the phrase 'deux nations'? Do you support the concept of a federal office of education that serves a supportive, information dissemination role?"

Results? An unusually candid exchange of views about CEQ's perception of the French "fact," and BCTF development and approval of a supportive position that triggered similar responses across Canada and facilitated CTF negotiations with the CEQ.

Halcyon days partly because of an effective relationship with the B.C. School Trustees Association, whose annual meeting incorporated a full hour, rather than the traditional few minutes, for an address from the BCTF president. A pointed discussion of educational issues, triggered by a sophisticated slide-tape presentation featuring an exchange of views among the federation's Executive Committee and Commission on Education, was incorporated in that hour.

Heady days because the federation was developing and promoting defensible positions about curriculum development, teacher education and competence, learning and working conditions, pensions, and education finance — and their positions were being taken seriously by government, trustees, and tertiary institution representatives. Heady days because teachers were taking the initiative and obtaining results or promise of them.

Confusion over educational aims? Recognize the inadequacies of the report of the

Chant Commission or, more formally, the Royal Commission on Education of 1960. Set out to influence the shape and course of education, directly. Strike a BCTF commission on education "to stimulate and provoke a study and debate within the teaching profession of major educational issues." Name capable people to it, regardless of position: Don MacKenzie, retired assistant superintendent; Lorill Hanney, intermediate supervisor; Jim Carter, vice-principal of a secondary school, now deputy minister of education; and Bill Allester, then director of BCTF professional development.

Kick off their work in Penticton with a

The 1968 AGM levied each BCTF member \$3 to finance an information campaign for the next election. Relationships were never the same again.

professional issues day in conjunction with the federation's annual meeting. Provide over a thousand delegates with the opportunity to interact with the commission and a panel of interrogators. Import a keynote speaker from Toronto to describe the teacher as facilitator of active learning. Offer seven concurrent group meetings to develop that general theme. Incorporate professors of education to speak to individualized learning in the early school years, and a musician, a biologist, a home economist, a psychiatrist, an audio-visual supervisor, a principal, and trainers of principals as resource people. Incorporate time for provincial specialist associations to meet. Above all, capture the ideas of teacher participants for consideration by the commission.

The result? After many briefs and meetings, a widely heralded blueprint for public education in B.C., in which two key beliefs predominated: education should be humanized and personalized; development of emotional maturity and social responsibility should parallel the development of the intellect.

Classes too large? Decide that no mem-

ber teach a regular class of 40 or more. Shock school trustees and the provincial government in doing so. Discount a statement from SFU's John Ellis that a smaller class campaign was "unimaginative and unrealistic." Counter education minister Peterson's statement that elimination of classes of more than 40 was feasible, but impractical, and would "result in an inferior educational system" that would require "unwarranted interference with the proper autonomy of schools and school districts." Despite criticism, promise to support morally and financially any teacher advised to refuse to teach an over-40 class. Guarantee full salary for as long as no salary was received from a school board.

The result? A dramatic drop of 40+ classes within a year, and the hiring of additional teachers and teacher aides.

Pension problems? Yes, including the lowest return for long-service members of any teachers' plan in Canada, and heavy penalties for early retirement. The approach? Place a reasoned proposal before the provincial secretary twice. Meet with the consulting actuary three times to discuss proposed changes more fully. Reject a year's delay in introducing changes. For the first time in 15 years, meet directly with members of the provincial cabinet. Accept kudos to Des Grady, then BCTF director of Economic Welfare, for an unusually able presentation. Take heart at the questions posed by the premier from his raised throne.

Results? Modest progress, and considerable disenchantment.

What caused relationships to deteriorate? Primarily, the precipitate introduction of major changes in the education finance formula and a decision to limit school construction, including the building of gymnasiums and libraries.

Bill 86 pegged rates of expenditure on school operations for an unspecified period of time, prohibited school boards from adopting, without approval by another authority, budgets exceeding 10 per cent of a basic program, and vested in the minister of education the right to determine the amount of each district's basic program. Particularly offensive (and potentially futile) was the requirement that boards seek approval for a larger budget from municipal and rural representatives, or the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, or owner-electors by referendum! Bill 86 also deleted mill rate and basic grant level guarantees.

The federation attacked the bill, stating that it appeared to be "... a powerful instrument to subject education to centralized, restrictive provincial control by placing

school boards in a strait jacket which the Minister may tighten or slacken at will."

The BCTF argued that the bill would "destroy local autonomy and impede progress in education by denying to school boards access to the wherewithall to implement progressive policy."

The BCSTA president expressed concern about referenda, but stated that the bill would not give greater discretionary power to the government to reduce school board budgets. He charged the BCTF with misinforming school trustees about the implications of the bill and formula. His past-president and vice-president publicly disagreed with him.

Public opinion was pro-BCTF.

The federation also attacked government decisions to curtail school construction. It estimated that a shortfall of 382 classrooms would adversely affect 11,000 students by September, and that libraries and gymnasiums were essential. Incidental information that \$25 million was readily available for superports inflamed the situation. The minister, in acknowledging the likelihood of swing shifts in fast-growing districts, attempted to dismiss BCTF criticism as "misguided foresight."

As a result, the 1968 annual meeting in Penticton was a tumultuous one. The agenda was amended in the first session to feature education finance and school construction matters. That afternoon, the rules were suspended, and the meeting agreed to a special levy of \$3 per member to fund a major campaign to:

- inform BCTF members of the ramifications, current and anticipated, of the policy of the provincial government with respect to the financing of school construction and the new education finance formula;
- inform the public concerning the issues and launch a special public relations campaign, immediately prior to the next provincial election, to inform the voters of the consequences of the government's policy on education finance;
- solicit support of any or all organizations and agencies that shared our concern;
- establish the right of the BCTF to a partnership role in decisions relating to school construction and utilization at the local and provincial level.

It was also agreed that a special lobby would be convened in Victoria during the 1969 session of the legislative assembly to pursue the question of education finance. A recommendation opposing amendments to the Public Schools Act "... in the matter of the sharing of fiscal responsibility between school boards and the provincial government" was unanimously approved. Rejected was a proposal to increase fees by \$25 to establish a strike or emergency assistance fund.

Of particular concern to the minister of education and his government was the juxtaposition of "a special public relations campaign" with "the next provincial election."

To clarify the federation's position, the BCTF Annual General Meeting the next day unanimously agreed to include in its minutes a statement from the president that read, in part, as follows:

"The fact that this is a non-partisan organization is a source of pride. No political party in this province controls or will control the decisions made by us at our AGM."

By the spring of 1968 the government perceived the BCTF as a political threat requiring a political response.

"The fact that we are a teachers' federation with educational objectives places on us the responsibility of taking a position on matters fundamental to the welfare of the hundreds of thousands of students with whom we work daily."

"If such a position in and of itself is damaging to the government of the day, so be it."

"It would be naive to claim that our actions as an organization have no political impact. They do have and will have. But the bases for our actions are educational, not political."

"Education is and must remain beyond party — and I emphasize the word party — politics."

But the statement, which is still valid, was quickly obscured by other events.

At the end of the first day of the AGM, an aggressive radio reporter questioned an obviously tired minister of education. Dissatisfied with the minister's statement that he took no issue with a campaign to acquaint people with the needs of education, the reporter bored in: "But couldn't such a campaign attacking government policies be construed as partisan politics?"

A BCTF Newsletter report states that the minister looked surprised, and his face flushed briefly with annoyance. "If the campaign was a political one or a partisan one in any sense, I could not condone it, and would have to consider some additional legislation. I could not compel every teacher to join a federation which used part of its dues for political purposes."

Radio newscasts and the headlines the next day were predictable. "Teachers Warned of Politics" bannered the *Vancouver Sun*. "Government Would Head Off Teachers' Politicking" said the *Victoria Times*. Columnist Nesbitt wrote that the BCTF seemed to be forming itself into a political party. In a supportive radio statement, CHQM referred to the federation's actions as an "astonishing spectacle" that should be "of the deepest concern to the people of the province," and added, "this is a matter that must not be left wholly on the shoulders of the teachers, even though, to their great credit, they have shown their readiness to fight with their own resources what they believe to be a fundamentally wrong approach to educational problems. . . ."

Organized labor strongly condemned the provincial government for threatening action against the federation. The 15,000-member New Westminster and District Labour Council unanimously endorsed a statement that read, in part:

"Political democracy is being strangled for no other purpose than the perpetuation of the present government. It is obvious that they not only threaten school teachers, but are intent on a program of thought control and the voter be damned."

"The Labour Council firmly believes that constructive criticism must be voiced clearly without interference, and that each and every citizen or group of citizens in a democracy must retain their right to political action whether it be in support of or against the wishes of the government of the day."

In mid-May, the Vancouver teachers' associations and the BCTF sponsored well-attended all-candidates' forums in connection with a Vancouver South by-election. The Social Credit member lost his seat.

Later that month, education minister Peterson, accompanied by four senior officials, including the deputy minister of education and the education comptroller, along with executive members of the B.C. Parent-Teacher Federation, attended the BCTF Representative Assembly meeting.

By that time, perceptions of the federation had changed. Regardless of the merits of its arguments on educational matters, it was perceived as a political threat requiring a political response. ○

1968-69



The government's education finance formula was causing many problems in schools. BCTF President Tom Hutchison (second from the right) led a BCTF delegation to meet with Education Minister

Donald Brothers (second from left) in February 1969. Other BCTF representatives were Assistant General Secretary Stan Evans (left) and Bruce Watson. Assistant Director of Economic Welfare.

Teachers' rights and an attempt to gain more "power" for teachers highlighted this year. The pensions issue produced friction within the federation.

TOM HUTCHISON

●Change comes slowly, and the themes for teachers in 1968-69 were similar to today's: bargaining rights, working conditions (especially class sizes), pensions improvements and teacher involvement in decision-making.

There were some differences. Fifty per cent of our teachers were in the 0-6 years range of experience; there were problems in teacher recruitment; we had concerns about minimally qualified persons added to the teaching ranks and severe problems in school buildings — facilities were not being built fast enough!

In the background of that year were several threads that shaped our efforts.

First was the working of the new education finance formula with its government control of the basic program, operational referenda for local expenditures over the

Tom Hutchison, BCTF president 1968-69, is now an assistant director of the BCTF's Government Division.

110 per cent level and a virtual freeze on school construction.

Second was the continuing debate over our BCTF commission on education and our successful efforts in promoting general discussion on what teachers saw as necessary for the school system.

Third was the ongoing internal debate among teachers on the pension plan and how to change "a first class fund with second class benefits."

Finally, there was the decision of the 1968 AGM to go "political," to take our message to teachers and public, up to the next election, with a \$3.00 levy per member for that purpose.

From time to time, teachers and public express a wistful desire that education be above politics. A glance at our concerns shows this desire to be unrealistic.

In a speech in Williams Lake I expressed on behalf of teachers our wish to be "no longer tenants in the house of education but co-architects of the structure." Our drive for significant staff committees and working conditions contracts were aspects of that wish. We compete for resources, and the power to be involved in decisions and the resources for education do not fall like ripe apples from the tree.

And it isn't that we did not communicate with trustees, with the minister and the ministry. In that year as president I spent considerable time with ministry and BCSTA people, and in addition there were meetings with the provincial secretary and his staff on pensions. But it became obvious that we, in concert with the PTA, saw that the new finance formula posed threats to the school system and that our apprehensions were not shared. In any case, the financial restrictions placed on education by government policy were so severe that the ability of the minister to respond was limited.

The bargaining season of 1968 produced much frustration. Boards' insistence on their prerogatives, the use of policy rather than agreement, the employment of agents and the difficulty of getting direct contact with the employer, foot dragging over the timing of negotiation meetings and attempts to limit bargaining to the finance formula limits, all produced tensions.

Castlegar held a work-to-rule, New Westminster Elementary teachers had to resort to booking-off sick to force a contract and the Vancouver Elementary Teachers marched on the school board offices, a move that eventually produced a working and learning conditions contract.

A special seminar was held in February 1969 to look at bargaining problems and a variety of methods was suggested: public campaigns, work-to-rule, boycott of arbitration, "pink lettering" districts, putting

districts in dispute, mass resignation and strike. Later in the year another in our series of committees on bargaining rights was put together. The bargaining rights issue never goes away.

Government restrictions on building produced their problems. Nowhere were these problems more evident than in Coquitlam, where a rapidly expanding district had to put students on shifts. The largest public meeting ever held in Coquitlam, 2,500 people, was over this issue, and the pressure applied in Coquitlam by a common front of teachers and parents was an exemplary public relations drive.



One of a BCTF president's more pleasant responsibilities is to welcome to the BCTF office representatives of teachers' organizations from other countries. Here Tom Hutchinson presents a gift to V.P. Raghavachari of India in March 1969.

In the meantime, the issue of the finance formula, an averaging system that took too little account of provincial diversity and growth, coupled with the need to obtain voter approval for operational expenditures over 110 per cent of the basic program, began to create problems for districts. Forty school districts were over the limit and operational referenda were defeated with monotonous regularity by handfuls of owner electors.

Powell River staged a strike on this issue and teachers were out on the streets with placards reading, "I am withdrawing my services; ask me why." A major lobby was held in Victoria in February, as directed by the AGM, and we maintained publicity on the education finance issue. A quality education fund was set up.

Kitimat exemplified the worst of the system, a district that went "from lighthouse district to educational slum" in a year. Kitimat was the catalyst that produced this resolution at the AGM of 1969: "That this

AGM guarantee full moral support and financial assistance where necessary (at the discretion of the Executive Committee) to teachers in any district where teachers act to oppose worsening learning conditions caused by the new education finance formula."

Nothing much happened in pensions, except that this issue produced more internal friction than any other. The 1969 AGM adopted pensions improvement as a major goal and adopted a set of pension policies that are pretty much the outline of the plan we have today. Personally, I was convinced that until this issue was resolved the federation would be unable to move on to its other objectives, and decided to spend the next two years on pensions.

"Teacher power" was in the air that year. Arthur Kratzmann, who was later to write the report on the Calgary strike, *A System in Conflict*, wrote an article in *The B.C. Teacher* on teacher power, in which he opined that teacher power was here to stay. I made a speech to the AGM whose theme was "responsibility needs power."

Of course, the decade of the 1960s was the decade of practically everybody's power, but teachers were beginning to perceive that it would take a massive effort to protect the education system and to achieve their own rights. It was primarily the assertion of rights that sparked the struggle to come.

And what of the \$3.00 levy that caused so much outcry for so little outlay? One does not make much of a revolution with \$3.00 per member. Since part of the terms of reference of the levy was that it could be spent up to the next provincial election, I had hoped that most of it could be used in the publicity we gained from our various brush fire wars so that we would not be embarrassed by a minuscule campaign. This was not to be.

With our minimal resources, we mounted the now famous apple campaign for the summer election of 1969. It was a campaign that attempted to put politicians on record on the education issue and to use teachers in getting the message to the public.

Regardless of its merits, it was a first, as the *Times Educational Supplement* pointed out, in the British Commonwealth. Jim Killeen will tell you in the next article how it worked out.○

1969-71



Severe problems occurred in salary bargaining in the fall of 1969. BCTF president Jim Killeen chaired an enthusiastic rally of 4500 teachers in November at the PNE Agrodome in Vancouver.

The "apple campaign" saw the BCTF step up its political involvement. Strong disagreements with the government continued, but some progress was made because the government was willing to listen to BCTF suggestions.

JIM KILLEEN

●It will not come as a surprise to career teachers in British Columbia to learn that there has been an ongoing struggle with our provincial governments since the founding of the BCTF in 1919.

Since 1966, when the BCTF opposed the government's first school construction freeze ("School shifts are acceptable" . . . W. A. C. Bennett), the federation's policies for advancing education have often run counter to the education policies of the government.

Consider the continuing struggle with education finance; the authorization to spend only with referenda approval; the question of class sizes coupled with satisfactory learning and working conditions; the need for full involvement of teachers in curriculum development and evaluation; the demands for a better pension plan, especially for our retired colleagues; our campaigns designed to make education an election issue; our struggle for full collective bargaining rights on all issues in accordance with the UNESCO/ILO statement on the status of teachers, and so on. We did not make ourselves popular when we took a firm stand on the FLQ edict.

1969-1971 saw a number of problems related to provincial government policies, filtered through school boards, such as the 1969 impasse over 1970 salary bargaining (the year of the 4500-teacher Agrodome rally) and the local struggles over learning and working conditions typified by struggles in Kitimat, in Powell River and in the North Peace, to mention only a few.

1969-1971 also saw a number of ongoing issues and operations that will be dealt with in some detail — the "apple campaign," the pension efforts, and the renewed interest of the media.

The federation's "apple campaign" in the 1969 provincial election was a "small p" political campaign designed to make education an issue in that election, not to attack or promote any political party. This point seemed to be understood by representatives of all the major political parties. For example:

Harold Merilees, Social Credit: "I applaud

Jim Killeen, BCTF president 1969-71, is now principal of Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School in Vancouver. He is also president of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.

THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1984

you and your organization for your undoubted deep and sincere interest in expanding and improving the educational system of British Columbia. . . . Your program is progressive and imaginative."

Eileen Dailly, New Democrat: "I congratulate the British Columbia Teachers' Federation for the great services they are doing for the improvement of education in the British Columbia school system. . . . I am most pleased to endorse the British Columbia Teachers' Federation platform and will most certainly make use whenever possible of the apple symbol."

Ken Jessiman, Liberal: "As a father of two teenage children, I assure you that my interest in quality education is as great as anyone's. I am pleased to be able to agree with your education platform and I wish you every success in your campaign."

Charles Ennals, M.D., Social Credit: "I heartily concur with the steps that the teachers of this province are undertaking to spotlight educational needs in British Columbia, during the current election campaign. The Teachers' Federation is to be congratulated for its genuine interest in attempting to provide the best possible education for all of the children in our province. While the education finance formula is a matter of government policy, I, as a Social Credit candidate, can see no harm in a periodic revision of the formula to ensure that it is meeting the needs of education in B.C."

This first formal effort involved hundreds of teachers performing myriad tasks during the summer.

The program included:

A personal contact with each candidate — to acquaint all candidates with our program and to encourage them to use the apple symbol.

An attempt to sponsor an all-candidates meeting; failing this, attendance at all meetings held by the political parties in the riding.

As widespread a distribution as possible of brochures and bumper stickers.

As much involvement of teachers as possible.

Anything further that might assist the cause of education in British Columbia.

The establishment of local and regional contacts. When contacts were arranged, kits of information were sent to them, including such material as: electoral district maps, school district maps, sample copies of the two brochures, reprints of the four major ads used in the media campaign, elaboration of our education platform statements, suggestions for holding meetings of local candidates, questions that could be asked of local candidates or posed at candidates' meetings, bumper stickers, and articles by C. D. Ovans and J. A. Spragge on the education finance formula.

The planning committee met 12 times; sub-groups met much oftener.

The president appeared on a number of

open-line radio programs and responded to at least 50 other queries from the media.

The president appeared on Channel 6/8 TV three times and Channel 2 once.

A booth was operated at UBC during the summer session so that information could be distributed and questions could be answered. A similar booth was operated at the PNE.

All-party meetings were arranged at SFU, UVic and UBC. Well over 600 people attended.

All candidates (187) received a personal letter from the president plus a kit of information and materials.



One of Jim Killeen's demanding responsibilities was heading up the BCTF's "apple campaign." Killeen is shown looking at some of the many press clippings during the height of the campaign.

All TV and radio stations and all B.C. newspapers (95) received a kit of information explaining the federation's position.

An aerial sign — towed by an airplane — floated above the PNE parade.

A number of press releases were issued. Large quantities of mail were answered. Most "anti" newspaper clippings received a response from the president.

Hundreds of 'phone calls were made and received.

The appearance of party leaders at the BCTF summer conference was arranged.

Materials were delivered to all party headquarters.

At least 24 all-candidates meetings were staged (or co-sponsored) in a number of areas. This was a tremendous public service.

Certain local associations arranged for delivery of educational information to their local members.

Some local associations mailed literature to doctors, lawyers, accountants, and other

professional people. Six hundred brochures were distributed this way in the Vancouver area alone.

Certain local associations interviewed newspaper editors and arranged for the insertion of stories in community newspapers.

The quotable quote of the election belonged to Social Credit aspirant Annis Stukus: "B.C. has the best education system in the world. The teachers should stop meddling with it."

Although many BCTF members of the day questioned the federation's involvement in non-partisan politics and had serious doubts about its success, the fact remains that we were and are committed to using the political process to further the interests of education, the interests of the young people in our charge, and — to be fair — the interests of teachers. Many lessons were learned that were to be applied very quickly in the pensions campaign and in the 1972 provincial election. An important lesson was the simple realization that effective political lobbying and intervention in both provincial and local jurisdictions is a 12-month a year proposition — each year.

Shortly after the 1969 election, the BCTF started to promote our campaign for better pensions — particularly for our retired colleagues. Two audiences were selected for this major effort. The first was the office of the provincial secretary, Wesley D. Black, then minister. Black, a former teacher, was the minister responsible for public sector pensions and, as an aside, the only minister of the crown who could make the title "Mr. President" (of the BCTF) sound like a dirty word.

The second audience was all of us — the members of the BCTF. Too often campaigns have fizzled because of a lack of information forwarded to members and, more importantly, because of a lack of unity of purpose. The BCTF staff, the Executive Committee and the Representative Assembly poured considerable energy into this priority one project for almost two years.

