LEADERSHIP IN A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION

An Exploratory Study of Leadership in the
British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation

by

HONOR CUSHING

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
in the School of Social Work

Accepted as conforming to the standard required for the degree of
Master of Social Work

1963
The University of British Columbia
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Social Work.

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, Canada.

Date 6-5-63
ABSTRACT

The voluntary association is a characteristic manifestation of social life in North America, and has always been regarded as a force for the preservation of democracy. The leadership of the voluntary association appears to be a crucial element in the survival of this form of organization, yet previous studies suggest that the voluntary association may no longer have the same significance for contemporary society as it did in the early history of the continent.

This study is an exploration of the leadership of one voluntary organization in British Columbia, the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation. These leaders were asked how they perceived the goals and purposes of the organization, to which they give their time and energy. Thirteen members of the Board of Directors were interviewed to obtain information concerning the extent of their participation; why they joined the organization; their family constellations; where they live; and their perception of the contributions they make to the organization. Interviews were arranged with members of the Board selected on an arbitrary basis, with the permission and the cooperation of the President and the Board of Directors. The information that was obtained was used as the background material of the study. The limitations of the case study method are noted and the reader cautioned to examine the data critically.

The findings of this study support the conclusions of other empirical investigations: with changes in other sectors of society and increased specialization of function, the role of the voluntary association in contemporary life appears to be blurred and requiring examination. Some of the possible reasons for these developments are outlined, and the relationship of the leaders to the voluntary association is explored. Finally the thesis suggests some questions for consideration and indicates some areas which might be investigated in future studies.
I wish to express my appreciation and my thanks to Dr. Charles McCann of the School of Social Work of the University of British Columbia, and to Dr. Leonard Marsh, Director of Research, who gave me so much encouragement and assistance.

I am grateful for the interest and cooperation shown me by Mrs. G. A. Binns, President of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation, and by the Board of Directors, and for the help and information that I received from Mrs. Grace Allam, Executive Secretary of the Federation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1. The Voluntary Association and Contemporary Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of leadership in Voluntary Associations, a review of the literature. Characteristics of the voluntary association. Values of a voluntary organization for a democratic society. Membership participation. Structural types and organizational patterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2. Place and Method of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical development of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation. Structural characteristics of the Federation. Method of study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3. Findings of the Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apathy in the voluntary organization. Why do parents join a Parent-Teacher Association. When do parents join a Parent-Teacher Association. First perception of parent-teacher goals. Later perception of the goals. Who are the members of the Board of Directors. Length of time spent in the organization. Election to the Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4. Problems of Leadership in the Federation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some abstract concepts of leadership. Leadership and the Federation. Development of leadership in the Federation. The challenge for the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendices:

- A. Interview Schedule
- B. Bibliography
CHAPTER I

THE VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION AND
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Voluntary associations of all kinds have always flourished in North America, and the quality of their activities has been linked by many observers with the survival of democracy.¹ By means of these associations of people banded together to perform a service to their fellows, citizens learn the art of self-government, "the sense of meaningful participation, the feeling of worth as an individual, and a sense of responsibility for the goal and policies which affect our lives".²

We appear to take our voluntary associations for granted, as an understood manifestation of democratic social life.³ Arnold Rose, in his presentation of a theory

---

¹ De Tocqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1953, II (The Henry Reeve Text as revised by Francis Bowen and edited by Phillips Bradley); see also Charles Beard, The American Commonwealth (1911), II.


³ Rose, Arnold M., Theory and Method in the Social Sciences, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1954. Rose differentiates between "expressive groups"
of the function of voluntary associations in contemporary social structure, bases his discussion on the hypothesis that voluntary associations have three important functions in the support of democracy. First, he says, they distribute power among a larger portion of the citizenry instead of allowing it to be concentrated in the government, second, they provide a sense of satisfaction with modern democratic processes because they help the ordinary citizen to see how these processes function in limited circumstances, and third, they provide a social mechanism for continually instituting social changes. It is the groups he describes as "social influence" groups which in his opinion play a vital role in the democratic state.¹

Many people work as volunteers with only limited understanding of the purpose and values of the programme to which they are giving their support. Their participation is not as meaningful, perhaps, as it would be if they used the opportunity to achieve an understanding of their democratic rights and responsibilities. It can be argued that the volunteer, to be most effective to himself and to his

who act only to express or satisfy the interests of their members in relation to themselves, and "social interest groups" whose goal lies outside their organization and whose activities are directed outwardly in a desire to achieve some condition or change in a segment of society as a whole.

¹ Ibid., p. 52.
association, must understand the basic goals and purposes of the organization to which he gives his time and energy. Cohen has noted, for example, that "voluntary associations can serve important ends only if they are clear about their role in relation to the needs of a democratic society".¹

Patterns of Leadership in a Voluntary Association

It seems evident that a crucial element in the relationship between the voluntary organization and this democratic society is that of leadership. An appropriate area of study then is that of the patterns of leadership in the voluntary association. This thesis will attempt to answer the following questions: What are the characteristics of the leaders? From what part of the community do they come? How did they attain leadership, and what is their perception of this role? This study will examine these patterns in a voluntary organization in British Columbia, the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation, and the data will be supplemented by a comprehensive survey of the literature on leadership.

The British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation is a province-wide organization of parents and teachers, founded in the year 1915 in the city of Victoria, British Columbia. In 1959-60, the point of greatest growth, the

¹ Cohen, op. cit., p. 37.
membership stood at fifty-two thousand. Since that year there has been a slow decline, and this year at March 31, 1963, the membership was thirty-seven thousand.

