

Interview: Pat Brady (PB)

Interviewer: Ken Novakowski (KN)

Assisted by: Al Cornes and Lesley Harrington

Date: July 12, 2016

Location: Vancouver, BC

[00:00:11] KN: We're here this afternoon, July 12th, 2016 to interview pat Brady, who was the BCTF President from 1977 to 1979. The interview is being conducted by Ken Novakowski and Al Cornes, with technical assistance from Lesley Harrington. Good afternoon, Pat, and thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview, and being here.

[00:00:36] PB: Good afternoon. It is going to be fun, I am sure.

[00:00:39] KN: So, we want to start off with asking you a bit about where and when you were born and where you were raised.

[00:00:46] PB: I was born, believe it or not, in St. Vincent Hospital in Vancouver, and basically, raised in a community called Bradner, which is now part of Greater Abbotsford.

[00:01:04] KN: And, when you say you were raised there, were you raised on the farm or

[00:01:07] PB: Well, no it wasn't a farm, it was 5 acres...

[00:01:12] KN: OK, so it was an acreage.

[00:01:17] PB: It wasn't an active farm, it was just a farm property that my dad bought in in 1930-something, and paid \$15,000 for it.

[00:01:23] KN: And, what year were you born?

[00:01:25] PB: 1937. That's 1937 (

[00:01:29] PB: laughs)

[00:01:36] KN: Can you tell us a bit about your family and whether or not they had a background in unionism; or whether there were progressive politics in your family; or something like that?

[00:01:44] PB: Well, my dad worked for the CPR and was very active in... whatever they called it—it has changed the name since then—the Railway Union. And he had no brothers and sisters in Canada, because he came from Ireland. Mom worked, but she never was in a union, and one cousin—oh, now we're getting far away—but he had a roofing company and it was unionized. So, dad was active in it, but not in an official position within a union. But he made sure he went to all the meetings, as that was his responsibility.

[00:02:33] KN: So, what can you remember and tell us about your experience in school, both elementary and secondary school?

[00:02:43] KN: Where did you go to school,

[00:02:44] KN: what kind of experiences

[00:02:45] KN: have you had?

[00:03:33] PB: I had, kind of, an unusual, I suppose schooling. I went for the first year university, and then I worked for the CPR for 2 years in Vancouver, near the old Sun building, because we didn't have any money. And then I went back for two years, and then I taught for four—again, cos I couldn't afford university. My family—none of them had any money that could even pay any major part of the costs to go to university. So, it was 2 years with the CPR; 2 years with UBC; 4 years teaching; and then back to UBC for 2 more years. I got both the Elementary and Advanced Certificate at that time; and I got my Secondary Degree after the five years. And after I graduated, I decided that where I wanted to teach, was somewhere outside the Valley and it would be adventuresome. And in those days they had at UBC, in the armories, what we called, the cattle market; where the school boards and the superintendents and the senior staff would have a booths of some kind, and try to attract teachers. Because they were hard to find teachers in any district. And I thought, well I will either go somewhere on the Island, or somewhere up North, just

[00:04:21] PB: away from the Valley after teaching in Chilliwack for four years. So, I was going around with a friend of mine. I came to the Prince George district booth. And they had lots of signs over there, and they were looking for elementary and secondary; and we were talking to the superintendent, and he said, "Well, we're building a brand new Prince George Senior Secondary". And, he said, "Would you consider that"? And I said, "Well, we're, sort of on a window-shopping today; and I will consider that". So, I filled out the form, and in those days, it was quite different from what I understand in the last 15–20 years. I put down, "I will come and teach in Prince George if you give me 2 blocks of Law 11, one block of History, I think, it was 11; a block of typing; and 1 other block I'll leave to you that I might consider". So... in about 2 days later I was back at the dormitories, cos I was back at UBC. I got a telegram, I am offered exactly what I asked for. Nowadays you apply to the district and hope they can place you somewhere, in what they think you need.

[00:05:45] PB: But it was such short supply (of teachers) in those days, you could literally, write your own ticket—even, as to the course, not just the level, but the course. So, I went to Prince George, thinking I will spend a couple of years there and so, I did teach there. I had, I think, 225 students in the cycle, at that time, and then I got involved in the local teachers' association. And I decided I will try some elementary, so I went and taught in an elementary school—name doesn't matter, but for Grade 4 and 6, one of each. Then they had in Prince George what they called, an Administrative Training Program, where you taught half-time and then were sort-of understudy to the principal. After that year, you were assessed to see if you wanted to become

a principal of a school. And of course, if you did, and there was a vacancy, it would be an outlying school, probably some 30-some miles from Prince George. In Giscome, or God knows where it might be. And Prince George, as you may know, if you went from the Southern boundary to the Northern, it is somewhere around 300 and some miles, you know?

[00:07:17] PB: So, it could be anywhere within the confines of that. But, anyhow the superintendent Dave Todd—you may have heard of him, but Dave was a very anti-union person, didn't believe that the teachers should have any organization at all, and that it was always a threat to what he thought should be done. It was more along the lines of what used to be when I first started in Chilliwack, where it wasn't a superintendent of schools for the district; it was the inspector. And the inspector, in effect was God, as far as the teachers were concerned, because he—and there were no shes at the time... later on Dorothy Glass and what was her name, I forgot... anyhow, they had become superintendents... But at that time, the inspector came and if he didn't like you, you got fired. That was it; he was the boss. But, in Prince George they changed the rules. And the superintendent was the one that made the recommendations. And so he said, "Would you appreciate going and being a principal in the district?" I said, "Well, depends where it is" and he says, "Well"—and he leaned forward I'll never forget this, he said, "If it comes to a conflict between the administrative staff (which meant him and his...) and the union, whose side would you take?"

[00:08:59] PB: And I looked at him and I said, "Well, it depends on the issue, Dave. I can't tell you whose side I'd pick; in fact I didn't know there was sides". I said, "If you're implying that I have to swear some kind of unofficial oath of fealty to the administration to become an administrator, you can just

[00:09:17] PB: take me off your list right now". So I never got a principal ship (everyone laughs), which didn't surprise me! But I was annoyed that the suggestion was, that to do your job, I looked at it more at a principal, an educational leader, but he looked at it as a functionary, to carry out the orders of his staff and the board, I guess. And I didn't think, that I wanted to be in that position, so I didn't take it. And I was involved with the local teachers organization at the time, along, with, also the provincial.

[00:09:57] KN: How did you get involved?

[00:09:58] PB: I got involved way back, in my first year teaching in 1960 in Chilliwack. They were having difficulty to get people to go to the Annual Meeting. And I was approached and asked, would you go to the Annual Meeting of the BCTF? I said, "Oh, Christ this is my holidays, why would I want to go to a bloody meeting for"? Oh, something to that effect. "But, we have to have so many delegates", and blah blah. So, I said, "Ok, I'll go". So, we went to the meeting and it was quite overwhelming; that's the first meeting that I've ever been. There are hundreds of people in this hall, and I think, at that time the Executive of the BCTF sat on the stage. And the president chaired the meeting, and so on. So, that's fine and I am sitting along, and resolutions came; and one came up and I don't even know what it was, and I am reading this and I said to...

Chilliwack only had three or four delegates, and I said to one of the others, I said, "Oh, that's a stupid thing! What does the Executive think they're doing, this is crazy!"

[00:11:13] PB: People are up and speaking, and mostly from the Executive, and a few from the audience, and I said, "Go and tell them that this, and this, is wrong or it won't work", or...I don't even remember, and they said, "Oh, we're not going to do that"... So, they said, "Well, you get up". So, I said, "Well... yeah, I can do that". So I went up to the microphone and I wasn't as nervous as I thought I might be, cos I was looking right at the chair. And that's the secret: if it's your first time, look at the chair, and speak to that person as if they're right next to you. And so I said, "I think this Executive motion is really wrong for the following three reasons" and I gave the three reasons. And they said, "Thank you". Up until then it had been very quiet in the room, and when I finished, there was this great round of applause. And I thought, "You're all sitting there, and you agree, why aren't you up there, you old folks, doing this?"

[00:12:15] PB: So, I went back and I was quite proud that I got a little applause for my great argument! And the meeting went on. And the motion—and it was an Executive motion—

[00:12:25] PB: it was defeated. Well, my head even got bigger (everyone laughs) at that table, of course. So, we went on with the rest of the meeting. And about 10 minutes later one of the Executive members got up off his chair, walked down the side, winded his way through to our table—cos I guess it was his side, or his motion, he was rather upset that it had been defeated. And he came over and said, "If you think you're so smart, why don't you run for Executive?" And I said—well, I won't tell you the word I said—but the second word was "you. I will!" And I did (laughter breaks out). And it was total accidental, I had no idea I was ever going to be that involved. And that was 1960 and I think I attended the next 53 or 54 consecutive Annual General Meetings...

[00:13:19] KN: And did you get elected?

[00:13:20] PB: I got elected—yes!

[00:13:23] KN: And was that when Wes Janzen was President? 1960 would have been Wes' time. He was 1960–61

[00:13:26] PB: You know I can't even remember...