The 1970 AGM studied and supported a controversial special resolution:

"That the BCTF declare now that, unless the Federation receives guarantees that substantial improvements in pensions legislation will be introduced to the 1971 session of the Legislative Assembly, this Annual General Meeting directs the Executive Committee to call for work-stoppages or other sanctions to compel governmental attention to the reasonable proposals the BCTF has advanced for improving teachers' pensions."

Delegates also supported a resolution that called for a referendum to be held among all teachers in the province to determine what action should be taken to

enforce the pension demands. The record of that move is history now — but 88 per cent said they would engage in strike action . . . and when the protest day of March 19, 1971 came, 96 per cent of our total membership engaged actively in that protest, after considerable soul searching and examination of conscience. Strike action did not — and still does not — come easily to teachers.

I am convinced that at this point the government realized that we meant business. The increases and amendments offered prior to that day were a genuine improvement for most active career teachers. However, the proposals for our retired colleagues were shabby, to say the least. The one-day protest action was a popular move — not only for our pensioners but for all other citizens who received a pension of any sort. After the 1972 provincial election, most of the long sought after pension revisions were obtained — particularly those that affected our retired colleagues. The following 10 years have seen a variety of refinements to the base established during the pension campaign period.

It was and continues to be most interesting to observe how a government reacts to criticism. There does not appear to be any set pattern. In April of 1970, the government introduced, without consultation, legislation that was designed to reduce a number of sick leave provisions. Almost instantaneously, a meeting was arranged with then Minister of Education Donald Brothers, and a very satisfactory rapprochement was reached. Similarly, the class size campaign was met by school boards and by the government with dialogue, with hard bargaining and with slow but steady concessions — usually outside the scope of bargaining.

Capital spending, dollars for operating budget and the authority to tax and spend have been ongoing matters for debate over the years. Periods of growth have been followed by years of decline; periods of investment in education have been followed by times of restraint and belt-tightening. The presentation of briefs and dialogue through delegations were frequent practices in this area of concern. The need for continuing effort is underlined by the following excerpt from an earlier *BCTF Newsletter*:

FIGHT BILL 3 — MacFARLAN: The battle to preserve democracy and defend education needs the commitment of each organization and individual citizen present, Jim MacFarlan emphasized in the opening speech. . . .

"It was some 25 years ago that the B.C. Teachers' Federation was engaged in a protracted struggle to win the right to collective bargaining.

"It was not given by a benevolent govern-

ment and it will not be taken away by a dictatorial government," he told the attentive audience.

"We must go from this meeting determined to force the repeal of Bill 3, determined to fight to guarantee free collective bargaining to every public employee and determined to remain united to achieve these ends," he said.

"This meeting should tell the Minister of Education and the Premier that we are united and that the public employees of this province, supported by all trade unionists will not allow this government to set back the clock to an era when employees had no rights.

"... governments are transient — they come and go at election time — but the basic civil rights of people are much more permanent and we do not intend to allow you (Mr. Premier) to deprive us of a century's work," he said.

The interesting thing about the preceding statement is that it was made in March 1972! Coincidentally, even the "Bill 3" is accurate!

Governments are not always willing to accept criticism without a political need to retaliate. The elimination in 1971 of the automatic BCTF membership provisions — long established in the Public Schools Act — was undoubtedly a move designed to destroy the BCTF. The main reason the provision was included in the Public Schools Act in 1947 was to give the profession control of the ethical behavior of its members. At that time the federation took on the responsibility of enforcing its Code of Ethics, thereby guaranteeing to the public that all teachers would behave ethically. Without automatic membership, a teacher who violated the Code of Ethics would merely have had to resign from the BCTF, and the profession would not have been able to discipline him/her.

The work of the BCTF Professional Relations Commission would also have been undermined. This commission, made up of outstanding members of the profession, did valuable work in resolving interpersonal difficulties within the profession before those difficulties could grow into ethics or dismissal cases. Because the commission acted only on request, it would have been unable to function if non-BCTF teachers were involved in relations problems.

The third adverse effect of this punitive legislation was that the federation would have to spend time, effort and money on membership recruitment and maintenance that ordinarily would be spent on projects of direct benefit to teachers and to education.

At the same time, the government removed from teachers and all other school board employees the right to run for school board positions anywhere in the province, and started moves to revise the laws and regulations governing teacher tenure. United action resulted in the enrolment of almost 100 per cent of the teachers of the

province as *voluntary* members. Protest, pressure and lobbying resulted in the shelving of the undemocratic legislation relating to serving on school boards. More of the same resulted in the matter of tenure being referred to a legislative committee. Eternal vigilance was necessary then as it is now.

The period 1969-1971 marked the start of intensified media interest in the BCTF and in matters related to the interests of teachers and students. Unfortunately, this interest, which is continuing, focussed on matters that were considered to be political and critical of the government. Rarely would one find an article dealing with the thousands of dedicated B.C. teachers or with the tens of thousands of hard-working and successful students. News is not made of such stuff.

DIFFERENT TODAY

Today's provincial government operation and BCTF relationships with it cannot be compared directly with the 1969-1971 brand. During that 1969-1971 period, the government tabled its legislation in the legislative assembly and all were privy to it. The government often consulted with BCTF elected officers and staff. Some amendment, some shelving and some time for consideration and response was possible. W. A. C. Bennett, no mean tactician, had a concept of democratic understanding and fairness of procedure not possessed by the current premier and his colleagues.

Today's operation is one that appears to be intentionally designed to underline uncertainty and its twin colleague confusion. I shudder to try to estimate the time wasted needlessly on the ever-changing public education scene instead of on the development of a quality public education system. Listen to the radio, watch TV, read the newspaper, open the mystery envelope . . . that's how we learn about developments in public education in British Columbia today . . . and even sadder, that's how the BCTF, the BCSTA, and other should-be partners learn too! The current premier has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is far easier to be on the wrecking gang than it is to be on the construction crew.

The International Labour Organization (ILO — a respected tripartite international organization involving government, management and labour) has clearly stated (November 1983) that no government jurisdiction in the industrialized world has treated its education system and its teachers so shabbily.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose! Little wonder that democratically conceived teacher policy, fully supported and committed leaders, and teacher unity are essential ingredients in 1984 — just as they were in 1919 — and in 1969-1971. ○

1971-73



Adam Robertson, a "moderate," was president of the BCTF during one of its most critical periods, and led the teacher opposition that helped to defeat the government of W. A. C. Bennett in 1972. In 1979 the BCTF recognized his life-long services to children, to

education and to the federation by presenting him with the Fergusson Memorial Award, the highest honor the BCTF can bestow. Adam and his wife Dolly are shown accepting the award from Bill Broadley, then past president of the federation.

Bill 3 was the last straw for teachers. With the battlecry of "We will not live with it!", the BCTF declared war on the W. A. C. Bennett government — and played a prominent role in its defeat.

ADAM ROBERTSON

●The years 1971-72 and 1972-73 were years of sharp contrast in BCTF-government relations. It was as if the two years had been plucked from different centuries; the first representing an era of darkness, and the second an era of light. While many of the details of those contrasting sets of relationships have faded with the passage of years, their substance remains clear in my memory.

Bob Buzza, Tom Hutchison and Jim Killen have dealt with BCTF-government relations as they perceived them in the years immediately preceding July 1971. In doing so they will have identified the seeds that germinated and flowered during my first term as president.

I entered the presidency during a brief moment in time when the federation was experiencing an uneasy truce in its relationship with the Social Credit government of W. A. C. Bennett. The government had

Adam Robertson, BCTF president 1971-73, is now retired, but still serves education as a school trustee in Creston.

moved to cancel our compulsory membership provision in the spring of 1971. I perceived the restoration of this provision to be my top priority as president. True to my position as one who loathed conflict, I moved to initiate a series of meetings with the Department of Education and the B.C. School Trustees Association. I did so because I believed it was not only desirable, but necessary to promote a spirit of co-operation among the three major parties in public education in British Columbia. I considered this to be essential if we were to regain our membership rights.

This proved to be a sensitive undertaking, for I lacked the wholehearted support of the BCTF Executive Committee. I had ventured into a "No-Man's Land" because my overtures were viewed with some suspicion by elements within the BCSTA, and by the minister. It came as a distinct shock to me that a few department officials tended on occasion to present a political, rather than an educational, outlook.

Throughout my endeavors I sensed personal acceptance tempered by a deep suspicion of the federation. My rural background, relatively free from the intrigue of political relations, and my commitment to education as a mission had combined to leave me poorly prepared for the challenge facing the BCTF president in the second half of 1971. It dawned on me that I must acquire a deeper understanding of past events, and if possible understand their genesis and their impact on the attitudes of each of the three parties, but particularly those of the federation and the government, if I hoped to resolve the conflict.

I concluded that the events currently highlighting BCTF-government relations were secondary in significance to the factors that gave rise to them. During the late '60s and early '70s the increasing activism of the BCTF leadership, prompted in part by developments south of the border, and the conservatism of a highly centralized Bennett government came into open and continuing conflict. In essence, two distinct and opposing ideologies, that of the federation and that of the government, sought to consolidate their individual positions — and the government controlled the legislation.

The continuing struggle has demonstrated that our society at large determines the future of legislation passed by government through its choices at the ballot box. It follows that the education system and the nature of education provided in our society will change from time to time as our society changes. Educational change tends to follow other social changes rather than initiate them. Is this at the root of the problem, that the federation in its desire to effect change has failed to recognize this sequence of development?

As the autumn months passed it became clear that my good intentions carried little weight with government. Despite evidence that reasonable salary settlements could be achieved at the local level, we witnessed the minister of education intervening at an early date. He indicated publicly that it was his intention to limit teachers' salary increases to 6.5 per cent. By November 15 about one-third of the school districts had finalized contracts with their local associations, but the balance had been forced into arbitration. The minister had added more fuel to a tense BCTF-government relationship, and had in the process encouraged boards to incur unnecessary arbitration costs.

percentage increase that would apply to teachers' salaries. To be binding, any increase beyond this limit, whether by arbitration boards or by negotiation, would have to be approved by school district referenda. In this action the government had taken away our bargaining rights, and had destroyed much of trustees' local autonomy.

The federation's reaction was immediate and very clear. We said that we would not live with it — the spirit and import of Bill 3. We followed the customary approaches to influence government to alter its position, but to no avail. Not in desperation, but with a clear realization that our difficulties with government could be resolved only in the



Adam Robertson's inherent decency and his courtesy to other people showed in his chairing of BCTF meetings. He was able to unite the federation to oppose the anti-education policies of the provincial government of W. A. C. Bennett. Social Credit governments since that time have never forgiven the BCTF for its actions in 1972.

This intervention followed on the heels of his earlier announcement in which he advised school boards that he proposed to reduce the provincial grants from 110 per cent to 108 per cent of the basic program of the year before. These two actions combined to worsen our relationship, and in the process heightened our attacks on government. As the year ended the future looked dark and appeared to offer little or no hope for co-operative action. The gloom and doom of the year ending was illuminated by the promise for a better tomorrow when we realized almost 100 per cent voluntary membership in the federation by the province's teachers.

The minister tabled Bill 3, an Act to Amend the Public Schools Act, during the 1972 spring session of the legislature, and in the course of doing so triggered a teacher reaction never anticipated by government. This amendment would give the government power to limit by regulation the

political arena, we moved into that sphere determined to effect a change of government.

As president, I could see no alternative to this decision. In the early months of 1972 we embarked on a most sensitive, difficult, and dangerous political venture in declaring war on the Bennett government. We did so in the full realization that a significant percentage of the membership had been, and continued to be, supporters of the Social Credit party. We did not offer them a new party, but asked them in the interests of education to support one of the other parties in the next election, preferably the one that had the best chance to win at the constituency level. To many this was a real challenge, in that they were being asked to support the official opposition.

The request was not made lightly, but it was deemed necessary, for we viewed a change in government as our only hope to free ourselves from discriminatory govern-

ment action. It was a dangerous course we had set because we had no assurance that it would be successful, and failure was too frightening to consider.

To finance our political campaign we levied an individual assessment on the membership that would have produced a fund in excess of a million dollars. Two of our members, unwilling to comply with our request, exercised their individual rights and sought a Supreme Court injunction against our program. They were successful in their appeal; the court acted to stay the collection and disbursement of funds raised through the assessment.

Undaunted, individual teachers united to form TPAC (Teachers' Political Action Committee) as a vehicle to launch a fund-raising campaign to compensate for the loss of funds by court action. In the following weeks TPAC acted to carry out the initial purpose of the campaign.

To many of our members this campaign was an agonizing experience in that it demanded them to make a choice between loyalty to the federation and to their individual consciences. In the process, individual conceptions of democracy came into question, and at times under unfair pressures. The soul of the BCTF membership was being sorely tested, and in the process it acquired scars that will long linger, and perhaps ultimately determine the future of our professional organization. These inner relationships, which we tend to downplay, may, if unresolved, be the federation's albatross.

Thus 1971-72 passed into history, and we girded ourselves for the uncertainties of 1972-73. The major uncertainty was soon to be clarified, for Premier Bennett called an election for August. The waiting was over, and TPAC moved to bring its resources to bear on the outcome of the August vote. After 20 years of Social Credit government the voters turned to Dave Barrett to form an

NDP government, and in doing so set the stage for the development of a new set of BCTF-government relations.

So it came to pass in the early months of my second term that the federation would be privileged to present its viewpoint to a government judged to be more sympathetic to its philosophy. Fearful of putting too much pressure on the new government to accede to our every request, I asked the Representative Assembly to give the government an opportunity to assess its resources, priorities, etc. I believed that undue pressure could cool off what promised to be a positive relationship, and would, if maintained, lead to closed doors in Victoria. It seemed clear to me that we had no one else to turn to as we sought a part in determining the future of education in B.C. To those caught in the glow of political victory, however, my advice was not only unacceptable, but outrageous, and I was so informed.

Our initial relations with the NDP government took on a rosy hue as the new minister indicated in her first week of office that she would be bringing in a bill at an early sitting of the legislature to restore bargaining rights to teachers and local autonomy to school boards, permitting them to exceed provincial grants without support of owner-electors.

Early in September representatives of the BCSTA and the federation met with the minister to discuss matters of mutual concern. At long last, teachers, trustees and the minister were able to meet in a positive relationship. At last, after many years, British Columbia had a minister who was an advocate for public education.

The minister had established an environment in which teachers and trustees could work profitably together. It was a mark of her astuteness that she realized that the development of a positive trustee-teacher relationship was essential to the maintenance

of a good BCTF-government relationship. The onus was ours. I accepted it, but lacked full Executive Committee support as I moved to develop it. It seemed to me that we could not forget the past, that those battles had to be refought, and that co-operation was the responsibility of the other party.

As the balance of my second year unfolded our more positive relationships with government led to restoration of compulsory membership, improvement in learning conditions, and the provision of a vastly improved teacher pension plan. In addition, ready access to the minister and her officials made it possible for us to carry on a meaningful dialogue in many other areas of mutual interest.

These months were marked by an undercurrent of antagonism toward the government because some viewed it as not having responded as anticipated. It was clear to me that insistence on our own way would eventually lead to deterioration of the positive relationship that had been developed. What we had fought for, and won — recognition as a worthy partner in the development of our public education system — was too precious to forfeit in a contest for political domination.

After a decade, one's changing perceptions tend to come into conflict with those of yesteryear. This is understandable when one is witness to a series of repeat performances uninfluenced by past experiences. I question the purpose underlying the bitter struggle, which cannot do other than inflict deep emotional and educational scars on those we profess to serve — our children. May the time, talent and energy we now spend in guerilla warfare be directed to a common purpose worthy of both BCTF and government. May our youngsters be the benefactors of our good will and reason. ○

THESE TEACHERS HAVE RETIRED

Most of the teachers listed below retired in 1983. A few had left teaching earlier but were granted deferred allowances. The federation extends to them all best wishes of the future.

Pamela M. Allen, Kamloops
William D. Botting, Victoria
Geoffrey J. Buckley, Vancouver
N. Joan Campbell, Vancouver
James K. Cavers, Alberni
Douglas E. Cole, Vernon
Sheila M. Collinson, Prince Rupert
George F. Durose, Vancouver
William Derpak, Surrey
Meryl E. Fast, Richmond
Edwin S. F. Francis, Victoria
Alan W. Fraser, Victoria

Yvette D. Friday, Lake Cowichan
Doris M. Fuller, Sunshine Coast
Nelles H. Glover, Burnaby
Dorothy Hinde, Saanich
Glen F. Hudlins, Mount Arrowsmith
John Ivanisko, Nanaimo
Laurel M. James, West Vancouver
Margaret H. Kellett, Vancouver
Peter Koropatnick, Chilliwack
Lambert Kropp, Nanaimo
Louis J. Lange, Maple Ridge
Michael S. Lapka, Richmond

Elmo M. Marshall, Penticton
Grace A. Matheson, West Vancouver
Maureen McDiarmid, Vancouver
Alma M. McGauley, Castlegar
John A. McKinnon, Penticton
Margaret McLaughlin, Maple Ridge
William L. Meggait, Maple Ridge
Lucille Milligan, Vancouver
Joseph L. R. Nepveu, Prince George
Gwendolyn Olhausen, Surrey
A. June Pocock, Kamloops
Elizabeth J. Proven, Surrey

Nina Read, Vancouver
Edward Redmond, Nanaimo
William K. Sample, Victoria
David Scoble, Nanaimo
Jean Shepherd, Trail
Gordon A. Smith, West Vancouver
Edward A. Strome, Kamloops
Ronald P. Sweeney, Abbotsford
V. Lorraine Tayler, Penticton
Margaret L. Tingey, West Vancouver

1973-75



Jim MacFarlan, noted for his eloquence and willingness to comment, attracted much attention from the media. His press confer-

ences as BCTF president were always well attended. This one occurred September 18, 1973, just a few weeks after he took office.

The BCTF had lost its opportunity to influence the new NDP government to improve education significantly. However, corporal punishment was abolished and, as a result of a one-day strike by Surrey teachers, a major reduction in class size was won.

JIM MacFARLAN

●To summarize two years of relations between the BCTF and the provincial government in a relatively short article is not an easy task.

One could simply chronicle the major events with a brief explanation and analysis of each. To do so would not provide any significant insight into the period.

The other approach, the one I have chosen, is to attempt to draw a more general picture of the period and to illustrate with two or three specific examples the highlights of teacher-government relations during this time.

I realize that this approach is also subject to criticism because it omits certain events that people with a different historical perspective may consider important. However, I assume that the function of this and other articles in this issue is both to inform and to stimulate debate about the rather

Jim MacFarlan, BCTF president 1973-75, is now vice-principal of Alpha Secondary School in Burnaby.



Jim MacFarlan enthusiastically supported the action of Surrey teachers in demonstrating on the grounds of the parliament buildings in Victoria. That demonstration resulted in his convincing

NDP Premier Dave Barrett to lower the pupil-teacher ratio, an action that created thousands of jobs for teachers.

complex process that has seen the federation's relations with government change from cap-in-hand to picket lines in 15 dramatic years.

One cannot simply begin with an analysis of the period from July 1973 to July 1975 without touching on the events of the previous several years. Teachers, their organization, and the entire education system in B.C. had been under almost continuous assault from the Social Credit government of Premier W. A. C. Bennett for over four years — from 1968 through 1972. Drastic changes in the education finance formula, local referenda for operating costs, a freeze on school construction (vast sums were diverted from the "captive" pension plans' traditional investments in school debentures into B.C. Hydro bonds to pay for the hydro projects on the Columbia and Peace rivers), the withdrawal of automatic BCTF membership, the failure to improve teachers' pensions, an extremely high pupil-teacher ratio, and an attempt at a wage freeze had driven teachers to political action. The federation and the Teachers' Political Action Committee had poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the NDP (and to a much lesser extent the Liberal and Tory) campaign funds. Thou-

sands of teachers volunteered as campaign workers. The election of the first NDP government in B.C.'s history was in no small measure due to the efforts of the BCTF and its members.

The actions of the federation following the election deserve the closest possible scrutiny, because they may have deprived us of the significant influence we could have exerted on the new government. President Robertson made a plea to the BCTF membership to refrain from pressuring the government immediately. The tone of his *BCTF Newsletter* article was, to say the least, very moderate. His view was that the government had to be given time to govern without the federation's insisting that all of the promised reforms be carried out immediately. He exhibited an almost classic liberal faith that the system of government would correct previous errors without any extra-parliamentary pressure.

For almost two years this naive hope influenced much of the thinking of the BCTF staff, a significant number of geographical representatives and a number of Executive Committee members. We allowed the new government to appear to be more progressive on educational matters than it really was. By failing to press for

major educational reforms — reforms that could have democratized the education system, altered the hierarchical nature of decision-making, helped to eliminate racism and sexism in schools, and brought greater community involvement — we lost an opportunity that may not be present again for a long time.

The government, and Education Minister Dailly in particular, were able to appear very positive and to placate many teachers by restoring the system to what it had been before the Socred attack of 1968-72. During the three years of the NDP there were in fact no major changes in K-12 education, with two possible exceptions. These exceptions were the abolition of corporal punishment, which was a courageous step by the minister, and a substantial reduction in class size, which came as a result of BCTF action and, in particular, as a result of a one-day strike by the Surrey local.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the three years of NDP rule is that regardless of the government in power the federation must retain its integrity and its independence. Just because we choose to help elect one party or another does not mean that we then depart from the political scene only to emerge again at election time.

