

AGM votes fee boost, \$3 levy

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER

MAY 1968

VANCOUVER, B.C.

VOL 7, No. 10

A \$5 fee increase, to help meet rising federation expenses, and permit expansion in some areas of service, was authorized by the Annual General Meeting in Penticton.

In addition, the AGM authorized a \$3 levy on all members, to help pay the cost of an informational campaign to inform the public on the inequities in the new school finance formula and the effects of the school building freeze.

Both motions came from the floor of the AGM and both were passed unanimously.

President R. M. Buzza had wired executive members and

Geographical Representatives in the week prior to the AGM that he believed a fee increase was essential if the federation was to maintain its standards of service to the members. However he did not make a formal recommendation to this effect to the AGM.

The motion to increase the fee, moved by Gil Currie-Johnson, of Abbotsford, was in the form of an amendment to a finance committee recommendation that the fee for the coming year should be the same as last year. The motion was seconded by Dale Kelly, of Vancouver.

The AGM rejected a motion by Douglas Lafferty, of Campbell River, that fees be increased by \$25 to build up a strike fund.

Ray Wunderlich, of Victoria, proposed the motion calling for the informational campaign and the special \$3 levy. This was seconded by Al Blakey, Vancouver.

The motion came on the morning of the first day of the AGM when regular business was suspended to permit discussion of the issue.

Delegates also adopted a resolution from the executive formally declaring their opposition to Bill 86, the Public Schools Act amendment which includes the new education finance formula.

The resolution put the federation on record 'as opposing the amendments to the Public Schools Act in the matter of the sharing of fiscal responsibility between school boards and the provincial government.'

The four reasons are:

- School boards are restricted from spending money from local tax sources.

- The minister of education has unlimited powers to determine the level of the basic program.

- Differentiation of financial support of school boards which hire teachers of varying qualifications has been abolished.

- There is no provision for each school board to receive a statement of the expectation of the provincial grant.

The spirited debate on education finance problems set the tone for the entire AGM, which many veteran teachers described as one of the best they had attended.

Debate seldom got bogged down on trivial issues and technicalities as delegates devoted themselves to the issues at hand and showed a willingness to take strong, decisive action.

Trustees split on formula

A belated decision by the president of the B.C. School Trustees Association to come out in support of the new provincial education finance formula has caused a split in trustee ranks.

Both past-president Fred Rowell, Vancouver, and first vice-president James Campbell, Saturna Island, disassociated themselves with remarks made by Frank Beinder in support of the formula.

Beinder, who had earlier been opposed to the formula changed his mind and came out in favor of it.

He charged that the BCTF was responsible for misinforming the trustees on the implications of the controversial Bill 86 which contains the new formula.

Campbell said his own integrity as a representative of the association was seriously damaged by Beinder's statement.

The chairman of the Greater Victoria School Board, Peter Bunn, said he was delighted by the teachers' stand in opposition to the formula.

'I wish our association was as militant,' he said. 'I am delighted with their (the teachers') action.'

'This is the only way to go about it. It is time to get tough. I just wish the trustees would take similar action in support of the teachers' stand.'

'Don't work in north'

OTTAWA — Government red tape in dealing with teachers in Canada's North could force half the teachers to resign this year.

Teachers of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association are at the boiling point because of 'administrative delays' in settling negotiations with their employer, the Federal Government.

The NWTTA has asked the Canadian Teachers' Federation to request that its other affiliated associations in all provinces advise their members not to sign contracts to teach in the North.

April 30 is the deadline for northern teachers to resign or sign new contracts. However, if agreement is not reached by then, the teachers will be forced to leave the North or sign a blank contract which the government will fill in later.

President Bob Buzza made the following statement to the AGM in Penticton following some implications that the meeting's decision to conduct an informational campaign on educational issues would mean federation involvement in partisan politics.

This is a teachers' federation. Our objectives are educational objectives, not political objectives. Let there be no mistake about this.

Essentially, we have three purposes:

- (1) To foster and promote the cause of education in B.C.

- (2) To raise the status of the teaching profession in B.C.



Tom Hutchison talks with reporters.

'A right to inform public'

The president-elect of the BCTF says that one of his major aims during his term of office will be improving communications with the public.

