

Dec 1980

Bruce County teachers' strike over

Bruce County's 233 teachers went back to school Monday, ending the 42 day long strike.

Last Thursday in Port Elgin, the secondary school teachers voted 93.4% in favour of a three-year contract. Shortly after their vote, Bruce County trustees voted 13 to 1 to settle the contract.

The contract gives the teachers an average salary increase of nine per cent each year and includes increased benefits, formation of two teacher-trustee committees and includes working conditions.

The agreement, which is retroactive to September 1, 1979 and which expires August 31, 1982 gives the teachers across the board salary increases of 8.4% the first year, 9.2% the second year and 9.75% the third year. Salaries will range from \$13,675 for a teacher in category

one with no experience to \$29,919 for a teacher in a maximum category with 11 years experience.

During negotiations and throughout the strike one of the major issues was that of working conditions and the new contract included two of the four items the teachers had demanded: pupil-teacher ratio and timetabling.

As a result if the September 30th enrollment remains the same as this year's, four additional teachers will have to be hired. The contract stated that the pupil-teacher ratio will not exceed 16.8 to one plus or minus one.

In the timetabling clause, a teacher's classes will occupy a maximum of 80% of the available periods, excluding lunch with half the remaining time for preparations and mark-

ing and the other half to be designated for oncall.

The two demands in the working conditions of the teachers that were not accepted were the hiring of qualified library and guidance personnel and a maximum number of students a teacher would have in a week.

The new committees to be set up will consider such topics as seniority, surplus procedures and to develop a teacher funded leave plan.

The teacher funded leave plan is to be implemented next September. Under this plan, teachers will be paid four years salary over a period of 5 years with the fifth year being a leave of absence.

Bob Farrell, teacher spokesman said the teachers were happy with the teacher-trustee committee clause stating that the committees will help resolve communication problems that have separated the board and

teachers and if successful, may lead the way to better relations.

A week ago Sunday, mediation talks were held all day before Martin Teplitsky, provincial mediator, presented the parties with a package. After studying it and a few changes made, it became the contract.

Bob Farrell said that the salaries were "competitive but not much more than competitive," in terms to the rest of the province. He added that once all the 1981-82 settlements are in, Bruce will probably still be in the lower half of the province.

In Port Elgin last Thursday, 213 teachers out of 233 voted on the contract, 199 voted in favour.

The only trustee to vote against the contract was Albert Smith of St. Edmunds. Smith commented that other members on the board were against the contract but voted for it because they knew it would be accepted.

Other highlights of the contract include:

- increased allowances for extra degrees in 1980-81;
- an increased contribution by the board to benefit plans from 75 to 85 per cent, effective immediately and to 90 per cent in 1981-82;

- a provision for the withholding of increments by the board for one year if a teacher's service is "less than satisfactory."

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