Before presenting the study design, a review of the salient facts from the literature will be presented, with the purpose of underlining the significance of this important facet of community life.

A Review of the Literature

An overview of the literature on the subject of the voluntary association on this continent suggests that this type of organization is peculiarly characteristic of the social structure of North America. Local associations ranging from informal groupings to large and powerful professional associations are numerous and in some ways one of the most expressive features of our society. In recent years the most spectacular growth has been shown by national organizations of both the federated and the corporate type. Although the voluntary association is not exclusively a North American phenomenon, the proliferation of such associations was the basis for the classic observation by Alexis de Tocqueville after his visit to the United States in 1831: "In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used, or applied to a greater multitude of objects than in North America. Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions
In order to understand this social development, some comprehension of the changes that have occurred in the structure of family life is necessary. In our industrial society, kinship and occupational roles and their associated interests, perhaps have become to a large extent segregated from each other and from other interests. In the area of kinship and occupation, people hopefully achieve success and happiness by their own individual efforts. Other interests tend to be segregated from family and job, in contrast to other societies where kinship, caste and community groups may determine many of these interests for the individual. When the individual cannot achieve satisfaction in other areas of interest in either his isolated conjugal family or in his job, he may turn to the associations which exist in great number in both the United States and Canada for their organized accomplishment.

1 de Tocqueville, op. cit., p. 106.

2 Floyd Dotson says that among the working class we do not find the wholesale displacement of "primary" by "secondary" groups with the consequent depersonalization of social relationship, which is implied in the conventional account of urban life. He concludes that the role of informal social participation, particularly between family and kin groups, has been consistently underestimated. See Floyd Dotson, "Patterns of Voluntary Association Among Urban Working Class Families," Am. Soc. Review, 16, No. 5 (1951), pp. 687-693.
Characteristics of the Voluntary Association

The characteristics of the voluntary association as a sociological type perhaps derive from its functions for the social structure. Since it pursues specific interests, it always, according to Barber, has at least some explicit purpose, 1 whether to furnish activities for members as an end in itself or to pursue a goal outside the organization in an effort to maintain or create some normative condition or change. 2 There are a great number of relatively less important interests in our society that are not determined by kinship or community groups, and therefore the individual has considerable choice in the matter of which he shall pursue. It is in this sense that membership in particular associations is voluntary. According to Barber, "voluntary membership is never simply psychological willingness, but rather is always patterned by a complex of social, structural and value considerations ... the institutional factors which define the differential significance of voluntary membership have important consequences for participation behaviour in the association." 3


3 Barber, op. cit., p. 480.
A written constitution is typical of the voluntary association. This states the purpose of the group and the ways in which the organization will be set up to accomplish this purpose. A set of offices defines the delimited obligations and responsibilities of those who fill them. These officers are elected by the members who all have a voice and vote in the election because each and every member is assumed to have an equal interest.

Three basic facts emerge in the investigation of empirical data about participation in voluntary organizations. First, there are, as we have noted previously, countless numbers of such associations. Second, there are a large number of people who have no memberships in any association at all. The evidence from a nationwide survey in 1955 in which memberships in trade unions were excluded, shows that only thirty-six per cent of the adult population were found to belong to voluntary associations. Third, there exists in any given association an active minority and an inactive majority.

The proliferation of associations has been ascribed to various factors. The change of function of the family,

---

1 This survey was carried out by the National Opinion Research Centre of the University of Chicago: Wright, Charles R. and Hyman, Herbert H., "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults," Am. Soc. Review, 23, No. 3 (1958), p. 287.

2 Barber, op. cit., p. 486.
the church and the state, and the relative loss of control of these major institutions over the individual is cited as one reason.\textsuperscript{1} Others have been the democratic and protestant principle of the freedom of individual choice, the articulation of minority groups, the increased division of labour, and the growing secularization of the population.\textsuperscript{2} Goldhamer notes that in effect, we are never in any exclusive sense members of a society at large, but rather we are members of a variety of social groups within the society.\textsuperscript{3} The more differentiated the members of the community are, the more associations they tend to have.\textsuperscript{4} The proliferation of associations appears to be most typical of the urban community with its wide variety of occupations and its diversity of occupational, economic and political interests.

In a large urban community, it has been suggested

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Scott, John C., "Membership and Participation in Voluntary Associations," \textit{Am. Soc. Review}, 22, No. 3 (1957), p. 315.
\item \textsuperscript{2} In the NORC survey (fn. 1, p. 7) it was observed that one of the groups with a low rate of membership is the Catholics. Hausknecht comments that "it is fair to say that members of this group tend to inhabit a more restricted world than members of other religious groups." Hausknecht, Murray, \textit{The Joiners}, The Bedminster Press, New York, 1962, p. 120. See also O'Dea, Thomas F., \textit{American Catholic Dilemma: An Inquiry into the Intellectual Life}, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1958.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Loc. cit.
\end{itemize}
by Goldhamer that persons having common interests probably could not come together easily to pursue these interests without some degree of formalization of their relationships. Members of these organizations tend to associate with one another only in respect to relatively narrow segments of their total life activities, in contrast to the type of total participation or associations characteristic of the family or the small community. Indeed, the association in our heterogeneous so-called modern society may represent a reconstituted small community.

