

HISTORY OF THE BCTF

The history of the BCTF can be conveniently organized around four distinctive periods: an infancy phase from 1919 to 1926, the year in which the offices were moved from Victoria to Vancouver; an adolescent stage from 1926 to 1947, the year in which compulsory membership was realized; an early maturity period from 1947 to 1971, the year in which the government, annoyed by Federation criticism of its failure to provide adequate financial support to public education, withdrew compulsory membership; and a full maturity phase from 1971 to the present, a period during which the BCTF has had to operate in an environment increasingly hostile to public education and to public school teachers.

1. INFANCY PHASE -- 1919 to 1926

Beginnings and Early Struggles

Teachers had few rights under the initial Public Schools Act of 1872. The act itself was in part prompted by the failure of the Victoria board of education to pay its teachers during the preceding two years. Admission to the profession was by way of an examination covering the curricular material. A mark of as low as thirty per cent would still qualify one to teach.

Teacher institutes were held during alternate years to discuss professional and curriculum concerns. Teachers could not be openly critical in such a forum.

There were many sources of dissatisfaction facing teachers of that era. The economic stresses created by the war had caused prices to rise at a rate five times faster than the rate of increase in teacher salaries. Capricious acts by some employers--the disrespect of teachers' rights, the lack of tenure or professional contracts, and the general pressures of the war were causing many to abandon their positions. Teachers played no part in the management of schools or in the formulation of educational policy.

This created the opportunity for a teachers' organization that the structure of the institutes had so successfully thwarted. J.G. Lister, president of the Vancouver Teachers' Association, called a meeting of teacher association representatives from Vancouver, Point Grey, South and North Vancouver as well as Victoria. The meeting was held on October 28, 1916 in the Dawson School in Vancouver. The first annual general meeting of the group took place in the King Edward High School on January 4, 1917. The BC Teachers' Federation was incorporated as a benevolent society on July 12, 1919. Harry Charlesworth of Victoria, its first president, also became its first general secretary. J.G. Lister succeeded him as president. Offices were opened in Victoria. Charlotte Clayton was named assistant secretary. Both Charlesworth and Clayton spent the rest of their working lives serving the BCTF.

The original objectives of the BCTF have remained unchanged in the constitution to this day. They were to foster and promote the cause of education in B.C., to raise the status of the teaching profession in B.C and to promote the welfare of the teachers of B.C.

When the BCTF was established, it was modelled after the National Union of Teachers of England. Consideration was given to naming it the B.C. Teachers' Union but the term "Federation" was used instead because the term "union" was not considered appropriate. Every provincial teachers' organization in Canada since then has been modelled on the intertwining goals of the economic welfare and the professional concerns of teachers.

The BCTF was a radical departure from tradition as it was an organization of teachers only and was free of control of senior administrators, the school boards, and the Department of Education.

Another novel concept introduced by the BCTF was that it opened membership to all teachers irrespective of their sex, religion or race. Teaching was recognized as an indissoluble craft and hence membership was open to all--counsellors, teacher-librarians, principals, teachers. Bill 20 destroyed that unity by excluding principals from membership in the BCTF. Over the years, the BCTF has successfully resisted various initiatives that sought to make it unnecessary that school librarians and counsellors hold valid teaching certificates.

The economic welfare of teachers and professional concerns have been intertwined goals of the BCTF from the beginning. In 1919 the BCTF concern was that teacher salaries, which lagged behind those of other professions requiring similar training and education, needed immediate improvement. Improvements were needed for two basic reasons: the economic welfare of the members and the concern that poor salaries would not attract good teachers.

The BCTF attempted to create a minimum provincial salary as one of its first objectives. This was a difficult goal to achieve as there were 744 different school districts, each negotiating different individual contracts with each teacher they employed. The first minimum salary proposed, in 1920, was \$1200 per year.

The first teachers' strike in the British Empire occurred in Victoria in 1919. One hundred and seventy-eight teachers refused to work for two days over a salary dispute. When the Provincial Secretary refused to intervene on the behalf of the school board, a negotiated settlement ensued. In 1920 the first Department of Education was established with its own minister. The BCTF was able to convince education officials of the desirability of having arbitration provisions to establish salaries and they were incorporated, on an optional basis, into the act. New Westminster teacher salaries were determined by arbitration in 1921. However the school board chose not to accept the arbitration award and, instead, chose to draft a list of each teacher's name with a salary beside it. Teachers could take it or leave it said the board. The teachers struck. Out of 86 teachers, only two broke ranks and showed up for work. There was intense public pressure for a settlement, including demands from the Board of Trade for the school board to come to its senses. In the election that followed the school board was replaced and the arbitration award was partially paid.