[00:13:30] PB: No, I didn't get elected that year! I think it was the next, or... anyhow, eventually I got elected. But it wasn't at that meeting, cos I was only in Chilliwack for four years, I think. But I did go to all the meetings as delegate. And then I went up North, and got involved, both with the Prince George Teachers' Association, and the North-Central District Council, that was existent at that time. And that was an interesting experience. I never ran for President of the Prince George Teachers at that time, but I was on the Executive for several years and the District Council. And then I was chosen by the District Council, along with a fellow by the name of Dave Shore—you may have remembered him—from I think, Williams Lake. Dave and I became the

Geographical Representatives to the BCTF Rep Assembly, which met at the bottom of the old BCTF building. And I think Dave and I had 7 locals—teachers’ associations—we looked after, from Smithers to the Alberta border; to way up North, Dawson Creek or something like that, past Quesnel. It was Williams Lake, Quesnel, Prince George, McBride, Valemount, Mackenzie, Nechako, Smithers, Burns Lake and Vanderhoof.

[00:15:03] PB: And there were two of us for that whole area to be the Geographic Representatives. And, it truly was geographic. And it caused some problems, trying to teach full-time and do this same time.

[00:15:19] KN: Could you talk a bit about the Regional Council?

[00:15:21] KN: What was the Regional Council?

[00:16:06] PB: In the North-Central District Council there were all those locals that were involved. It met on a regular basis to share concerns and ideas, both, with the Federation and with government on situations that were particularly germane to that particular geographic area: living conditions, and the weather and that sort of thing. And we shared a lot of information about... because at that time there were the individual contracts negotiated, so it was part of (a way) to get together and agree on common issues before there was this provincial stuff. And how we want it, and how we could whip-saw this and that. The PD people got together for the joint PD efforts—the professional development efforts; the bargaining got together—and so it was a good group of sharing things. And at the time, because of the structure of the Rep Assembly, we were representing the geographic area and we were entitled to two representatives. We also worked with OVTA, the Okanagan Valley Teachers’ Association, from time to time; and the North-Central District Council. This was before the Executive of the BCTF, not too far down the line, abolished the district councils.

[00:16:52] PB: I think, in a way, that they were a threat to the power structure that they were trying to either inculcate, or already have developed; that they felt there was a lack of control over district councils. The one time, when the government of BC said, you’re going to either be a union or profession—now we know, that is an over-generalization, but you know what I am talking about—and there was quite a bit of a dialogue with the East-West Kootenay District Councils, the Okanagan Valley Teachers’ Association. So, the district councils, North-Central Council and the Peace District Council; we were looking at one time, that maybe this is the time we should become a teachers’ federation separate from those guys down there, which meant the Lower Mainland. And, there was some serious talk about that. Depending on how the BCTF, as an entity, and the Executive handled this—and we had quite a few discussions. I think I was Vice-President of the North Central Council. Anyhow. Then they changed the RA, for instance to, every local association should have its own individual member, which I think, was a great move, I am not saying it wasn’t which in fact meant, that the GR designation was gone.

[00:18:26] PB: And I represented Prince George along with many others—Colin Scott, and Doug Smart—he became the Teachers’ College Registrar; and in fact, Doug and I served on the

Executive together. We were the two dissenting votes on most things, because... How many are there on the Executive?

[00:18:57] KN: 11.

[00:18:58] PB: 11, it was usually 9:2 even on the time of the day. And you guys realize it, political in-fighting was absolutely horrendous. And I was still teaching elementary, Grade 7, or something, bringing all my homework to mark, books to read, because it didn't matter what I said, or Doug said. Wasn't going to happen. And we understand; and one day he said to me, he asked, "Why do you come to these meetings?" And I said, "Well you wouldn't even get as seconder for any of your stupid motions, if I wasn't here" (laughs), and I said, "It is nice—we can chat on the plane on the way down and back, and if you think you're going to make any difference, Doug..." Anyhow, that was an interesting experience. I think, I spent 12 years on the Executive.

[00:19:51] KN: When did you become President of your local?

[00:19:57] PB: Well, I was the first Second Vice in 8 years, that wasn't thrown out of office. We had

[00:20:09] PB: 7 or 8 in a row, Second Vice that ran for the First and were not re-elected after one year as Second Vice. This was BCTF. I became Second Vice after one of the AGMs, after being Member At Large. And I ran for President against—he was from Hope—Don Walmsley.

[00:20:35] PB: And I became President—I think, Don was Frist, I am not sure. But I became President. And so, my first year as President was right from the classroom into full-time in the office. I've never done a year, or two, and now it is three. Under-study as First Vice, and it was quite the learning experience. And then I became part of the Canadian Teachers' Federation delegates at their Annual Meeting, and eventually became President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

[00:21:18] PB: And then I came back to Prince George, and I ran for President. So, I was the BC President, Canadian President and then I ran for the top-job, which is this local (everyone laughs)—no, that's true, Local President. I mean, that's the hardest job I ever did, was the Local President. As the BC President, you have a staff of 130–150 people. And you're helping foreign policy and all that, but you have all those people that can do all those things. I went onto the national level, and I think there were only 25 full-time staff members at the headquarters in Ottawa. But you're dealing with provincial and territorial presidents of the organization, and a lot of international. I was the head of the Canadian delegation, I think, to three international meetings. One was in Lagos, Nigeria, one in Brasilia, one in Jakarta; the other two were in Geneva... but anyhow. It is a totally different workload and pressures from the BCTF, to the CTF, till you get to the local, where everything is a problem. And at that time we had a person that came in 2 days out of 5 to the office, to help with clerical work.

[00:22:58] KN: You were full-time then?

[00:22:59] PB: I was full-time. But there was no full-time staff. And, mostly personnel problems. It was a really difficult job in comparison to the others. And, as I said, I saved the hardest job to last. And that was true (laughs).

[00:23:23] KN: So, can you talk a bit about... you talked about CTF, so I'd like to know what your experience was at the CTF, but before that, you spoke quite a bit about how you got involved in the Federation, and when you were President, and I'll focus on those two years. How would you describe the political, social and economic climate in the province at the time, in 1977–79?

[00:24:01] PB: Well, the political situation with the government wasn't as tough as most of my predecessors and successors had. I had, in effect a relatively easy term, if I can use that. I am not talking internally, I am talking politically. The big issues with the provincial government, I think it was... either my second year there was an election, or the next.

[00:24:31] KN: 1979.

[00:24:33] KN: It would have been your second year.

[00:24:34] PB: Yeah, so but the biggest issue of conflict paled, in comparison of what other presidents served or had to face—with various bills, and strikes and all this sort of stuff. Mine was relatively easy. The big issue was private schools, their funding the lack of qualifications in teacher-training. And the minister was Pat McGeer, and he said, "Anybody who could teach in the private school, anybody could teach". And he proved that it's not true, cos I saw some of this so-called teaching. When I was on the UBC senate—I was on UBC senate for 15 years—and my constant criticism in the Senate, was to say, "Look, this university is hiring all these brilliant physicists and God knows what, and you keep saying that they're there for "teaching and research, and it is 50/50%", and I said, "It is not". Many of these people are hired because of some academic Nobel Prize, or some other whatever the heck the reason is, but what kind of teaching instruction and lessons—cos I sat through 5 years of so-called teaching, and I know what a lecture is; and they could have put in on tape and no interaction, and so on.

[00:26:12] PB: And I can remember—I think, it was Martha Piper, who one day said, "Well, we're 50/50". I said, "Yeah, you're 50/50" and I said this in the Senate, so it's not secret—I said, "Like the gentleman who loved the elephant and rabbit soup, that was a gourmet delight for him". And she said, "What"? And I said, "Yeah, and he went into a restaurant in France; and they had on the menu, elephant and rabbit soup. So, the guy said, well, I will have that and I want the biggest terrine you can give me, I just love it. So, they brought it out, he tasted it and he said to the server, this is not an elephant and rabbit soup. "Yes it is! " "No, it isn't. Call the chef out". Chef came out, "Oh yes, sir, this is elephant and rabbit soup", he said. "How can you say that"? He said, "Yeah, one elephant and one rabbit!" And I said, "That's like UBC", I said. "The elephant is the research, and the rabbit is the teaching". And so, don't tell me it's 50/50. I forgot where we started with this one, but what I am getting at is that my years were relatively simple.

[00:27:29] PB: I think, in part I got elected because many of the delegates and certainly, I'll say this of the teachers that I had talked to over the years or so, were tired of the extreme hurry of the Executive that preceded the one that I was on—although I was on for 12 years, but when I was President—with the trying to reform the world, using the BCTF as the vehicle. And in the long run, I was tremendously successful. Because if you want to reform, at least this part of the world, in BC and so on, and some of the social causes they were advocating, what better vehicle could you use, than the BCTF? You've got representatives in every part of the province, through schools and teachers, you've got staff of a 100 and something, to do what you want to do. You've got presses that you could use, to put out whatever you want. You've got credibility with—at least at that time, it varies from year to year—within the popular system and teachers, because everybody had one, good or bad. And what better vehicle? And I felt that the teachers were getting really tired with, not necessarily the issues...