Values of a Voluntary Organization for a Democratic Society

Underlining the significance of this field as an area of study is the relationship between the voluntary association and the values of a democratic society. For example, one value for this society of the voluntary association lies in its function of offering opportunity for expression of opinion. It is no longer possible for citizens to meet together in town meetings for the discussion of common problems. In place of this more direct method of making our wishes known, we now depend on government by representatives of the people. Under such conditions, it is important that people be able to direct their elected representatives in accordance with their wishes. Goldhamer

1 Goldhamer, op. cit., p. 595.
stresses the point that citizens require a method of securing organized expression on issues as they arise. "Such expressions do not represent merely the statement of a position in regard to an issue, but also demand, backed by whatever means of pressure are available to the organization, that the issue be settled in accordance with its desires." The voluntary association is a way of providing equal opportunity to study problems that concern us, and are the expression of a genuinely public opinion.

**Membership Participation**

Also justifying the significance of this subject for investigation is the status of the non-participant. This has been a matter for research among sociologists who have questioned the statement by Charles and Mary Beard: the non-participant (in voluntary associations) is "a pariah ... of questionable ability to serve ... an object of curiosity, if not of suspicion." Studies in metropolitan areas indicate that there are large numbers of people who do not have a single affiliation in a voluntary organization. Kommarovsky reported in her study of New York City that "in the bulk of the city's population, the unaffiliated

---


persons constitute a majority".¹ She came to the conclusion that class differences in participation were generally found to persist even when other factors held constant.

In a study of family participation in voluntary organizations, Anderson found evidence to connect participation with so-called status self-ratings. Families of low socio-economic status did not participate or take leadership roles, not only because the community does not confer these roles upon them, but because they themselves accept an inferior status and act accordingly. Their self-judgements as to their own social status are closely correlated to measures of their actual social participation. Much of the participation inertia in our society may be related to these self-attitudes.²

Scott found that the number of persons participating in voluntary associations tends to be highly exaggerated by the public. In his research, he found that thirty-eight per cent of the persons sampled had no membership in a voluntary association. He found even higher percentages of non-affiliation among persons in lower social class, in manual occupations, among people of Catholic


affiliation, and with only elementary school education. He concluded that even in a highly urbanized society such as the United States, in which secondary types of relationships and multiplicity of interests are maximized, participation in voluntary associations is far from being a universal phenomenon.¹

Wright and Hyman found that not only is there a sizeable group of Americans who are not members of any voluntary association, but that only a minority belong to more than one such organization.² They found that the higher the status of the respondents, the greater the percentage of memberships in formal organizations. Home owners were more likely to be members than were home renters, and this was also found to be true in Scott's study. There appeared to be no appreciable difference between the membership rates of urban dwellers and rural farm non-residents. They found two situational factors, home ownership and family status, which seemed to be related to voluntary association memberships. Men and women with children were found to be members more often than childless couples. It may be possible that children lead their parents into neighbourhood community participation.

A third matter for concern is the fact of the

¹ Scott, op. cit., pp. 315-326.
active minority which exists no matter what interest any particular association represents. Minority attendance in associations persists despite attempts to choose a time and place for meetings which conflicts least with the job and family obligations of the members. Even when by-laws are enacted imposing sanctions for non-attendance, such rules appear to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

One of the reasons for this which has been discussed by Barber is that our social structure does more than segregate our peripheral interests from family and job obligations. "It defines them as being of less importance than family and job."¹ There seems to be a culturally prescribed preoccupation with such obligations which tend to limit interest even in associations which are especially meaningful for the individual.

Structural Types and Organizational Patterns

In addition, says Barber, the internal structure of the voluntary association itself contributes to the tendency toward the inactive majority. With its formal organization and division of function among its members, it is possible for the minority to achieve the interests of

¹ Barber, op. cit., p. 486.
the association with very little participation on the part of the majority.\footnote{1}

In discussing the values of democratic associations, Barber gives a lucid description of the organizational pattern of the voluntary association.\footnote{2} The typical pattern according to this authority, is a democratic one, with formal authority residing in the whole membership. The democratic organization states the ethical desirability of voluntary affiliation and membership rights open to all, without regard to sex, race, occupation, nationality, social class, religious creed or political attachment. It makes provision for the active participation of all members, that is, for their frequent attendance at meetings, their taking part in discussion, their working on committees and holding office at some time; in short for their participation in the formulation and realization of policy. The fundamental democratic instrument is the decision by vote, implicitly guaranteed as a right by most democratic associations.

The democratic association, continues Barber, is further characterized by frequent and regular election of officers, short terms of office, and the rotation of any

\footnote{1} Barber, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 487.

given official position among as large a number of members as possible. Where the association is divided into many branches, it is considered desirable to have relatively large local autonomy; that is, the flow of power is up from the local groups to the central co-ordinating group. In the large association, where national conventions are held, the democratic election of delegates to the convention is valued as a means of achieving total group influence on the policy of the association.

In order to have effective control over the executive, Barber continues, members have the right to be critical and to require that they furnish regular, complete and detailed reports on its implementation of policy and on all financial transactions. The critical member has his opportunity to transmit his dissident opinion to the whole membership through the medium of the convention, where the right of free speech is guaranteed, and in the official publication of the association.

In even the smallest democratic association, according to Barber, the executive must deal with certain problems. There exists the need to take action in the interests of that association, and in the democratic group it is the active minority that takes the responsibility. Members who desire to avoid responsibility, partly because of their preoccupation with other interests and partly
because they are quite willing to have the active minority discharge the major concern for the interests of the association, grant authority to the occupants of the executive roles to pursue specialized executive functions. The existence of an inactive majority often requires the active minority to take more power than is formally granted to it under a democratic constitution. However it is expected to justify this to the membership.