Pensions

Teacher pensions were also an early concern of the BCTF. Prior to 1921 outstanding teachers could be rewarded for long and faithful service only by a special act of the legislature. This was done in a few isolated cases. The BCTF pressed for a pension of 1/60 of the average salary for the last ten years' work for each year of service. In 1921 changes were made to the Civil Servant's Pension Act to allow for teachers to receive pensions - but pensions were to be given only where the school boards chose to give them and school boards could only grant them after receiving permission from the local municipal council. In the end not one teacher in the province ever collected a pension under this provision.

Tenure and Professional Rights

Teacher tenure had been a major concern of the BCTF since its early years. Prior to 1923 teachers could be dismissed by their Board at the end of any school term. As the result of BCTF representations, an appeal of dismissals to the Council of Public Instruction (the provincial cabinet) was provided for. Later appeals to a Board of Reference were allowed.

The BCTF was also successful in obtaining the removal of the probationary appointment process. Prior to April 1972 teachers appointed to a district were automatically on probation. They could be terminated at the end of their first year of employment without cause.

Development of a Profession

Concurrent with the BCTF's struggle for better economic rewards for teachers has been a concern for making teaching a true profession. The Federation has consistently sought to achieve professional recognition by identifying and promoting the expertise that sets teaching apart from other tasks in society. Its professional goals have been pursued in terms of improved qualifications, a recognition of the inevitability of change and a willingness to engage in a continuous process of re-education through a variety of in-service education activities, and a demand for freedom for teachers to make decisions about their work in the classroom and about instructional materials and curriculum.

The first publication of the organization was called *The Educator of Canada*. It appeared in March 1919. Later, in 1921, it became the *B.C. Teacher*. It promoted the slogan of the Federation: "Fair Play and a Square Deal" as well as addressing the professional concerns of members. It has maintained that function to this day.

The Federation played a major role in each major survey of education undertaken for the provincial government. The first one, Putman--Weir, 1925, resulted from BCTF prompting. The report led to the establishment of junior high schools and many more students attending high school. In 1926, the BCTF office was moved to Vancouver.

2. ADOLESCENT PHASE -- 1926 to 1947

Expansion of Services and Numbers of Members

During this period, the BCTF was able to pursue the interrelated objectives of welfare interests and professional concerns of teachers.

Welfare Interests

In 1929 the Vancouver teachers were the first group to receive a salary scale based upon certification and experience. No sooner, however, was this concept accepted than the province was plunged into the Great Depression. Soon minimum salary scales became the maximum. Recovery was slow and halted altogether with an order-in-council in 1943 which froze teacher salaries for the duration of the war.

Amendments to the Public Schools Act in 1937 permitted either party to demand binding arbitration of unresolved salary disputes, thereby inserting compulsory arbitration into the school labor relation system. With only minor modifications this arrangement remained in force until the introduction of the Compensation Stabilization Program in 1982.

In 1938, continuing contracts were established for teachers.

Since 1939 the BCTF has operated a salary indemnity plan designated to provide benefits to members who have used all of their statutory sick leave but are still unable, because of sickness or accident, to return to work.

The bargaining and economic problems faced by teachers suggested an alliance with organized labour. The Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association spear-headed this drive. At the 1942 AGM it was decided to put the question of labour affiliation to the general membership. Later that year teachers voted by a 56 per cent majority to join the Trades and Labour Congress. The 1943 AGM committed the Federation to join by a vote of 175 to 116. The meeting directed the executive to carry out its wishes by a further vote of 183 to 88.

Pensions remained an issue. In 1929 the Teachers' Pension Act was finally proclaimed. It provided for pensions based upon years of service. To provide for teachers who had not yet contributed enough to receive a pension, mandatory retirement age was waived or a school board could grant a special pension. The Saanich school board was the first to do so.

From 1929 to 1940 the benefit was based on service plus an annuity purchased from the teacher's own contributions. The government contribution was inadequate to maintain the pensions. Little proper actuarial work was done on the plan and, as a result, the fund was bankrupt by 1940. In 1940 a new act was passed.

This new act reduced pension benefits being paid, increased the government contribution and retained the basis on which pensions were calculated, namely, service plus an annuity purchased by the teacher's own contributions.