That hard lesson from our first encounter with a "friendly" government can also be applied to local school boards where teachers have helped to elect progressive pro-education candidates. Let us remember that our obligations don't stop with the ballot box. Had we recognized that in 1972 we might have seen substantial reforms rather than just restorative action.

neither the minister nor the government had a clear and consistent educational philosophy. The fact that the government never saw how to reform the system may have stemmed from the lack of a genuine desire to bring about major changes. Its goal in education as in other areas of society may have simply been to create a more humane system rather than one that offered any real alleviation from the deepening social and economic crisis that was beginning to have profound effects even in 1972.

The most significant interaction between the federation and the government did not come about through the official channels. It came through direct membership action in the form of a strike. The throne speech that opened the spring session of the legislature in 1974 had contained little in the way of specific assistance to reduce class size. The budget made only a vague reference to funds being available for this purpose. Many teachers felt that they had been betrayed by a government they had worked hard to elect.

The minister was moved to action more quickly by the sight of 1,000 angry teachers than by 1½ years of BCTF briefs, meetings and lobbying. I had accompanied the Surrey strikers to Victoria and was leaving the rally to return to Vancouver when the minister summoned me from her window. I chatted briefly with her about our demands and she asked me to reiterate them for the premier.

The government more than kept its promise for the first year. Three thousand new jobs were created and class sizes dropped sharply. Although the government did not meet its commitment in the second year, it did fund a further cut in the PTR, and an additional 950 teachers were hired.

WE SHALL MISS THESE TEACHERS

Florence Mary Duddles (Mackay)
Barbara W. Kershaw (McDonald)
Doris Joanne Shaw (Phelps)
Erne Gwenyth Williams

Vancouver
Coquitlam
Shuswap
Vancouver

October 4, 1983
October 30, 1983
October 13, 1983
October 14, 1983

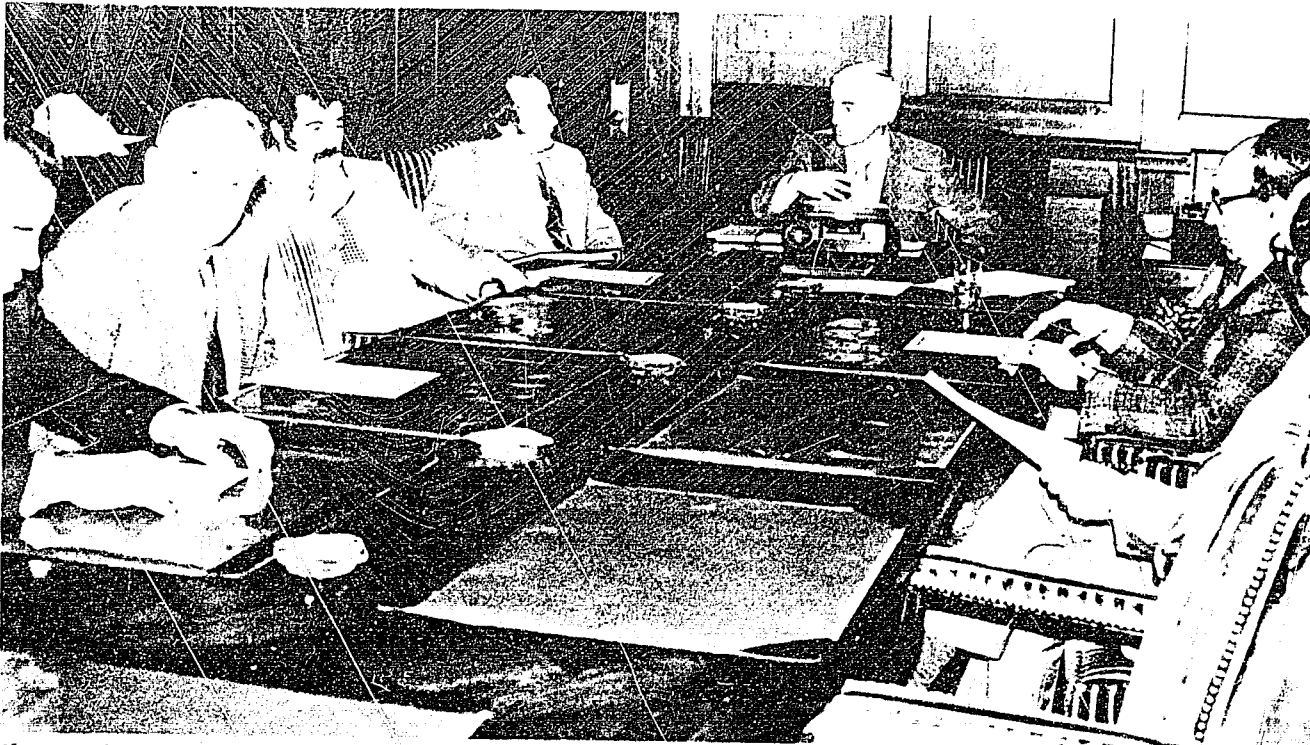
Helena Ackert (Paulis)
 Jane Angus
 Ilse Brandt
 George Dorman
 Margaret Erickson (Johnston)
 Eleanor Gibbs
 Charlotte Graham (Douglas)
 Emma Hughson
 Anton Koch
 Dorothy Murray
 John Newberry
 Pamela Noel
 Gwen Pearson
 John Petrak
 Bohdan Pitchko
 Kathleen Portsmouth
 Mildred Renwick
 Elizabeth Sager (Anderson)
 Annie Tingley

Nelson
North Vancouver
Surrey
Nanaimo
Vancouver
Vancouver
Alberni
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
Vancouver
Fernie
North Vancouver
Nanaimo
Surrey
Vancouver
Kelowna
Victoria

October 15, 1983
September 26, 1983
October 6, 1983
July 22, 1983
November 2, 1983
November 29, 1983
October 3, 1983
November 11, 1983
October 11, 1983
October 28, 1983
November 27, 1983
November 9, 1983
October 14, 1983
October 25, 1983
October 26, 1983
October 13, 1983
September 22, 1983
September 13, 1983
September 28, 1983

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1975-77



Knowing that the new Social Credit government of Bill Bennett would be suspicious of the BCTF, President Bill Broadley met twice with the Social Credit caucus in an attempt to alleviate the concerns

of government members. Unfortunately, the meetings were not well attended. The meeting shown here occurred in 1977.

Education finance and wage controls were important issues. The new Social Credit government made cutbacks in school financing, transferred more of the education bill to local property owners, and made grants to independent schools for the first time.

BILL BROADLEY

● By the third year of the NDP government, teacher enthusiasm for it began to wane, despite the significant improvements made in local autonomy, education finance, class size and pensions since its election in 1972.

The ministry of education continued to consult with BCTF representatives and encouraged similar meaningful consultation at the school district level. But the appointment of a commissioner for education and later the establishment of a research and development division had both failed.

The government gave the appearance that it did not know where it wanted to go with its education policies.

BCTF relationships with the provincial government focus on two ministries — the provincial secretary (for pensions) and education.

The commissioner of teachers' pensions and BCTF representatives continued to

Bill Broadley, BCTF president 1975-77, now teaches at Esquimalt Senior Secondary School in Victoria.

meel regularly to deal with proposals for pension changes through legislation or regulation. After these discussions the BCTF made presentations to the provincial secretary seeking specific changes. The minister, usually briefed by the commissioner, would indicate his or her readiness to recommend proposals to cabinet. Some matters might be referred back for further discussion and clarification.

The process was clear and effective. It continued with the change in government in December 1975 from the NDP to the Social Credit administration.

That issues in education were rarely as simple as those in pensions is reflected in the difficulty the federation encountered in pursuing matters to a conclusion with the ministry of education.

School curriculum was an area in which clear procedures had existed since 1961 for BCTF representatives to address issues through the ministry's elementary and secondary professional advisory committees on curriculum. However, neither committee met after June 1975, although they were never formally discharged.

In the fall of 1975, six curriculum revision committees were suspended because of budgetary restrictions. The ministry had sponsored a workshop in the summer of 1975 for trustee and BCTF representatives, to recommend procedures for the identification and establishment of a core curriculum for B.C. schools. Although workshop members submitted a set of recommendations to the ministry, the BCTF failed in its attempts to prod the ministry into any further action in 1975.

In most areas, the BCTF had difficulty in knowing where to take the initiatives within the ministry so that follow-up action would occur. BCTF officers met education minister Eileen Dailly in September 1975 to clarify procedures for expediting action on matters previously brought to government, but that had been given little visible attention. Some attention followed.

Education finance could be dealt with by making a submission to the commission enquiring into property assessment and taxation. (The BCTF made such a submission.) Because of economic uncertainties, no schedule could be given for the resumption of the pupil-teacher ratio reduction of 1.5 promised for each of three years but stopped after a single year. No procedure was established by the minister to examine extension of the scope of bargaining as part of a teaching profession act.

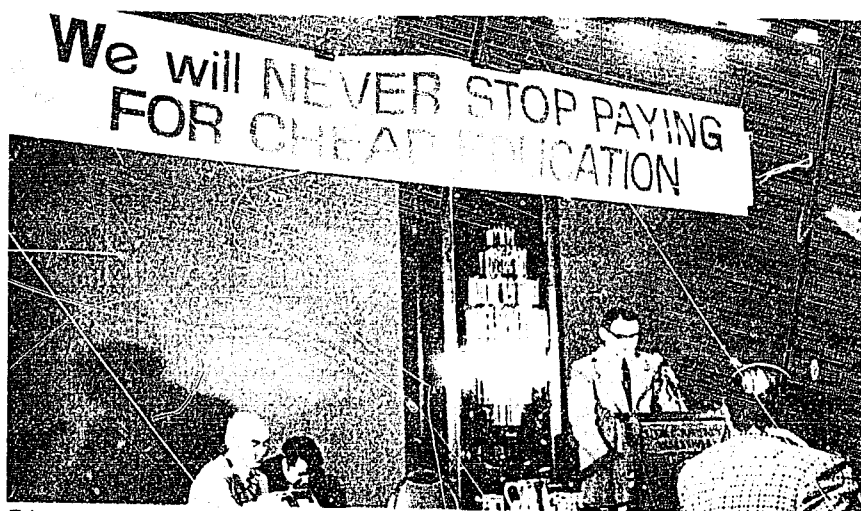
A specific official was designated to meet BCTF representatives to complete recommendations for amending regulations affecting personnel practices sought over the previous two years. Finally, a proposed

women's studies course remained that — a proposal.

Education finance and wage controls became major issues in BCTF relationships with government in late 1975. In October the federal government announced an anti-inflation program that included wage restraints. Because education was a provincial responsibility, teachers needed to know the provincial position. Premier Barrett, meeting with BCTF officers, stated that teachers would be dealt with in the same way as other public sector employees. They

Six weeks later the minister warned school boards that the 19 per cent increase in their budgets for 1976 was unacceptable. No increase above the federal guidelines of 8.5 per cent would be paid from provincial revenues. Boards must pass on the additional costs to local taxpayers or cut programs.

The BCTF demonstrated that since most of the cuts advocated by the minister for 1976 budgets could apply only in September, a 25 per cent cut in programs would be required. In March, the minister would not



Education Minister Pat McGeer walked into a militant BCTF Annual General Meeting in 1975. Incensed about the inadequacy of the government's funding of education, the delegates had already decided to take political action. McGeer delivered a cupboard-is-bare speech, then rushed back to Victoria without a question period for either the delegates or the media.

would not be exempt. Yet the government took no action to alter the salary arbitration rules for teachers.

School boards were told by the ministry that only salaries were subject to the federal guidelines. By December, the government indicated that enough dollars would be provided by the province to protect local taxpayers and permit a small reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio.

A few days later the Social Credit party returned to power. Dr. Patrick McGeer, former Liberal leader but now elected as a Social Credit MLA, became minister of education. By his appointment, Premier Bennett demonstrated his intent to avoid the previous Social Credit government's direct attacks on education and the BCTF.

While the Insurance Corporation of B.C. took a significant amount of Dr. McGeer's time, he began in 1976 by asking school boards to roll back teacher salary arbitration awards, ignoring the fact that the awards were legal and binding. A BCTF brief to the minister in mid-January placed the case for teachers' salaries and the need to avoid any arbitrary limits to provincial sharing of education expenditures or on local school board budgets.

deny the analysis. The cuts meant 6,000 to 7,000 fewer teachers, a major growth in class size and a significant decline in individual attention for students.

The BCTF knew from opinion polls that the public supported smaller classes and was even prepared to pay higher taxes to improve the quality of education — preferably through general revenues rather than local property taxes. Politically, the position of the government would not sell. School boards held reasonably firm with their budgets.

By April the minister described the BCTF analysis as preposterous, declaring that 500 additional teachers would be employed by September. (A PTR reduction of 0.58 did occur in September.) At the same time, the government forced a 65 million dollar increase in local taxes for schools. The seed was planted for a taxpayer revolt against rising local property taxes.

BCTF attempts to influence government, through the minister and MLAs, to increase the provincial share of funding failed. In 1977 the report of the commission enquiring into property assessment and taxation recommended that over a five-year period the province assume 75 per cent of

local education costs from general revenues, up from 55 per cent. The government chose an opposite direction, further nurturing the taxpayer revolt.

Not until June did B.C. pass legislation that placed teachers under the federal wage control program. Retroactively, a new law applied to the arbitration awards of six months earlier. In September, the first decision on teacher arbitrations strictly applied the rules and required salary rollbacks.

A January 1977 meeting with the premier sought relief from the gross inequities of the AIB decisions. While he agreed there were inequities, the outcome was no change, except for the premier's suggestion of a joint study to develop a plan for public sector employees. He did not follow-up on his suggestion with the BCTF. Salaries and education finance were political issues to be dealt with by the minister and his colleagues.

When he became minister, Dr. McGeer appointed a new deputy minister, Dr. Walter Hardwick, a UBC geography professor, one-time school teacher and former TEAM alderperson in Vancouver. Not long after, Jim Carter was seconded from his position as principal of Sentinel Secondary School in West Vancouver to serve as a policy consultant in the ministry. He, too, was associated with TEAM and also served as a member of the four-person BCTF commission on education, which published the 1968 report, *Involvement — the Key to Better Schools*. The two understood the public schools and had the confidence of the minister.

On "non-political" issues, BCTF representatives met with these officials. Topics could be addressed with an assurance that necessary information or decisions would be brought back to BCTF representatives.

When he took office, the new deputy placed all ministry advisory committees on "hold." Several effective channels of communication were closed by this decision. Late in 1976 the informal communication with the deputy minister was formalized by the establishment of a Deputy Minister's Advisory Committee (DMAC) to meet every four to six weeks. Its purpose was to facilitate the exchange of information — a purpose it achieved well.

In January 1977 Dr. Hardwick advised that the two professional advisory committees on curriculum would not be reinstated. Instead, the federation should initiate meetings with the new school programs division of the ministry as issues needed attention. By May the ministry indicated an intent to establish an advisory committee on school programs to meet four times a year with a view to rebuilding the consultative processes with the BCTF and other groups.

The establishment of a core curriculum, begun under the NDP, received a new impetus from Dr. McGeer. Recommendations from the core curriculum summer workshop were never revealed. Instead ministry staff drafted a statement for circulation and discussion throughout the province in early 1977. Responses would be sought through an advertising campaign and public meetings. The responses were reviewed and the draft statement modified. By September a core curriculum was to be in place.

Concerns that a rigid curriculum might result from this process led the BCTF to advertise a concern that individual differences should not be sacrificed in the establishment of a core curriculum.

(The core was in place in September when I returned to teaching. It had no more impact than any other curriculum guide. In fact, teachers had already responded to the need to remove any soft spots in the curriculum. The core curriculum was a political response to a political need. The political response worked.)

In one area of curriculum, the ministry in 1976 finally approved a Women's Studies Course for local use after much pressure from the BCTF. The Advisory Committee on Sexism in Education was never recalled.

One other initiative of the NDP continued under the Social Credit government was a provincial assessment program. A Joint Committee on Education (JCE) advised the ministry of the development of a long range provincial assessment program. BCTF representatives served on the JCE from 1974 until it ceased meeting in 1976. When specific assessment programs got under way, the ministry invited the federation to nominate teachers to the various committees involved with each assessment.

Except for the first language in B.C. assessment the BCTF declined the invitation. The majority of the Executive Committee did not wish to participate in a process they viewed as too centralist and harmful to good classroom practices. The minority took the view that teacher representatives ought to be involved to prevent potential abuses. BCTF representatives on the language assessment committees had succeeded in eliminating major concerns.

By May 1977 the BCTF Representative Assembly decided teachers should not administer or mark provincial examinations. Teachers were not united in opposition. Either for legal reasons or because they disagreed with the BCTF position, classroom teachers did not boycott the assessments. If BCTF representatives had continued to be involved with the assessment program from the outset, would we be facing Grade 12 government examinations in 1984?

At BCTF initiative, actions were taken on a consultative basis with the ministry and trustee representatives that led to the establishment of a tentative school calendar for five years in advance. This re-established the practice of a two-week Christmas vacation and avoided mid-week stops and starts.

One education finance matter became a major issue in 1977, when legislation was introduced to fund independent schools. The BCTF and government held opposite positions. The money was not being taken from public schools according to the government, since it was "new money." The legislation passed.

The success of the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA) in its lobby to achieve public funding underscored an effective technique for obtaining legislative change. For many years FISA encouraged members to participate in the various political parties. As a result of this direct action, several parties did change their policy. Long standing Social Credit opposition to funding was reversed. The BCTF ought to give more consideration to such a long term approach.

CAUCUS MEETINGS

Twice during my term as president, BCTF representatives met with the Social Credit caucus to discuss BCTF hopes and aspirations for education. Although the meetings were intended to establish communication with caucus members, they were poorly attended by MLAs. Those who did attend were very sensitive to what they perceived as BCTF attacks on their party. Resentment still lingered about the federation's role in the 1972 election. While the minister had stated he had no intention of changing compulsory membership legislation, caucus members continued to challenge the point. Raising BCTF concerns was difficult. Unfortunately, the attempt by the federation to build bridges did not succeed, because of underlying mistrust and resentment of BCTF activities. Most of the caucus could not accept the concept that elected BCTF representatives spoke for the majority of teachers. How ironic when one considers the role of an MLA.

When I became president in 1975 the BCTF had good communication but poor follow-up within the ministry from a government sympathetic to good education for all children, smaller classes and decentralized decision-making. When I completed my term two years later we had good communication and good follow-up within the ministry from a government committed to its version of excellence, larger classes and greater control. ○

1977-79



President Pat Brady and First Vice-President Al Blakey attach a bumper sticker advertising the BCTF's FAIRTAX campaign. The campaign, a successful one, drew attention to the inadequacies of the government's education finance formula.

Despite a minister of education who was "against" the public school system, the BCTF's FAIRTAX campaign was very successful in publicizing the inequities of the government's education finance formula.

PAT BRADY

Although both my years in office were ones in which the Social Credit government of Bill Bennett was in power, the BCTF was able to make some headway, particularly in the areas of pensions and education finance.

Unfortunately, I don't have my files as I write this account of those years, so my thoughts will not necessarily be in chronological order — I don't pretend that my memory works that efficiently.

One of the recurring issues in most of the last 16 years was pensions. We got tremendous advice from Bruce Watson (staff) and the pensions committees during my years in office and, despite several attempts at the Annual General Meeting to change what was happening, we managed to keep intact the basis of the pensions benefits. Although we did pay a slightly increased percentage of our salaries as "premiums," the benefits we obtained were improved in a number of areas. Productive meetings with the people in the minister's office and the rapport between Bruce Watson and the pensions commissioner were positive things. Grace McCarthy, the minister responsible for pensions in those days, was very knowledgeable; without her help we wouldn't have been able to achieve the pension improvements we did.

Another issue, that of class size, was at its peak. We made several challenges. Pat McGeer, who was minister at the time, was not at all convinced of the need for smaller classes. I remember challenging him on the Jack Webster program. I phoned in when McGeer was on and challenged him to take up the BCTF offer to pay for a study on the effects of smaller classes. He accepted that challenge, but we never got around to doing the study.

The government was sensitive to class size as a political issue. The BCTF and its local associations had done a good job of convincing school boards that it was an important issue, and I think we got the message across to the public. Our surveys of those days showed that the size of classes was a major concern of people. Although the government didn't like the fact that more and more teachers were being hired

Pat Brady, BCTF president 1977-79, now teaches at Gladstone Elementary School in Prince George.

THE B.C. TEACHER, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1984

to reduce the size of classes, it eventually had to accept public opinion on the matter.

I inherited from Bill Broadley the independent schools question. Teachers were divided on the issue. They were not as solidly opposed to the funding of independent schools as we contended. Now, however, I believe that if we took a survey we would find a significant increase in the number of teachers who are opposed to funding independent schools, particularly since grants to the independent schools have been increased while the government has been cutting back on grants to the public school system. However, I think the public is not opposed to the funding, partly because of government statements about the cost of the public system. I don't see any significant shift from that policy by the provincial government in the near future.

An issue that was of great concern to teachers was the regularizing of the school calendar, which increased the length of school holidays and set them, the number of school days in a year, and the number of discretionary days (which many of our members continue to call professional days) five years in advance.