In the democratic association, Barber suggests that "to conform with the value that equal participation requires rotation of officers, the formal rules provide for regular election of officials for short terms."¹ It seems to be necessary, however, to make some arrangement so that at least a few of the officials who have served for a long time and have special knowledge of the history of the association remain in some office on the executive. However carefully the constitution is drawn up, it seems fair to say that general statements of policy will probably never cover all possible contingencies. If the executive must act to adjust the purposes of the association to the circumstances of the external situation, it seems reasonable to suppose that officials with long tenure will help to maintain a long term view in terms of the relevance of the

¹ Barber, op. cit., p. 492.
new problems to the purpose of the organization.

When we examine the empirical studies of voluntary organizations, it becomes apparent that there are two types of organizational structure, corporate and federated. "The fundamental basis for the distinction between these two types is the locus of ultimate authority within the organization. In organizations having corporate structures, the national headquarters exercises supervisory powers over the component units, while in federations, the affiliates retain a large measure of autonomy."¹ Lipset stresses the importance of the historical origins of an association as giving the clue to the structural type. Organization may be from the top down, where the group which originally starts the association organizes other individuals or branches into a larger structure, and organization through the successive but autonomous formation of one group after another.² According to Lipset, the possibilities for democracy are much greater in the second type of association because a ready made opposition is built into the organization.³ That is, the greater the number of

³ Loc. cit.
independent sources of power and status, the greater the possibility that alternative factions will establish opposition to the incumbents of the leadership positions.

Truman, in his study of pressure groups, notes that in an organization where subcentres of power are formally acknowledged, the problem of cohesion is more likely to arise and the possibilities for internal dissension are greater. He adds that a loosely federated structure can less effectively mould public opinion or influence the course of government because of the difficulties of presenting a united front in this type of organization.¹

For these reasons the historical origins of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation are of some importance in understanding the structure of this organization. It seems appropriate, therefore, to describe briefly the historical beginnings of the Federation. This will be taken up in the Chapter which follows.

CHAPTER II

PLACE AND METHOD OF STUDY

The Historical Development of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation

The history of the development of the present structure of the B.C.P.T. Federation is one of organization through successive but autonomous formation of one local association after another, finally co-ordinated by the organization of a central board with formal constitution and by-laws. No local associations are organized unless by the express wish of the members, so there is a considerable measure of self-government; on the other hand, associations once they are organized, are bound by the directives of the Board of Directors. This chapter traces the history of the growth of the organization from one association to a Federation of over fifty thousand members, and the method of study employed to attempt to discover some facts about its leadership.

The first local association of the organization now known as the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation was formed in the year 1915 during the first world war. News of an organization known as the Parent-Teacher
Association, operating in the United States, gave inspiration for a similar project in British Columbia. During this year two groups, one in Vancouver and one in Victoria, gathered information from associations in the states of Washington and California about the work of this organization whose objectives were to promote the welfare of children and youth, irrespective of race, colour or creed.¹

British Columbia, using the constitution and by-laws of California and Washington to guide the group here, set about launching associations in this province. By the end of the year 1916 several associations had been organized, the first one meeting appropriately enough in the historic Craigflower school in Victoria. In the year 1917, a central organization was formed, known as the Vancouver and District Parent-Teacher Federation, in order that problems affecting more than one association could be dealt with more effectively. In 1922 a central provincial Board was formed at a conference in Vancouver which was attended by two hundred and eighty-three delegates from sixty associations throughout the province. By 1960, the membership had risen to fifty-two thousand in over six hundred and fifty associations.

¹ I am indebted to a history of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation, written by Mrs. A. E. Delmage, Historian and Life Member of the Federation, and published by the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation.
Structural Characteristics of the Federation

The basic unit of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation is the local association. Local associations are organized in schools operating under the British Columbia Public Schools Act, or receiving grants from the British Columbia Department of Education, or from the government of Canada, or operating under the Superintendent of Schools of the Yukon Territory. Local associations pay a per capita fee to the Federation in respect of its members, and this fee includes for the individual, membership in the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, which is the National body, as well as in the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation.

A Parent-Teacher Council is a conference body which provides opportunity for associations within a city, district or community, to unite in the pursuit of common objectives. A Council has no legislative powers, pays no fees to the Provincial or National Federations, and may be organized only by authorization of the Board of Directors. The constitution and by-laws which govern a council must be approved by the Federation.

A Region is designated thus by the authorization of the Board. It is a geographic area comprising one or more school districts and Parent-Teacher Associations, with the purpose of electing a representative to the Board who
will act as a liaison between the Federation and these Associations. A Region pays no fees to the Provincial or National Federation, and the elected representative of a region is a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation.

The Constitution of the Federation also provides for an Executive Committee whose duty it is to carry out any commitments made to it by the Federation or by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee may transact routine business, and may make suggestions or recommendations to the Board. This committee meets at least six times a year, and the by-laws of the Federation clearly define the offices of the Board which are to be represented on it.¹

The Board of Directors of the Federation consists of the Chairmen of the fourteen standing committees, Chairman of the Magazine Board, Chairman of Council Presidents, the Honorary President, three Vice-Presidents, the President, the immediate Past President, and the Secretary Treasurer. In addition, each of the Regional Representatives from the eighteen Regions of the province are members of the Board of Directors. With the exception of the Honorary President, who since 1926 has always been

the elected President of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, these forty officers of the Federation are elected biennially. The Board has the power to fill any vacancies by appointment except when such a vacancy occurs within a period of six weeks prior to the first day of the Annual Convention, in which case the office is declared open for election.¹

The Board of Directors is required to meet at least four times a year, and has the duty to fill by appointment annually offices which are not covered by the By-Laws. The office of Chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws committee and that of Finance Chairman, as well as three National Representatives must be appointed from members of the Board.