[00:28:51] PB: Many times we'd agree we want to go from, say, Prince George to Vancouver. I want to take the bus, so-and-so wants to take the train, so-and-so wants to fly; somebody wants to hitch-hike. We all basically agree on the start and the end point; it was the methodology that was the big problem. And some of our committees, that would come up to me and they would tell me I should be doing this and that, and I said to them one time—one of the committees, I said, "Look, you come up, and you verbally beat me; and make my lie on the floor; and kick me; and say, now that I have your attention... Well, that is not the way to get things done". They didn't like that. But anyhow, I felt that that change was needed, and I felt that being there for 2 years, at least gave a break. That's all I can say, for those two years, at least, to calm things down. And we had achieved a number of things, we put them in that list (points towards the room) and you can do whatever you like with it, it's on that report that came out of our Teacher newsletter, or whatever it was called at the time.

[00:30:04] KN: What was your relationship like with the government of the day?

[00:30:12] PB: Well, it was one of, I won't say positive, but, sort of, neutrality. That's silly. You can't be neutral, but I think, the government was... As I say, what my feeling was, people may disagree with—most of the classroom teachers, not the activists—it was a pleasant break, instead of the government getting kicked and yelled at and screamed at, and all that. And they didn't want to upset the apple-cart by causing any problems. Hey, they're calm, the water is clam, let's not stir it up again. And they weren't milk

[00:30:55] PB: toast—

[00:31:36] PB: and Pat McGeer, you couldn't say he's milk toast; he's very opinionated, even if he's got no facts to back it up. Many times I had said, "Pat, you think you're thinking, but you're simply re-arranging your prejudices". He didn't like that. We met several times and I told him what the organization wanted, and he told me the government's position, but we never came to logger heads. And one time, I think, when I was President, it was an interesting thing, it was what I call the Abbotsford cabal. The minister for municipalities was Vim Vander Zalm from

Bradner; or Abbotsford. The president of the UBCM was Dave Kendall, who was from Abbotsford; and I was President of the teachers, from Abbotsford. And I said to Vim one day, I said—he wasn't Premier at the time—I said, "Why don't you and Dave, and I get together sometime and get a cup of coffee in the Atten Garden and solve all the problems of this province?", and he got a kick out of that. Cos we knew each other very well. But it was a quiet period,

[00:32:17] PB: there were no major confrontations that I could recall. There were lots of little individual things.

[00:32:22] KN: Were you at all involved in the 1972 election? That was a big one for the Federation, when it was the first time we decided to take some political action? Of course, we all know what happened with respect to the Federation, so, TPAC was formed. Were you at all involved in TPAC, or what happened

[00:32:44] KN: there?

[00:32:46] PB: I am trying to think what the big issue was in 1972?

[00:32:49] KN: There were couple: one of them was the government had introduced legislation that limited the amount of what increase we could get, by limiting grants to school boards. And secondly, the other issue that was pretty big, was the compulsory membership issue, that was taken away then.

[00:33:11] PB: Yeah, that's what I'd mention; the compulsory membership. And you had a choice, as an organization, that was overly generalized, to be a profession, or a union. And I was very involved in that, and especially, in the, as I mentioned, the district councils. At that one time, they were waiting and looking at what the BCTF was going to do. And we eventually, decided that we might as well, hang together than hang separately, and have two competing organizations. Because I had also seen the difficulties in Ontario, where you had the Elementary Women Teachers, the Elementary Men Teachers, the Ontario Secondary Teachers, the Ontario English Speaking Catholic Teachers, and in Quebec with their lead teacher organization. I said, no, we have to have one. And we don't win them all, but we will have to fight within the organization, what we think the direction should be, win or lose. You can't fracture, and have that kind of mess, that you've got in—I thought it was mess in Ontario. Although they did have an umbrella, called the Ontario Teachers' Federation. But the internal problems, and I saw that as CTF President,

[00:34:35] PB: they

[00:34:37] PB: take a small issue and magnify it out of all proportion. So, I did get involved, in that, with a couple of other people in Prince George, such as Colin Scott and Doug, and, I think, Dave Corcoran, because the principals were still members of the Teachers' Federation then. We told our members, who wanted to butt out of the BCTF, because they said it is just going to be

another big trade-union, and we don't like that because they're missing the other part, the professional part; and I said no, we can't. And that's when I think, you could choose, in my memory, you could choose district by district, or...

[00:35:26] KN: Local by local.

[00:35:28] PB: Or local by local, or whatever you wanted to call it; to be union, or be professionals; that's the over-generalized categories that the government gave. And I think, those four of us got together and convinced our members, I think, we had 12 or 13 hundred members, to stay with the Federation, and do whatever we could within the Federation to get some of those guys down there to see our point of view (laughs).

[00:35:59] KN: So, given what you said about the 1972 election and you did get involved, I gather, because you had such a calm period as President, when the 1979 election came did you, as the BCTF President have any involvement in that? Did you do anything at all for that campaign, do you remember?

[00:36:21] PB: I think, we always got involved. But not to the degree of the kind of strong rhetoric of walking out, and picket lines, and signs and all that sort of stuff. I think, the approach was more, what I called it, rational, than some called irrational (laughs). And I don't even remember what the hell the outcome of that election was.

[00:36:37] KN: Bill Bennet

[00:36:53] KN: won.

[00:36:54] PB: Well, where we were really involved, was in 1983 with the Solidarity thing; and that was a story in itself. Well, one of the things that I remember, when I talk about my two years, fairly calm, I can't recall any major issues, that would lead us to hit the bricks when...I remember the one-day pensions strike for teachers, when we couldn't strike and later on, some of the other actions after I left the Executive. I remember again, why I mentioned Pat McGeer, and I said, I was in the officer training school at UBC, and one day we had the president of UBC came to one of our mass-dinners in the drill-hall, and Pat McGeer was one of the guests. And at that time, of course, I wasn't involved with the teachers, but I had some good talks with him about some of the things that were going on, in my view, as a student at the time; cos I was a student. And also, as a major in the army. And what some of the students who were in the officer training program were telling me about the quality of instruction that they were getting.

[00:38:29] PB: And I said to Pat McGeer, "You and your bloody faculty should be getting off your buns and"—cos we had some people in the Faculty of Medicine, and McGeer was in there; I said, "You've got people in there who don't know how to instruct; they know how to lecture, and they show slides"; and from there, when I was in with the president; I still can recall some of the conversation, and... it was interesting.

[00:38:58] PB: But, as I said, there was nothing dramatic, like many of other presidents had faced since then.

[00:39:08] KN: What about changes within the BCTF during your time as President, and actually leading up to that? Were there any changes happening in the organization?

[00:39:19] PB: Not anything of significant. I mean, on the Executive—yes, because, before I became President, I would consider... Cos there were two-party systems, as you may know, but people who are watching this, maybe don't know. There was a two-party system, in the Federation, wrestling for control of the Executive, and, obviously, to the Executive and the staff people they hired. And one was called Teacher Viewpoint, and I forgot what the other one was called, it went through many name changes. But the Teacher Viewpoint had particular philosophical underpinnings and the social out-look that they wanted to push through the Federation. And affect the society, obviously. The other group, which I would be classified as a member of, didn't like the way it was being done, and some of the issues they were pushing. But we had no particular agenda or platform, it was just "We don't like what they're doing", in many cases, and the speed with which they're doing it. And that's when that change came. Cos, when I was elected, I think, the vote on the Executive was

[00:40:50] PB: 9:2, or something like that. And the second year, probably similar. And then, following that, it reversed, and I was on the end of the two. I can't remember, but at times it was not very pleasant; we had some of the Executive members—it got well beyond the issue and the approach, to personality conflicts—that were very hard to watch, and sit through. Especially, a couple of the members (laughs, shakes head), it was terrible. It got to the point, I remember, one person on the Executive, Sue Granger and I, who was on there; and Dorothy Glass, I think. But Sue and I said to the one of the other members of the Viewpoint group; we went for dinner—"You want to go out for dinner"? "Oh, yeah". Well, that person came back and got absolute shit that she had gone out to dinner with those guys. And she told the

[00:42:07] PB: President of the day, that she may believe and agree with what he believed in, and the policies, but he wasn't going to pull her social chain, if I could use that. She wants to go to dinner with anybody, she would, and she was Second Vice at the time. And she was not supported at the next meeting, because of lack of "loyalty" (laughs).

[00:42:35] KN: So, just looking at that period of time, I think it was after your presidency, I think very early 1980s when the Federation passed a resolution, that disallowed smoking at meetings and, I wonder how you reacted to that when that happened?

[00:43:01] PB: I was disappointed cos I smoked and still do, unfortunately, I mean, but I could see the point that it is bothering people around you. And so, I went outside to smoke, that was it. And I didn't get up and argue to continue it, then I figured it was going to happen. Then the next year they passed—or maybe a year or two later, I don't know, they passed a motion, that the AGM be scent-free. SCENT. And that passed. And I was chairing that meeting. And, I think, the next year, and I was still chairing, cos I chaired a long time at that AGM, I don't remember

how many years, 20-some years, I guess... Anyhow, the next year motion came up that, when people were allergic to peanuts and all this and that; the AGM be nut-free. Well, unfortunately, my mic was open and I said, "Well if it is nut-free, we won't have a quorum". And some people didn't appreciate that (laughter erupts). Chairing of that AGM was a fascinating process, and most of the people in attendance had no idea of the amount of the background work, that the chairs of those meetings went through and still, I presume, go through. Every resolution, what percentage, is it amendable, is it debatable, all that sort of stuff.