Professional Concerns

During this time, the BCTF sought to increase its impact on curriculum by securing the right to name a representative to sit on the Department's advisory curriculum committee. At least one day of each annual general meeting was devoted to subject section meetings. These meetings served two purposes. One was to pass resolutions requesting the Department to update the curriculum, or to examine the appropriateness of the current textbook, or to review the reliability or validity of the most recent Departmental examinations. The other purpose was to enable teachers to discuss, demonstrate, explore, and experiment with alternative teaching strategies.

The BCTF played a significant role in two royal commissions--the King Commission in 1935 and the Cameron Commission in 1945.

Compulsory Membership

Early BCTF efforts on behalf of teachers were hampered by the fact that only about one-half of the province's teachers belonged to local teachers' associations. Until 1940 direct membership in the BCTF was not allowed--membership was obtained via membership in a local which, in turn, belonged to the provincial body. Many teachers were

isolated in remote communities in one or two room schools. They saw little concrete benefit from belonging to a provincial organization. The initial fee of \$0.25 a year had risen to approximately one-half of one per cent of salary. During the depression years, salaries were often in arrears or only partially paid. This made the fee a significant amount for some.

The Federation used its association with organized labour to gain public support for its position on compulsory membership. It was a long and difficult struggle. By the time compulsory membership was achieved 93 per cent of the province's teachers were members. The purpose of compulsory membership was to ensure that teachers followed an ethical standard of conduct. Professional status demanded that the Federation enforce professional ethics for the profession.

For the next 24 years the BCTF enforced the Code of Ethics. Charges, when laid, were thoroughly investigated and guilty members were disciplined. Some were suspended or expelled from membership. This, in effect, terminated their employment as membership was a necessary prerequisite of employment.

3. EARLY MATURITY PHASE -- 1947 to 1971

Further Expansion of Services Now Available To All B.C. Teachers

With compulsory membership, the BCTF no longer had to expend some of its energies and resources on recruiting members. It was able to focus on the provision of services and programs. The success of already established programs led teachers to ask for and to receive extensions and additional programs in the complementary areas of teacher welfare and professional concerns.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Federation made significant advances in both the professional and economic aspects of its work. A strong emphasis upon better qualifications for teachers and the necessity for teachers to keep up-to-date through in-service education provided much of the justification for major economic advances. Because many economic battles had been won in earlier decades, the BCTF was able to devote a greater emphasis on the professional development aspects of its work.

Major efforts were made in such areas as teacher-preparation programs in the universities, in-service education, curriculum development, continuous progress for students, learning conditions for students and teaching conditions for teachers, obtaining adequate resources for new programs, obtaining special attention for students with emotional problems, the activities of provincial specialist associations, the expansion of the Lesson Aids service, and advice to ministerial authorities and school boards on the design of school buildings.

With respect to the provincial specialist associations, they began to be established in the late fifties. These PSAs, permanent organizations providing on-going services, replaced the haphazard and frequent very informal structures and processes that had been set in place at the various annual subject section meetings. Membership in a PSA was voluntary. PSA's focussed their energies both on the on-going professional development of the teacher and on encouraging and promoting improvements to the provincial curriculum.

The establishment of the PSA's greatly enhanced the amount and the extent of professional development programs by teachers, available to teachers.

Throughout its history the BCTF has worked to obtain for teachers an effective voice in curriculum decisions. A significant victory was won in 1961 when the Ministry of Education appointed two provincial advisory curriculum committees, one for elementary schools, the other for secondary schools. Each of the committees had members representing the ministry, the universities, the BCTF and school trustees. The BCTF had three (and later four) representatives on each committee. These committees helped to shape the development of education in B.C. for over a decade.

The two provincial advisory curriculum committees were originally established to advise the Department on the implementation of the recommendations of the Chant Royal Commission Report, 1960. In the end, few of the recommendations were acted upon.

The Federation has also conducted its own educational surveys. During the school year 1967-68, a BCTF commission of four: D.B. MacKenzie, chairperson, L.A. Hanney, R.J. Carter, later a deputy minister of education, and W.V. (Bill) Allester, stimulated and provoked "... a study and debate within the teaching profession of British Columbia." Hundreds of teachers, and others, were involved in the preparation of briefs to the commission. The report, *Involvement: The Key to Better Schools*, issued in September 1968, provided "guidelines for the future design of education."