The policies of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation are determined by the members of the Associations throughout British Columbia, through their delegates whom they appoint to represent their associations at the Annual Conventions. These delegates in turn elect the Provincial Officers and direct the appointment of National Representatives, who, in conference with the representatives from the Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federations from each province, fashion the policies of the

¹ By-Laws of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation, Article X, Section 5.
Thus the policies which govern the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation in British Columbia, and Home and School Associations throughout Canada, are not superimposed by any outside person or group of persons, but are established by democratic process in which the individual Parent-Teacher member has a voice in the decisions made by the Federation through his elected and appointed representatives.

The Statement of Policy for the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation is based on resolutions which have been passed at the Annual Conventions of the Federation, as well as the recommendations submitted in a Brief to the Royal Commission on Education in 1959. The Brief included all resolutions pertaining to education that had been adopted at previous conventions in the years 1955, 1956, and 1957, as well as answers to a questionnaire based on questions and topics submitted by members, associations, committees and other groups within the Federation structure. All recommendations in this Brief which were drawn from answers to this questionnaire originated in replies which were virtually unanimous. The recommendations in the Brief, therefore, were felt to express the views of the Majority.

---

of the members of the Federation.

It has been found in empirical studies of voluntary organizations that beyond a certain point the size and interests of a democratic association compel it to employ full-time officials.\(^1\) The Parent-Teacher Federation is no exception, and Article XII of the By-laws of the Federation makes provision for the appointment of an Executive Secretary, who does not hold office and has no vote. However, it appears to be fair to assume that the Executive Secretary must have a large degree of ego-involvement in her work.\(^2\)

In addition, the office establishment provides for two full-time and one part-time employee.

The "British Columbia Parent-Teacher" is the official magazine of the Federation and is published five times each year in Vancouver. It contains material reflecting the various areas of interest of the Federation, serves as a medium of exchange of news between associations, and publishes progress reports of committees, as well as dealing with many aspects of education in the province.

As can be observed readily from a review of the policy, the interests and scope of activity of the British

---

1 Barber, op. cit., p. 492.
2 Personal communication.
Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation encompasses almost every phase of community interest in the welfare of children, and the leadership of this organization is of paramount importance. Before discussing the findings of this exploratory study, however, let us consider its design and method.

**Method of Study**

Data for this study were collected through a variety of sources, primarily the scheduled interview. (See Appendix A.) It was hoped to discover by this method of exploration what were the special characteristics the officers of the Federation held in common. We wondered how they perceived the goals of the Federation, and if they felt that these goals were being reached. We wanted to find out what pathways they had taken to leadership in this province-wide organization.

The decision was made to focus attention on the members of the Board of Directors who live in the Greater Vancouver Area, first because of the closer contact they have with the headquarters of the Federation, and second because it was not possible in the time at the disposal of the writer to interview members of the Board who live in places distant from Vancouver. It was further decided arbitrarily to exclude the Regional representatives, of whom four live in the Greater Vancouver area. In effect
the form of sampling may be characterized as a selected sample.

It should be pointed out that the sample was selected on the basis of an arbitrary decision, and therefore may not be representative in the scientific sense. However the study is an exploratory one, and the decisions thus arbitrarily made as to the sampling were based on factors of time, the availability of the respondents, and the fact of the special responsibilities of officers of the Federation who live in the Greater Vancouver area.

These officers are in theory able to attend every meeting of the Board of Directors, every meeting of any committee to which they belong or which they chair, and they can be reached easily by other officers, by members of their committees, and by the Executive Secretary, either by telephone or in person. Officers of Councils or Local Associations are free to consult these officers informally and at short or no notice. A review of the minutes of a single Board meeting will, to the sensitive observer, give a clue to the heavy burden of responsibility that falls upon those officers of the Federation who live within commuting distance of the Federation office and who are linked by telephone to such a large proportion of the membership.

With this rationale for our decision, then, we
interviewed, with the permission of the President and the Board of Directors of the Federation, the following thirteen members of the Board:

President
First Vice-President

Chairmen of the following standing committees:
- Chairman of the Magazine Board
- Audio-Visual Education
- Community Influences
- Leisure Time Activities
- Parent Education
- Programme
- Promotion
- Publications
- Public Relations
- Resolutions
- Safety

The President is, ex officio, a member of all committees, and the first Vice-President, who by the terms of the By-laws, Article VIII, is required "to serve in such capacities as may be designated by the Federation, the Board, or the Executive Committee" is explicitly directed to be a member of the Finance Committee.¹

It should be noted that of the chairmen of the seventeen standing committees, only three live outside the Greater Vancouver area. At the time this survey was conducted, two others who lived in Vancouver or its environs were not available for interview. There were two vacancies

---

on the Board which have since been filled by appointment.

The method used in this exploration, then is the case study method, and its limitations are well-known to the social scientist.\(^1\) However the case study can give a more detailed picture of "the social reality beneath the formal organization",\(^2\) and the objective and skilled interviewer may be able to minimize some of the major limitations of this method, therefore its use may be justified on these grounds.

This study attempted to obtain factual information concerning time spent in the organization, family constellations, educational attainment of the members, as well as subjective data involving opinions and attitudes. In this latter area a special effort was made to obtain the informant's opinion and it was made clear that the purpose

\(^1\) For example, it is difficult not to generalize on the basis of the small sample of interviews. Young, in her discussion of the limitations of this method says that individual recollections are open to errors of perception, memory, judgement and unconscious bias, with a special tendency to overemphasise unusual events. She adds that the case study method is subjective, the replies may be self-justificatory, and they include an element of wish-fulfilment. On the other hand, the investigator tends to see what he is looking for, he usually wants to help the subject, and the case situation generally offers a complex of variable. See Young, Pauline V., PhD., Scientific Social Surveys and Research, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1939, pp. 248-250.

