

SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT

At the Last AUCE Provincial Convention several changes were approved which had an impact on the Provincial Office. The Provincial Coordinator was approved as a second full-time Salaried Position, overtime for salaried officers was limited by requiring pre-approval from the Provincial Executive, per capita tax remittance procedures were tightened up while at the same time conditions for the waiving of per capita tax was written in the Constitution and all non-constitutionally required Cross-Local Committees were eliminated.

To date, the effects of these changes have been mixed.

There has not been adequate time to assess the effectiveness of a full-time Coordinator. The Provincial Coordinator served for only three months. During her time in office she put out two Provincial Newsletters, brought the newspaper clipping file up to date, and assisted with filing. The presence of a second person in the office was an advantage by allowing each person to bounce ideas and gain suggestions from the other person as well as to ensure that the office was covered. The question of whether or not the presence of a second full time officer provided sufficient additional research, assistance to the Local or to the membership to justify the additional cost cannot be answered one way or the other on the basis of the three months that there were two salaried officers in the office.

The elimination of the cross-local committees reduced the usage of the Provincial Office. Because the Provincial Office is not adjacent to any of our Locals, it makes it difficult for the Local membership to use the resources available in the office. Locals Six and Seven have used the resources available. Local Six used the Printing facilities to print bulletins for their membership and Local Seven used the resources files for research on behalf of their sign up campaign.

Unfortunately, the effect of the "isolation" of the Provincial office has been to create a feeling that many members have that the Provincial is "something out there" that doesn't do anything relevant for the membership. This view of the Provincial should concern us. I will try to come up with some suggestions to deal with this problem later in my report.

The changes made to the procedures for remittance of per capita tax have been largely ineffective. The majority of Locals have been tardy in remitting their per capita tax. Locals Four and Five, in particular, have used late remittance of per capita tax as a means of trying to apply political pressure to enforce their demands on the Provincial Executive. Local Five is five months in arrears while Local Four has repeatedly been more than four months late in remitting per capita tax.

When repeated communications to the Local Four Treasurer and Local Executive were unsuccessful in having them either remit the per capita tax on time, or have them provide reasons for their actions, a letter was sent to the Local membership informing them of the situation.

Both Locals Four and Five have petitioned for secession from the Provincial Association. NOTE: A report from the Inquiry Committees on Secession from the two Locals will be presented at Convention.

Local Six, when faced with a temporary financial crunch, applied for a short-term interest-free loan.

The Provincial Executive has proposed an amendment to the constitution to help deal with this situation in future.

continued next page...

Over the last year the activities in the Provincial Office have centred over expanding the Provincial Resources Centre, putting out the Provincial Newsletter, assisting with preparations for the bargaining strategies seminar and processing the secession inquiries and referendums for Locals Four and Five. The office was also used by Locals Six and Seven (as mentioned previously) as well as by members of the public.

The Provincial Resources Centre was improved by soliciting information on Labour legislation, Workers Compensation, Education Policy and other related topic from all Canadian Provinces - as well as countries in Europe. As a result, we have extensive information, and legislation from all Provinces in Canada as well as five countries in Europe. We also expanded our magazine subscriptions and increased our number of relevant reports from different agencies.

Over the last year my major activity was representing AUCE in the Defend Educational Services Coalition (DESC) which was formed in response to the Provincial Government's Compensation Stabilisation Program. DESC is made up of AUCE, the BC Teacher's Federation, the Canadian Federation of Students, the College-Institutes Educators Association, CUPE and the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union. The major emphasis of DESC has been to increase public opposition to the Wage and Spending Restrain Program through media advertising, press releases, pamphlets and through a "Day of Education" on April 29th. The program has had some effect to date, however the time for more political activity has come. The Provincial Executive has proposed a resolution that will provide us with comprehensive policy and action that we can use to actively oppose the Compensation Stabilisation Program.

DESC is a useful coalition, performing a useful function of pulling together a widely based coalition of groups. The general approach has been effective to-date, although the Television ads were largely ineffective. I would recommend that we retain our membership in DESC - but that we attempt to change the direction now that the legislation has been approved. Public opposition is building and it is time that we strengthened our attacks on this program. It is our jobs that are being wiped out, it is our wages that are being squeezed and we can't let them steamroller us. DESC can be a vehicle to focus this opposition and we must make sure that it serves our needs.

I also went to the CLC Convention in Winnipeg on behalf of the Provincial Association in order to lobby for admission to the CLC. The Convention was interesting, however I was forced to conclude that the likelihood of our being granted affiliate status to the CLC is highly unlikely due to the adamant opposition to our admission by CUPE. Although there was significant support from those delegates that we talked to and strong support from the two opposition caucuses, no motion in support of admitting non-affiliates made it to the floor and one motion was reworded to turn it into an affirmative action plan to admit non-affiliates through present affiliates in their jurisdiction, which would have been a licence to raid non-affiliates. Fortunately, this motion did not make it to the floor of the Convention.