In 1969, the Federation co-sponsored another major study with the Educational Research Institute of B.C. This was a study of school libraries and was conducted by J.S. Church, with the assistance of A.W. Fraser and others. The report, issued in June 1970 and called *Personalizing Learning*, dealt with the whole field of school libraries and other educational resource centres in B.C.

Teachers' Pensions

In 1961 the act was again re-written to remove the annuity portion of the pension and calculate the pension solely on service, age of retirement and final average salary. This basic formula is still in effect.

The 1969 Annual General Meeting adopted a comprehensive statement of pensions policy that called for major improvements in teachers' pensions. In the fall of that year a brief was presented to the provincial government detailing the amendments the BCTF wanted made in the Teachers' Pension Act. Despite repeated representations over the next few months, the government decided not to make any changes to the act at the 1970 sitting of legislature. Teachers were incensed by this decision, and the BCTF mounted a major campaign over the next 12 months to attempt to win the changes called for in the briefs submitted to the government in 1969 and 1970.

The 1971 sitting of the legislature passed major amendments to the Teachers' Pension Act, significantly improving the pensions that long service teachers could expect when they retired. A major disappointment was that the increase granted to already retired teachers was very small. Because it had always been BCTF policy that any increases in pension should go first to teachers already retired, and because this point had been reiterated in the 1969 brief, the BCTF tried to persuade the government to improve further the pensions of the retired teachers. Active teachers all over the province supported the Federation's efforts to win additional benefits for the retired teachers.

Their efforts culminated in a province-wide one-day strike on March 19, the first province-wide teachers' strike in BCTF history--to focus public attention on the plight of the retired teachers. Despite all the efforts, the government made no change in its legislation. The BCTF continued its efforts to improve the pensions of retired teachers and to improve the pensions prospects of "short service" (fewer than 30 years of pensionable service) teachers.

First Step Toward Recognition of Equality

In the mid-fifties the BCTF worked for and eventually achieved the removal of discrimination in salary scales against women teachers. The BCTF also worked for and achieved the removal of differing salary scales based on teaching position--that is elementary, junior high and senior high. Henceforth the two criteria for determining the salary of a teacher would be qualifications and the number of years of teaching experience.

4. FULL MATURITY PHASE -- 1971 to present

Response to External Threats

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In 1971, in retaliation for a mounting opposition from the BCTF to poor education policies, the government removed the compulsory membership provision from the Public School Act. Only 69 of the 22,000 teachers in the province did not join or withdrew from membership. Compulsory membership was legislatively restored in 1973. Throughout the restraint period of the early 1980's the Federation again led public opposition to government education policies particularly against cutbacks to education funding and opposition to wage controls.

In 1983, as part of a major initiative to cut back public sector spending, including funding for public education, government introduced a series of 26 Bills which had the collective effect of attacking the basic rights of unionized workers, the human rights of large numbers of British Columbians, and allowing for the first time, the layoff of teachers and other public sector workers without cause. Teachers rallied with the rest of the labour movement to create "Operation Solidarity" to fight the legislation. We also became part of the Solidarity Coalition, working with community activists and human rights groups to "Stop the Bills". The mobilization against the government legislation was overwhelming, culminating in over 50,000 people attending a mass rally at Empire Stadium in August of 1983 and a march through downtown Vancouver in October of 80,000 in opposition to the legislative package.

In November of 1983, teachers participated with other unions in a three day provincial strike action that amounted to a political act against the government legislation. The strike action led to the negotiation of fair layoff and recall provisions for teachers. Over the Remembrance Day weekend, the Operation Solidarity leadership negotiated a controversial end to the action. At the 1984 AGM, the Federation adopted a policy that would have members honour all picket lines in future. This marked a significant step in the trade union consciousness of teachers.

In 1987, government again eliminated compulsory membership as part of an overall package of changes to the governance of public education in B.C. Among the other changes was the creation of a College of Teachers, a teacher certification body but also intended to look after the professional development needs of teachers. The government also removed principals and vice-principals from the teacher bargaining unit, making their on going participation in the BCTF rather pointless. The net result of this legislative onslaught on the BCTF was to unite teachers as never before. First on April 28 in an all day study session and later with the rest of the labour movement in a general strike on June 1, teachers demonstrated their unity and resolve. In a major sign up and certification campaign that ensued in the fall of 1987, the BCTF under the slogan "BCTF Now more than ever" again did a voluntary sign-up of over 98% of BC teachers. Teachers turned an attack on their organization into an opportunity to rebuild and move forward.