\(^2\) Loc. cit.
of the interview was to obtain information rather than pursue any specific point of view. That some non-conscious factors may have been operating as conditioning elements, must, however, be noted, and the reader is cautioned to examine the data critically.

In the following chapter we will turn to a presentation and discussion of the findings.
CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In the previous chapters we have discussed the place of the voluntary association in contemporary society and the structural characteristics of the particular voluntary association which we are investigating. Let us now turn our attention to the leaders of the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation and their characteristics. How were they first recruited as members of this organization? How did they first appraise the purposes and goals of this organization? Did these perceptions change, and if so, how do they now perceive the objectives? What do they consider to be their contribution to the goals of the Federation?

Apathy in the Voluntary Organization

The discussion in the first chapter leads us to believe that membership in voluntary associations is by no means a universal phenomenon. Even in the so-called "golden age" of the nineteenth century, Barber tells us that "despite the widespread myth that voluntary participation was complete ... writers of the nineteenth century ... assigned to New England towns attributes they never
Apathy is not a new characteristic of the voluntary association.

At first glance one might come to the conclusion that the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Federation, with its lofty and altruistic goals, would be the type of association that would have a prior claim on the time and energies of parents, especially in view of the value that education holds in the consciousness of many parents today. However, an examination of the participation of parents in local Parent-Teacher Associations in one Parent-Teacher Council in British Columbia seems to indicate that even in an organization with such high purpose and potential for social action, participation is on a relatively small scale.

In the Parent-Teacher Council comprising the Associations organized in the Burnaby School District, a lower mainland municipality adjacent to the cities of Vancouver and New Westminster, twenty-four elementary schools are represented. The total number of elementary schools in this school district is thirty-two, with an enrollment of thirteen thousand five hundred students. The total number of students registered in schools in which a Parent-Teacher Association is organized is eleven thousand, five hundred. The total membership in Parent-Teacher associations in

---

1 Barber, _op. cit._, p. 484.
Burnaby is two thousand, four hundred and twenty-seven. The number of parents belonging to the Parent-Teacher Association is twenty per cent of the number of students registered at those schools, and eighteen per cent of the total school population. The highest percentage of parents to students in any one association is thirty-six per cent, and the lowest is eight per cent. This is even below Kommarovsky's findings for the city of New York.

In some schools parents have organized Parents' Groups, which operate as auxiliaries to the schools to which they are attached, rather than as part of a larger policy-making body, and we are not here concerned with these groups.

**Why Do Parents Join a Parent-Teacher Association**

One of the questions this study attempted to examine was: why do parents attend their first Parent-Teacher meeting? Although it is probable that a reasonably wide range of motives is responsible, in our sample we found that the feeling of duty and responsibility played the major part in the decision to join.

Nine parents said that they attended their first meeting because they felt they had an obligation to take an intelligent interest in the school careers of their children. One had become interested in Parent-Teacher work through work in the church, and ultimately organized
an association in the school in which his child was registered. One said that she attended her first meeting at the invitation of a neighbour, not knowing what to expect, but looking forward to meeting friends in a new neighbourhood.

Two members had themselves been educated in Europe and in England, and went to their first meeting primarily to try to find out in what way the Canadian system of education differed from their own experiences, but also because they felt that one could learn more quickly about the institutions and culture of a country by joining its voluntary organizations. Two parents attended Parent-Teacher meetings in the first instance because of explicit pressure to do so brought to bear upon them by their children.

In addition to these reasons, there is one common one, the wish to meet the teachers to whom they have entrusted the care of their children, and in fact the first meeting of the year soon after the beginning of the fall term is frequently set up for this purpose. However, one might speculate whether this is not a reflection of a middle class value, the expectation of the "good parent", who whether she belongs to a Parent-Teacher Association or not, will find means of fulfilling this expectation. As can be seen in other studies of voluntary organizations, that portion of society which in theory could benefit most, is least represented on the membership rolls.
When Do the Parents Join the Parent-Teacher Association

Another area examined was that of the relationship between initial involvement in Parent-Teacher activities and the age of the child. Of the thirteen members interviewed, ten attended their first meeting when the oldest child in the family was first enrolled in Grade One. When asked: "What age was your eldest child when you attended your first Parent-Teacher meeting?", some of the answers were: "I expected to join the P.T.A. as soon as my child entered Grade One"; "My mother had belonged to Home and School in Ontario and I naturally expected to do the same"; "I wanted to find out what the schools were doing, so as soon as my child entered school, I got some friends together and we organized a P.T.A."; "I felt it was a moral obligation to attend P.T.A. meetings"; "I assumed that I had a duty to attend P.T.A. meetings".

Three of the members were charter members of the Parent-Teacher Association in the schools their children attended, and each was involved in the organizational process. One member attended her first meeting when her child was still in kindergarten. She related that she had moved to a school district in which there was a kindergarten so that her child could benefit from this experience. We might conclude that not only do people who rise to positions of leadership in an organization feel a commitment
to devote time to community activities, and a responsibility to their children, but they appear willing to devote this time and energy to discharging this responsibility.

