

B.C. Education Minister pessimistic about deal with teachers



BCTF president Susan Lambert and Education Minister George Abbott have a rocky year ahead.

BLACK PRESS

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The B.C. government is sticking to its promise of a net-zero contract with the province's teachers, even as negotiations drag on heading into a new school year.

"There is no question in my mind and certainly no question in government's mind that the net-zero mandate that has now been applied to about three-quarters of public servants in British Columbia will soon be applied to teachers," education minister George Abbott told a group of reporters during a conference call Tuesday afternoon. "From a budgetary perspective it's going to be a zero-per-cent increase year-over-year. It's not like government is being

mean-spirited here. We don't have a choice, we don't have the dollars to deal with a wage increase for the teachers or for anyone else at this point."

The B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and B.C. Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) have been negotiating a new contract since the previous one expired in the spring. Earlier this summer the BCTF voted overwhelmingly in favour of a job action starting when students go back to school on Sept. 6 if there was no agreement reached.

The BCTF said the job action would begin with work-to-rule. Essentially, teachers would stop performing administrative duties like preparing report cards. They would also stop between class su-

pervision.

"Attendance will be carried out as usual, as we did before," said Jennifer Wolney, acting president of the Revelstoke Teachers' Association.

Abbott said he was not optimistic about an agreement being reached any time soon. "I don't want to be Polyanna-ish and indicate there's going to be an agreement next week because I don't believe there will be but I do hope the parties continue to work hard to try and reach an agreement."

Anne Cooper, the superintendent of the Revelstoke School District, said supervision would be taken over by administrative staff.

"We're going to organize to cover off the supervision," she said. As for report cards, she said the district would come up with a plan for them later on in the school year.

When asked what the government would do in event of a strike, Minister Abbott did not rule out intervention.

"Should that eventuality occur we can look at the history of these things in the province and probably imagine what government would do in response to that but I hope that's a bridge we don't have to cross," he said.

Negotiations between the province and the teachers' union has

been notoriously acrimonious in the past. In 2005, the teachers engaged in an illegal 17-day strike that had to be ended by a court order.

"One doesn't want to be overly pessimistic on these matters but I need to be realistic as well," said Abbott. "I do hope the parties can reach an agreement and we can continue to build a quality education agreement across the province."

Wolney gave little hope for optimism. "Obviously the two parties are very far apart. It's not going well," she told the Times Review.

Full-day kindergarten launches in Revelstoke

When the school year kicked off in Revelstoke this week, it marked the debut of full-day kindergarten in Revelstoke – and about 90 children were registered to start things off.

Full-day kindergarten was launched throughout part of Brit-

ish Columbia last year and this year marks the beginning of the program for all kindergarten students.

In Revelstoke, enrolment is sitting at about 90 students, said school district superintendent Anne Cooper. That's up from 80 students last year and only 59 the year before.

"I'm very encouraged by that number," she said.

Education Minister George Abbott said the roll out last year for 22,000 kindergarten students was a big success, with great feedback from parents and teachers. This year there will be about 37,000 students registered in full-day kindergarten.

"That is a big advance in the education system," he told a group of reporters during a conference call last week. "It's been very challenging but very successful as well."

The Revelstoke School District held off on implementing full-day kindergarten last year because it wanted to roll out the program district wide rather than piecemeal. Cooper said the district held meetings with teachers last year to prepare them for the upcoming school year.

"I think they worked hard and were very thoughtful so I think we're in really good shape," she said.

IH announces new Kamloops-based dedicated helicopter ambulance

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A new dedicated helicopter air ambulance based at Kamloops' Royal Inland Hospital was put into service on Aug. 30.

The 'dedicated' helicopter means a crew of paramedics will staff the helicopter for 12 hours per day, seven days a week, ready to take off at a moment's notice. It will serve an area including Rev-

elstoke.

The announcement follows a eight-week trial period last summer. During the trial, the BC Ambulance Service Critical Care Transport helicopter was deployed 62 times and was used to transport patients to hospitals in Kamloops, Kelowna and Vancouver a total of 33 times.

Following the trial, the BCAS reverted to the existing system, which involved using chartered he-

licopters and dedicated airplanes. The new helicopter will not completely replace the old system, but will be integrated into it. A BCAS spokesperson stressed to the *Times Review* that the treatment and transport of patients involved in critical care incidents involved a complex set of variables. Depending on circumstances, the helicopter may or may not be used in incidents such as a bad car crash on the Trans-Canada Highway, or an industrial

accident in the backcountry.

The key advantage of the new system is having the specialized trauma team on stand-by next to the helicopter. Previously, the team would have to make its way to a chartered helicopter, using up precious time in critical incidents.

"Everyone knows about 'The Golden Hour' – that tight, precious window of time when people's chances of survival and optimal recovery are highest," said

Kamloops-South Thompson MLA Kevin Krueger. "Emergency room physicians and your local MLAs have worked eight years for this service."

"Our region includes geography that can present a challenge for those responding to medical emergencies. This option will help address long distances and mountainous landscapes," said Interior

See next page

Reconnaissance, restitution et réconciliation

Lors des premières activités nationales d'internement au Canada en 1914-1920, des milliers d'hommes, de femmes et d'enfants ont été stigmatisés comme étant des « ennemis étrangers ». Plusieurs furent emprisonnés. Dépouillés du peu de richesses qu'ils possédaient, forcés d'effectuer des travaux difficiles dans l'arrière-pays du Canada, ils ont également été privés de leurs droits et soumis à d'autres censures sanctionnées par l'état – non pas à cause de quoique ce soit qu'ils avaient fait, mais uniquement à cause de l'endroit d'où ils venaient et de qui ils étaient.

En mai 2008, des représentants de la communauté ukrainienne du Canada ont conclu un accord avec le gouvernement du Canada qui a mené à la création d'un fonds de dotation pour financer des projets commémoratifs, éducatifs, académiques et culturels ayant pour but de rappeler à tous les Canadiens cet épisode dans l'histoire de notre pays.

Recognition, Restitution & Reconciliation

During Canada's first national internment operations of 1914-1920 thousands of men, women and children were branded as "enemy aliens." Many were imprisoned. Stripped of what little wealth they had, forced to do heavy labour in Canada's hinterlands, they were also disenfranchised and subjected to other state sanctioned censures – not because of anything they had done but only because of where they had come from, who they were.

In May 2008 representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian community reached an agreement with the Government of Canada providing for the creation of an endowment fund to support commemorative, educational, scholarly and cultural projects intended to remind all Canadians of this episode in our nation's history.

Qu'est dans votre coffre?

Fonds canadien de reconnaissance de l'internement durant la Première Guerre mondiale

Pour présenter une demande de subvention ou pour obtenir plus d'information, veuillez consulter l'adresse www.internementcanada.ca ou appelez sans frais le 1-866-288-7931

What's in your trunk?

Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund

To apply for a grant or for more information please go to www.internementcanada.ca or phone toll free at 1-866-288-7931

Revelstoke Theatre Company

March 2012 musical production will be "Oklahoma"

Auditions will be held
Wednesday Sept 14 & Thursday Sept 15
 (at the United Church)

Audition Packages will be available from the
 Community Centre after Labor Day

Auditions for Fall Production of One Act Comedies

Wednesday September 21 at 7:00pm or
 Saturday September 24 at 1:00pm
 7 actors (male and female) are needed.
 (at the Rec. Centre)

For more information, call Lyn or Denny at 250.837.3687

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