Another criterion separates the full maturity phase from the three earlier ones and that is the fact in this last phase, the president, the political leader, has assumed full leadership. It was in the late sixties that the president replaced the general secretary (now the executive director) as the official spokesperson and the public representative of teachers. Since 1969, presidents have served for two or in some cases three one-year terms. Prior to 1969, presidents only served one one-year term while continuing with their full-time teaching responsibilities. Serving more than one year as president, and frequently following some time as a vice-president, meant that the president had a thorough knowledge and understanding of both existing and emerging issues. The president has become an experienced political leader. As well, since 1997, in addition to the president and first vice-president, the second vice-president was added as a full time table officer position. With the administrative functions of the staff more clearly defined, it has meant that the president and the executive committee are very much more politically accountable to the membership than was possible prior to the 1970s.

BCTF Relations with Labour

The 1996 AGM passed a resolution from the Prince Rupert local calling upon the BCTF to affiliate with the BC Federation of Labour. Because of AGM policy requiring a member vote on any affiliation with a labour body, the Federation organized a campaign and member vote in the fall of 1996. The result was a rejection of affiliation by 59% of the members.

Since then, the BCTF has participated in the BC Federation of Labour Public Sector Committee (Expanded) and worked on numerous BC Federation of Labour campaigns. A resolution passed at the 2000 AGM calls upon the BCTF to work towards eventual affiliation with the CLC and the BC Federation of Labour.

Bargaining Rights

In February of 1982, the BCTF held a member vote to determine support for a submission to government requesting full bargaining rights, including the right to strike. The question put to members actually included the option of strike or arbitration, to be exercised by teachers through their local. Nonetheless, teachers turned down the proposal.

Just over a year later and following the launching of both a major restraint program and a legislative assault on labour and human rights by the provincial government, teachers were indeed on a provincial strike. In overwhelming numbers, teachers heeded the call of Operation Solidarity, an organization of all unions in BC, to take job action against the 26 Bills introduced by government in the summer of 1983. Of particular concern to the BCTF was a piece of legislation that would give employers the right to lay off teachers and other public sector workers without cause. Unlike other public sector workers, teachers did not have seniority rights in the agreements, because their limited bargaining rights did not provide for the negotiation of seniority and severance provisions. After walking picket lines for three days with other union members, teachers were able to successfully negotiate lay off and recall provisions in their local agreements. This marked a significant step towards full collective bargaining; the negotiation of something other than salaries and bonuses. Teachers now understood the importance of the picket line both for themselves and other workers.

The legislative package of 1987 that removed compulsory membership in the BCTF for teachers and established a College of Teachers, also gave full bargaining rights to teachers, including the right to strike. Teachers were provided the option of choosing an "association" model with limited bargaining rights and no strike option or a "union" model with the full scope of employment conditions negotiable and the right to strike. All 76 locals of the BCTF chose the union model and the first round of bargaining under the expanded rights took place in 1988/89.

What emerged was a system of co-ordinated local bargaining. Locals were the bargaining agent charged with the responsibility of negotiating a collective agreement with their school board. The BCTF worked to co-ordinate all negotiating activities as well as to develop the Collective Bargaining Handbook, with model clause language on every conceivable provision that teachers might wish to negotiate. Local bargaining teams were trained by the BCTF and supported by staff assigned to work with locals. Additional staff were hired to assist and new policies and procedures were put in place to support the new bargaining regime including strike pay and assistance.

The first round of full collective bargaining for teachers in 1988 continued to captivate the excitement and energy of teachers that was generated in the sign-up campaign the year before. On November 28, Kitimat teachers began a 10-day strike before successfully concluding an agreement. Eleven other locals struck in the first round and others mobilized to achieve their objectives that became identified in the slogan "Why Not Here?" We did well through co-ordinated local bargaining. And we experienced a high degree of democracy and member participation in decisions and the process of achieving local collective agreements.

The net result of co-ordinated local bargaining through three rounds was the achievement of comprehensive collective agreements that not only replaced the rights contained in legislation, but also enhanced and expanded those rights considerably. We obtained class size limits in contract, preparation time, paid maternity leave, tenure rights other workload provisions and professional autonomy clauses. And our salary increases were significant as well through this period, allowing us to not only keep up with inflation, but also to recover some of the losses we had experienced as a result of the wage control program of the eighties. Collective bargaining had truly come of age for teachers. Teachers finally had an appropriate vehicle to exercise their collective will within the public school system.