First Perceptions of Parent-Teacher Goals

However, if we look at the first appraisal of the Parent-Teacher Association by these members, we can see that for many the goals of the Federation were perceived only dimly if indeed they were perceived at all. As we saw in Chapter I, if members are to participate in the activities of an association in a way that offers rewards both to themselves and to their organization, they should have a clear perception of the goals and purposes of that organization. The avowed purpose of the Parent-Teacher Federation is "To promote the welfare of children and youth", as stated in Article I of the Constitution, but on the basis of this selected sample these members tended to regard this as referring to their children in the school which they were attending, or at most, all the children attending that school. The purchase of a refrigerator seems to have a tangible and immediate value; the long term goals which appear nebulous in the extreme cannot have the same appeal for the majority of parents. The idea of working for all children is not always seen at first as the purpose. As we will see, it is frequently only as the member's activities reach out beyond the confines of the local
association to Council and Federation that the vista widens.

In our sample, for instance, seven thought that the Parent-Teacher Association in their schools were fund-raising organizations, auxiliaries to the school, which raised money by various devices such as fashion shows, carnivals and bridge tournaments, to be spent, often following a suggestion from the principal of the school, in the purchase of items which were not provided by the School Board. In this manner were purchased supplementary teaching aids, stage curtains, lunch room equipment record players, and so on. Because Parent-Teacher Associations did some of these things in the depression era, the idea that this is still the purpose of a Parent-Teacher Association seems to linger on, and in many schools is still the practice. Opinions on the merits of fund-raising in general were certainly divided among the Board members that were interviewed, and it appears that the question is not yet settled satisfactorily.

Three members of our sample said they had no pre-conceived ideas about the purpose or activities of the Parent-Teacher Association which they joined. The Federation was connected only vaguely in their minds with the local organization. One member thought that the association was a liaison between the home and the school; one member believed firmly in the necessity of voluntary participation
in such associations as part of the continuing struggle to maintain a democratic society. Only one appeared to have a really clear and vivid comprehension of the goals of the Federation, and she joined the association in her school in the full knowledge of the value and necessity for our society of the voluntary organization, both as a democratic institution and as an aid to personal growth.

Later Perceptions of the Goals

An attempt was made in this study to determine whether the participants' perception of the organization changed with the passing of time; to identify the nature of the change if any, and to examine the factors contributing to these changes. When we asked the question: "What do you see the purpose of the Federation to be now?", some of the answers we received were: "I was asked to be a Council Delegate; this was the first office I held in my local P.T.A. I soon realized that the P.T.A. was interested in more important things than buying dishes for the school. I think the present goal of the Federation is to help establish a relationship between parents and teachers so that they can learn each other's role in relationship to the child. It should be also an organization for training for leadership." This member felt that the most important issue before the Board of Directors at the present time was the present state of education in the Province.
Another member replied to the question in this way: "Money raising used to be the goal of the P.T.A., and it still can be a strong cohesive force in a local association. Now the money raised by P.T.A.'s is more likely to be used for bursaries and scholarships. Keeping watch on the education system is our main job." A third said the goal was clearly stated: to promote the welfare of children and youth, but the value of the Federation was as a cooperative effort of a large group to deal with problems where individual effort would be of no avail. Two members said that they thought the organization was a training field for work in the larger community, a "springboard" as one person put it, "training for citizenship" said another. "We need organizations like the P.T.A. to help us keep the freedom of a democratic society; a society based on the family unit."

The question was asked: "What do you think of the Federation in terms of a group for social action?" There was divided opinion on this question. Six members saw the Federation as an instrument for social action in the field of child welfare. One member said that it could be a

1 The Committee on Child Welfare Services published in 1961 a comprehensive report on Child Welfare Services in British Columbia, entitled, Child Welfare Work Kit for use by social action study groups. This fact may have influenced the respondents.
social action group, but that it had not yet reached that point in its development; three saw its main purpose as policy making, especially in the field of education, and three saw it as an instrument to promote good relationships between parents and teachers.

Five members specifically mentioned the first time they attended the Annual Convention as the time when their ideas concerning the purpose and scope of the Federation's activities began to change. The Convention is an event that often gives a new delegate a new perspective, and succeeds in drawing former delegates back again. The theme of the meeting is focussed on some issue with a broad yet relevant meaning for Parent-Teacher members. At this time the Resolutions prepared by local associations and by the Board are presented, discussed, and voted upon. Discussions and addresses and reports are on a scale rather different from the usual experience in a P.T.A. meeting, and the impact of the interested participation of five hundred other delegates under the dynamic leadership of the Board members is difficult to resist.

As has been noted in other studies, one of the chief values of a voluntary organization is as an instrument in the struggle to maintain our democratic forms of government, but only one person expressed this point of view in just this way clearly and explicitly. It was implied in
the replies of six others, and could be inferred in some of the responses of the remainder. Therefore it would appear that the members who were interviewed all had some appreciation of this aspect of a voluntary organization.

From looking on the Parent-Teacher Association as a group connected with an individual school, and having few if any larger implications, these members, it seemed later, perceived the Federation as an organization which could initiate social action in the field of child welfare. All concluded that fund raising could never be entirely abolished and the following reasons were cited: first, funds are necessary to run an association, buy stationery, send delegates to conventions so that their perceptions may be broadened, and to provide bursaries and scholarships; second, fund-raising provides a concrete focus for the activity of members of an association who would otherwise have no interest in membership.

Who Are the Members of the Board of Directors

As we have seen in the second chapter, the formal structure of the Parent-Teacher Federation in such that in the actual operation of an organization of this size in a geographic area encompassing the whole province of British Columbia, the problem of representative participation in the leadership group is a formidable one. The Board of Directors meets four times a year, and expenses of Board
members from distant points is met as far as possible by the Federation. Certain expenses of the Regional Representatives are also a charge upon the funds of the Federation, including an allocation to defray the costs of visiting associations in their various regions.