[00:44:31] PB: A lot of work on it. I think, after a while to me, having done it quite a bit—and the RA too, I guess, it came one time and I remember the issue... I think it was to take abortion out of the Criminal Code—the Vaschon demand—basically that was the thrust of it. And I knew that was a divisive thing, and I had... as a matter of fact, I think, I was President that year.

[00:45:12] KN: OK, so you did have some controversy?

[00:45:14] PB: And I understood, the Status of Women Committee was meeting to discuss that, to make a recommendation that we support taking it out of the Criminal Code. So, I went to that meeting—I think, that's what it was. I went to that Status of Women meeting, as President, which kind of blew their mind. They were all women, I thought that says something—there's no men on the Status of Women Committee; but they were all women. So, I went to the meeting and my objective there was to say, "Look, people, this is no-win situation for the Federation, as an entity". I thought it was my job. Because it is a no-win situation. If it passes, those that are opposed to it, will be alienated, to a hell of a big degree. If it fails, those who supported it, will be alienated. And I said, "I would suggest", that it is one of those kinds of things, that I would always recommend when you've got something that is more of a moral, an individual moral thing, "that you just table the motion; you don't pass it, you don't fail it". Well, in any case, they decided they would forge ahead, despite my sage advice, from my perspective, at least (laughs) and they would recommend and support this, and speak on the floor of the AGM, to support it.

[00:46:53] PB: So, they said, "Everybody agreed", I said, "No". "Oh, well you're not a member of this Committee"—they didn't say it doesn't matter what you think, but—you're not a member of the Committee. I said, "Yes I am, I read the Constitution I am a member of every Committee". "Oh!" And I said, "Do you have a vote on these things"? "

[00:47:20] PB: No",

[00:47:23] PB: they said, "We usually have consensus, which I think is the strongest kind of motion", or meaning you can have, but at times there are differences. I said, "Well, if you're going to say, by consensus; I don't consent that you should recommend this and support it" "Oh, we'll have a vote. All in favour, all opposed"; so I put my hand up as opposed, and, I think... want was her name, from Prince George, oh, I forgot her name—but she voted against it. And the chair—it passed, which I understood—was kind of annoyed and said, "Would you like your vote recorded?" in a rather abrupt tone and I said, "Well, do you usually do that"? "No". I said, "Well, I don't want my vote recorded. But I want you to know that there are two of us in this

Committee that didn't vote for this, so this can't go out as unanimous". That was one of the few times that I actually went to a Committee, and voted on anything. I went to a number of Committees, cos I felt that was part of my job, is to sit-in on some of the committees, whenever I could.

[00:48:40] PB: I also operated the switch-board for a day and went down to the print-room, and spent half a day there; and to various departments, cos I wanted to see first-hand what they did, so that I get a better feeling of what the staff was up against. But the one I am thinking about chairing, was I think, it was something about gay rights, I forgot what the hell the motion was. But I came into the room, after lunch. And I usually get there 10 or 15 minutes ahead of time to make sure I know what's going on. I am coming by the door and I go in the room, and every microphone has about 5 people lined up at the microphone. And I thought, oh, wonder what this one is? Cos I don't really memorize the agenda. And Peter McCue was at the one closest to where I was going by and he said, "Pat, who's chairing this meeting this afternoon?" I said, "I am." He said, "Well, you know the Resolution whatever-the-heck number, 123 is on the agenda right after lunch?"

[00:49:55] PB: I said, "Well, what's resolution

[00:49:59] PB: 123?"

[00:50:00] PB: or whatever the number was. "Oh", he says, "It's the one on gay rights", or something. I said, "Oh, alright". And I said, "I wondered why all these people were here", cos obviously, it is one of those controversial things. And the ones that are on the mics, they're all on one side, in favour of whatever the resolution was. The other people weren't that organized. He says, "Well, I've been here a while" and he said, "How are you going to do the order"? I say, "Well, with this many on the microphone I will just go, 1,2,3,4,5 and keep going". "Oh", he says, "Well, look I wrote down the order in which they'd appear, if you'd like that". I said, "No, I don't take reservations Peter" (laughs). He was a little upset. But it was, again, one of those controversial resolutions, but that one I felt was a little different from the other one, because we'd set the precedent in a way that the Federation was going to take a stance on what I considered individual moral issues, as opposed to societal. I know a lot of people disagreed with me in that kind of an approach, but that's what I did from a Federation point of view, not from an individual. Anyhow.

[00:51:20] KN: So, the Rep Assembly used to elect its chair since I was at the AGM in a formal way, and you chaired the RA and the AGM for a very, very long time.

[00:51:40] KN: And in each election, if my recollection is right, you topped the poll, in spite of the fact that there were these political differences that existed in the Federation. How do you account for that,

[00:51:56] KN: what do you think does account for that?

[00:52:17] PB: Well, I followed the advice I gave, I think it was Ken Smith, when he first came on the Executive, and one staff-member who is known to favour one of the political sides—I won't mention the staff member's name, but you can tell. And I said, when we hired him, I called the gentleman and said, "Look, when you're on staff of this organization"—and I said same to Ken—but, basically this staff-member, "When you come in here, you're working for all of the teachers of this province. You're not working for your faction that you think is the way to truth and the light politically".

[00:52:38] PB: And I said, "If you can't do that, you shouldn't be here". And I tried to adopt that kind of thing at the RA, and the AGM. Obviously, of my political background and everybody knew it, because I remember at one time (points to KN); I think, it was Ken Novakowski, decided that there was some hoof rot in the AGM, and they needed more women chairs. And I think, Ken Novakowski said, "We should have a workshop, how to chair large meetings just for women", wasn't that Ken Novakowski, do you recall?

[00:53:16] KN: Yes (everyone laughs). I

[00:53:17] KN: am asking the questions!

[00:54:01] PB: Well, as an interviewer I thought you might know that. So, I was asked if I would at the Summer Conference have an, I think, one or two-day how to chair workshops, but only women could attend. So, I did that. And at the end of that, I forgot who asked me—it might have been yourself—who do you think would be able to be a chair at, not just the RA, which is difficult, but the AGM is a little bit harder, because of the complexity of things? Cos in the RA you know most of the people; or at least I did. And I said, well, I recommend these two people. I think, they're the best I had—I think out of a dozen or something. Two of them said, no bloody way, cos they all thought it was easy, they could do it, and, eventually, this one person from Surrey, was chosen to chair the RA. And that person had served on... new rules, and I had said, this is a good person, has the skills and ability from my opinion, to chair the RA.

[00:54:46] PB: And, noted, the practice is, usually, the RA people would chair the AGM, although it wasn't a given,

[00:54:55] PB: but it practically happened all the time. Well, this person chaired, but unfortunately, I think she was less biased—boy, I am being polite—than you could expect the chair to be, and many of her supporters, who were in same political camp, if I could use that term, came to me and said, this is not good. There is too much bias on behalf of the chair, obviously, in favour of a philosophical kind of thing, I don't know how to phrase it. And the person may have gone to the AGM, and I think, next RA when the term was up, wasn't re-elected. And it was damn shame, because all the skills were there, but they couldn't do what I told the staff-member. When you're doing this job, leave your bloody politics out of it and do the job. And I attempted to, sometimes, gnashing my teeth, I attempted to say, this is what the motion says, I think it's a stupid—and I told you about how I got involved—stupid thing... Not my

job! I am just a referee in the hockey game; if I want to play goalie, put the damn referee's whistle down and get in the goal.

[00:56:13] PB: This person couldn't do that. They had to both, be the goalie and the referee and you can't survive. And, I think, to answer the question I think, I tried to be as neutral as I could on many things; and if I wanted to say something, I would go and tell somebody, I thought, maybe you should raise these points above this motion, but I wouldn't do it as Chair.

[00:56:34] KN: Can you talk a bit about your experience as President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation? And any issues that may have happened there that you might want to refer to, or your international work?

[00:56:47] PB: Well, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, because of its structure, and, as the President, and I am repeating, was a much easier job, than being the BC President. And, certainly, compared to the local president they were worlds apart. But it was rewarding in that some of the programs they had were absolutely outstanding, and I am talking about their international development programs. Absolutely amazing. And I did a couple of these—I went through the Caribbean at one time and to the various island nations there. The teachers were organizing in those areas, St. Vincent and Jamaica and so on. And I talked to the teachers' leadership in each one of these, and I think, in 7 or 8 different countries, and said, what can the Canadian Teachers' Federation do to assist you for your teachers' organization? And some of them were strictly union, and some were professionals and some of them were mixture, which is fine. What can we do to help you and your teachers improve? And we would bring—I think, you guys know, but some people don't—we would bring each year to Ottawa, for a period of time, I think it was two months, partly in Ottawa, to show them what we did as provincial and national teachers' organization, instructions and functions and processes.