Tom Hutchison told a press conference, within minutes of his election to the top post in the federation, that if communicating with the public on educational issues brings clashes with government 'that is the risk that we have to take.'

Hutchison, vice-principal of David Thompson Secondary School, Invermere, defeated Ed Nelson, of Burnaby, in the presidential election.

Commenting on an earlier decision by the AGM to assess all BCTF members \$3 to pay for an informational campaign, prior to the next election, to inform the public on the effects of the school construction freeze and the inequities in the new school financing formula. Hutchison said: 'We have a legitimate right to tell the public what is best for education and election time is a good time to do it.'

'Education should get more play as an election topic.'

Hutchison denied that federation involvement in such a campaign at election time could be interpreted as partisan politics. 'If I find that the federation becomes partisan, mine will be the shortest presidency on record,' he said.

Hutchison told the assembled press, radio and television reporters that though he frequently took a conservative viewpoint on educational issues, he believes in progressive education.

'There are a great many traditional teachers doing a very good job in our classrooms. We can live with both the traditional and the progressive,' he said.

Other officers elected at the AGM in Penticton were: first vice-president, Jim Killeen, Vancouver; second vice-president, Adam Robertson, Creston; members at large on executive: Gil Johnston, Gold River; Alex Philip, Peace River; Louis Beduz, Comox; Dick Dunlop, North Vancouver; Ray Wunderlich, Victoria.

Belth coming for BCTF short course

One of North America's leading educational philosophers, Dr. Marc Belth, of Queen's College, City University of New York, will run a three-week course at Simon Fraser University this summer as part of the BCTF's summer short course program.

The course, entitled 'Three Weeks with Marc Belth, an Adventure in Educational Philosophy,' is one of the highlights of the summer short course program to be held in July.

Twenty-three courses, ranging from folk dancing and puppetry in primary grades to 'The Computer and Instruction' will be offered.

Full details on the short course program will be contained in a special issue of the BCTF Newsletter which will appear in mid-May.

'If it hurts, so be it'

(3) To promote the welfare of the teachers in B.C.

Any action we take through our AGM is in pursuit of these objectives.

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.

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 it-

self is damaging to the government of the day, so be it.

With respect to the federation's actions over the past few months: information has been sent to all MLAs of all parties to make them aware of our concern with respect to construction curbs and the implications of Bill 86. The same basic information has been made available to the public. As teachers, we have an obligation to inform the public of matters of concern to us in the field of education. This we shall continue to do.

It would be naive to claim that our actions as an organization have no political impact. They do 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.

Members of all political persuasions are found within our ranks. This is a source of strength and pride.

The contribution of individual teachers to local, provincial and federal government in Canada has been a significant one. Teachers across the country take pride in the contribution, as individuals, of their colleagues.