Jim Carter was a saving grace to us in those days; he was a tremendous buffer between Pat McGeer and Walter Hardwick (deputy minister) on the one hand, and teachers and trustees, on the other. If it hadn't been for Jim Carter and some of his advice to the deputy, and particularly to the minister, we could have been in a lot more trouble as an organization politically and financially. His work and his presence as a member of the Deputy Minister's Advisory Committee were really helpful. That advisory committee, despite some strong BCTF views put to it, did achieve several things. Probably its most important achievement was to "head off at the pass" a number of changes Pat McGeer would have liked to see introduced in education. The tempering views of Jim Carter and his ability to get to McGeer were very important to us. Without them, we would have found a much more right-wing extremist point of view on behalf of the minister and the government of those days.

Many of our members, particularly on the Executive Committee, didn't think the committee was a very useful vehicle, but I found that it was a real benefit to us. Many times we'd hear things mentioned, give our views on their probable effects, and find that the proposals were not implemented or that they were modified so much that they were acceptable in their final form.

Pat McGeer was not really concerned with the public school system. He was more of an elitist than the minister who followed him and probably even more so than the minister who preceded him. McGeer was



Not all of a BCTF president's duties involved relations with the government. Here, in 1979, Pat Brady presents a trophy to the winner of the B.C. Student Film Festival. The trophy, incidentally, had been donated to the festival by the BCTF several years earlier.

university minded, and felt that the schools were not tough enough. He had a mind set of the late '50s or early '60s and believed that the secondary schools should weed out students, keeping only the gems to send on to higher education. His favorite line was that schools should give students marketable skills. On several occasions, both publicly and privately, I asked him what market he was talking about, and what skills. What crystal ball was he using to come up with a plan as to what the future needs of our society would be and what skills would be needed? At no time did he ever come up with an answer. I think he was taking a two-fold approach: one, his personal view that there should be marketable skills; and two, the political view of the government and its business oriented ministers and the premier that the schools should be preparing workers for the factories.

One of the major successes we had during '77-'79 was the campaign on FAIR-TAX, a BCTF program that publicized the inequities in the government's formula for financing education. Our campaign was very effective. I remember going to the annual meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities and being with McGeer on the stage on a panel on education finance. At first the mayors and alderpersons were on the government's side, but after I presented many of the facts our staff and Education Finance Committee had given to me, and had outlined the inequities of the government's formula, I could sense the audience shifting.

In a way, I felt sorry for Pat McGeer, because he'd been let down by his staff and was very badly briefed — or else he didn't take the time to get briefed on the finance formula — and he came off looking terrible. The ultimate insult came when a motion from the floor, passed with about 80 per cent in favor, supported what we were advocating in our campaign, and criticized the government's funding formula — this from mayors and alderpersons who were always so upset by school board budgets and the fact that because they had to collect the monies, they got all the blame for rising school costs. The fact that we had gotten through to the public, and particularly to the municipal level of government, set several cabinet ministers back on their heels.

Near the end of the 1979 provincial election campaign, we agreed to try to meet with all the party leaders. We met with the Liberal and Conservative leaders, but nothing of any significance resulted. We were to meet with Dave Barrett and Bill Bennett also.

We didn't meet with Dave Barrett, actually, but we did meet with a group of his senior NDP colleagues. We asked if the NDP would, if elected, broaden the scope of bargaining for teachers. They hummed and hawed. Neither they nor the Socreds would extend the scope of bargaining, mainly because the government would lose fiscal control.

When I subsequently met with Bill Bennett, he was very upset that we had not had a meeting with Barrett, and felt he'd been

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end-played and that we were just trying to get him on the hook and make capital out of his being the premier. He felt we should have met with some of his minor ministers.

Bennett was accompanied in this private meeting by Tony Tozer. Bennett was extremely tired, worn out. It had been a long campaign. He'd tried to do it all himself, touring the province and so on. I felt that Tozer hadn't been doing his job properly, to give Bennett a bit of rest. At any rate, the premier was in an antagonistic mood against the federation because of the negative publicity he was receiving in teacher ads and teacher campaigns. He asked me how I, as leader of the organization, could put up with this kind of anti-Socreds propaganda. I tried to explain to him that we were merely stating the record of the government. He felt it wasn't fair that were talking about the record of the Socreds and, in effect, urging people to vote against them.

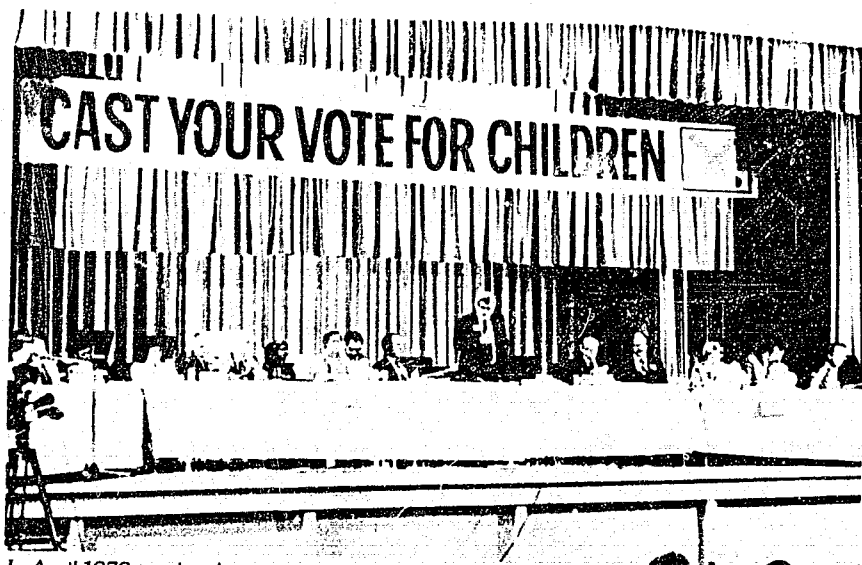
He still held against the organization and teachers the campaign of 1972, when teachers had been, in his view, instrumental in changing the balance of votes so that his father had been defeated. He didn't say that, but the antagonism was there, and I think it was because he was so tired and consequently much less than diplomatic in his comments. I think the fact that teachers were once again picking on the poor Socreds really got to him.

If we look back over the last 10 or 11 years, the anti-teacher, anti-BCTF mood colors Bennett's thinking and spills over into his views on education. In his view, teachers are always opposed to the proper, right way, and the policies of Social Credit. I think that has a lot to do with some of the recent events and with Bennett's attitude and approach to anything to do with educa-

tion and, in particular, teachers. He believes that teachers have always been a thorn in the side of the Socreds, and I think that, in part, the government's actions since July have illustrated his negative view of teachers and their organization.

He believes that the BCTF, although it claims non-partisanship, is probably the most partisan and destructive organization in the province when it comes to the policies he supports, so it is not surprising that he's trying to push us. He's not a very forgiving man, and his lack of higher education is probably an embarrassment to him. He may feel that the educated people of the province, particularly at the universities and in the BCTF, look down on him, and that they do not respect him because he does not have paper qualifications. That belief would, of course, influence many of his approaches to issues that affect education, teachers, and the BCTF.

As long as Bennett is the premier, the relationships between the BCTF and teachers and his party and government will be colored by his negative attitudes. We won't get much out of the education ministry or the government unless we can change public attitudes to such an extent that the public prevails. The federation will not have the kind of influence, regardless of the logic and reasonableness of any position we take, that it should have in talking to the government. We shall be ignored as an organization unless it is politically expedient to listen to us and Bennett has no other course of action and no alternatives presented by public mood. At that point he'll accept what we have to say, reluctantly, but only if his polls tell him that the position is one he has to take because the public wants him to do so. ○



In April 1979 teachers' associations were again staging all-candidates meetings, this one in Vancouver, in an attempt to draw attention to the education policies — or lack of them — of candidates in the provincial election of that year.

1979-81



The issue of teachers' pensions seems to be a never-ending controversy between the BCTF and the government. In 1980 the issue was the government's action in limiting indexing of pensions.

BCTF president Al Blakey (left) and the Provincial Secretary Evan Wolfe (right) both addressed a rally on the grounds of the parliament buildings.

A new minister of education raised teachers' hopes, but nothing happened to improve education. Teachers' concerns about pensions were escalating, and the result was several local strikes.

AL BLAKEY

● It already seems so long ago.

Particularly my first year as president.

Although it didn't begin auspiciously, since shoot-from-the-lip Pat McGeer was looking down his nose at the public school system and bashing what didn't fit into his elitist perceptions, the end of November saw the installation of Brian Smith as minister of education and some hope was created in the education environment.

A freshman MLA, Smith was an unknown quantity. In fact, "Brian Who?" was a common initial reaction to his appointment. However, as mayor of Oak Bay he had a record of supporting an increased provincial share of education costs, and his initial public statements were supportive of the public school system and teachers. It was a refreshing change.

After my first meeting with Smith I reported to the BCTF Executive Committee, "The minister indicated an openness and a

Al Blakey, BCTF president, 1979-81, now teaches at Florence Nightingale Elementary School in Vancouver.

flexibility — naturally without specific commitment — in striking contrast with the previous minister."

Shortly after our meeting the new minister announced the education estimates for the next year, which amounted to a further reduction in the provincial share of education spending.

These two items were omens for the future, as it turned out. Warm words were never matched by deeds. But till late spring warm words satisfied most; the experience of having an education minister who actually appeared to listen and care about the concerns and problems that teachers had was like cool, fresh water to parched throats. No one wants not to believe in a mirage.

At the same time as Smith actually visited schools and praised the hard work of teachers, seeming to recognize the problems of workload created by the more diverse student body, mainstreaming, learning disabilities and the large number of students with English as a second language, the education mandarins were hard at work in a less public way, standardizing the education of non-standardized children. Elementary Self-Assessment, the Credit Allocation Plan and the Administrative Handbook worked their way down through the bureaucracy, seeking to achieve more control by the ministry of what was taught and how it would be taught. In response to BCTF criticism of these systems or of the way in which they were implemented, ministry officials would often agree "as educators" but defend their actions as a necessary evil, a means of pre-empting even worse directions from the government caucus. Some of our criticisms were acted on, but not to the extent of substantial change.

We also had the case of the secret files. A Nanaimo trustee raised the issue, stating that he had been assured by a ministry official that all communications to the ministry about teachers went into their files. To begin with, the efforts of the federation to get each teacher the right of access to his or her file were denied by the minister. After some outcry Smith changed his position, and a number of us made a symbolic visit to exercise our right. Nothing untoward was found, although there were rumors that a lot of file cleaning had been taking place. Still, Smith had backed off publicly and a positive impression of the minister was maintained as someone who could be worked with on a co-operative basis.

The 1980 Annual General Meeting gave what the *BCTF Newsletter* described as a warm reception to the minister and received from him responses that sounded reasoned and sympathetic, although there

was a growing restlessness about the lack of action to substantiate his words.

As the school year neared its end the federation began to sharpen its public comments on Brian Smith. At the spring Representative Assembly I issued a report card on his record, finding it less than satisfactory, and called on Smith and his officials to live up to his fine words. With the beginning of the new school year in September it was announced that the minister was planning a series of public forums around the province to hear what the people wanted before making any major decisions about the future of education.

In the meantime the roof had fallen in on teachers in another area.

Provincial Secretary Evan Wolfe had tabled in the legislature changes in public service pensions. The key feature that raised the ire of teachers and others concerned was the elimination of full indexing.

A strike in Terrace resulted in a complete victory for the teachers.

Within days a lobby representing teachers in the overwhelming majority of school districts met with MLAs in Victoria to press the case for full indexing. Bennett's reaction was to accuse the teachers of "government bashing" when he attacked Pat Clarke, the president of the Kelowna teachers (now first vice-president of the BCTF).

The BCTF's position was weakened by the fact that the federation had actually asked for the indexing change at one point (it had changed its position at the 1980 AGM in a hotly contested decision), with the membership still not as well informed as the situation called for, the spring RA's plan of action didn't go beyond traditional pressure tactics. The suggestion of a pensions protest day was turned down by the geographical representatives. Only in Prince

Rupert did teachers protest by withdrawing services for half a day in conjunction with other public service workers. One of the RA's key decisions, however, was to co-operate with public sector unions in a campaign to maintain full indexing, including the contribution of up to \$10,000 to an advertising campaign co-operatively developed by the public sector unions and/or the B.C. Federation of Labour.

Compared with the response of government employees, that of teachers was weak, and little success was expected as the school year closed for the summer.

Then the government sweetened the pot for the BCGEU, giving it a better deal on indexing than other workers in the public sector. It appeared that the more militant job action of government employees had paid off.

With the beginning of the new school year the BCTF began to prepare a campaign of increasing pressure on the government, including job action. Teachers were stirred to a more militant posture both by the inequity of being given a worse deal than the BCGEU and by the example of the kind of action that gained the BCGEU a better deal. Meetings with Evan Wolfe, the provincial secretary, resulted in no change in the government position.

At the same time as the federation was building its campaign on pensions, the minister of education was carrying out a series of public forums around the province, gathering public opinion before making major policy decisions about the future of education in the province. At each forum teachers presented their pensions case as part of their efforts to influence the government position. Brian Smith expressed concern about the matter and repeatedly implied that he would be taking the teachers' case to the cabinet. As a result, while the federation increased its attack on Evan Wolfe, it maintained a more positive relationship with Smith, supporting the idea of public input into educational change.

On November 6, the federation held a mass meeting in the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver. Twenty-five hundred teachers turned out to hear Adam Robertson, a past president of the BCTF, and me speak and air our demands on the government. Evan Wolfe had been invited to come and present his case but declined, and the meeting became a rally that indicated a rising mood of militancy among BCTF members.

This rising mood of militancy was confirmed by Surrey teachers. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by a metro lobby of the cabinet initiated by the Langley local, Surrey voted to withdraw services for the afternoon of the same day and join the lobby en masse. They also voted to with-

draw services on December 4 to demonstrate at the opening of the legislature

The Ft. Langley lobby (the cabinet meeting was held at Ft. Langley), based on the turnout and enthusiasm of the Surrey teachers, had a significant effect, not with the cabinet, which I and other executive members met with that day, but with other locals of the federation. The BCTF executive called for strike votes in a number of locals and prepared to call as many as possible out of the classroom to demonstrate with Surrey in Victoria on December 4. Virtually all the Vancouver Island locals that could get to Victoria voted to join the demonstration and two other metro locals, along with Surrey, jammed the ferries to capacity. Some three to four thousand teachers marched through the sedate streets of Victoria to demonstrate their anger.

Another four thousand teachers in the metro area withdrew their services on December 11 and demonstrated in downtown Vancouver as the BCTF executive increased the pressure on the government just prior to what it had been informed would be the time the cabinet would meet and discuss teacher pensions. It was at this meeting that Brian Smith was to present the case he had heard at the forums.

With the Christmas holidays coming up and with only a few locals ready to withdraw services, the BCTF executive decided to call a public cooling off period to give the government an olive branch to which they could respond. The show of strength on December 4 and 11 gave the federation a position of power from which it felt it could make such a gesture.

Nothing came from government, although the investments of our pension money were being made on a different basis, it appeared, a basis that would result in the fund's paying a higher level of indexing than had been anticipated.

At the winter Representative Assembly a decision was made to hold a strike vote unless the executive decided that a reasonable solution to our confrontation with government was reached. Although the Representative Assembly decision was overwhelming, it soon became clear that the resolve of the membership was far less strong. Therefore, when discussions with government achieved agreement on a joint pensions study, and when it became evident that the new investment practices would result in some improvement in the level of indexing, the executive decided to accept a solution it didn't like, but that it felt was a gain. Our bargaining position was not strong enough to get more, in the executive's opinion.

During the year the federation's efforts to broaden the scope of bargaining had also

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been developing. Using a strategy of intensifying local bargaining for issues not covered by the Public Schools Act and supporting strong action where locals decided to take such a route, the BCTF intended to create in practice what it wanted in legislation, thereby creating a fait accompli to press on government. Although we didn't expect to achieve a broadened scope of bargaining in one year, a number of actions did develop, one of which, in particular, involved the provincial government. That was the Terrace strike.

Driven by a board of almost unbelievable insensitivity to both teacher and public concern, the dispute initially arose out of the firing of two principals. At one point the dispute appeared resolved by the interven-

tion of the provincial government in the person of the deputy minister, who supported a settlement outside the provisions of the Public Schools Act. But when this agreement broke down, the teachers struck for one week and won an almost total victory. At no time did the provincial government move to have the strike declared illegal; nor did it suggest that any time be made up.

The relative calm of the initial Smith months were gone and turbulence had become the norm. This turbulence would continue, as it turned out, until the government decided to make it war. Perhaps we had learned some things that helped us when that war came. ○

1981-83



When BCTF President Larry Kuehn came out of the Robson Square Media Centre in Vancouver in February 1982, he was surrounded by the media, wanting his reactions to the announcements he had just heard. Education Minister Brian Smith had

announced the first 1982 cutbacks in education. Kuehn's first comment: "Bennett's meat-cleaver approach to economic salvation will gut the school system of this province."

In each of the last two years the government stepped up its attack on the public school system. Its 1983 assault on all social services surprised nearly everyone, and precipitated an organized opposition unprecedented in our province. The result for teachers was a province-wide strike.

JIM BOWMAN

●Relations between the BCTF and the provincial government, always uneasy, often acerbic, deteriorated even further during the past two years.

Political moves to the right in North America, combined with a particularly severe recession in this province, almost guaranteed that social services in general and public education in particular would be hard hit.

No one, however, forecast the consequences of the re-election of the Bennett government on public employees, especially the born-again right-wing fervor that produced the July 7, 1983 budget and the mass of punitive legislation reaching far beyond the cry for fiscal restraint in government.

The chronology of events in the box on the next page is too stark to do justice to the almost daily featuring of some aspect or other of the problems in education. It

Jim Bowman is the director of the BCTF's Government Division.

became routine to record, as events unfolded, accompanying examples of teacher-bashing — particularly BCTF teacher-leader bashing — by the provincial government. The federation, never loath to mix it up, responded in kind. Our parish-pump politics, with the media featuring the posturing as well as the positions of both sides, created a climate in which crisis and conflict were the order of the day.

What a parochial province this is and how dominated by the media we are! It would take a Bismarck to ignore a summons from Webster, the Pope of the idiot box, and lesser mortals like Bennett and Kuehn, Heinrich and Leach, dutifully make their pilgrimages to that Canossa of the Lower Mainland, the Burnaby studios of BCTV.

The noisy bigots who infest the radio hot-line shows — both as hosts and callers — never lack for either people to interview or some alleged malpractice in the education system to denounce.

The symbiotic relationship between the press and politicians ensures that if one of them itches the other will scratch, so reporters and columnists both in the provincial dailies and local newspapers have had a field day. They are ubiquitous. "What did Marjorie say today?" sang out I, entering the family portals one evening. "We don't have any children called Marjorie," retorted my wife, thus placing my life and work in a much more sensible perspective.

The media can't be blamed, however, for starting and keeping the fire fueled, even if they do throw a little gasoline on it now and then. The BCTF and the government seem to find it impossible to reconcile their differences and the events of the past two years offer concentrated evidence of the gulf that separates them on the major issues of public education, its control, financing and roles of the major shareholders in the system.

The themes that emerge from the events of the past two years are almost always the same ones that have characterized government - BCTF relations for a generation.

The federation disagrees fundamentally with the government about the purposes and control of the public education system. We see an egalitarian system offering a broad, liberal education with major decision-making at the local level. The government, although never offering a coherent philosophy — much direction in education is left to ministerial whims and biases — by its actions obviously believes in a return to a more elitist system with standards of success and failure emphasized in the so-called basics and rigid centralist control of decision-making in key areas.

The government and the federation dis-

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

February 18, 1982	Bennett's so-called restraint program announced. Restricts school board budgets and teachers' salaries.
March 11, 1982	Education (Interim) Finance Act announced, which confiscates local commercial tax base and gives provincial cabinet sweeping powers over school board budgets.
March 3, 1982	Creation of Defend Educational Services Coalition (DESC) to fight budget cuts.
April 30, 1982	Education Interim Finance Act becomes law.
June 25, 1982	Compensation Stabilization Act becomes law.
July 21, 1982	BCTF and BCSTA summoned to meet premier.
July 29, 1982	Compensation Stabilization program guidelines and regulations revised downward.
July 30, 1982	School board budgets cut by another \$37½ million. 1983 budgets set at \$55½ million less than 1982.
August 10, 1982	Vander Zalm replaces Smith as minister of education.
September 7, 1982	Approximately 1,000 fewer teachers in system as schools re-open.
September 15, 1982	Budget crisis. 278 teachers receive notices effective in October.
September 28, 1982	Bill 89 introduced in legislature. Introduces principle of teachers working without pay and flouts teacher contracts.
October 14, 1982	Bill 89 becomes law.
November 15, 1982	62 districts heading for arbitration and Peck.
February 9, 1983	Parents demonstrate against budget cuts.
February 18, 1983	Both BCSTA and BCTF call for Vander Zalm's resignation.
March 14, 1983	BCTF negotiates issues with provincial government but talks are sabotaged.
May 5, 1983	Bennett government returned to office in provincial election but without Vander Zalm.
May 26, 1983	Heinrich appointed education minister.
July 7, 1983	Delayed budget and 26 bills attacking human rights, etc., introduced in legislature.
August 1983	BCTF joins Operation Solidarity and Solidarity Coalition.
August 30, 1983	Provincial exams for Grade 12 announced.
September 1, 1983	Government announces 25 per cent reduction in school board budgets to 1986.
October 15, 1983	Massive Solidarity demonstration surrounds Socred convention.
October 29, 1983	BCTF strike vote gets 60 per cent approval.
November 8-10, 1983	Teachers withdraw services.
December 1, 1983	Teachers in five districts get termination notices.

agree vehemently about financial support to the public education system. The BCTF maintains that this province has traditionally under-funded the system, that catering to the legitimate needs of all students in this province requires more, not fewer, teachers, and that education costs have never in the past reflected the ability of the province's citizens to pay for them.