[00:58:31] PB: And then they would go to a host-teacher organization, say BC or Alberta, or one of the Ontario ones, to get some first-hand experience within a smaller group. And I felt, that was very rewarding. I didn't go to Africa, but we had many teachers from organizations from Africa, both Anglophone and Francophone; and we were sponsored, in part by the provincial and territorial groups, and the Canadian International Development Agency, funded much of that work, to bring them together. And I would tell them, well, we always had to have a little speech, welcome to the first day of the course; and, basically I would say, "You may hear a hundred things on this course, of those only three may be applicable to you, because of your government, because of your legislation, because of your finance", but I said, "That is at least three more than you had when you came here, so, most of what we do I understand you won't be able to do. But you can build possibly, and build on those three; and add another one next year, and the next year".

[00:59:55] PB: And, that was rewarding. The other one was rewarding, was the Hilroy fellowships, which recognized teacher innovation in curriculum. The Going to the World meetings. At one time I went to Geneva with the International Labour Organization; to work

with the development of a protocol, for the rights of teachers. Basically, the rights of teachers that the ILO could take, and try to get adopted in a country. And that was an eye-opener to me. Again, I talk about the 100 things we do; and 2 you can do, there it was very difficult... The ILO people were great and I worked with Tom Bedyako, as you know, and all the African teachers, and so on. But we were so far from what the teachers could even reasonably expect, whatever the ILO adopted would be turned down, but at least, we worked on it, that was the rewarding thing. And not so much the formal meetings and delegate positions and so on, it was the side-talk alongside of that, over the lunch or dinner.

[01:01:41] PB: And it is like many things—for instance, a Prime Minister is coming back from a NATO meeting. It is not what goes on at the meeting around that table, that is all puff and stuff for the audience and the media; it is all done either ahead of time with the news release, or it is done one-to-one in small groups outside of that meeting. And many conventions are the same way, as anybody knows—it is not necessarily the resolutions that are on the floor, it is what they call in the back-rooms. And that sounds sinister and negative, but it is not, it is true. Much of that stuff is done; and I got a lot out of those; and at the World meetings, the same kind of thing. And the Canadians, the teachers, were respected so much in all the other national teacher organizations. And I remember one year we, as Canadian teachers, we had decided as a Board of Directors that we would host the next World meeting of teachers. And we had quite the discussion within the Board of Directors of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, where it should be held. I argued—I was President—I argued for Ottawa, because of the bi-lingualism, because of the parliamentary building, because of the closeness to Toronto and Montreal, and the cultures that they represented in different ways and all that.

[01:03:19] PB: I didn't win the day on the Board of the Directors, they decided they'll hold it in Saskatoon, which kind of threw me a bit. I always wondered, what kind of cultural experience—it would be different; (laughs). In any case, and I know the bi-lingualism, as far as those cowboys were concerned, was a different kind of language. But anyhow, we went to the World meeting, I think it was in Brasilia, the president of that day was from Japan, Makaieto his name was. And I think, he knew about 4 words of English, because he never used it obviously, and the four words were "Thank you very much". We had a pool, actually, this is an aside, but we had a pool, how many times in the day, Mr. Makaieto would say, "Thank you very much. Thank you very much". Jim Killeen was the Vice-President and President the next year. So, anyhow, Canada had applied, and was to be voted on at the next General Assembly. And we had a 100 and some delegates, and I was the head of the delegation. And I went round to some of the other ones—I had met in other meetings, and so on, and I found out that it was a shoe-in that Canada was going to get it,

[01:04:42] PB: there was no problem at all. We had the Caribbean, we had the Commonwealth countries. But there were two other nominations. And it wasn't a secret ballot, which I thought, probably it should be. But, that was their rules, so Makaieto called all in favour of—I don't remember the country, say Venezuela, or something. Well, some hands went up.

[01:05:09] PB: All in favour of, maybe it was Ivory Coast, or Senegal, I don't know. Some hands went up. And he said, all in favour of Canada, hands went up. None of our delegation put their hands up, cos I had arranged it ahead of time—we won't vote. We had it made, we didn't have to vote, but I didn't say that. We just won't vote, so Makaieto says, “

[01:05:35] PB: Canada?” He's looking at me (nodding), you know, aren't you going to vote for yourself? I sat there and he says, “OK...Oh”, he says, it finally dawned on him. We're being the diplomats, we're not going to vote for ourselves. Only because we got it made, why the hell rub it in (laughs)? We're letting the masses decide where it was going to be. So, we did get to hold the World meeting. In Saskatoon. But the interesting part of the CTF were mainly working with teachers, not only in this leadership role, but where we sent teachers, who are sponsored by our provincial and territorial—mainly provincial, cos territorials didn't have the money—(organizations) to go for courses on professional development all over the world, French and English. But mainly, Caribbean and Africa. When I was later on the BCTF International Solidarity—I forget the title, whatever it was at the time, I argued that the BCTF, because, I think they've withdrawn erroneously (from CTF), I think they've joined back in again...

[01:07:01] KN: Yeah.

[01:07:44] PB: I think, erroneously ...We didn't get our way, we'll pick our marbles and go home, we won't come to the CTF. I used that with North-Central and Okanagan; to hell with it, and we will form an interior teachers' union; you can have one down at the coast. And I argued against that, although it was a good idea in many ways. And I argued against the leaving the CTF; I think, you don't get your way, well, fight again. But I suggested the chair of the Committee— I don't think I was the chair of that Committee, that the BCTF should pay more attention to South America and Central America teacher organizations. Since we weren't in CTF, and more attention and devote whatever the money that might had been spent at the CTF level, for sponsoring the teachers to do professional development and so on, to spend that in South America. And I am pleased to see that they did extend to Central and South America, to teacher organizations; and spent considerable dollars in liaison, and whatever they've been doing over the years. Because, they were ignored by the CTF members, it was basically, Caribbean and Africa. And nothing in South and Central America.

[01:08:28] KN: So, just go back, Pat, for a minute to your years as President of the BCTF, can you identify an event or an issue that was, sort of, your most rewarding or your highest point of elation, while you were President?

[01:08:48] PB: Well, I read that question and honestly, I can't.

[01:09:02] KN: OK.

[01:09:17] PB: I think, I was more in a caretaker position for the two years. And nothing would be that you can go out and wave the flag and yell and scream and holler. It was an attempt in

part to try to soothe things down, and try to get more co-operation, on common issues and less negative confrontation on areas where we disagreed.

[01:09:32] KN: Less internal conflict.

[01:09:47] PB: Yeah, and doing that, sort of reflects what I think—I had this mythical Ms. Smith in a Grade 4 classroom in Pouce Coupe. And I said that many times to people: “If you had the information, or if Ms. Smith in Grade 4 in Pouce Coupe, had the information you have on this issue, whatever it was, how do you think she would vote as an “ordinary” classroom teacher?”—

[01:10:02] PB: using Frances Worledge’s comment, an ordinary classroom

[01:10:54] PB: teacher. I said, “How would she vote”? And I said, “What we forget, it seems to me at the BCTF Annual Meetings, is that the word is that; you are a delegate from your organization, from your union or from your association. They have delegated to you to vote what you think they want to happen; not what you want to happen. And if you sit back and say, I know, and if I could take, for example, as Prince George, if I could poll the 1,200 teachers in Prince George, on this issue, whatever it is, I’d think to myself they would be in favour of it, or opposed to it. Then that’s how I should vote, not whether I, personally... If I think, I wouldn’t know if I polled them, what the result would be, I just don’t know how they’d vote, then I would say I am going to use what I think is my best judgement. And I’d tell them how I voted and if they don’t like it, they’d throw me out of office”. So many times I saw delegates here at meetings, that I really honestly believed, and it is from looking out from the chair, I really believed that they were really not reflecting what at least the majority of their members association, of federation, or whatever the union they were (they were from). They were voting a personal philosophy

[01:11:46] PB: and, I think, that is an incorrect way to do things. I saw many times a delegation of 30 or 40 delegates on a relatively controversial issue, vote unanimously in favour or opposed to the issue. Now, I don’t think that that reflected their members’ overall point of view. Now, if they were directed to vote that way, and we were directed in my delegation from Prince George one year to vote that way, in favour of a resolution; I personally couldn’t vote and I gave my card to somebody who could, and then gave it back. I think they did represent the local’s wishes, but I couldn’t do it. But, if they were directed to do it, I could see 37 hands go up, yes or no; and down. I don’t believe, as Nanaimo did a few times, I think, in Rep Assembly, 6 votes “yes”, two votes “No” and one abstention. I thought no, that is not how it works; if you know at least half—that means you’re all in favour, or opposed to it, but... it was a different philosophy that some of the branches had. And sometimes I would sit there when, at the Annual Meeting they’d have a table count.