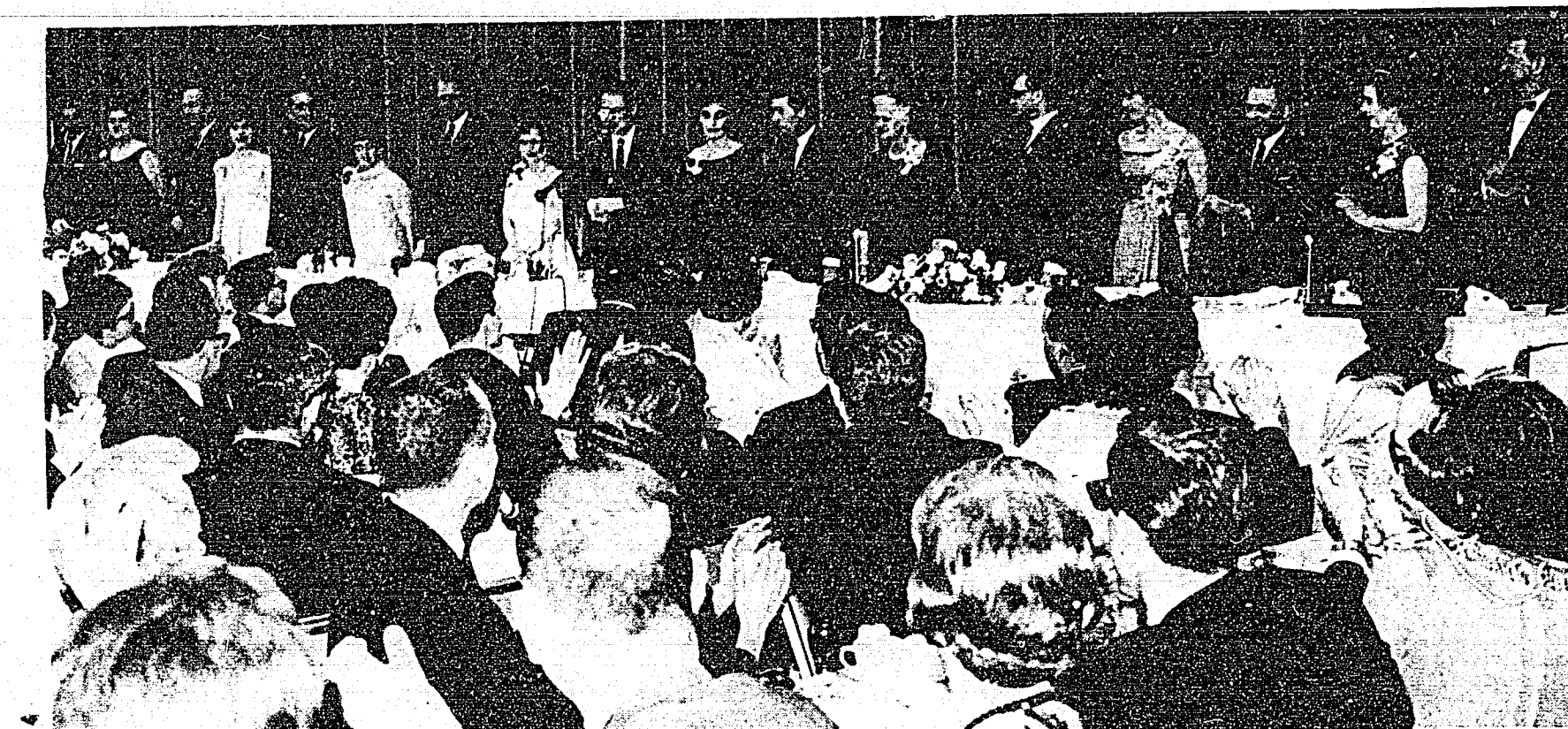
To summarize, the objectives of the teachers of B.C. are educational objectives.



Delegates to the AGM jam Penticton's Peach Bowl convention auditorium. Members of the pensions committee were making their report as this picture was taken. Delegates were impressed with Peach Bowl facilities.



President-elect Tom Hutchison holds the first of what will be many meetings with press, radio and television reporters during his term of office. Hutchison faced reporters within minutes of his election.