The government, on the other hand, looks quantitatively at the costs of the system and maintains that quality can be maintained or even improved with fewer teachers and less ancillary service costs. These conflicting views dictate conflict between the parties, and the slow gains made by the profession in good economic times appear to be being swiftly negated during poor ones.

The third major area of contention is collective bargaining for teachers; its scope and results. This a particularly frustrating problem because for years the provincial government has attacked both the results of the limited bargaining of salaries resolved by compulsory arbitration and the method itself. Various ministers have at times spoken out against alternative methods, particularly those proposed by the federation for broadening the scope of bargaining to allow all terms and conditions of employment to be negotiated.

Most of the events of the past two years and the areas of rhetoric surrounding those events are encompassed by those three themes. Provincial examinations and the threats of unilateral curriculum changes; the stripping of bargaining rights, the abroga-

tion of contracts and the attacks on teachers' salaries of Bill 89 and Bill 3 and the Compensation Stabilization Plan; the stripping of school board autonomy over budgets of the Education (Interim) Finance Act, the bewildering number of changes in both budget formulas and amounts, the pledged increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, the expropriation of the commercial and industrial tax base; the forecast reduction in school board budgets: all are the dénouement of a struggle more than a decade old.

Some themes are emerging. The traditional isolationism of the federation, first breached with the formation of the Defend Educational Services Coalition (DESC) in March 1982, was swept away with a vengeance when the BCTF became active in the establishment of the Solidarity Coalition and Operation Solidarity in the summer of 1983. Will these new alliances persist and will the recent identification of the federation with organized labor persist? It is probably too early to tell and the answer may lie in the premier's timetable rather than ours or the labor movement's.

Teacher militancy, a term long used to describe the profession's leaders, shifted to the followers in early November 1983. Was it a fundamental shift or a reaction to years



First indications were deceiving when Bill Vander Zalm (left) was appointed Minister of Education. He visited the BCTF office and talked for two hours with President Larry Kuehn (right) and Vice-President Doug Smart. However, what he heard did not influence him, and things in education went from bad to worse.

of frustration, crisis and badmouthing of the profession that will dissipate when — or perhaps if — the province returns to calmer times?

Will the 40/60 that became 60/40 that became about 90 per cent support for

which the disagreements take place. It is characterized by rancor and bitterness that go far beyond even vastly divergent views of the purposes of, and support for, public education and a place in the collective bargaining sun for teachers.

There is a mutual lack of trust and a suspicion of motives. The government, with a long memory, sees the federation as political opposition constantly in being and thus fair game for constant attack. The government also perceives little, if any, altruism in the federation's defence of the public education system.

Conversely, the federation perceives the government as being anti-public education and is always suspicious of its intentions. It suspects that the government has plans to strip the federation of its power as part of a general assault on organized groups and trade unions.

Given that aura of mistrust and given that it seems difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the government's objectives with our own, can 1984 offer any solace for the beleaguered system of education?

As this is being written, calls from the media interrupt. Most of the reporters are gathering wool from the provincial fences in the hope of getting enough to weave another story. Will the media, embellishing our respective positions, help both parties dictate yet another year of crisis and conflict?

One thing seems sure: neither we nor the government are likely to capitulate. Nor will the government seek peace (no Kelowna accords but a cessation of hostilities and some slight shift in priorities) with Solidarity in the hope that economic recovery will be nurtured more by labor peace than strife.

We can hope so, but don't bet on it. O

It would take a Bismark to ignore a summons from Webster, the Pope of the idiot box.

strong action by the federation persist or not? Perhaps it is the wrong question. Because teachers who withdrew their services, not for self interest, may never be the same again in a collective sense, whatever their individual views.

To me, the most dominant feature of relations between the BCTF and the government is neither the traditional nor the emerging themes. It is, rather, the climate in

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THE STRIKE Nov. 8-10 1983



On November 8, 1983 teachers all over the province found themselves on picket lines for the first time. Despite the rain, spirits

were high and participation was amazingly high. This group of teachers picketed Burnaby South Senior Secondary School.

The success of the teachers' strike amazed many people. Teachers shared an experience that, for good or ill, will be a benchmark in the history of the BCTF.

TOM HUTCHISON

●The radical image is easy to come by for a teachers' organization since the expectation that teachers will conform is so strong that any departure from this expectation is viewed as shocking.

The BCTF, for all its reputation, contained a vast majority of teachers who had never taken any form of job action. A teacher could have retired in June 1983 after 40 years of service and have been called on only once — and that for only one day — to withdraw service.

The BCTF was a neophyte on the job action scene and had to patch together a strike from scratch. After July 7, and throughout the summer, the major effort was to analyze and publicize the implications of the government's budget and legislative program to members and public, and to work with Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition in a wave of mounting

Tom Hutchison is an assistant director of the BCTF's Government Division.

public protest. Although the word "strike" was in the air, there was no blueprint.

The BCTF summer conference in August was the first opportunity to have a large representative group of teachers look at an information and action plan. This was taken to local associations for ratification and included the possibility of co-operating with Solidarity, "up to and including job action." By the end of September most local associations had adopted this position.

It was not until September 24 that the Executive Committee passed a set of strike guidelines and recommended them to local associations for study. On October 1, the Representative Assembly decided that the BCTF would conduct a secret ballot vote of all members, either at general meetings or at the staff level, on a province wide withdrawal of service by teachers as part of action against the legislation and budget. This vote was to be concluded by October 21.

The very organization of the vote was a major undertaking and it had to be accompanied by informational presentations. The process was also hampered by the circulation of legal opinions by the BCSTA to the effect that any teachers' strike would be illegal. Nevertheless the organization rose to the occasion and the vote was completed, confirmed by the accounting firm of Touche Ross. The result, released on October 29, showed 60 percent in favor of withdrawal of service.

In the meantime BCTF staff had been collecting information from other teachers' organizations and unions on how one actually conducts a strike. The first opportunity to have draft ideas studied was at a meeting of major BCTF committees on October 21-22, and the Labor Affairs Committee recommended a set of Strike Alert bulletins. The first of four of these bulletins went out on October 24.

Once again local associations were asked to undertake a major task. The setting up of strike headquarters, forming a strike committee and the other necessary committees, organizing picket duties and distributing leaflets and picket signs were all new tasks, done under time pressure. Above all, there was little time for mental preparation, to gain a feel for the exigencies of a strike situation, the realities of a picket line, and meeting the unexpected.

On October 29, the Executive Committee endorsed the Operation Solidarity plan for escalating job action, with the education sector called to join in on Tuesday, November 8. The deadline for resolving the conflict was November 2, the day after the BCGEU strike began; if there were no resolution the BCTF would issue strike notices to each board.

A tense but determined Representative

Assembly met on November 4-5 together with local presidents. In the background was Education Minister Heinrich's threat to lift the certificates of teachers who struck. But also in the background was the recent Ontario Supreme Court decision suggesting that the right to strike was constitutionally guaranteed in the Canadian Bill of Rights. Colleagues from Ontario were present at the meeting to give their support. That assembly was both haunted and enlivened by the threat of process servers seeking to serve notices of injunction on Vancouver and Victoria representatives.

Nevertheless, final preparations were concluded and throughout B.C. teachers

Buoyant spirits and camaraderie marked the picket line.

spent a busy weekend organizing, or an uneasy weekend wrestling with their consciences. Most BCTF staff and members of the Executive Committee dispersed to their "battle stations" throughout the province.

By this time telephone lines in the BCTF office were being staffed till midnight, and on Sunday and Monday staff did little but answer them. The catalyst was the North Vancouver negotiation, which continued through Sunday night. The agreement was ratified by the teachers on Monday afternoon and was about to be ratified by the board until the ministry intervened. Late Monday night the strike was on, and the word was fanned out around the province. We knew also that Vancouver and Victoria associations had received injunctions, in Vancouver against picketing only. But there was nothing to do but go home and wait to see what the picket lines would bring on Tuesday morning.

The result was astonishing. Our press and information officer had been anxious that speedy, accurate information on strike participation be fed in to the office since the media would be avid for information. We were able to claim up to 90 percent participation. An independent swift survey by CBC on the first day gave us a grudging 83 percent. President Larry Kuehn held the best attended BCTF press conference ever in the BCTF building to announce the results. Over the three days of strike the number of teachers participating increased.

It was an interesting time. Notices of

injunction, and injunctions, came thick and fast. By Thursday, eight injunctions had been granted and 18 were in the works with another 14 rumored. The BCTF building was closed down twice because of bomb threats. Phones never stopped ringing. Despite intense threats, more than half the administrators joined the strike. Apart from a few ugly incidents — and they were very few — the news from the picket lines told of buoyant spirits and camaraderie.

Communication was difficult. We had hoped to put out a daily *Strike News* bulletin, but produced only one. Events moved too fast. Our major links with one another were the daily hot line bulletins, the telephone and the Envoy electronic message network, which proved invaluable. But we are accustomed to a flow of print and some of us suffered the pangs of information withdrawal.

The solidarity on the picket lines was the most striking feature. Despite the anxious moments, and the information hiatus while negotiations proceeded, and despite the weather, which would have daunted the most hardened, teachers hung in. Some even volunteered for duty in other areas. Parents joined teachers and teachers probably learned more about their colleagues in CUPE in three days walking the lines than they had in years.

And teachers all over reported the public supporting them with hot drinks and cookies, on one occasion even pizza, and encouraging honks on car horns. Most locals held general meetings, and as we moved into the long weekend, support, despite injunctions and some concern that the escalation program was being delayed till Monday, was solid.

The phones were no less busy over that weekend as BCGEU and Solidarity negotiations continued. On Sunday evening, with BCGEU negotiations completed and Solidarity's emissary, Munro, on the wing to Kelowna, there was something like a crowd scene on the upper floor of the BCTF building. Then the word came from Larry Kuehn and the solidarity steering committee that an accord had been reached and that the strike was over.

Well, the strike was over, but things would probably never be the same again.

Teachers, who had never before participated in a major job action, had been the hinge on which a possible general strike had swung. And the hinge had swung like a well oiled deluxe model. Teachers had demonstrated not only determination, but, starting from scratch, an awesome capability for organization.

They had shared in an experience that, for good or ill, will be a benchmark in the history of the BCTF.

They delivered. ○

Suddenly, I had to take a stand

This poignant article, written by a Saanich teacher who prefers to remain anonymous, captures the feelings of many teachers who went on strike as a matter of principle. The article first appeared in the November 25, 1983 issue of *Monday Magazine*, published in Victoria, and is reprinted here with the permission of that publication.

A SAANICH TEACHER

● MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

There's a different feeling in the air as I go into work this morning. Is this really going to be my last day for a while? How long?

After 22 years as an educator, am I actually going to strike, or take part in a political protest, or whatever? I've always considered myself apolitical, having voted, at various times, for every one of the established political parties. Nor have I been a staunch member of the B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF). In fact, for most of the years I've belonged to it, I've resented the fact that I've had to.

But now it's different.

Normal modern management practice calls for employer and employee to confer, deliberate and negotiate when new practices are being considered. It is true that this may lead to compromise; but the outcome is ultimately acceptable to both sides. Thus, when the time comes to implement such programs, there is support from both parties concerned. And it will work.

Bennett has tried it the other way. He has re-written the social contract — not because of restraint but in fact because he wishes to establish a new set of priorities in B.C. — without the necessary prior consultation.

The Premier has told us that we must buy what he's got to sell. I'm not sure I want to do this.

Like everyone else at work, I hope for a settlement. Several times during the day I go out to my car and listen to the news.

The boss calls a meeting and brings us up to date on the situation. We confer. We realize that the crunch is here. Some announce that they are going out. Others remain silent. Will this mean that they're going to come in?

I let the boss know that I probably won't be seeing him tomorrow. He says he understands. I wonder to myself if our previous close relationship — friendship — will be retained after this is over.

All Saanich teachers attend a meeting after school today. The fact that for the first time there appears to be a 100 per cent

turnout is not surprising. Although concern and distress show on the faces of everyone there, the focus is on the effect of our walkout, not on whether or not it will occur.

At home in the evening, I tell my family the news.

"You mean you'll be picketing?" asks my son.

"How embarrassing!" exclaims my daughter.

My wife is angry — seething — not with me but with the government for creating the climate that has allowed this to happen. My stomach is tense and I tend to be edgy. I try to read or watch TV but find I can concentrate only on the news.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

I wake at 4 a.m. with a bitter taste in my mouth. I lie quietly, trying not to disturb my wife and then discover, when it's time to get up, that she too has been awake for ages.

As I drive along the Pat Bay Highway to do my first picket duty, I come to the realization that striking isn't fun, isn't something anyone wants to do. But enough anger and despair will force a person to this end. Is anger and despair by large sections of his productive electorate truly something that the premier wants to foster? Or can he honestly be so insensitive to the feelings he's engendered?

As I picket with my CUPE colleagues at a school where only the principal has turned up, parents begin to arrive with their children. Surprisingly, only one is unpleasant.

By starting time, about a quarter of the students are there. A third of these leave with their parents over the next half hour.

It's quiet on the line. The drivers of the few cars that pass indicate nothing. The cold and monotony is broken by the school principal who brings us coffee. And by a plane flying overhead trailing a sign "PAPCO RIP LEST YE FORGET"; a reference to the air controllers fired by President Reagan. Nice. I wonder if the government paid for the plane.

A school trustee drives by — and smiles. Then the head of our local association visits. It's great to see him. He brings us the news that very few teachers have gone in. This makes us happy and relieved.

Perhaps it is at this point — when we realize that we're 87 per cent solid — that the spirit begins to soar. Together with my

fellow picketers, I feel happier, stronger. I feel even better when a couple of students stop, chat, leave and return with doughnuts for the entire group. If they can understand what this is all about, why can't the men at the top?

I picket from 7:30 to 10 and then I'm off until 1 p.m. I use this break to do something a teacher can never do while on duty; I lunch downtown with a couple of friends. I find it difficult not to discuss events with them. One, sympathetic and supportive, joins in. The other is silent. I assume he disagrees but is too polite to say so. I try to change the subject.

I dash home and nap for an hour. At the dinner table we watch the news, normally a no-no in our family. There's a certain feeling of elation when we learn that nearly 90 per cent of B.C.'s teachers came to the same decision I did today. And it wasn't for more pay, as so many seem to think; it's a political statement against truly retrogressive legislation. If the premier has ears, let him hear.

I attend the rehearsal of the play that I'm in. A fellow actor arrives, announces that he abhors the teacher's strike, and quits the play. The cast is in shock; and puzzled. Nearly 30 people are involved in the play. Only five are teachers.

I am desperately tired when I get home. It's the tiredness that emanates from tension and excitement. I sleep deeply.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

I shop. The reaction is mixed. The lady in the supermarket considers all this "a terrible nuisance" while the girl in the bank congratulates me for taking a stand against the Socreds.

Bennett talks of public support. It occurs to me that most of the public I know oppose him. But not the hardware store set. And that's what counts I guess.

On duty after lunch I talk with fellow picketers about those teachers who have gone to work. Although one such teacher is a good friend of mine, I feel resentment. There will be scars in the staff room.

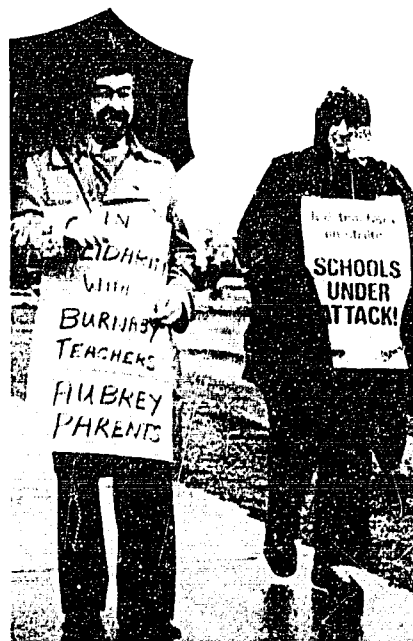
We're getting more waves today from passing motorists. Maybe 25 per cent give us a negative gesture; sometimes very negative.

Several parents talk to us as they wait to collect their child at this school where about five teachers went in. They're upset at the inconvenience but again their anger is directed at Bennett for letting it happen. Interesting. I guess parents know how dedicated most teachers are and realize that our decision was not taken lightly.

An old friend drives by with her husband. They stop. She has a "Strikers Should Be Shot" button on and is very angry. Spittle

spatters the dashboard as they both yell at us. Their mind is set — as mine is too I suppose — so there is no opportunity to reason or to be rational. They didn't return my smile as we parted and I sense that our friendship is over. Is the headache I develop 15 minutes later related to this incident?

My stomach churns when I hear on the news that the premier will stay out of the teacher's dispute as he considers this a matter to be resolved by each school board. He claims it's nothing to do with him. What sanctimonious nonsense! He's provoked it all and now steps back and no doubt gloats over the millions of dollars a day his government is saving in this strike.



One of the pleasant surprises of the strike was the degree of parental support teachers received. Some picket lines, such as this one at Aubrey Elementary School in Burnaby, saw parents walking the lines in support of the teachers of their children.

Just before picket duty ends, I learn that several trustees have paid friendly visits to some of the picketers. This apparent lack of rancour is consoling.

At rehearsal, I'm very glad to see that last night's quitter is back. I thank him for his change of heart. Few people nowadays it seems are big enough to change their mind. Why is the saving of face accomplished by resoluteness instead of by problem solving?

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Today I keep track of passing motorists. After 2½ hours, 60 per cent have made

positive gestures, 25 per cent have not recognized our existence and 15 per cent have been rude.

I'm truly surprised at the 15 per cent. I thought it would be much higher. It's interesting that most of the 15 per cent seem to drive larger, dark coloured cars.

We talk briefly with the principal as he leaves the school. He's unhappy that he had to open and host a charade. He's unhappier still that old friends on the picket line catcalled at him as he went into school this morning. A pity, this divisiveness.

But we learn too that some principals did leave their schools and walk the line. That's good. The position of our 20 principals and head teachers has been very difficult, for as members of the BCTF they are one of us. Trustees, however, see them as management. For three days now they've been forced to balance feelings against duty.

There's a meeting at 3:30 at the Saanich Fair Grounds. Everyone is very "up" but the only firm news is that the rumoured injunction is being heard at this very moment. We're asked to attend another meeting tomorrow at 1 p.m. Coffee and sandwiches are served. As far as I can see, no teacher who went to school today attends this gathering.

The pain of being on strike is not the lost salary or the cold feet. It's not knowing when it all will end — the uncertainty. For a professional person who has always known clearly defined roles, this is what is so hard to cope with.

At dinner and rehearsal tonight, I focus on other topics. I'm angry at having to stay angry for so long. It's a great mood to be in when my daughter's friends arrive to celebrate her birthday.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

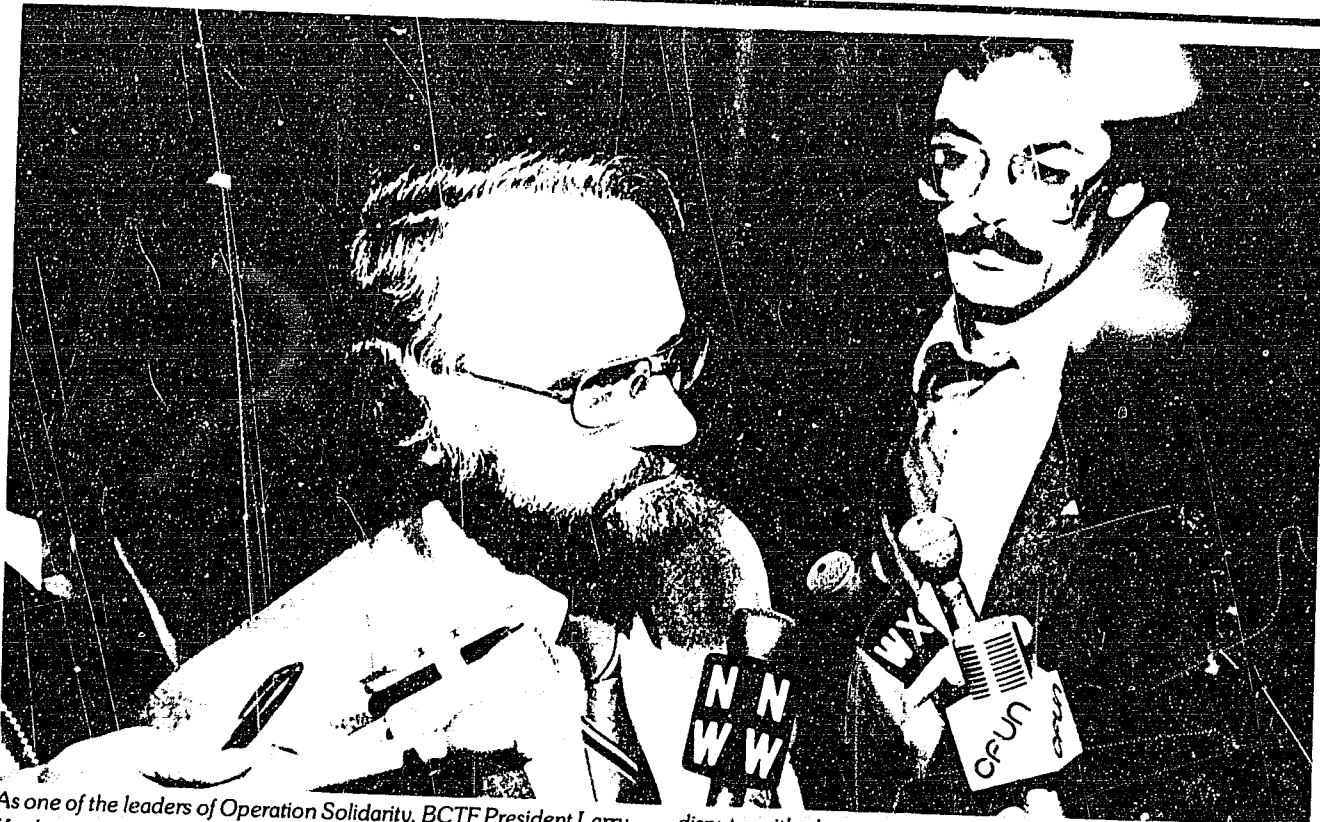
At 1 p.m. all Saanich teachers meet in Sanscha Hall in Sidney. Everyone seems to be there.