Over the last year I have had considerable difficulties in performing the duties of Secretary Treasurer. The two significant reasons have been my lack of training in the skills necessary and because of that a difficulty in discerning what the role of a full time officer in AUCE should be. This was aggravated by the resignation of the Provincial Coordinator and by the isolation of the Provincial Office from the membership.

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The Secretary Treasurer's position is both an office worker and an Executive member. The equivalent office position would be an office manager/bookkeeper which requires a significant level of training and office experience. Because of the structure of the position, bookkeeping, records keeping, filing, minutes and correspondence must be done and can only be done by this person. At the same time, due to the voluntary nature of the Executive it is virtually impossible to get direction and guidance from the Executive. The Secretary Treasurer is also a member of the Executive and this requires a wide range of often differing skills. A person who runs for the position has often had extensive experience as an executive member but rarely hands on experience in bookkeeping, office management etc. Part of the advantage of having a second person in the office is that both people can assist and advise each other and pool their skills. The difficulties in the position are emphasised by the short-term nature of a position that is elected yearly.

The Provincial Executive is proposing that the Provincial Coordinator's position be eliminated and that we have one full time officer - the Secretary Treasurer. If we eliminate the Provincial Coordinator we must significantly change the Secretary Treasurer's position. We must reduce the amount of routine clerical work to be done so that the Secretary Treasurer can spend the majority of her/his time out of the office. The Secretary Treasurer should be a "field worker" that is actively assisting the Locals, talking to the membership, representing AUCE with other groups etc.

To do this two major changes should be made:

- 1) We should hire a part-time book keeper to ensure that the books are properly maintained, to advise and assist the Secretary Treasurer and to provide continuity. This would lessen the lengthy training period now needed and provide the consistence and reliability that the books require. This could be tied in to simplifying the accounting procedures by changing to a "One-Write System" as investigated by the Provincial Executive. The cost of a part time book keeper will be approximately \$250 a month.
- 2) A systematic training procedure should be set up. The strengths and weaknesses of the Secretary Treasurer should be identified so that they can learn the skills to perform the job effectively. This should be combined with more effective supervision and direction from the Provincial Executive. This would go a long way to reduce the isolation and anxiety inherent in this position.

The reduction of the "shit work" in the office will be more difficult. The number and length of Executive Meetings must be reduced. We have had too many committees, sub-committees, referendums, reports - the result has been the wasting of the energies and abilities of those who have wanted to build AUCE - leading to a sense of failure and exhaustion. This must be changed!

We must sketch out action and then let those authorised to act the freedom to act. We have tended to be so afraid of people becoming intrenched that we have blocked them from performing their tasks. In this office what this means is that we must reduce the number of reports, the number of meetings, and if necessary cut back on extraneous things like the resources centre so that the Secretary Treasurer can be free to help where help is needed.

Over the next year this Convention should set two or three priorities and direct the Executive to focus on them. The resolution in favour of investigating the creation of a Provincial Council is important but it should not be the main priority of the Provincial for the next year. There are other critical tasks that

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the Provincial needs to focus on.

- 1) Responding to the economy and the attacks on unions by the Provincial and Federal Governments. We need an active Provincial Executive that will be able to defend our members, that will be able to organise opposition in conjunction with other groups and will be able to marshall support within the Provincial Association for any actions that may be necessary to fight repressive Government policies.
- 2) Organising new AUCE Locals. Just over 40% of the workforce in B.C. is organised, the vast majority is women. We have to look seriously at setting up an organising committee and paying members to organise if necessary.
- 3) Union Education. We must work more closely with our locals to improve union education at the locals. This could be done by providing resources to the Locals, by providing financial assistance to the Locals, or by paying members of the Locals to attend programs (ie. Arbitration seminars, collective bargaining courses).

We must recognise that our resources are limited and that we will be most effective if we assist and augment the activities of the locals and not try to add another level of resources.

We could also assist them by providing tangible educational aids such as slide/tape presentations, stewards manuals, contract clause finders. We can start by asking them what they need and by either hiring people to do them or by providing the Locals with financial assistance to do them themselves.

It would be a major mistake to reduce the Provincial Per Capita and turn the money back to the Locals. We must use the money to build a strike fund that will be a "local assistance fund" which can be used for emergencies. We must use the money to provide concrete assistance to the Locals. We can use the money for funding projects that will assist our members.

We can and must reduce the isolation of the Provincial from the membership and ensure that it serves the needs of the Locals and of the membership!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That we continue to remain a member of the Defend Educational Services Coalition.
- 2) That we hire a part time bookkeeper to cost no more than \$250.
- 3) That the Provincial Executive be directed to develop a training procedure for the next Secretary Treasurer and develop a procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of this training.
- 4) That the Provincial Executive prioritise its activities for the next year in two or three major areas along the lines of my suggestions.