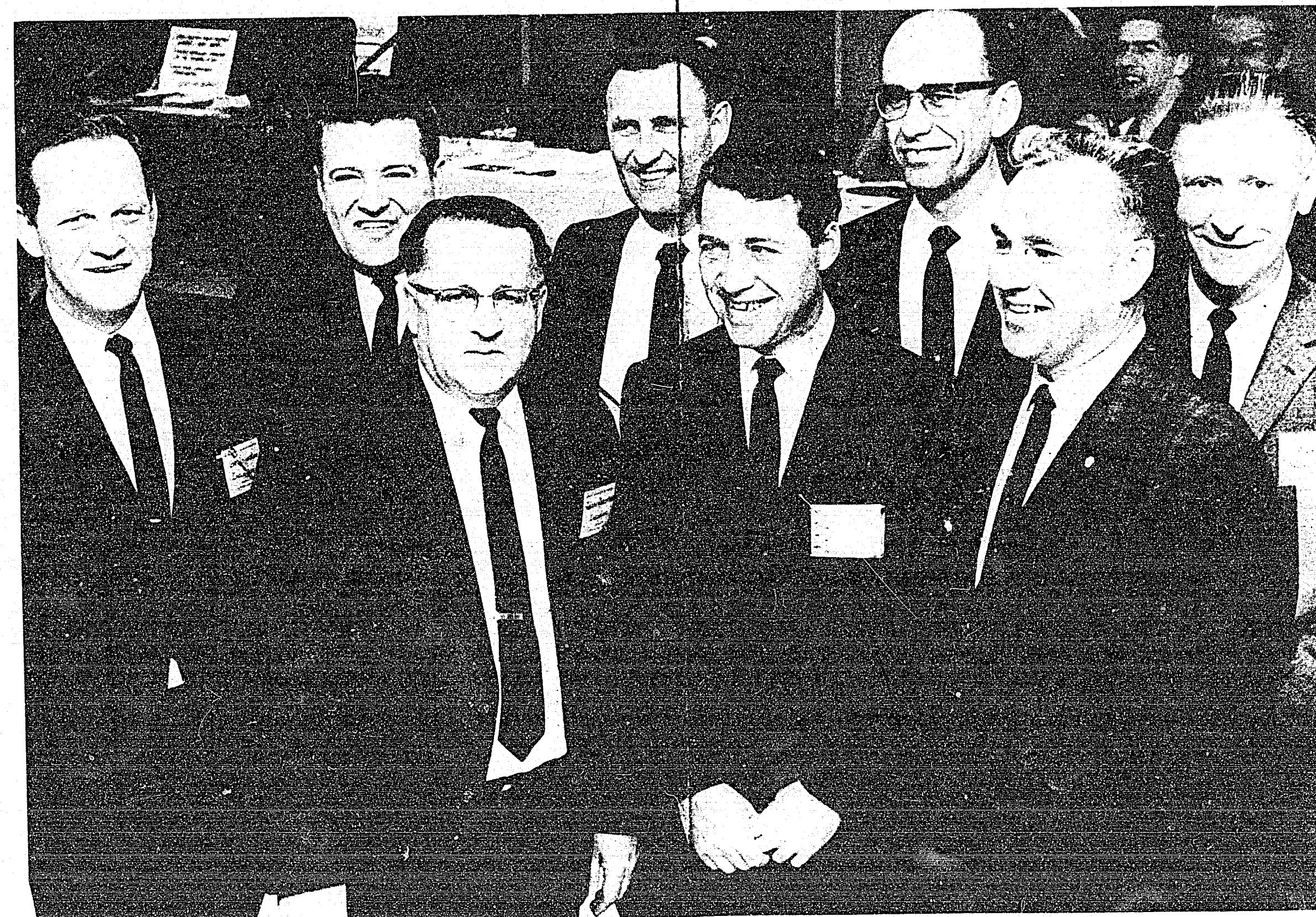
President Bob Buzza introduces the head table during the awards banquet. Guests included Education Minister L. R. Peterson and local municipal and trustee representatives.



Education reporters Bill Stavdal, left, Victoria Colonist and Wilf Bennett, Vancouver Province, received special 'certificates of appreciation' for their service to education.



One of the federation's best-known members, Tom Chalmers, principal of Burnaby South Secondary School, received the federation's Ferguson Memorial award for outstanding service to education. Chalmers was president of the federation in 1948. He has been particularly interested in curriculum development. He is shown here at the AGM in Penticton receiving his award from past president J. Harley Robertson.



'The sweet smiles of success.' Newly-elected president Tom Hutchison, front center, poses with newly-elected table officers and executive members. On his right is Adam Robertson, Creston, second vice-president; and on his left Dick Dunlop, North Vancouver. Back row, left to right: Gil Johnston, Gold River; Jim Killeen, Vancouver, first vice-president; Louis Beduz, Comox; Ray Wunderlich, Victoria, and Alex Philip, Peace River. Dunlop, Philip, Wunderlich and Beduz are 'new faces' on the executive committee.

RESOLUTIONS—HOW THEY FARED

Local associations

These resolutions from local associations were passed:

AGREEMENTS
2. That the BCTF recognize that all principals in any school district have equal responsibilities and should therefore be entitled to equal administrative allowances relative to such factors as experience and pupil enrollment.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
4. (a) That the BCTF favor the establishment of kindergartens as an integral part of the primary program.

(b) That the BCTF establish a special committee to promote the establishment of kindergartens throughout our school system.

6. That the Department of Education should authorize the use of the French language for instructional purposes within the public school system in areas where the French-speaking percentage of the school population warrants it.