[01:13:22] PB: And I know, one, or two or three tables it would be a unanimous one way or the other. And I really couldn’t believe that they really—and I am talking about controversial things, not run of the mill things—I couldn’t believe that they really reflected what their membership majority would have had; if they had the information that was there. But I don’t believe what

Nanaimo did, where 3 out of 10 would be in favour, and 3 out of 10 would be opposed, and 3 wouldn't care, so I'll vote 3:3:3—now I don't like that, you either vote on all, or you don't vote anything. Anyhow.

[01:14:07] KN: Is there anything at all you'd like to say about your experience in the BCTF? Anything at all?

[01:14:22] PB: Well, I think it was fascinating experience for me, personally, to be that involved for, well, take it 50-some years in a multiplicity of capacities. And I was on the committees too, not just President or on the Executive and so on. I got so much out of it, personally, and the organization managed to suffer me for those years, so, might have been some help. I think, anybody who goes through those roles is interested in the fact, that maybe you'll be able to help somewhere down the line. Again, a hundred points, and maybe only three succeeded, but that is three more than you had when you started. And the people I met over the years, I've had some strong disagreements, but... if you read through that book (points) you'll see some of my harshest critics. When I left... "We didn't always agree with you, but at least we..." you know, it was nice to get those letters. I use to get one president; Coquitlam he was from. Every day or every second-day I would get a letter, why am I not doing this, or why aren't I doing this; and why isn't the Executive doing this,

[01:15:50] PB: and; so on. And I used to answer them one at the time and eventually, I just piled them up, and did an en-block; and that didn't work very well (everyone laughs). Cos I still got them, but down the line I did what I called, the politician: "Thank you very much for your input; we certainly appreciate hearing your view and we will take it under consideration". Because, it didn't matter what was done, it was wrong, and so on. We had a few major problems, from my point of view, in staffing over the years. There were cases, where I felt people were appointed to staff, when there were, in my view, better candidates. And that's... everybody has their view. But one stood out in mind: we had one time, a position on the professional staff, in bargaining. And, at that time they were trying to involve more women in staff positions; that was the official policy of the Executive. Or maybe it was un-official, but it certainly was pushed. Which is not a bad thing, obviously, but we had two applicants; the one I gave my endorsement—I was asked for a reference; was from a woman in Prince George.

[01:17:14] PB: She had been on the school board as the chair of the school board for a number of years. She'd been teaching for a number of years, she'd been on our local Executive, including President, and chair of our Bargaining Committee. She also, when she was a trustee, she was part of the provincial strategy of the trustees in their bargaining; and their bargaining committee. She had all the qualifications. She and I rarely agreed on anything philosophically and politicly, cos we were, sort of, polar parts, if you talk Left and Right. I was Right; she was Left, quite a bit. But I felt she was the most qualified person for that staff. And in light of the fact, that she was female, which I have my own biases about—not only the best qualified, but she was also a female, which was another thing that the Executive (sought)—she was not appointed to that staff in the bargaining position. And somebody in my opinion, with lesser

qualifications and experience was appointed. And I was very angry; and I think, Jimmy MacFarlan and I—this was one of the few times we agreed—we were really pissed-off, that this person didn't get the job. And again, I think, I know the factors, but that's down the water;

[01:18:41] PB: but I think, one of the things I tried to do, when I talked about staff, I said, "Leave your politics behind". But it worked the other way: sometimes the politics of the Executive may have over-ridden the best qualified person to be put on staff; and there were a couple of instances that I won't mention. When I left Prince George to come down to the BCTF Executive meetings you could almost hear the "There goes Attila the Hun"; and when I'd get down here, it'd be "There goes Karl Marx!" No, the other way around! When I left Prince George, they'd say, "There goes Karl Marx" and when I'd come down here, they'd say "Here comes Attila the Hun". The political perspectives were so different (everyone laughs). Which is kind of amazing. But, as I said, I wouldn't have stayed in it, I mean, it is not the pay, for chris-sakes, and, I think, it is the interactions. The good parts was, going around to various local meetings, as a representative for the Teachers' Federation. In many cases —and we did it in our local and other locals, they had a program to fill—

[01:19:57] PB: let's invite the President and he can wave the flag and let's see how good we are, we have the President here! And the difficulty was that, is I would phone and say, OK, I'll come, what do you want me to speak on—anything in particular? No, just come and talk to us; I said, "Well, I don't want to be talking about pensions, if you're interested in bargaining or contracting. I don't want to be talking about contracting, if you're interested in pensions; or take anything else you want to... tell me what is of concern to you, or the members in particular. And at least I can address that and the rest of the fluff you can throw out the window and I leave". And it was very difficult to get them to commit. Their main game was to get somebody with the title of President, to be there and to speak to their local. And the hardest one to get to, ever was Arrow Lakes, which I had no idea where it was. And I went to, I think, Kelowna—and this is a long time ago; and drove up the side of a mountain, on a road that was about two feet wider than the car,

[01:21:07] PB: and I am looking down at this bloody lake, thinking, I will fall off that cliff! And, it was the friendliest meeting, cos it is a small district and a big turn-out; all 30 of them or whatever the heck it was, and it was great! It was so wonderful to interact, and they're telling me about their life in the classroom, and what they put up with... Or meeting them out in the sub-locals and Prince George had two, Giscome and so on, where they... people down here are saying, oh, just call a local meeting after school! Well, it is 390 miles from North to South to get to an after-school (meeting). I would come here, and they would talk that it is the wrong kind of paper towels—(up there) they wouldn't even have them in these bloody schools, and so on. Although, we did have some motions: some people might remember, one year about making sure every school had a sick room, which in a one-room school in Riske Creek is pretty hard to get a sickroom. They had a janitor full-time,

[01:22:17] PB: that's tough. Make sure that they had running water with soap, and hot and cold water. Again, Riske Creek, I am using one example. Then the amendment was, that it had to be union soap, which I just about fell off the chair when that one came up, but, anyhow... it was very interesting to see them in-situ. And my experience was great from the teaching, leave the Federation, cos I taught Grade 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, well, 11, 12, 13. And at that time, when I first started in Prince George, first year university was Grade 13, so I taught all the grades, and Law, History, Economics, Typing, keyboarding I should call it. But my most enjoyable time was my five blocks of Boys' Cooking. With 15-year-olds, was that ever fun (laughs)! You didn't ask me about my teaching it was all about the organization stuff.

[01:23:23] KN: That was really interesting, do you want to expand any more about your teaching times?

[01:23:29] KN: What you really liked about teaching?

[01:24:16] PB: Yeah, I decided not to stick at one level, say, intermediate, or primary or secondary, but to try to experience the whole gamut. And I think, that helped when I went into the Federation. Cos I knew the problems that I had when I had the Grade 2 kids, and I knew the problems, with the Grade 13 kids, when I was teaching them. And, so I had decided consciously to try not to do it, as I had both the degrees and I could at least try and teach all. But the reason I went into junior secondary after I came back from Ottawa, after the CTF cos it was full-time in Ottawa, and I went into Grades 8, 9 and 10, junior high, whatever they called it at that time. And they gave me what I called the sweat-hog courses. Which I accepted, because I wouldn't have taken the job otherwise, the record-keeping and the keyboarding and I said to the principal, "What else have you got not filled-in"? "Oh, well, we have this cooking and food service class, that the women, Home Ec. teachers won't take."

[01:25:03] PB: I said, "Why"? "Cos, they're all boys". "Well, why are they all boys"? Well, at that time the boys took metal work and woodwork, and they couldn't get into Home Ec, and wise-versa, it seemed to be the counsellors. So I said, "Well, they should know how to cook, and be bachelors", and so I said, "I'll take that block". So, I did; and the next year I had 2 blocks, the third year I had 4, the fourth year I had 5; because the kids knew that one day I would demonstrate how to make pies, and the next day they'd make one. And eat it. I never had any discipline problems, cos the worst thing was, "Ken, tomorrow we're making pizza! Oh great, not you"! " Why"? "Cos, you know what you didn't clean up the dishes yesterday, so you can sit back and do the paper assignment". Oh, that the 15-year-old, who won't eat, and everybody else is eating... then you don't have any discipline problems from then on (everyone laughs). And I use to go in on Saturdays, and the boys could bring a friend, and the friend could come in on a Saturday. Because the Home Ec period was 50 minutes long,

[01:26:24] PB: how do you try to make a pie in 50 minutes when somebody doesn't even know what a rolling pin is, it is kind of exciting to watch. So, I would go in on Saturday and they could bring a friend, they'd be responsible, and they could cook anything they wanted. And had to

bring me the recipe ahead of time, so I could say, well, you have to bring this, and I've got flour, I've got salt and I've got pepper, but I haven't got this so... And that was really, really good for these kids, cos many of them would come in and they would cook things they never would have done, because, couple of them told me, at home, here is my experience: they go to help mom, and she says, "Do it this way. No, you're doing it that way! Get out of here, let me do it myself"—and they never got any experience doing it. So, I remember a couple of experiences, one kid came over with two friends, he says, "Is it alright if I have two"? I say, "Why"? He says "Well I am making a birthday party for my mother",

[01:27:23] PB: so they make cakes, and decorate them they make cookies and they make pies and that kinds of stuff; the father came in with a station wagon, took it all away. And the next day I get a call from the mother of the boy, and she says, "I'd like to thank you for—I forgot his name—for allowing him and his two friends to come in, and it was a surprise birthday party and it was wonderful; there was him, the two boys and four if his other friends" (laughter erupts). It was her birthday party! She said, but it was the thought that counted—I said, "Yeah"! But I ran that for about 6 months, and then one day I had a fellow who was in his early 20s, he was a real estate fellow and he was tired of going to McDonalds and eating the things that you put into a microwave. And he heard that I was there on Saturdays and his nephew was, or his cousin, I mean, was coming in and he wondered if he could come in and learn a little bit about cooking. So, he did and by the end of that year I had four young adults, who were in their 20s all coming in on Saturdays to learn how to cook.