There's a mood of apprehension — nervousness perhaps — for we think we know the question we'll be asked. We're not sure of the collective answer. Conversations are more subdued than yesterday. Those that laugh do so more shrilly than is necessary.

The meeting begins. It's long. And private. But by its end, we have voted to return to work on Monday. Relief is tempered by the question of whether or not anything was accomplished. I resolve this in my own mind by determining that my act, our act, was a necessary statement.

And as events transpired on Sunday evening, it was a statement that Premier Bill Bennett, in desperation, was forced to listen to . . . at least with one ear. O

The Role of Operation Solidarity



As one of the leaders of Operation Solidarity, BCTF President Larry Kuehn was always in demand by the media for comments about the

dispute with the government. "Kuehn" became a very familiar name to people in all parts of the province.

The BCTF president played a prominent role in the formation and decisions of Operation Solidarity. Here is his "inside" report of Solidarity's dispute with the government.

LARRY KUEHN

● It was an exciting moment, even for those who have been through labor battles for many years.

The B.C. Federation of Labour's annual convention on December 1 adopted a motion calling for job action by all affiliates of Operation Solidarity — basically the entire labor movement in British Columbia, public-sector and private-sector unions, affiliates and non-affiliates of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

That action was amazing in itself — unprecedented anywhere in North America. But even more amazing — and unlikely from any examination of past experience — is that the event that would set off such action would be the firing or laying off of teachers or other school employees, in contravention of an agreement that ended a program of escalating strikes in November.

Reflection on the motion adopted on

Larry Kuehn is the president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

December 1 leads to higher and higher levels of amazement. The trigger for a massive mobilization and challenge to the government was identified as a group of workers who have consciously over the years held themselves aloof from the labor movement and its techniques of struggle. The motion was not pushed through by the traditional militants as a way of challenging the traditional leadership; rather, it was carried unanimously, with most of the speakers being leaders of the B.C. Fed and its major unions. And it came after a two-week period of disagreement and predictions of demobilization of labor and splits in Solidarity.

One man, above all others, demands credit for this turn of events — Bill Bennett, the premier of British Columbia. Good intentions and effective planning can never match an uncompromising enemy for producing the conditions for militant action.

Bennett deserves much of the credit for the creation of Solidarity. His massive attack on the institutions and values of the liberal democratic welfare state shook large numbers of concerned and active people out of their organizational ghettos. His attack on the rights of labor — with particular but not exclusive emphasis on public-sector unions — created unprecedented conditions encouraging labor unity.

Obviously, the conditions encouraging the creation of a unified social and labor movement did not in themselves ensure that it would happen. Art Kube, as the newly elected president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, played the other major role, placing the only organization that could be central in creating a broad and effective movement of opposition in the position of catalyst of labor unity and coalition of community opposition to the program and techniques of the government.

But the best of intentions of Art Kube or anyone else would have failed to produce a mass movement of opposition in B.C. had not Bill Bennett time and again created the necessity for a united and militant mass opposition.

In July and August the labor movement, through Operation Solidarity, created a series of mass rallies, that were, in effect, brief public-sector general strikes. These produced demonstrations of 25,000 at the legislature in Victoria and 45,000 at Empire Stadium in Vancouver on August 10. These were dismissed by Bennett as being no more significant than the tea party he holds annually on his lawn in Kelowna, emulating his father's populist political tactics.

And he ignored the petition campaign and other political protests organized and carried out by the Solidarity Coalition in September and October. At least publicly, he also dismissed the 60,000 people who

marched around the Social Credit convention at the Hotel Vancouver on October 15, in the most massive symbolic confrontation with government ever staged in British Columbia.

These dismissals of major protests, made concrete by contemptuous passing of legislation with 24-hour sessions of the legislature and the physical dragging of the leader of the opposition from the House, pushed the labor movement into adopting a plan of escalating strike action.

Bill Bennett's actions shook many people out of their organizational ghettos. The result was Operation Solidarity.

If unprecedented levels of political protest were ineffective in changing the course of government policy, perhaps the threat, then the reality of the disruption of service and then of the economy would produce some re-examination by the government and a realization that policy could not just reflect the views of a portion of the society that benefits from high profits from private enterprise, and has no concern or interest in the services and benefits government redistributes to those who are less powerful.

The threat of disruption caused by strikes was again ineffective. And on November 1 the actual strikes began, with the B.C. Government Employees Union withdrawing services except for narrowly defined "essential services." Little wonder was expressed at this action, despite the fact that the BCGEU carried out what was probably the most extensive strike ever by a government employees' union in North America. But the climate was such that this in itself did not seem newsworthy.

When no resolution was reached by November 8, and the next phase of escalation was undertaken, much amazement was expressed. The second phase of escalation involved the education sector — public education teachers and support employees and post-secondary institution em-

ployees. This sector has been the least likely, at both the public school and post-secondary levels, to undertake job action, with teachers at all levels carrying attitudes of being "professional" and thus not inclined to use the withdrawal of service tactics commonly accepted in the labor movement.

Traditional attitudes, in themselves, were an indication that the second stage of escalation would not work. In addition, two other factors were commonly read as indicating that Solidarity's pressure on the government would end with the collapse of the escalation of the strike.

The teacher strike vote had been 60 per cent in favor, less by a great deal than traditional unions would consider necessary to carry out a successful strike. And Jack Heinrich, the minister of education, in the week before the strike, issued heavy threats against teachers. Not only did he make the claim that a teacher strike would be illegal, but he also threatened double jeopardy for teachers. Boards could attempt to fire them, and the minister could remove their teaching certificates, thus destroying their right to teach anywhere in B.C. for the rest of their lives.

November 7 arrived with the appearance that there would be a resolution before the resolve in the education sector was tested. It appeared that a package was being put together that would settle one issue — the destruction of Bill 3 through exemptions. Bill 3 — the Public Restraint Act — was the centrepiece of the government program. It allowed the government to get rid of employees essentially for any reason and on any criteria it wished, and extended those rights to all other public-sector employers in the province. Such extensive power in the hands of public employers would have destroyed the reason for the existence of public-sector unions. They would no longer have had any ability to protect the rights of their members.

Operation Solidarity set the initial price for avoiding escalating public-sector strikes, and a potential "general strike," in the province as the elimination of the effects of Bill 3. The demand was not even that Bill 3 be wiped off the books, but rather that, through negotiations, public-sector unions would be able to preserve the traditional principles of protection through seniority layoff provisions.

It appeared on November 7 that a package had been put together that would have the BCGEU achieve Bill 3 exemptions through negotiation, other public-sector contract provisions would be declared to be acceptable for exemption, and a clause negotiated between North Vancouver teachers and their school board would be approved as an exemption that indicated

that teachers also could negotiate out of Bill 3.

This package was put together with the intervention of a number of people — including Art Kube and Jack Munro from the labor movement; Stephen Kelleher, chairperson of the Labour Relations Board; Ed Peck, the government's compensation stabilization commissioner (who had the legislated job of approving any exemptions from Bill 3); and Jim Matkin, president of the Employers' Council and, in appearance, a representative of the provincial government, whose employ he had recently left.

Neither Kube nor Munro wanted the "general strike" that might eventually be set off if an escalation of the public-sector strikes began, and both were prepared to go to great lengths to ensure that there was a settlement. Munro, despite no direct interest in teachers, was prepared to use all of his influence to ensure that there was a resolution of Bill 3 issues satisfactory to teachers, to make sure that the action did not escalate.

However, late on November 7 everything broke down. The deputy minister of education, Jim Carter, intervened to ensure that an agreement reached in North Vancouver was not ratified by the school board, killing the concrete example that would have shown that teachers could be exempted from the provisions of Bill 3. And no agreement was reached between the government and the BCGEU on provisions that would exempt that union from Bill 3.

Reporters later indicated that the government felt no real pressure to settle because it did not believe there was any danger of escalation. Norman Spector, the government negotiator, told a reporter that the teachers would not carry out a successful strike. And a minister later admitted on the CBC Journal that the government expected that, at most, 50 per cent of teachers would withdraw services.

The government — and many others — had misread teachers. A 60 per cent "yes" vote on the strike issue represented a substantial shift in opinion on the part of teachers. And the heavy campaign of threats by the minister of education had backfired. It made clear to teachers that there was no middle ground — they must choose between supporting their organization, which reflected their interests, and the government, which was attacking them and the service they provide.

Thus, Operation Solidarity's escalating strike action was a success, when close to 90 per cent of teachers and, on the second day, a majority of school principals, joined the action by withdrawing services.

New pressure was now put both on Operation Solidarity and the government.

Operation Solidarity had to define the price of a settlement at a higher level because teachers and others in the education sector were on strike for more than just seniority rights. Even more important to them were education cutbacks and other challenges to social services, democratic rights and human rights.

And the government had miscalculated. The successful education-sector strike meant that a settlement would require more compromises on their part.

witness, based on discussions Spector had with the premier. The one area on which there was not initial agreement was education, although at no time was the making up of the three days' instruction time lost during the strike one of the items up for discussion.

The areas of agreement were read by Kelleher to BCGEU, CUPE, and BCTF representatives. Kelleher's notes, among other areas, indicated that money not spent on salaries during the strike would remain in



President Larry Kuehn's report to the BCTF Representative Assembly in November 1983 was eagerly awaited by the geographical representatives and local association presidents who attended. Kuehn reported to the assembly proudly wearing his Solidarity button.

In the absence of Art Kube, who had become seriously ill, the steering committee of Operation Solidarity, after many hours of debate, adopted a new "bottom line" for a settlement. This included not only a satisfactory resolution of Bill 3 exemptions for all public-sector unions, but also — in an unprecedented move — the maintenance of educational services based on 1983 budgets as the level of comparison. It also said that there had to be a commitment to action on human rights and tenants' rights, and some process of meaningful consultation on other issues of concern to the broad coalition that made up Solidarity.

The Operation Solidarity steering committee also delegated Jack Munro and Mike Kramer, secretary-treasurer of the B.C. Federation of Labour, to find some arena for negotiation.

Munro, through contacts with Jim Matkin, managed to set up a meeting with Norman Spector, the premier's deputy minister, on November 11, in an attempt to find a resolution. Several items were put forward as the basis for settlement. Spector listed the items for Munro and Kramer, in the presence of Stephen Kelleher as a

the education system, but that the money would not be used to pay for salary increases or to create new jobs. CUPE and BCTF representatives made it clear that this meant that the money could be used to retain people who were already working in the system in the 1984 budget year. There was no disagreement with this position.

These elements of agreement on issues were reached by the evening of November 11. On November 13, in mid-afternoon, the government and the BCGEU reached agreement on all of the provisions of a contract, including a Bill 3 exemption clause that provided seniority throughout government service and gave nearly as much protection as government employees had had before the government began its legislative onslaught on July 7.

At that point, as agreed beforehand by the steering committee of Operation Solidarity, Jack Munro headed off by government jet to Kelowna to put the final public touches on an agreement that all of the steering committee thought had been finalized at the Labour Relations Board over the weekend. The purpose of going to Kelowna was to have the premier an-

nounce publicly what had been agreed to: that is, the terms on which the escalating strike action would be called off and everyone who was already out called on to return to work.

Munro called Mike Kramer on the evening of November 13 and relayed a message to the Operation Solidarity steering committee that the premier refused to describe the agreement publicly that night because of pressure from the cabinet growing out of publicity in the November 12 Vancouver Sun about the Operation Solidarity demands. However, Munro indicated that the agreement reached beforehand was intact on the other points.

The Operation Solidarity steering committee, on the recommendation of both Munro and Kube (from his sick bed), agreed unanimously at about 22:30 on the evening of November 13 that the escalating strike action should be called off.

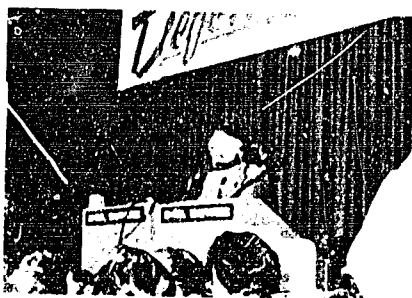
Much criticism has fallen on those who made this decision, and particularly on Jack Munro, for ending what had been a successful action before it came to a completely satisfactory conclusion. The motivations for calling off the action are complex and varied, but can best be characterized by saying that all involved thought that they were acting "responsibly" both for the labor movement and for the society.

There is no doubt that the next stage of escalation could have been carried out successfully. The municipal and transportation workers would have walked off the job without the many questions about the education sector. But then the dilemma would have become one of what would end the strike short of the destruction of either the government or the labor movement. The last possible moment of accommodation had been arrived at, when both the labor movement and government could compromise and agree to live together in an uneasy truce. And that opportunity was grabbed by the leadership of the labor movement.

The choice of backing off and choosing to live to fight another day was not made without repercussions. The community groups involved in the Solidarity Coalition felt that the labor movement had settled too cheaply. They had called off the strike without having forced the government to back off on their destruction of human rights, tenants' rights, rights of women, and concepts of local control and planning.

And some teachers were disappointed that not all their demands had been met. The agreement on education would only postpone the cuts the government planned to make, creating major disruptions that might increase their political cost, but not guaranteeing that they would never take place, as teachers had legitimately hoped.

This agreement between the government and the labor movement — with some successes for labor, but without total success — appeared to have the effect of demobilizing direct action by the labor movement. Operation Solidarity frequently expressed support for broader social issues and a willingness of labor to be involved in the struggle for those issues, but not through job action.



Larry Kuehn's report to the 1983 Annual General Meeting was, as usual, the subject of much media attention. His report to the 1984 AGM in March will undoubtedly receive even more media attention as a result of the November 1983 teachers' strike.

But, as happened at each stage of the evolution of Solidarity, Bill Bennett intervened to ensure that the movement continues as a militant and significant factor in B.C. society.

Most of the labor leaders involved in Solidarity assumed that Bill Bennett shared with them a desire to have a truce in the social warfare that has characterized B.C. since July 7. But it appears that Bennett's desire for a truce was much more limited. A major concern may have been that his dream of a Grey Cup game in his showpiece stadium be carried out without disruption.

The one area of disagreement and conflict in the so-called "Kelowna Accord" between Bennett and Munro concerned education. The position of the government was that it had agreed that the strike "savings" on salaries would remain in the school system if teachers made up in some way the three days' instruction missed during the strike — despite the fact that there was no mention of this pre-condition in the negotiations that took place at the Labour Relations Board. Operation Solidarity and the BCTF disagreed, saying that the agreement was that the money would stay in the school system, but without the pre-condition that it be spent to pay for the making up of three days' instructional time. Operation Solidarity understood — and therefore agreed to call off the escalating job action — that the money could be used to postpone the layoffs of teachers scheduled to occur in mid-school year.

But the government's final position on

what it had agreed and would agree to was reserved for two weeks. The minister of education met with representatives of teachers and of school trustees and said that the decision would be made later. In the meantime the question had been examined by the school superintendents, as well as the school trustees and teachers. There was agreement of all parties directly involved in the education system that making up three days was impractical and that money saved during the strike should be used to avoid layoffs. Eventually the minister of education agreed publicly that it was impractical to demand that three days be made up by teachers.

The minister announced to the school trustees that a final decision would be made on Friday, November 25. But the cabinet meeting for that day was cancelled — the cabinet was evidently too interested in football. The Grey Cup in the new money-losing covered stadium intervened again.

Finally, on November 30, the minister of education announced what the cabinet had decided. The money for the education system could not be used to save jobs and educational service to children. It must be used to make up the three days of instructional time, regardless of what had been agreed to beforehand and regardless of what everyone who works in and with the school system thought practical.

The Grey Cup was over. The financial community in New York, who set the province's credit rating, did not even know that the threat of a general strike was very real and averted only by hours. And the premier again miscalculated and assumed that the labor movement would not stand behind its new-found friends, the teachers.

But who would guess that, as a representative of teachers, I would receive three standing ovations at a convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour, precisely because teachers stood up and took action when no one expected them to, and thus gave new strength to the labor movement as a whole? And who would have calculated that the leadership of the B.C. Federation of Labour would have received a rebuke from the convention for not putting forward a militant enough program for the future of Operation Solidarity?

And who would be so crazy as to assume that the provincial government would throw a challenge to the labor movement in B.C. in the midst of a convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour?

And if this dispute does not explode, who can doubt that the Bennett government will soon take a new action demanding a militant response?

But who would believe much of what happens in the name of government in British Columbia?○

Where are our leaders?

The political and economic leaders of our country are dangerously complacent. In our own province, the paralysis of leadership in education threatens to reduce the school system to a level of mediocrity.

R. B. WILLIAMS

●We are facing a paralysis of leadership in this country that could make Canada an economic hinterland.

The paralysis of our leaders responsible for education in this province threatens to reduce our education system to a level of mediocrity.

Canada desperately needs leaders with a vision. Canadians need to reaffirm their confidence in the value of education.

The Canadian people, and particularly our leadership, have lost the initiative to excel, to become the vanguard of progress in the world. Instead, we appear to accept passively current conditions, content with the belief that somehow things will get better by actions taken by other people in other countries. Canadians seem content with unimaginative "solutions" to our economic woes.

The political and economic leadership of this country is dangerously complacent and myopic. We have been told that if only inflation or interest rates were brought down, we would be on the quick road to recovery. The recession has managed to reduce both, yet we are far from an economic recovery.

We are told continually that Canada is doing well in comparison with other countries. In fact Canada is doing worse. Statistics Canada indicates that since mid-1981 we have had the steepest production

decline of all major industrialized countries. *Euromoney*, a reputable economic publication, annually rates the performance of countries according to standard economic measures. It rates Canada 35th on the average between 1974 and 1981. In 1982 Canada had dropped to 40th for the first three quarters.

During the past eight years, Canada has ranked 57th in the world in economic growth, with the most substantial decline having occurred in the past three years. The European Management Forum in Geneva annually rates all countries in terms of competitiveness of the economy. Ten factors, such as efficiency, state intervention and political stability are examined. More than 700 corporate executives and economists in 22 industrial countries were surveyed. Canada is not even listed in the top 20 nations this year.

There can be no doubt that Canada is facing far more serious economic problems than our leaders would have us believe. Canada was once considered to be a world leader in terms of economic growth, productivity, quality of life indicators, and technological development. A number of leaders around the world now consider Canada to be a primary resource supplier, a "fringe nation."

In education, Canada was once recognized as a world leader. There are clear indications in the past few years that our commitment to and belief in education has declined. In contrast, other major industrialized nations have made education a national priority.

Why has this happened? Perhaps it can be explained in sociological terms by our "industrial model" with its emphasis on high production/consumption, immediate returns and unrestricted growth. This was appropriate for the growing 1950s and 1960s, but is not particularly adaptable to the present era of restricted growth and economic interdependence. In comparison, Western European and Japanese industrial models contain many similar features but they also emphasize *planned* economic growth, national priorities, and concern for the quality of life.

When our industrial model was flourishing during the 1950s and 1960s it is not surprising that education received the necessary support. From the late 1970s until the present, a substantial change in world economic conditions rendered our industrial model dysfunctional. This has been made abundantly clear by our inability to compete with other countries in the development of manufacturing industries and specifically the making of quality products and improving labor productivity.

As our economy soured, government leaders reduced commitments to social services such as education. As a result, educators, like Alice in Wonderland, are now running faster and faster with cost-cutting measures while trying to preserve the quality of educational services.

Is it mere coincidence that our decreasing commitment to high technology industry parallels a decreasing number of students pursuing advanced studies in mathematics, sciences and technologies? In comparison

Dr. R. B. Williams is the principal of Sutherland Secondary School in North Vancouver.

with other countries, our national and provincial governments have done little to promote science and technology in the private sector or in post-secondary institutions. Competition among industrialized countries depends, to a large degree, on high technology. The countries with the greatest commitments in this area appear to be most successful. It is not surprising, then, that education becomes a high priority in these countries.