7. That the Executive Committee be instructed to set up an ad hoc committee to:

(1) determine a functional definition of educational underprivilege in terms of cultural deprivation;

(2) initiate a research program to identify: (a) educationally underprivileged students, and (b) effective teaching procedures for such students;

(3) recommend appropriate measures to implement the research findings.

8. That the Department of Education should:

(1) supply two additional staff members to the office of the Director of School Broadcasts;

(2) increase the budget of the Division of School Broadcasts so that more broadcasts may use the resources of field trips to provide children with experiences which are impossible or impractical to provide within the school.

9. That the Department of Education should establish a Division of Educational Television.

21. That the Department of Education should change its priorities in secondary school construction so that Library resource center accommodation and equipment is a first consideration.

22. That, to permit students to move from one stream to another in senior secondary schools as conditions change, the Department of Education should relax the rigidity of the recently organized secondary streams, by making it possible for pupils to graduate with a pattern of core subjects and a freer choice of elective courses (e.g., English, social studies, mathematics and science through Grade 12, and whatever other courses the pupil can pass successfully).

EDUCATION FINANCE
10. That the provincial government should permit a simple majority rather than the present 60%, to approve a school-building referendum.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS
12. (a) That it be the responsibility of any teacher who finds himself in a teaching situation which he feels is detrimental to the educational welfare of the pupils in his charge, to report the situation to his local association and to the BCTF office.

(b) That the BCTF support morally and financially any teacher who is advised by the BCTF and his local association to refuse to teach a regular class.

(c) (a) That if any teacher, on the advice of the BCTF, refuses to teach, his full salary shall be paid by the BCTF for as long a period of time as he receives no salary from the school board.

(b) That if a teacher loses his teaching position as a result of refusing, on the advice of the BCTF, to teach a class, the BCTF shall give him full assistance in finding a comparable position, and that, until such a position is found, his full salary shall continue to be paid by the BCTF.

FINANCE
16. That the BCTF make possible medical coverage for foreign exchange teachers in B.C. by paying to PTMS or to VSTMS the premiums required to provide medical services for these teachers and their families.

DEFEATED
These resolutions from local associations were defeated:

AGREEMENTS
1. That the Public Schools Act should be amended to provide that teachers' salaries may be paid on a semi-monthly basis.

3. (a) That the BCTF establish annually minimum salary levels for all certification categories.

(b) That teachers should support the minimum salary levels set by the BCTF by refusing to offer their services to school districts which pay minimum salaries that are lower than those recognized by the BCTF as minimum salary levels.

EDUCATION FINANCE
11. That the Public Schools Act should be amended to provide for the inclusion of the cost of sidewalks and street improvements in school budgets so that these costs may be shared throughout the district, rather than being borne in full by the particular municipality in which they are constructed and by the owners of the properties adjoining the schools.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS
13. (a) That the BCTF recommend that, as of January 1, 1969, its members refrain from drawing up or assigning to BCTF members any program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

(c) That the BCTF support morally and financially any of its members who refuse to engage in a program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

(d) That if a BCTF member, in accordance with BCTF procedures, refuses to engage in a program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision or refuses to draw up or assign to BCTF members any program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENTS
18. That Section 5.01 of the Rules of Council of Public Instruction should be abrogated and replaced by: 'The initial appointment of a teacher by the Board of School Trustees of a school district will be permanent except when the teacher has not taught previously in the Province of British Columbia or when the teacher is non-certificated. In the latter two cases the teacher will be appointed on probation for a period of (one, two or three years, as may be deemed suitable after consultations with the Department of Education). The probationary appointment shall be designated in writing when notice of appointment is given and may be terminated by the Board of School Trustees upon at least thirty days' notice in writing, which notice shall expire with the termination of the probationary period.'

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
19. That the following be added as Clause 11 of the BCTF Code of Ethics: 'The teacher shall not accept an exchange position in the United Kingdom without arranging for his exchange to live at a standard that is not lower than that of a teacher at the EB-0 salary level of his district.'

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
20. That the Department of Education should have the names of the authors appear on each Departmental final examination.

FINANCE
23. That sufficient money be included in next year's budget to provide for one full-time elected representative in addition to the President.

24. That, in view of the increased number of changes in elementary and secondary courses, the BCTF increase the amount of money it grants to in-service education activities.