[01:28:35] PB: And that was what

[01:28:37] PB: did

[01:28:38] PB: that spin-off and there was a real reward. When we had the RAs in Delta...

[01:28:51] KN: Delta River Inn.

[01:28:52] PB: Or whatever it is called now; I was sitting there after the dinner one time and this young man came up to me, and says, "Mr. Brady"! I said, "Yes"? He says, "Do you remember me"? I said, "No, I really don't I am sorry". He said, "Well I was in your cooking class at Prince George" and blah, blah, blah, blah. And he said, "So I remember you" and I said, "Well, what are you doing these days"? He said, "Well, I am the head-chef for Delta Hotels", or whatever the title was for the Lower Mainland "And I just wanted to say, thank you, cos if I hadn't been there, I wouldn't have gone on and taken this career". And he said, "And here's my card", and on the back it said, "Dinner for four at any Delta Hotel" and he signed it. So there was some reward to this thing (everyone laughs). So, that was a nice thing, but some of these things these kids did; I was very strict, I said, the first this is safety and health. Especially the health part, about cleaning the dishes properly and all this sort of thing, washing hands and all that.

[01:30:15] PB: On the first day they'd come in and give me their slips and I am checking them off, and I said, "Now, this could be dangerous you can cut yourself with a knife, you can drop a

knife, you can burn yourself, and when you're making recipes, you have to make them exactly how the recipe says, or I say, then if you don't like things, you change them after the first time. So, do what I said, nothing else. OK. Any questions"? "

[01:30:44] PB: No". "

[01:30:45] PB: Alright. There are some cookies at the table, that I made, and they're OK, and there is some instant coffee and some tea-bags, and you got about 20 minutes till the next bell; why don't you put the kettle on, and have a cup of coffee or tea, and have a cookie while I do the paperwork; and get to know your partners". "OK". So, I am doing the paperwork, and I have (pretends to smell something in the air)... What the hell is that smell? I look over and here is one of those aluminum pots with a plastic handle and the plastic's running down onto the electric burner. And it's smoking! Oh, my god I got up and knocked it in the sink, I said, "What happened"? He said, "Well, you said you put the kettle on!" I said, "Yeah, but there is no water in it. He says, "You didn't say to put the water in it (laughter erupts)." Lesson learned! Oh my, it was lovely—another time these kids came in, the simplest thing you can make is baking powder biscuits. Christ, there is nothing to doing that. Well, till I found out there was. So, I did it this one way, my usual pattern was to make something, demonstrate, and I made them write the recipe down.

[01:32:07] PB: I could have given a sheet with it on, but I said, you write it down, and the steps. And then, the next day, they made it and they got to eat it. And I repeated the pattern most of the time. So, the first one was baking powder biscuits. So, they're ready the next day and they're all in there, and they're having a great fun and they're cooking, finally cooking! First time! And there is jam and stuff on the tables, and all of a sudden this wail comes through from over in the corner, "Mr. Brady!" "What"? "Look at mine!" So, I go over and I look in the oven, and here are these baking powders biscuits, like the mud-pots in the Yosemite park, they're going (shows change in size with hand) up and down. And the other ones in the other ovens are rising. "What's wrong with mine? What am I going to do", he says. I said, "Well, just leave them in there, we'll let them burn and we'll sell them to the minor hockey league for pucks". I said, "Let me see your recipe". So, he had baking soda instead of baking powder,

[01:33:15] PB: so, no baking powder, they don't rise. But it was this—oh, you think it was the end of the world, this kid was so disappointed... There was another disaster, they made pies. And we made apple pies, cos they're the simplest, I think. And if I was your partner (points to KN); today I would make the crust. Top and bottom,

[01:33:44] PB: and you would make the filling. And whoever made the crust got to take it home, and the next day, we would reverse roles. And because it was a five-block-period, we would have lunch in between, I had three classes and there were 24 kids. So, 6 stations of four, so there'd be 12 pies per class. So, at the end of the day there are 36 pies on the counter for these kids to come and pick up. And, because it takes about 45 minutes, it takes longer than that to cook the damn thing, cos some of them are cooking while the others are making, and they go in,

and oh, it is a rigmarole. But anyhow, and they're coming in, and they're picking up the pies, and of course, all these smells are coming in wafting down the halls, and all kinds of vultures outside the door seeing what they can get. The kids managed to get out the door with the pies intact. But a week later, we decided single crust, and we'd do lemon. Kid brought this lovely glass plate from home, and

[01:35:03] PB: made the lemon pie and picked it up after school. Got just out the door, when somebody jostled him, and it is all over (laughs) smashed! This kid comes in, and he is about 16 and he is literally crying, that this masterpiece is all over the floor in the hallway. Anyhow, enough of that. That was a fun time.

[01:35:26] KN: Sounds like it! So I have a couple more questions. One is, and I know that you have attended a phenomenal number of the BCTF AGMs, what number was that?

[01:35:40] PB: I think, I didn't go to the one in Victoria, I went to this years, but didn't go to Victoria, so I started my first one in 1960. And I attended every AGM...

[01:35:52] KN: So, 54 total?

[01:36:05] PB: Yeah, and then missed Victoria, and then this year, because and, like I said, in some capacity, because sometimes CTF presidents bringing greetings, sometimes as chair sometimes as delegate, sometimes as Executive, and as

[01:36:18] PB: retired teachers'

[01:36:20] PB: delegate. One year I had three voting cards. I had one as a member of the Executive, as Past President I had as a GR, and I had a ticket as a local delegate.

[01:36:43] KN: Wow!

[01:36:47] PB: That was interesting to have different coloured cards. Yeah, 53 consecutive and 54 in total, I guess.

[01:36:51] KN: What can you say about your involvement after you retired from teaching and you were involved in the Retired Teachers' Association, and now you're involved with Canadian Retired Teachers' Association. Can you tell us a few words about that?

[01:37:08] PB: Well, when I retired from teaching, I retired from Mission, actually. I was doing Special Ed in Mission. And when I retired, I joined the Retired Teachers. And I got a letter or a notice in a magazine, I forgot, saying the Annual General Meeting of the Retired Teachers was at such and such a hotel at this time and date. And I would always tell my colleagues, at least in Prince George, that there are some meetings you must attend each year, because it is your association: one, when you elect your Executive, including your GR or LR or whatever the heck it is; and secondly, when you elect your AGM delegates, cos they're representing you. You must go to, in my mind, to those two, as you owe it to the organization, and to your colleagues. You

don't have to run for election, but you vote for people, you think, can do the job. So, with that kind of background I joined. So I better go to the Annual General Meeting. And so, I went to the meeting and met quite a few people that I had known over the years, many of them had been involved in the local or provincial level.

[01:38:37] PB: And I just went there as a member, because, I thought it was my duty; and the president at the time, I think it was Rolli Cashioni... doesn't matter. The President said, "Oh, welcome and so on, and he said, what are you doing here"? And I said, "Well, I retired last year, and I thought I am a member, I paid my dues, so I'd better come to the Annual Meeting". "Oh, well, we got a job for you"! And I said, "I just came to the Annual Meeting, I've done enough jobs". And he said, "Look, we just had somebody on the Finance Committee resign". Away back, two members of Prince George local used to do budget at the RA. We went over line-by-line, program-by-program, questioning and asking, and so on. When I left the RA years later, it was block-budgets with no scrutiny over anything significant at all. It has really ticked me off. Anyhow. He said, "Will you be on Finance Committee? I see you done some work on that with the BCTF budgets". I said, "Oh yeah". So, I went onto the Committee,

[01:39:50] PB: we had a few meetings and then the Chair resigned. And the Executive of the RTA asked if I would take over pro-tem as chair. Needless to say, I didn't consider what I should have known politically, pro-tem was just an excuse to say, you're going to be the Chair for ever, sort of thing. So, I became the Chair of the Committee and you didn't have a vote as Chair of a Committee on the Board of Directors. And the Board of Directors, very well-meaning people and hard-working, but they had not a lot of what I call, organizational involvement. And it showed. And a simple thing, when I went as the Finance Committee Chair, they had a bank account that they put dues in, and they wrote cheques, when it came out. Logical. And I said, "You might want to consider this", to the Board of Director I said, "I think you should set-up an operating account, for what you are going to do and spend, and get revenue for the year; you should have a capital account, in case you need some capital improvements; office furniture, whatever

[01:41:21] PB: it is; and I said, I think you need a reserve account", and at that time we had a charitable wing, unofficially, called R.R. Smith Fund, And, I said, "And a fourth account for R.R. Smith. And with R.R. Smith I recommend that you get an approval to be a registered charity, and take it away from Retired Teachers". And it took 2 years, but that got done. But they did, and what they were doing with budgeting, was not as organized as I thought it should be, so I said, "Let's try this: what we think we're going to spend in all kinds of categories this year; what we actually spent at the end of the fiscal year. And comparing what we budgeted, what we spent that will help us to do the third year, what we should spend in the coming". "Oh, that sounded logical". "Then you could—and remember budgets are your best guess, they can be above, below, could be anywhere. But at the end of that first year, budget, \$30,000, spent \$26,000; you have \$4,000 left over.