What has been the role of the federal government in education? Because education is a provincial responsibility, the federal government has not taken a direct role. Yet, in other areas that have been provincial responsibilities, such as resources and certain areas of health, the federal government has seen fit to exert its influence.

Similarly in the United States, education is a state responsibility, but the federal government has had a very direct influence on education finance and standards. President Reagan fulfilled his promise to encourage educational quality throughout the United States through the Department of Education. As the *New York Times* reported, although the Reagan administration had originally promised substantial reductions in financial support for education, these reductions have not taken place. Many of the state governments, such as California, are facing legislative and public pressure to restore education financing.

What have been the developments in British Columbia? There is little evidence that education is a priority in this province. There is much evidence to the contrary. According to BCSTA figures, per capita expenditures, and expenditures for education as a proportion of the provincial budget have decreased substantially. Compared with other provinces, British Columbia has one of the lowest financial commitments to education in Canada.

Not only does education in this province appear to have a low priority, but educators, in comparison with educators in Western European countries and Japan, lack government and public confidence. How can we expect to educate students with an increased respect for, and commitment to, learning when their teachers are the object of constant criticism? In contrast, in the United States, representatives from government, education and media recently met to discuss strategies to promote education in that country.

Our leaders in government and the media appear to be confused about the purposes of education versus the products of our education system. Criticism of our school system and higher education has focussed on a number of themes: graduates don't have sufficient literacy and job skills; schools don't have enough discipline; stu-

dents are not generally prepared for adult life. These criticisms are not substantiated by convincing evidence. The causes for the deficiencies, if they do exist, may rest with the policy-makers and society in general.

The mandate for our school system, as proposed by legislators and supported by the public in the past three decades, was mass education. With a booming economy, the need for large numbers of educated workers was a priority. Coupled with this was the phenomenon of large numbers of women entering the work force. Our public school system was expected to educate all young people, provide a custodial service for children and delay entry of youngsters into the labor market.

Given the mandate for mass education and its related purposes, our school system and educators have done a magnificent job. Today the high school dropout rate is minimal; a vast majority of students graduate with competency in reading, writing and computation; and a large number of students continue with further training or education.

APPROPRIATE MANDATE?

The public schools have also assumed many of the responsibilities of the family in such areas as basic discipline, family life education, health and nutrition, and socialization skills. If government leaders and the public have concerns about the quality of our graduates, they should examine whether the mandate for our public schools is still appropriate.

The essential point is that the responsibility for determining the purposes and priorities in our education system rests with our leaders in government at the provincial and local level. Educators have a role to play by developing and advancing their notions of what kind of a mandate for education is necessary now.

There is a need for a different kind of educated citizen in today's complex world. At a time when individuals may be expected to train for different work careers several times within a life span, it is imperative that schooling be preparation for a complex life, not just the acquisition of specific job skills. Students need to learn problem-solving and synthesis skills in real-life situations.

How to provide these real-life situations requires some creative thought. Perhaps the idea of a period of time of compulsory national or community service for young people, as practised in other countries, has merit. We need to give mathematics, the sciences, humanities and citizenship more emphasis. The graduate with a broad general education and mastery of problem-solving skills is of more value to society than

the student who has only specialized job skills.

More sophisticated training required in highly technical jobs could be provided by employers in business and industry. Our leaders responsible for education need to extend the responsibility for training and job skills to the private sector. In countries that are acknowledged as leaders in technological development, industry takes a major role in the training of workers, with government incentives and union support.

Educators in the province must be prepared to examine the mandate for education, the present structure of schools and teaching practices. The BCTF could demonstrate its leadership by proposing a "blueprint" for education for the 1980s. Continuing debate and confrontation on the issues of finance and salaries alone will gain little public support.

If our present education system is inadequate — and there is little evidence to support this claim — our leaders in government must take responsibility for not redefining the mandate of education while financial support is being withdrawn.

If the products of our education system don't meet the expectations of society, our leaders in government must take responsibility for not establishing education as a priority.

If Canada and British Columbia cannot compete in the business and technological world with other countries, our leaders must take responsibility for not promoting and supporting the development of technological industries.

If financing mass education has become impossible, our leaders in government and education must take responsibility for not investigating new creative methods for financing, including co-operative arrangements with business and industry.

If the current confrontation between educators and the government has failed to rally public support, leaders in our profession must take responsibility for focussing attention strictly on the issues of finance and salaries rather than the larger issues of the purposes and structure of our education system.

If the importance of education has declined in this province, our leaders in government, business and the teaching profession must take responsibility for not becoming more vocal advocates.

At this point in our history, Canadians are facing critical choices. Will Canada revert to being a country of "drawers of water and hewers of wood"? Will our governments "nickel and dime" education into mediocrity? Or will our leaders place education as a priority on the agenda for our economic recovery?○

The New Westminster Strike of 1921

BCTF members have always refused to be pushed around. Here is an account of the New Westminster teachers' strike 60 years ago.

STEVE NORMAN

● During the lead up to the BCTF three-day strike in November 1983, several references were made to earlier teacher strikes. More correctly, the references were to the lack of teacher strikes over the 66-year history of the federation.

The 1919 Victoria and 1921 New Westminster strikes were the first and second strikes by the BCTF and, as we all know, any strike has a great number of facets and issues.

Living in New Westminster and having ready access to archives and other materials, I decided to look a little more closely at the 1921 strike.

There were several major issues in the conflict:

- recognition of the local association as the agent for teachers;
- recognition of a salary grid that had incremental or experience increases;
- recognition of the then voluntary arbitration process as a means to resolve disputes;
- the difference between teacher salaries in New Westminster and those in surrounding districts.

All of these issues had been festering for some time between the board and the teachers so that, when the strike threat was given, it came as a shock to the residents of New Westminster.

Steve Norman is an assistant director of the BCTF's Bargaining Division.

The provincial government had only a short time before — partly because of the Victoria strike — legislated a process whereby the boards and teachers could agree to third-party arbitration. This legislation had not been used when the New Westminster problems developed, but did figure prominently in the resolution of the issues.

The turmoil boiled over on Thursday, January 27, 1921. The headline in *The British Columbian* read, "School Board Sets Salaries." R. H. Gray, secretary for the trustees, portrayed the issue as one in which the board had set salaries for each teacher, which collectively amounted to increases totalling \$13,285 and that teachers had asked for increases totalling over \$20,000.

W. T. Plaxton, secretary of the New Westminster Teachers' Association, was informed that any individual teacher could secure information at the office regarding his or her salary. It was recognized that salary increases from the schedule of the year before contained certain automatic increases (increments), totalling approximately \$8,000. This had been agreed between the board and the teachers' association.

Press reports mentioned that the decision of the board was final, and there was no intention to carry out further negotiations.

The teachers, knowing that February 15, the final date for school board budget

setting, was fast approaching, tried to convene a meeting with the board to discuss the salary position, but nothing happened. On Saturday, February 12 an ultimatum was sent by the teachers' association to the board: "After full and calm deliberation, the teachers have decided that unless the School Board consents to meet the executive and arrange a salary schedule mutually satisfactory to both parties, the teachers will not be in school on Monday."¹

This decision was supported by the 86 teachers, of whom 76 were members of the New Westminster Teachers' Association.

The teachers claimed their salaries were far below the standards set by other B.C. districts.

On Monday, February 14 the strike went into effect. All schools, except the T. J. Trapp Technical School, were closed. The reason Trapp Tech was exempted was that the teachers at the school had entered into an agreement in the summer that was still in force through the summer of 1921.

The reports in the *Columbian* indicated that only two teachers showed up for work in the remaining schools. The principals were, however, on hand to marshal the pupils and advise them to return home on the first strike day, but they were not in the schools for the remainder of the week.

One report said the pupils regarded the coincidence of the strike and a nice fall of snow as a direct dispensation of providence. Another report indicated that high school students formed a parade and went downtown announcing they were out on a sympathetic strike. They also went to Trapp Tech and "serenaded" that institution under the mistaken impression the teachers were "bucking" the strike.

T. J. Trapp, school board chairperson and member of the board for 30 years, was quoted in the newspaper as saying that trustees had "gone the limit." "We have gone out of our way to be liberal," he said.⁴ He added that he felt many teachers were not in sympathy with the strike, but had gone out only because of loyalty to their organization. He said that salaries would have been satisfactory to the majority, but for the "professional salary booster"⁵ employed by the B.C. Teachers' Federation. The salary booster referred to was Harry Charlesworth, the BCTF's first general secretary who had been appointed just a year earlier. The board also took the step of publishing the district list of teachers by school showing their monthly salaries.

The teachers' representative, W. T. Plaxton, pointed out that the issues for teachers were that the school board had met with a specially appointed teachers' salary committee, which had drawn up a salary schedule that was endorsed unanimously by the teachers' association. The board received

the subcommittee report, heard from the teachers, and drew up a salary schedule on January 21, entirely ignoring the requests of the teachers. Plaxton requested a copy of the salary schedule adopted by the board but his request was refused. The teachers requested that the board reopen negotiation,⁵ but they were refused. The teachers' letter to the board stated that, if the board refused to reopen negotiations, the association would ask the board to submit to arbitration on the matter. The teachers quoted the recent 1919 amendment to the Public Schools Act allowing for such a procedure.

The city council of the day entered the fray by offering its services through the mayor, J. J. Johnson, acting as intermediary in the dispute. The school board met on Monday afternoon in a hastily called meeting and decided not to accept the mayor's offer, and issued an ultimatum stating that, if the teachers returned to work by Thursday morning, the board would ask the city council to conduct a referendum to determine if the ratepayers wanted to pay the higher salaries. The board added that if teachers refused to return to work by Thursday, they would be breaking provincial law, their jobs would be declared vacant, and the board would seek replacements.

The *Columbian* reported the board's actions unsympathetically, and referred to the board's habit of meeting behind locked doors as "Star Chamber sessions." It was reported also that only one trustee, Sami Howell, opposed the directions of the board; he had moved to meet with the teachers, but received no seconder. The board sent out a letter to each teacher advising the teachers of the board's decisions.

When G. S. Ford, president of the teachers' association, was asked what the teachers would do with the board letter, he stated, "They will tear it up. The board cannot carry out its threat."⁶ He also said the teachers were organized across the Dominion and it would be impossible to get "teachers to fill our places." He added a comment to the effect that if the board hopes to starve us out, we can last six months.

Telegrams of support were reprinted in the *Columbian* from Victoria Teachers' Association and the Vancouver Teachers' Association.

It is interesting that whenever the board referred to the teachers' group, it referred to the teachers' institute, while the teachers referred to their teachers' association. This difference seems to stem from the original formation by boards and the provincial department of education of "institutes" and of the "associations" by teachers.

City council debated the referendum issue when it received the reply from the board refusing the offer of mediation. The mayor suggested that if the school board had called in the council and other bodies, such as the Kiwanis, the crisis could have been averted. He openly regretted the board's position.

On Wednesday, the board received a petition signed by 50 citizens, many of whom were prominent in business, requesting that a group of three from each side sit down to a discussion. The editorial in Wednesday's *Columbian* stated very clearly that the main issue of the strike was the recognition of the teachers' association, not the salary question as the board had stated. The editorial then urged citizens to write or telephone the board to request it meet with the teachers.

In the same issue of the newspaper was a comment from the Department of Education. Minister of Education Dr. McLean stated that no action would be taken by the provincial government until an official notification and request was made to him by the New Westminster board.

On Thursday the teachers did not go back to work and public opinion was becoming more hostile toward the board's position. An editorial in the newspaper stated, "To bar the round table conference to the teachers' association is to slam and bar the door to any compromise."⁷ It was also reported that two teachers had returned to their school on Thursday. The report says that no students showed up and the superintendent instructed the two to close their classes.

On Thursday public pressure again built, as the Parent Teacher Association called a meeting and invited interested citizens to discuss the situation at the city hall.

An interesting sidelight occurred at the regular Thursday meeting of the board; the trustees ordered that each school should be equipped with a fire extinguisher. The main point in the argument was reported to have been the savings in insurance premiums.

On Friday, February 18 the deadlock was broken. The board agreed to meet the teachers to find a solution that would allow the schools to reopen. The meeting suggested by the board would have three teacher association representatives, three ratepayers appointed by the president of the Board of Trade, and all of the trustees.

A telegram from the Alberta Teachers' Alliance was read at the special Saturday meeting in which the ATA president said, "No members will accept positions with your board."⁸ This surprised the trustees; they stated they hadn't considered advertising in Alberta.

On Saturday, February 19 a basis for settlement was reached. The board agreed

to recognize the teachers' association and attempt to negotiate salaries. Failing this they would go to arbitration. The school board would retain the right to dismiss a teacher for cause, while recognizing that the teachers' association would have the right to hearing before the board, but a strike or lock out would be a last resort, and only after 30 days' notice.

It was decided, as well, that no punitive action would be taken against any striking teacher. Teachers would not be compelled to belong to the association, but all salaries would be arrived at by negotiation with association representatives. The board also suggested that 15 minutes be added to remaining school days to make up for the lost time. The newspaper reported that the gathering broke up in a friendly attitude with the singing of the national anthem.

The school board's budget had been passed by the February 15 deadline. When the arbitration board brought in its decision, it awarded substantial salary increases. The provincial government then allowed the council of New Westminster to resort to a money by-law to raise the supplementary funds necessary to pay this award. The referendum failed to receive the necessary majority to pass. The school board then refused to include the award in the next year's budget. This provoked a new crisis, when all but three members of the teaching force of New Westminster presented their resignations to take effect if they didn't receive the award. The three who did not were the principal and vice-principal of Trapp Technical, and the daughter of Mrs. Gilley, a board member.

This situation was averted when the trustee elections returned a board agreeable to the teachers' demands. Five of the seven trustees were replaced by those elections. The two incumbents elected (Howell and Gray) were both sympathetic to the teachers' issues.

Salaries of teachers were raised by the new board by an amount totalling \$21,271 in the next budget, an increase of about 11 per cent.

During the strike, donations were received by the teachers from associations around the province. This fund totalled \$1,300, according to E. H. Lock in 1954.* Because much of the fund was not needed, it was donated to the BCTF and eventually became the nucleus of the Reserve Fund, a fund that only recently, and after much debate, became available as a strike fund. O

*E. H. Lock was a high school teacher in New Westminster who participated in the strike. A truly outstanding teacher, he served as president of the BCTF in 1925-26.

References and five appendices available on request.

New Books...

GRACE E. FUNK

Opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the reviewers, and not necessarily those of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the editor or the new books editor. Reviews are edited for clarity and length.

Addresses are given for publishers not listed in Books in Print, Canadian Publishers' Directory, or Books from British Columbia.



ACROSS THE DESK — has come the ninth edition of *Books from British Columbia 1983/84*, issued by the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia (with the assistance of the Canada Council, the Department of Communications and the B.C. Cultural Fund).

ABPBC is a trade association that serves its members with a newsletter and seminars. It maintains in Vancouver a permanent viewing collection of all titles by its members and by many non-members as well — a boon to book-conscious British Columbians able to get to 1622 West 7th Avenue.

The catalogue begins with a page-length statement on book publishing in British Columbia — only 20 years old, and growing. B.C. publishers include the "country's leading drama publisher," and "literary houses" (24 new "Poetry" titles and 11 "Fiction"), also "Canada's foremost publisher of legal self-help" (two titles new under "Law").

Thirty-three of the catalogue pages describe the 214 new titles, giving full bibliographic information, pagination, size, illustrations, rights, and an annotation. Almost all the books are pictured (b&w) for added impact. The books are organized under an impressive 27 headings, of which "History" has 32 titles, including Hilda Neatby's *So much to do, so little time*, which is not quite precisely history. It could equally well be grouped with the single title listed under "Philosophy and Religion." "Sports and Recreation," surprisingly, includes only seven titles, but when "Travel and Adventure" are added, the total becomes 17.

Despite considerable support from federal and provincial governments, B.C. publishers are not laughing this year — only one title under "Humor" — nor are they singing — only one title in the entire catalogue under "Music." "Education and Reference" is hardly that; the list is *Editing*

Your Newsletter (any newsletter), *The Original Student Calendar* (an engagement book) and *Is Anyone Listening?* (a teachers' handbook).

Many of the titles in the catalogue have been referred to in these columns; currently on the desk are 17 of the new titles. *Inside Job: essays on the New Work Writing* (Tom Wayman, Harbour) is a provocative piece of literary criticism that says, in effect, that most Canadian literature is irrelevant to most Canadians — who work for a living. As if in proof, under it in the pile lies *Trail of Iron* (Bill McKee and George Klassen, Douglas and McIntyre), a detailed account of the building of the CPR, and its influence on immigration and settlement, on industry and tourism, on every aspect of Canadian life and labor. The book is extensively illustrated, chiefly with photographs of workers.

Harbour Publishing's two plays, *Talking Dirty*, by Sherman Snukal, and *Last Call*, by Morris Panych, are undoubtedly Canadian literature. One is some Sunday interaction in Kitsilano; the other is two survivors of a nuclear war.

Talonbooks continue to contribute to the body of Canadian literature, relevant or otherwise, with *Saga of the Wet Hens*, a play by Jovette Marchessault translated from the French by Linda Gaboriau. Laure Conan, Germaine Guevremont, Gabrielle Roy and Ann Hebert are presumed to meet, somewhere beyond, and perform six tableaux "for all women everywhere."

Mary Meigs has produced a novel(?), *The Medusa Head*, about the relationships, true and false, among three women. Immigrant writer Bill Scherbrucker, born and brought up in Kenya, has written *Chameleon and other stories* about his particular Kenya, then and now. Robin Blaser's earnest book of poetry is called *Syntax*, but seems a little lacking in it. And Bill Bissett's latest collection, *Seagull on Yonge Street*,

lacks syntax and spelling and capitalization and other simple necessities, but apparently manages to be Canadian poetry. None of these books, I agree, seems to have much to do with the life I lead.

Douglas and McIntyre continue their strong history list with *North West Company*, by Marjorie Campbell (c. 1957), one of a number of reprints included in the catalogue. Gray's Publishing, which prints wildflower books, now has added *Wildflowers of the Yukon and Northwestern Canada including adjacent Alaska*, by John G. Trelawny. The flowers are arranged by plant families; each species is identified by a color photograph, half a column of description, range and habitat.

Of the 21 children's books listed in the catalogue, five of Douglas and McIntyre's Groundwood Books are here. Most Canadian children's books come in good quality paperbacks now. *The Young Collector* (John Hearne) seriously considers everything from shells to spark-plugs. *Simon Jesse* (Stan Dragland) is a compassionate boy who is drawn into a fantasy land to lead some unusual horned rats out of an underground exile. B.C. author Heather

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Kellerhals-Stewart has also written a fantasy, called *Stuck fast in yesterday*. Both books are entertaining reading, but both seem somehow lacking in basic motivation, or real plot conflict.

In hard cover *Zoom at Sea*, by Tim Wynn-Jones, illustrated by Ken Nutt, is pure picture-book magic. No logic, no explanations, just delight. *Wheels for Walking* by Sandra Richmond is a chilling contrast — reality at its most bitter as a healthy young woman must accept life as a quadruplegic. Press Porcupine adds to cat-lovers' shelf with *The Cat in the Cathedral* by Bernadette Renaud, translated from the French. It is a gentle tale by an award-winning author about a lonely organist.

The 812 titles in the backlist are arranged under the same headings. They are given title, author, publisher code and price. The user is referred to the previous eight editions of the catalogue. Following the backlist are author, title and publisher indices, and ordering information. All together, *Books from British Columbia* is a very usable guide to books and book publishing in British Columbia.

Not all British Columbia books appear in the catalogue, however. *Northern Man, the victor*, by Jim Martin was recently published by Hancock House, which is certainly a

publishing presence in B.C. Jim Martin tells his own story of his life as a trapper, a crack rifle shot and a bush pilot in the Northwest Territories. Paul St. Pierre's *Smith and other Events: tales of the Chilcotin* is, regrettably, published by Doubleday in Toronto. If you know Smith, and the Chilcotin, reach quickly for this best of the tales. If you don't, reach faster and get acquainted with one of Canada's great story tellers.

B. J. Bond is the pen name of two British Columbia teachers. They have written *Goodbye, Carleton High* (Scholastic) about a young man with a reading disability and a poor self-image for which he tries to compensate with practical jokes. Other Canadian children's books not in the catalogue have come from a variety of publishers. Seal Books has printed *Journey through a Shadow*, by Jaylene Butchart, winner of the Young Canadian Writers Award (for writers under 18 years of age). The ordinary trials of growing up for Jamie Brock are compounded by the sudden death of his parents, a new school, and a gang of bullies.

Kids Can Press continues its bilingual series with *Let's Go! Allons-y!* (Lesley Fairfield), full of places to go and the words that go with them. Picture books on its fall list are *Puddleman* (Ted Staunton) and *A Difficult*

Day (Eugenie Fernandes), about the difficulties of being a small child even with a loving mother. Both of these will make great read-alouds in the kindergarten.

A Dangerous Game, by Raymond Bradbury, is an ephemeral holiday mystery, alternating sleuthing and swimming. Another of many folktales is *The Wicked Fairy-Wife*, retold from the French by Mary Alice Downie, with charming, rather rustic illustrations by Kim Price.