25. That statement 14.C.06 be amended to read: 'That the President and General Secretary be authorized to effect payment out of BCTF funds of conciliation and/or arbitration costs in excess of \$5 per member to any local association which makes application with a detailed account of expenses.'

New resolutions

These 'new' resolutions were passed:

Note: A 'new' resolution is one which is presented from the floor during the meeting.

1. (1) That the Executive Committee immediately direct a major campaign to:

(a) 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;

(b) 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 present government's policy on education finance;

(c) solicit support of any or all organizations and agencies which share of our concern;

(d) establish the right of the BCTF to a partnership role in decisions relating to school construction and utilization at the local and provincial level.

(2) That a progress report be made at the next Representative Assembly meeting.

(3) That a special lobby be convened in Victoria during the 1969 session of the Legislative Assembly to discuss the question of education finance.

(4) That a special levy of \$3 be collected to cover the cost of such a campaign.

2. That the Executive Committee be instructed to study methods of extending financial assistance to exchange teachers.

Referred

Resolutions referred — These resolutions were referred to appropriate committees:

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS
13. (b) That the BCTF recommend that, as of January 1, 1969, its members refrain from drawing up or assigning to BCTF members any program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

(c) That the BCTF support morally and financially any of its members who refuse to engage in a program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

(d) That if a BCTF member, in accordance with BCTF procedures, refuses to engage in a program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision or refuses to draw up or assign to BCTF members any program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision.

(e) That if a BCTF member loses his position as a result of his refusal to engage in a program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision or refuses to draw up or assign to BCTF members any program of regularly scheduled lunch hour supervision, in accordance with BCTF procedures, the BCTF shall give him full assistance in finding a comparable position and that, until such a position is found, his full salary shall continue to be paid by the BCTF.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
17. That the Government of B.C. should assume the full operating and capital costs of community colleges.

Recommendations

These recommendations from various committees were passed:

FINANCE COMMITTEE
5. That the fee for active membership in the BCTF for the 1968-69 fiscal year be \$80, including \$79 for general operation, and a one dollar allocation for International Assistance.

6. That the fee for associate membership in the BCTF for the 1968-69 fiscal year be \$10.

7. That the BCTF retain the services of its present auditors, Martin, Browning and Company, for the year 1968-69.

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY
9. That the 'more than 39' intolerability limit be maintained.

10. That the intolerability limit for classes of first-year pupils be 30.

11. That future limits of intolerability be measured in terms of teacher assignment criteria.

14. (a) That the BCTF accept as a major objective the achieving of a partnership role in the determination of:

1. the nature of the education given to teachers in training;

2. those people who shall receive teaching certificates;

(b) That the BCTF undertake a concerted drive to achieve this objective.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
16. That the BCTF recognizes that some valuable services related to instruction and supervision in a school may profitably be carried out by non-certificated personnel, but that it must be carried out under the direction of a certificated teacher. Non-certificated personnel may include clerical aides, non-instructional supervisors, technical assistants, theme markers, team aides and such other assistants as BCTF members may find to be of value. Non-certificated people may be student or adult, paid or voluntary personnel.

17. That teachers should be involved in the selection of the auxiliary school personnel with whom they are to be associated.

18. That any teacher has the right to reject the services of auxiliary school personnel.

19. That pre-service and in-service education is desirable for all auxiliary school personnel and for the teachers who will be involved with such personnel.

20. That the costs of pre-service and in-service education programs should be borne by the local school board.

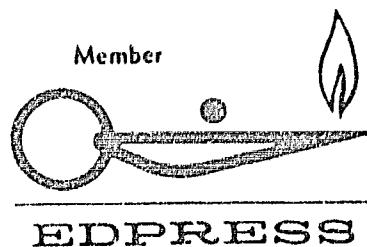
21. That the BCTF should be prepared to utilize its staff in the planning and implementation of pre-service and in-service workshops for auxiliary school personnel.

YUKON GUESTS
Guests at the 1968 AGM in Penticton were three members of the Yukon Teachers' Association — Irma Bourassa, Margaret Healy and John Pacey.

CATHOLIC TRUSTEE
Alex Worth, who teaches at North Vancouver's Hamilton Junior Secondary, has been elected a member of the Central Catholic School Board, Vancouver. Worth is chairman of St. Edmund's School Board, North Vancouver.