[01:42:50] PB: That goes into the reserve fund". "

[01:42:54] PB: What do you mean?

[01:42:56] PB: We've been calling that income for next year!" I said, "No, that's not your income. That goes into your reserve fund. And we want a capital fund that is equivalent to 30% of your operating budget. And when it reaches that, OK, you can freeze it. It will take some time to get there". They finally went along with that and it has been working fairly well since then; I think, we now call it Contingency fund. It has \$300,000 and some in it. And they're still operating on a fee, that hasn't changed for X years, and at this AGM, I understand, we're going to reduce it by a dollar or two. But they had not done this kind of thing. And then, eventually I looked at their Constitution and by-laws. Absolutely different. Got a committee together, went over that, improved a lot of things, and over the years, I don't know how many years I was on the RTA Executive, including President. When I had gone in that first meeting, the only people who attended were the people who had lived within about 30 miles of the hotel. Because people couldn't afford to come from Pouce Coupe or from Victoria.

[01:44:27] PB: That didn't cost me much, cos I am in Abbotsford, but I said, that is one of my goals, which I achieved, is that BC Retired Teachers will pay for at least 2 delegates from every one of our 40-some branches to go to the Annual Meeting. And there is a scale, any, regardless of size and then add additional delegates, depending on the size of the organization. And that is now in effect, the same way that it was when teachers came to BCTF Annual Meeting. The Prince George delegation was entitled to send 17 members. And at that time, Prince George Teachers had to pay for hotel, travel, meals all expenses, we had to pay ourselves. So, in those days, and it cost us \$10,000 to send our delegation here. We couldn't afford a hospitality room, or anything like that from the Prince George stage. We did get together with the North-Central, and we did get a little room that we all put-in \$10 of our money to get that.

[01:45:45] PB: And what bothered me, is I would come down to the thing and I would see half the Hotel Vancouver, Surrey, VESTA, locals hired a room for hospitality, and had money to spend on refreshments. And, that, sort of, annoyed me; and eventually, we got the Federation to pay for the AGM delegates. And, eventually, I got the RTA to pay for every branch to have at least two and more. And that's worked very well... And you talked about involvement in that; and we also belonged to the Canadian Retired, and so I was the delegate to go to the Canadian Retired Teachers and eventually became President of the Retired Canadian Teachers. Along with JoAnne Lauber, who you may know, and I think she's Past President as of June, and since I came around, there were other Past Presidents at CRTA. So, I got involved because I figured you should be involved if you belong to an organization. Same, with the Legion: I am a member of the Legion I go to their meetings; well, I am on the Executive too. Also, COSCO, I am a member of COSCO, and on the board

[01:47:19] PB: because COSCO belongs to the National Pensioners'. I am on the Executive as Secretary of the National Pensioners'. I need my spare time (laughs).

[01:47:24] KN: So, I have one last question.

[01:47:29] PB: Oh, thank Christ.

[01:47:35] KN: And I am wondering if you have any advice for any young teachers, who might be starting their career at this time?

[01:47:45] PB: Well, my first question—and I wouldn't do this, but "Why in hell are you going into teaching at this time?" The significant changes—my first class in 1960 in Chilliwack had 47 Grade 7 students. And it was not a difficult job even in my first year of teaching. And the reason is, everything was prescribed. If it was October, you were doing Japan in Social Studies; if it was October 17, you'd better be on page so-and-so on the Math book. Arithmetic book. There was one novel, "Treasure Island", that everybody read, whether you liked it or hated it. And in that context—and the students were all well-behaved, I can use that. And the parents were very supportive: if you had a problem with your student, you phoned, it was taken care of. Sounds like an ideal world. Over the years, and I encountered it till I retired, I look now and, as I say, rhetorically, why would you go into teaching at this time? When you have students that don't speak the language of instruction; nothing wrong with their brains, they just don't understand what the hell you're saying.

[01:49:20] PB: Same as if I went to Russia or China into a classroom I wouldn't know. And the teacher has to deal with me, along with X number of other kids. We have students now, which we encouraged as teachers, and rightly so, that used to have special facilities, because they were blind or they were deaf, and they're integrated. The difficulty though, is with the teacher. I worked with the deaf kids at Mission Secondary. Tremendous challenge to the teachers to try and meet their needs. You go into a Biology class, with a girl, who is blind, in Grade 12, and they're dissecting a frog. Take her in the Chemistry 12; they're doing something with iron filings, or something, and she's blind and they're all over the place. Goes into Math class, and the teacher is showing a big long algebraic expression, and saying, "First you move these parentheses, then you do the square, and there's your line and below there is the" ... etc., she's blind,

[01:50:48] PB: she can't see what he is doing. And she's got a Braille machine. How the hell do you do a long equation, on a Braille machine? Goes into the History 12 class; there is the teacher with a lovely display screen—this is a map of Europe. Red is France, Green is Italy, Blue is The Netherlands. Now I am going to flip this over, can you see those blue lines? Those represent the major rivers. And this is the elevation. These are the problems, that the kid has, how does a teacher get across and meet the needs of those other X kids in that Chemistry lab, the Biology lab, the History lab and so on? And that is the difficulty with the students we have in there, with the

[01:51:53] PB: learning disabilities, that are beyond sight and hearing. I worked in Mission, we had a young fellow, who was 16 that we had to change diapers for this young man, because of his problems. Had a girl in the Math 11 class, taught Math, that the parents insisted be in the class, we asked to take her aside and help her—has to be in the class with her peers. The

administration did that, she had an aide at the back of the class. And she had coins on the table; and I am not saying this is a pejorative way, the job of the aide was to help her figure out what coins would make a dollar. And these kids are doing trigonometry. But that teacher is responsible, in quotes, for this student. No interaction at all, because they haven't have the time. And the amount of time spent with one student, with one of the situations, it takes away from the others. But in a 40 minute class in an elementary school, or whatever, one hour class at a secondary, you don't have the time to serve the needs of those kids. And, there is not any money, and a lot of the cuts to the education funding that the boards have to make, because there is a lack of provincial funding, is to the kids with difficulties.

[01:53:33] PB: I am not talking about Band or Track, or something like that, which is also thrown-out because we don't have the money and I think, it would be nice to have it, but I am talking about the basic fundamentals. And they're not being met—I would never go back today, unless I had a specialty area, like I did working with the special needs kids. Just them, aside, but in a regular classroom, and being told you have to cover all this material, and do all this without the kind of resources— and these are material or personnel, it is almost impossible. And you ask, what would I give advice to, (laughs), I started with my first question, why the hell are you doing this, do you know what you're getting into? My advice to them, I would suggest you'll have a lot of difficulties, because of the multiplicity of factors I just mentioned, to tell you what we deal with, but the key is, the satisfaction you get from the students, who appreciate what you're doing, or what you're trying to do... I am not talking about the sweat-hogs and the bad ones that are just there for hell-raising, but most of your students.

[01:55:03] PB: When I left Mission, I think, the most telling moment was Little Joey I had, well he was 16, but he wasn't that big; and he had a special need and he was on some pill, retalin, or some calming medicine. And he was supposed to take that an hour before he got to class. And he usually did, but one day he comes in "Hi, Mr. Brady. What are we doing today (bounces up and down)?" "Joey, Joey, settle down". I said, "Where is your friend"? He called his pill, his friend. "Oh, it is in my pocket!" I said, "You're supposed to take it at 8 O'clock". "I forgot, I forgot, shall I take it now?" I said, "No, give it to me, I think I am going to need it" (laughter erupts). But Joey was fine, he heeded some personal help, and there were a lot of problems with Joey, but we got along fairly well, and one day he said "Mr. Brady, I hear you're leaving at the end of this year". I said, "Yep, Joey, packing her up and going on home" "

[01:56:14] PB: You're leaving"?

[01:56:15] PB: I said, "Yes", He said "Well, you can't. We need you". Now, that's the kind of accolade that I would tell that first year teacher. She is going to get it either orally, or in some other way. Just the kid coming up, and sort of brushing against you, or standing close to you— don't dare touch them—but, I mean, you can sense it, and I said, "That's the reward you get, not the dollars". How many times do the teachers say, "Give me fewer kids in the class, and you can keep your bloody one percent". I did many times. And that's what I would say to that first (year teacher). Look for those. And when you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot in and hang on.

[01:56:42] KN: That's a wonderful way to end it!

[01:57:09] KN: Thank you very much.

[01:57:10] PB: You're welcome!