Folk tales, or folk art, *Cat's Cradle, Owl's Eyes: a book of string games* (Camilla Gryski) is a bit of both, and good fun besides. In many folk tales, the animals talk, but if Jennie walks a telepathic dog called Sam, *Could Dracula Live in Woodford?* (Mary Howarth). Read one and see. ○

BOOKS RECEIVED

Butler, Lenora F. *Releasing children from depression*. Toronto, OISE Press, 1980. 56 pp. paper \$6.50 0-7744-0216-4 (Profiles in practical education 12). Teacher Mediated Intervention to improve the low self-esteem of lonely, unhappy children.

Gatt-Fly. *Ah hah! A new approach to popular education*. Toronto, Between the Lines, 1983. 112 pp. paper \$16.95 0-919946-36-4. Adult education seminars to increase understanding of economic interaction and social justice.

Kitcher, Philip. *Abusing science: the case against creationism*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1983. 213 pp. paper \$6.95 0-262-61037-x. "A marvelously lucid summary of the evidence for evolution and the overwhelming case against its enemies . . . valuable . . . fun to read." Written by a philosopher of science.

DISCIPLINE

Altmann, Hal. *The teacher and the trouble-maker* by Hal Altmann and Kay Grose. Calgary, Detselig, 1982. 95 pp., paper, \$9.95. 0-920490-24-7.

In their introduction Altmann and Grose undertake to "assist the teacher in maintaining discipline by providing a fresh approach to a very old problem in education." I'm sorry to say I don't think they have fully succeeded. I really am sorry, because with my first quick glance through the book I thought I saw more than turned out to be there. I commend the authors for their good intentions and for the amount of work that has obviously gone into the book, but I wonder if it was worth it.

The introduction also establishes the theoretical assumptions that underlie the authors' plea for a humanistic approach to

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discipline: "There is a need for classroom discipline" that "should be affirmative" and to which "attitudes are the key." Certainly nobody could quarrel with those assumptions, or with the brief explanations that elaborate them. This promising beginning, however, is followed by some 40 pages of what could be called theoretical material, somewhat reminiscent of an undergraduate term paper. These pages tell us nothing that is really new and seem to be of little practical assistance to classroom teachers. Three sections labelled "Historical Background," "Contemporary Approaches," and "Review of the Literature" draw heavily on research studies, but of the 94 items in the list of references only one bears a date more recent than 1980.

The best of the book comes near the end. Not that there is anything new here either, but there are some things that bear repeating. The section labelled "Orientation Toward Action" provides a brief restatement of the rationale for a humanistic approach to discipline and gives a number of useful strategies for classroom management growing out of that approach. The real nugget comes in the "Conclusion": "... practical suggestions in the form of 15 rules for the classroom teacher." Here at last, particularly in the authors' comments on the rules, we seem to hear the authentic voice of a real, live teacher drawing on a wealth of real classroom experience. The advice given here is excellent. I thought so when I first heard it (probably at Normal School some 35 years ago) and I still think so. I doubt that it can be repeated too often.

Extra features of the book are a generous sprinkling of attractive line drawings by Loneta Siemens, and a set of nine workshop ideas, drawn from various sources, that might be worth trying as discussion starters at a ProD day.

I have one more quibble about the book — without working too hard at it I found 60 or more errors in diction, grammar, spelling and punctuation. (Please! The plural of *curriculum* is not *curricula* but *curricula*.) Surely, if the book was thought to be worth publishing in the first place, someone among all those involved could have found those errors before I did.

—Don Levey, Armstrong

EDUCATION AS DRAMA

Courtney, Richard. *Re-Play, Studies of Human Drama in Education*. Toronto, OISE Press, 1982. 224 pp., paper, \$24.50. ISBN 0-7744-0248-2.

What will be the next major shift in educational practice? Given that schooling as a vital public institution will be adequately funded and that impetus for change will occur both from within and from without the school system, what will the new change in teaching/learning be like?

A strong case can be made for a future in

which drama, newly defined and applied to the classroom, will become the central tool to liberate education and open vast potentials for learning. This is the case made by Richard Courtney, a man who came to Canada from England in the 1960s, taught educational drama at the University of Victoria, the University of Calgary and now at the prestigious Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Now, with almost a dozen of his books published, countless undergraduate and graduate students working under his inspiration, his central concepts continue to be articulated, debated, published, and — more and more — broadly implemented in the classroom.

In the late sixties Courtney published his *Play, Drama and Thought*, subtitled *the intellectual background to drama in education*, the first of his "global" works that seek to provide the theoretical rationale for drama as "the centre of modern creative education: all arts spring from it and all scientific methods evolve through it." This book marshalled all sorts of information from educational thought, psychology, play theory, sociology, history and others to support the notion that "creative imagination" is the key to humans as developing entities and is "essentially dramatic" in nature; the "dramatic process," therefore, must be nurtured in modern education.

In a more recent "global" work (1980), *The Dramatic Curriculum*, Courtney elaborated on the pervasive dynamics of drama in society and within the individual, then went on to consider its place in the curriculum. Again, the "dramatic process" was described as "the essential element of all encounters" and therefore has a crucial position in school curriculum, which Courtney defined as: "... what takes place between teacher and student." The latter half of this book considered curriculum design and program design in a drama context.

In *Re-Play*, his most recent work, Courtney hones his definition of educational drama and proceeds to expand on a few educational gaps not covered — or only lightly so — in his previous books, such as drama and motivation ("For too many teachers and educational administrators, mechanistic theories of motivation prevail ... dramatic activity ... is self-motivated because it is the organism's way of creating meaning out of experience."), drama and the transfer of learning ("positively indicated by the literature"), drama and the different ("... in the case of the gifted ... the teacher may ... lead him to other modes of personality"), and expression ("My argument in this chapter will be that dramatic activity is the basis for learning, and particularly for the learning of language").

He makes clear his belief that dramatic action is the prime mediator between the inner self and one's environment and thereby explains the title of the book: "We do this in order to create meaning — to understand experience and reinterpret it in

ways that are meaningful to us. 'Re-play is re-cognition,' as Marshall McLuhan says."

Like Courtney's other "global" books (he has also written a number of practical classroom "how-to" books) *Re-Play* is extremely useful for two kinds of teachers:

One: the teacher who "teaches" drama as a separate subject or uses drama to teach language, history, or any other subject can find a wealth of supportive material to more than justify his or her use of drama in the classroom. If the teacher has any self-doubts about the long-range "value" of the dramatic method, or needs to find ammunition to explain his or her work to others, this book will supply as much careful, comprehensive thinking on the subject as most teachers will need. It even concludes with a highly readable "Axioms and Maxims" section that presents and explains in a precise manner such thoughts as "the arts are essential to learning," which in these days of restraint and conservatism almost seems like a voice in the wilderness.

Two: the teacher who has never taught drama and has never used any "dramatic method" to teach. This teacher should investigate, at least intellectually at first, the substantial basis for putting the "dramatic method" at the core of "living education." Teachers who sometimes wonder why education can't be better, why children are

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bored or aren't learning, should "re-play" their perceptions of teaching and learning.

Anyone seriously concerned about future directions of education should consider the "dramatic method," and Richard Courtney is one of its finest and most eloquent spokespersons. *Re-Play* manages, like its two predecessors, to combine a personalized, writer-to-reader tone with an impressive, scholarly collection of materials well organized for the non-specialist reader.

Re-Play will give teachers almost as much convincing as they want. Courtney's case is strong and deserves attention: the logical problem for the teacher, after learning about the dramatic method, is one of implementation, which, it is anticipated, is the likely topic for Courtney's next opus.

—James Hoffman,
David Thompson University Centre,
Nelson

LANGUAGE ARTS

Beck, M. Susan. *Kidspeak: how your child develops language*. Scarborough, New American Library, 1982. 120 pp., paper, \$7.50. 0-452-25376-4.

This book puzzles me. I'm not sure what it is Susan Beck is trying to do. Part of my confusion comes from her use of the word

how in her subtitle. What on earth does *how* mean? Is Beck employing a subtle ruse to demonstrate the point that "structure" words such as *how*, because they lack denotation, are harder to understand than "content" words? On the basis of that *how* I expected, perhaps naively, to find some in-depth analysis of children's development of language skills. No such luck.

I turned to my dictionaries to see if I expected too much of *how*. Webster's New International skimps the job with a mere 50 lines, but the OED comes through with five columns. Long or short, though, they pretty much agree on "in what manner or way; by what means or process."

Back to *Kidspeak*, and I'm still puzzled. What I do find is a fair amount of general information on the nature and structure of language, and some details of the apparently more-or-less fixed order in which children are said to acquire various language skills. Did I ask too much of *how*? I still don't know.

There are three sections to the book: Part I, A Theory of Meaning and of Child Development; Part II, The Learning of Concepts and Relationships, and Part III, On Reading and Writing. Part I gives an account of the nature of language that, although it is somewhat superficial and sometimes dubious, serves as an adequate introduction for newcomers to the field. The chapter on children's development of meaning "outlines the common developmental patterns of children . . . and shows how they come to know that language is a system of meaningful sounds. . . ." There is indeed one very important *how* statement: "they learn by seeking out patterns and rules for language formation." Unfortunately, the chapter also runs heavily to phrases telling us that children "somehow know," "come to know," "learn very early" and "are awfully busy learning the essentials of the English language." Interesting enough, but to quote Eeyore, "Not very *how*."

Part II, The Learning of Concepts and Relationships, is central to the book and at least purports to deal with matters that are central to the development of understanding of language. Again, the focus seems to be on *what* children do as they struggle for meaning, rather than *how* they carry on the struggle. Once again, though, there is a nugget: "as children attempt to understand, they relate what they know to what is new to them." This is an entertaining section, filled with samples of children's use of language that range from the creatively poetic through the emotionally moving to the delightfully funny. An important emphasis in this section is on the need for adults to listen not just to the words children are saying but to the meanings that underlie their idiosyncratic usages.

Part III, On Reading and Writing, deals mainly with the kinds of stories and books children enjoy at different ages and stages, and it includes some useful annotated book-lists. More important, in this section

Beck makes the point that children, in listening to and reading stories, are not only having fun, but are learning about language and its relationship to the reality of their own experiences.

The book includes a "Selected Bibliography." I'm not sure if this is a list of Beck's sources or a list of further readings for those interested in pursuing the subject. If it's the former, the author has certainly dug deeply; if it's the latter, I'm still confused, because for most of the audience to whom the book appears to be addressed it would be a tremendous leap to the works of such experts on the linguistically esoteric as Roger Brown and Noam Chomsky.

—Don Levey, Armstrong

Brownhill, Karen D. *Reading is for me* by Ian Fraser and Karen Brownhill. Toronto, Clarke Irwin, 1983. 208 pp., paper, \$9.95. 0-7720-1383-7. (Aspects of Language Across the Curriculum series.) Teacher's guide available.

I have no great admiration for school textbooks — a great many are pedestrian, some are pretentious, and there's a good chance they'll be just plain dull. So it is a real pleasure to come across an exception, and this reading text by Fraser and Brownhill certainly qualifies. It is a veritable delight that should appeal to any students and teachers who are lucky enough to be able to use it.

This is a book for kids — not only because the style of presentation is breezy and entertaining and the format is almost guaranteed to be attractive, but because it begins with kids; with kids and their reading problems, their perceptions of reading and of their reading problems, and their felt need for success in reading.

In their introduction the authors tell their readers, "We want to show you how reading works, so that you know what happens when you read. Readers who know what is happening when they read have some control over the process." To do this job they bring together a number of the insights of reading research (particularly that branch of it loosely labelled "psycholinguistic") and present them to kids in meaningful ways.

It is no longer uncommon to hear that reading has as much or more to do with the reader as it has with the material to be read; that there are a lot of "non-print" factors in both the language system and in the real world that inform the reading process just as significantly as do the words printed on the page. To my way of thinking, the evidence for these propositions is overwhelming. The secret of Fraser's and Brownhill's success is that they have been able to give these theories a practical application that should make sense to kids and should help them to penetrate the mystery and mystique that surround the reading process.

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The book starts where kids are—in a real world, only a small part of which consists of words to be read. It goes on to show that we “read” (or misread) many things and situations by applying to them what we already know, and it goes on to demonstrate how this already-familiar process can apply to reading print. In a key chapter titled “Up Behind Your Eyeballs, What’s In Your Mind?” the students are given some excellent practice in retrieving and organizing what they already know so that they can apply it to the reading task.

The last six chapters of the book deal with such tried-and-true topics as skimming and scanning, setting purposes for reading, adjusting reading rate to purpose, improving reading speed, and recreational and study reading. Again, though, the presentation is fresh, the exercises are practical, and, because it builds on the solid foundation of the first three chapters, these topics probably make a lot more sense to kids than they usually do.

This book is meant for “problem” readers in junior secondary grades and beyond, and I know that many teachers at this level have not in the past felt confident about reading instruction. Fortunately, there is a teacher’s guide for the book. I haven’t seen it, but if it is anywhere near as effective as the text itself it could make the job of reading improvement as much fun for the teacher as I’m sure it will be for the students.

In an introductory note to students, “From the Writers to the Readers” Fraser and Brownhill say, “You may feel, if reading is almost always a problem for you, that it is your fault and that there must be something wrong with you (which is not true).” If this book does nothing more than convince “problem” readers that it is not their fault and that there is not something wrong with them, it will have done a great service. I’m convinced, though, that the book will do a great deal more than that.

—Don Levey, Armstrong

SCHOOLING

Friesen, John W. *Schools With a Purpose*. Calgary, Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1983. 142 pp., paper, \$10.95. 0-920490-34-4.

Schools With a Purpose offers five case studies of schools that operate within a particular cultural context for that culture’s own purposes. The schools studied cater to the needs of Native People, the Doukhobors, Holdeman Mennonites, the Amish, and Calgary’s Chinese.

Perhaps the most useful section, however, might be the two introductory chapters, “The Concept of Culture” and “Alternative Forms of Schooling,” in which the author, currently president of the Multicultural Education Council of the Alberta

Teachers’ Association, provides an informative framework for the more detailed studies to follow.

These studies are a disappointment. Whereas the aforementioned chapters are well written and informative, the studies are too general in content and have all the appearance of the hastily typed rough copy of a graduate student’s sociology in education paper. Unsubstantiated generalizations abound—the last thing one would expect from the Multicultural Education Council.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of this publication is the difficulty of seeing why it has appeared at all. There just seems to be no good reason why this book was written. The author has no discernible thesis that needs the support of his case studies, which in themselves are too scanty to serve either that or any other purpose.

—Simon Ruddell, Vancouver

Wansbrough, Michael B. *They will if we let them*. Hamilton Image Publishing, 1980. 144 pp., paper, \$6.95. 0-9690633-0-X. Order from Image Publishing, 17 Davenport Rd., Toronto, Ont. M5H 1H2.

“The most neglected element in our society may well be the parents of school-aged children.” And with that, Wansbrough begins 143 pages of practical guidance to parents about the raising of their child/children.

Wansbrough is the headmaster of Canada’s second largest independent school, and he writes from the perspective of one who has been an educator for some 20 years. Further, he claims to be a “practical” educator who finds himself at odds with the scholasticism of modern educational theory. The combination provides a rather entertaining “guide to your child’s education.”

This paperback book is delightfully presented. Its bright yellow, red, and black cover, and cartoon type illustration (by Alexander Sanderson), convey to the reader a sense of relaxation in an area normally fraught with high emotion and tension. The informal style also serves to make the message palatable and easily digested. The combination, in fact, suggests that it might actually be possible to guide one’s youngster through his or her growing up years and have everyone land on the side of sanity!

I feel Wansbrough has really presented three topics:

1. basic principles of sound parenting, from the cradle to graduation;
2. basic principles for ensuring that one’s child receives the best/right education;
3. the evils of the public school system.

Topics 1 and 2 are presented sympathetically. Parents can take comfort from his position and feel supported in their attempts to guide their youngsters. Parents

who are hesitant about interfering in the lives of their children receive encouragement to do what they think is right, not what the child thinks might be right! In many ways his message is like a breath of fresh air.

Topic 3 could well be his real purpose for writing this little book. His attack on government control of education borders on the vituperative. Only on this topic does he become impractical. Large cities can provide a wide range of school styles; small cities, towns and villages cannot. He would have all of us choosing our own style of school system, thus doing away with what we know as the public school system. Many teachers today might well agree with his philosophy, but its inclusion in this book detracts from an otherwise very entertaining, informative guide to parenting.

They Will If We Let Them refers, not to the children or parents on whom Wansbrough lavishes the bulk of his attention, but rather to this statement taken from his introduction:

“Politicians, so-called professionals and bureaucrats, want to take our money, our responsibilities and our choice away from us. They will if we let them.” Despite this, the book is worth reading, and is worth recommending to parents who might well need his reassurance that they still have some rights and responsibilities toward their children!

—Elizabeth Fussell, Revelstoke

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*High is our calling, friend! Creative Art
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Wordsworth

●It's humbling, if not exactly humiliating, to be a student in a creative writing course.

Though it looks as if your instructor and the other students are talking only about the manuscript of your poem or your short story lying there on the table, it's really your mind they're picking apart, showing you the stiffness of it, its narrowness and vanities, the recurrent failures to look beyond your prejudices, its numerous blind spots.

But the pleasure of observing your fellow students compensates for a lot of the smarting. A creative writing course I took last spring attracted a number of vivid characters.

The most recognizable type was the promising young poetess. She sat slightly apart from everyone else, her pale hands settled protectively on a slim collection of verses, with more than a hint of condescension and nervous rashes on her white face. Her work was undeniably classy and our group was genuinely moved by her discerning sympathies for the misfits, losers, and underdogs who seemed to throng her life. However, the puzzle was how a girl who demonstrated such vivid compassion on paper could be so unfailingly haughty and aloof with her fellow students, especially those who had ample qualifications as misfits, losers, and underdogs.

Beside her sat an old burly man, who had never put a serious pen to paper at any point in his long life. He had been a faller in his younger days but in more recent years he'd run charter boats in the Gulf Islands. Now that he was retired, he had the feeling, he told us without self-consciousness, that he had a duty, certainly to his family and maybe to others outside it, to write his autobiography. He did not want his views on life to pass unrecorded.

Geoff Hargreaves, our regular columnist, teaches at Cowichan Senior Secondary School in Duncan.

Next to him was a plump, middle-aged lady, with rosy-red cheeks, a farmer's jolly wife. For a decade or more, she said, she had been wanting to write, and since at long last her children had grown up and fled the nest, she now had the leisure to do it. She wrote creepy little tales about housewives secretly burning with sterile anger and perverse lusts, while their menfolk and children cheerfully took them for granted, never suspecting there was poison in the apple pie.

On the opposite side of the table glowered a gruff, inflexible man, a retired teacher. He had no stories about himself to tell, he growled at us, but his best friend had many, for he had driven dog teams in Alaska and once, for example, had had his dogs go berserk and attack and kill the lead-dog. But in the last year the friend had gone blind; so now he was intent on telling his friend's tales for him.

A very loquacious woman was seated beside him. She was an endless source of information and opinion. Hemingway, Greene, Proust, Waugh, Dostoevsky — she had read and remembered them all. She had literary anecdotes and references galore. But we never learned what she was interested in writing, because, when her turn to read her material came round, she was unaccountably absent.

A dark, uncompromising young man was the last of our small group. When Mona, the instructor, asked him what he was interested in writing, he replied, "Everything!"

"Everything?" she asked incredulously.

"Everything!" he repeated. "Novels, plays, poetry, everything!"

Then he added that he had just been laid off at the mill, so now he had the time to write everything.

"Well, yes of course," said Mona doubtfully.

His first contribution was a very short short story, typed entirely in block capitals.

"Why do you type only in upper case?" asked Mona.

"I do all my typing that way," he replied.

"I think it's more striking. I've just finished a

novel. And that was all in capitals."

Mona suggested he respect the convention of using lower case as well, but he obviously thought she was being a fusspot.

He didn't tell us what he'd been doing at the mill before the lay-off, but I don't reckon it was anything very highfaluting. However, his short story was all about power-mongering at senior levels of government. In a mere 1,400 words, six or seven characters, not one of them much distinguishable from any other, crossed and double-crossed each other at breath-taking speed to gain control of Canada's destiny, and all with a total cynicism intended to shock those innocents among us not privy to the way government really works.

"How did you find the story?" Mona asked the disheartened group.

The poetess stared at the poor young man with her pitiless eyes. "I couldn't follow it at all," she said sourly. "I couldn't tell one character from another."

"Politicians are all alike," countered the young man, undaunted.

"And everything happened too fast," she went on.

"Things do happen fast in politics," he informed her patronizingly.

"The reader needs more details."

"This is a *short* story," he retaliated.

"It *isn't*," she said viciously. "It isn't a short story at all. It's pure exposition, just a bald summary of unlikely events. It's awful."

Tempers suddenly flared all round the table, some in aggression, some in defence, some agreeing with the poetess's literary verdict but angry over her manner.

Mona waved her arms to restore peace, and voices eventually reduced their volume, and temperatures dropped.

"Well, I'm sure," said Mona finally, "in a course like this, where we are all here to learn, that some mistakes can be even more useful than successes."

The young man picked up his manuscript and standing by the door, he turned to Mona. "I still don't see," he said with heroic stubbornness, "what's wrong with using only capital letters." ○

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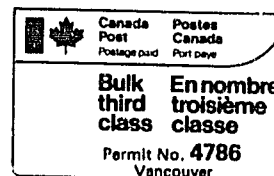
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For contributions to be deductible in the 1983 tax year.

Call your Co-op for interest rates and an RSP application form. Collect calls are accepted.

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