In the third round of local bargaining, in the spring of 1993, Surrey and Vancouver teachers were on strike. Round three had been a difficult one for teachers. Building on the success of the first two rounds, locals were hoping to secure provisions gained by others in the earlier rounds and to improve provisions in a number of areas. But, the economic climate had changed and the public was not as receptive to our cause as it had been in earlier rounds. The government ordered teachers in Surrey and Vancouver back to work without negotiated settlements.

A year later in 1994, government introduced the Public Sector Labour Relations Act which created the BCTF as the bargaining agent for all teachers and created a provincial bargaining agency for trustees called the BC Public School Employers' Association. The locus of bargaining was moved to the provincial level where all the significant cost items would be negotiated and where teachers retained the right to strike. While locals were still able to negotiate local matters agreements, they no longer possessed the right to strike. The pressure was off the local boards of school trustees.

The first round of bargaining under the new PELRA, resulted in a roll over of existing agreements between boards and locals and a small number of provincial provisions, including a common grievance procedure and harassment clause. The second round achieved reductions in class size for most classes at the K-3 level, fixed ratios for learning specialist teachers; librarians, counsellors, learning assistance teachers, special education teachers, and ESL teachers and improvements for Teachers on Call. But both rounds failed to establish the ability of the parties (BCTF and BCPSEA) to negotiate with one another. In both cases, government intervention was the direct route to a deal.

In March of 2000, CUPE struck in 43 districts and in every one of those, teachers honoured picket lines. Over half of the public school system in BC was shut down and over 25,100 teachers received third party strike pay from the BCTF for their support. CUPE and the BCTF continue to forge strong links of solidarity.

Tenure and Professional Rights

When government introduced Bills 19 and 20 in the spring of 1987, part of their strategy was to create a College of Teachers that would look after the professional interests of teachers. Pressure from the BCTF, backed by solid member support, ensured that enactment of the College would see its role largely limited to teacher certification and de-certification.

With the achievement of full collective bargaining rights at the same time, teachers were now able to negotiate aspects of their tenure and professional rights. In particular the inclusion of professional autonomy provisions in many agreements took the issue of teacher professional rights a great step forward.

Teachers' Pensions

Plan members and the employer both agreed in 1974 to an additional contribution of up to one percent each to make a one-time adjustment to pensions in payment from 1972 to 1975 and to provide ongoing inflation protection. Commencing in 1975 all past and future pensions would be adjusted quarterly by the changes in the Canadian Consumer Price Index. In addition the final average salaries of plan members on long term disability and those with vested pensions would be increased to date of retirement by the same index.

In 1981 the one percent contribution for indexing was allocated to the Inflation Adjustment Account. The quarterly indexing of pensions ceased and was replaced by an annual increase, not to exceed the Canadian Consumer Price Index, and within the available funds in the Inflation Adjustment Account.

The government agreed at this time to create an Investment Committee, with BCTF representation, to hear reports from the Ministry of Finance and to give input to the investment of the pension fund.

Changes to teachers' pension benefits are ongoing: lowering the vesting period from 10 to 2 years; basing pension eligibility on the "90" factor; lessening the reduction for early retirement; indexing the CPP offset; making available to retirees the Medical Services Plan of B.C., an Extended Health Benefit Plan and a Dental Plan with the cost sharing dependent upon pensionable service; recognizing child-rearing years for pension eligibility; simplifying and broadening purchase of service rules.

In 1992 the Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee (TPPAC) was formed to create a committee to represent the interests of all pension plan members—members of the BCTF, the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, the B.C. School Superintendents' Association and the retired members of the plan.

Full maturity in the pension plan was attained when the BCTF as Plan Member Partner and the Minister of Finance as the Plan Employer Partner signed an agreement to implement joint trusteeship of the Teachers' Pension Plan. Under the Agreement, effective 5 April 2001, the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees (five appointees from each partner) is responsible for managing the pension plan and the pension fund. Two crown corporations, the B.C. Pension Corporation and the B.C. Investment Management Corporation, are delegated the responsibility, respectively, for the day-to-day administration of the plan and the investment of the funds.

Conclusion

Since 1919, the BCTF has been articulate and effective in working for the rights of teachers and students and in promoting public education. Its motto could well be, in the words of the Reverend Edward Cridge in his report as Superintendent of Schools in 1861:

"A blessing [education] as precious as the light and the air should be rendered as common and as free as possible."