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Authorized as second class mail by the Post Office Department,
Ottawa, Ontario, and for payment of postage in cash.



Buzza comments . . .

When teachers change, teaching changes; I am proud that we began this year's AGM by involving our delegates in a discussion of major issues in education.

I am proud, too, that ours was an 'open' meeting. Not once did we go into 'Committee of the Whole.' Part of the proceedings were, in fact, broadcast 'live.'

Debate generally was of a high order and free of rancor. Delegates obviously felt, as they should, that this was their meeting.

It was heartening to hear expressions of appreciation for the contribution of our full-time staff. Responsibility for establishing policy lies with elected representatives, not with staff; it follows that criticism of policy should be directed to those who establish it, not to those who work within it.

Prior to adjournment, the AGM unanimously endorsed a statement outlining in detail the non-partisan nature of organization, one beholden to no political party. The statement emphasized, however, that, as members of a teachers' federation with educational objectives, we have the responsibility for taking a position on matters fundamental to the welfare of the students with whom we work.

This we have done and will do.

Penticton; forty-three years between visits is too long. Thanks for a wonderful week, one in which we could actually feel the 'common concern' of our colleagues.

May future general meetings be as significant.

'Astonishing spectacle'

(Editor's Note: The following is a shortened version of an editorial over radio station CHQM, Vancouver.)

The astonishing spectacle of the whole body of the B.C. Teachers' Federation up in arms against the B.C. Government's new education policy is, or should be, a matter of the deepest concern to the people of this province.

We doubt if a parallel case could be found in this country's history, and not many in other countries, including the new states in the world.

If there is one lesson these times imprinted in the minds of nearly all peoples, it is that education is the prime factor of success in meeting the problems of this age.

Some are saying that the teachers do not properly understand the policy. In that highly unlikely case, NOW is the time to explain it properly.

This automatically brings up another question. Why is it necessary to introduce financing formulas, and a general policy which, it can be suggested, is incomprehensible to the people who INSTRUCT our young?

Lacking an explanation of purposes, open or hidden, at least this canard against our teachers should be abandoned as unworthy of serious belief. It is not the first time, however, that the government has attempted to befog an issue with a confusing bureaucratic formula.

There are things about the new plans that take a good deal of sorting out. The government has withdrawn its guarantee to pay at least 50 percent of approved costs of public education.

It is pegging current school grants to previous year's costs. It is setting costs on the basis of a province-wide average. It is at least clear that it is not going to expand education. The aim is to restrict it.

The changes are made, of all things, in the name of economy, getting MORE for the education dollar. The same is said about using basements, hallways, gymnasiums, and activity rooms as classrooms.

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 of British Columbia.

This is a vital concern of every family in B.C. with children to educate. It must not be allowed to blow by, either in a fog or deliberately created controversy and confusion, or for the much less respectable reason of indifference.

British Columbia does not live in a vacuum, though it may be politically convenient for some to pretend it does. We are part of the modern world. We have got to compete in the modern world. There's no acceptable reason why the vital tool of education should be blunted, by an ingrown, isolated, backwoods outlook. This is unworthy of all of us.

Convention briefs

A proposal from North Vancouver that teachers refuse all lunch hour supervision or activities was overwhelmingly defeated by the AGM.

Leo Chaland, speaking for the resolution, said professional staff of a school should be used only for professional duties. He said statistics show that 20 percent of a teacher's time is used for duties not directly involved with teaching.

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Delegates reaffirmed the stand on class size taken at the 1967 AGM, by stating that any teacher who refuses to teach a class of more than 39 students will get the full financial backing of the federation.

Les Isaacson, of Victoria, chairman of the Effective Teaching and Learning Conditions Committee said that as a result of last year's campaign the number of over-40 classes had been reduced from 411 to about 40.

He said also that the number of split classes had remained about the same, thus easing fears that split classes would be increased as principals attempted to keep the size of classes below 40.

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Two veteran members of the federation were awarded honorary life memberships. They were Cec Blois, of Haney, who is retiring this year as a member of the executive, and Ewart Whatmough, secretary-treasurer of the Provincial Teachers' Medical Services.

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Use of French language instruction in schools where a French-speaking majority warrants it was overwhelmingly approved by delegates. The resolution to this effect, which came from Comox teachers, promoted some active debate in favor of the proposal. An amendment calling for similar instruction in German, Chinese and Italian was rejected.

Minimum of two GRs for each district

No region in the province will have fewer than two Geographical Representatives on the Representative Assembly as a result of a decision made by the AGM.

Several delegates from outlying sections of the province expressed concern that one GR could not hope to communicate effectively with teachers in the large, sparsely-populated districts, yet under the old membership formula, these districts were entitled to only one GR.

The new formula, which will mean a total of 48 Geographical Representatives instead of the present 45, is as follows:

Percentage of BCTF Membership	No. of Geographical Representatives
1.0% - 4.99%	2 representatives
5.0% - 6.99%	3 representatives
7.0% - 8.99%	4 representatives
9.0% - 10.99%	5 representatives

Moment of drama in AGM pressroom

The great issues of the 1968 AGM were debated in the cavernous convention hall of the Penticton Peach Bowl.

But the one real moment of drama occurred at a press conference in a beer bottle scattered, paper strewn anteroom with 'Press' on the door.

An aggressive radio reporter bored in on an obviously tired minister of education who had earlier that day come through a long drive from the coast and a long delegates' dinner.

'What do you think, sir,' he asked, 'of the teachers' federation raising money to mount an informational campaign critical of the government's education finance policies?'

Replied the minister: 'If it is merely a campaign to acquaint the people with the needs of education, I take no issue with it at all. That is the sort of thing that I am trying to do every day. I would be all in favor of such action.'

The reporter bored in: 'But couldn't such a campaign attacking government policies be construed as partisan politics?'

The minister looked surprised and his face flashed 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,' he said firmly.

'I could not compel every teacher to join a federation which used part of its dues for political purposes.'

The radio newscasts and the headlines the next day were predictable. 'Teachers Warned of Politics' bannered the Vancouver Sun. Said the Victoria Times: 'Government Would Head Off Teachers' Politicking.'

The minister had made his stand clear.

In response, BCTF president Bob Buzza clarified the federation's case:

'Ours is a teachers' federation. Our objectives are educational objectives. Let there be no mistake about this,' he told an applauding session of the AGM the next day.

'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 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.'

Mill rate set at 24.30

By BRUCE WATSON
Assistant Director Economic Welfare

The Minister of Education has announced the 1968 grants to school boards. At the same time, he stated that the uniform mill rate to be applied in all districts is to be 24.30 mills, up from 16.10 mills in 1967.

The basic education program for 1968 was calculated in relation to 1967 costs which in turn were in relation to the previous education finance formula. Although the basic education program for 1968 is larger than that of the previous year, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the new education finance formula for succeeding years. The Minister now has complete control over the items of this year's budgets which he will consider as approved for determining the base for next year's basic program.



ing the base for next year's basic program.

As the basic program becomes more realistic in relation to costs and the proportion paid by the provincial government remains the same, the uniform mill rate must rise, as it has this year.

But, as the uniform mill rate rises, the tax leeway left to any one school district to allow it to exceed the basic program if it so desires becomes less.

In 1967 the average mill rate throughout the province was 30.02 mills, compared to an estimate of 31.21 mills for 1968. Therefore, in 1967 a school district had a tax leeway of approximately 14 mills whereas in 1968 the tax leeway is approximately 7 mills.

More tax leeway would have been possible if the provincial government had paid a larger proportion of the basic program with the remainder being raised through the application of a much lower uniform mill rate.

Some school districts are pleased with the 1968 grants as they receive more money and some

also receive a reduction in their total mill rate. Others are relieved to see only a minor upward trend in the mill rate.

Dr. Peterson has stated that some high-cost districts will be brought to the average over a period of two or three years by allowing them, without further special approval, to exceed the statutory budget limits.

At the time of printing, the districts involved are not known. The grants to such districts may be adequate this year but these districts may be shocked to find that mill rates will have to be increased substantially in 1969 when this special treatment is reduced or eliminated.

The education finance committee will study the new provisions over the next year. Enthusiasm now being expressed by some school boards may turn to chagrin when the whole story unfolds.

Therefore, unqualified support for the 1968 grants is not warranted until more details are known and studied.

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