However, it is not possible for Board members living in remote parts of the Province to participate fully in the immense amount of work necessary to run an organization of this kind. The scope of the activity is wide and demands many hours of time which is given freely by these volunteers, but the chief burden falls inevitably upon those members of the Board who live in the urban area within commuting distance of the Federation office. Therefore the very fact of residing in the urban area places a special responsibility of the Board members who fall into this category, and their commitments to other activities are significant. Especially important, as it developed in this study, is the size of the family and the age of the younger children.

We asked the question, "How old are your children now, and how old were they when you first became a Board member?" Of the thirteen members interviewed, two were men, and their business obligations rather than their family constellation appeared to influence their participation in Federation activities. However, even in these families,
there was only one child in the home, and this child was almost grown up; that is, in both cases the child in the home was attending High School.

Of the eleven other members, one had four children, of which only three were now living at home. This member felt that the only reason that she had been able to give as much time as she wished was because she had the full-time services of a maid. She and three other members still had children at home who were in elementary school: these children were ages seven, eight, nine and eleven. No families of members included any pre-school children, and in five families all the children had passed their eighteenth birthday and in some cases were no longer at home. In any case, no family had more than four children, three families had three children, seven families had two children, and two families had one child. The members with children still in elementary school set limits on the amount of time they were willing to devote to Federation activities because of the responsibility they felt to their families.

In response to the second part of the question, it was found that only the minority had children eight years old or younger when they first took a position on the Board. Eight members had not become Board members until after their youngest child was twelve years old. Only one, the member with the services of a maid, went on the Board
while one of her children was still a pre-schooler. One exception to the pattern is the member who had a baby after she went on the Board, but the remaining members had children between six and eleven years, all in elementary school.

To illustrate the amount of time that can be spent in the service of the Federation, the activities of one member who has one child still at home, in Grade 12, is illuminating.\(^1\) This Federation officer has been a Parent-Teacher member for thirteen years. During that time she has helped to organize two new associations in her children's schools, taken office on the executive of each, and has held a membership in a third association. Although she never served on a Parent-Teacher Council, she is now in her seventh year as a member of the Board of Directors; she has been a member of the executive committee of the Board for three years, and she has been appointed National representative for three terms.

She has served as chairman of eight committees; she has participated in at least nine Regional Conferences, five Workshops, and she has been Official Representative of the Board to nine conferences and meetings held by other organizations; for example, the B. C. Safety Conference;

\(^1\) This example is not intended to portray the typical pattern of Parent-Teacher activity, but is cited only for illustrative purposes.
the School for Alcohol Studies at U.B.C., and the Television Workshop at U.B.C. She has been a delegate to eight Group Development Workshops at the University of British Columbia, held jointly by the Parent-Teacher Federation and the Extension Department of the University. She has worked at two Parent's Institutes, three Adult Education Conferences, and at least one Border Conference, which is held in cooperation with the Washington Congress of Parents and Teachers, alternating between a city in Washington and in British Columbia. She has been an active and working member of sixteen special committees of the Board, and she has been a member of five standing committees of the Board.

Membership on only one standing committee in one year entailed planning a workshop on programming with films in conjunction with the National Film Board and the Vancouver Public Library, preparing a programme booklet for local associations, attending a National annual meeting of the National Federation in Saskatoon, attending all Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings, visiting local associations as speaker, resource person or installation officer. She has organized one association on the lower mainland, and assisted councils and local associations with planning programmes, workshops, and schools of instruction for officers.

This member has two children, the elder married
and the younger in her final year at High School. She feels free to devote this much time to the Federation, and she feels strongly identified with it. She made the observation that in her opinion, voluntary membership in this organization was of more value to the member than was the member's contribution to the organization.

Like twelve of the other members interviewed, this officer also belonged to other voluntary organizations. In our sample, one member belonged to five other associations and was chairman of one, three belonged to four others, three belonged to three others, one belonged to two others, three belonged to only one other association, and one belonged to no others. The greater number of other organizations to which the member belonged, the greater the possibility that he had an executive office in at least one of them.

The formal educational achievements of the members of the Federation appear to have little significance in assessing their contribution. However all the members interviewed had completed Grade twelve. Five had degrees from a university, and four had had two years of professional education (such as normal school) in addition to Grade twelve. Four had not had any further formal education after completing grade twelve. Intelligence and education did not appear to be primary aspects of leadership on the basis of
these data. The length of time spent in Parent-Teacher activity appeared to be of greater significance. A certain body of knowledge is required in order to perform executive functions well, and this is often acquired slowly. The goals of the Federation, as we have seen, are perceived more clearly after experience with the organization as a working member. In addition, many are reluctant to take office on the Board while their children are still young.

Length of Time Spent in the Organization

In our sample of thirteen, six members had worked in the organization at some level for a period of between sixteen and twenty-one years. One of these six members is the President, who has spent twenty-one years in the association, eleven of them on the Board of Directors. These six members provide the background of experience which comes from long tenure, which we saw was necessary for the continuing efficiency of an organization.

Three of the members have been in the association for periods of between eleven and sixteen years; of these, two have been members of the Board for only one year and one has been a member for nine years. One has spent ten years in the organization, and three have spent nine years; of these three, one has been on the Board for seven years, one for three years and one for two years. In summary, one member has held six offices on the Board of Directors,
three have held four offices, five have held three offices, and four were elected or appointed to the Board for the first time. There is then, good recruitment to the Board. As we have seen in other studies, the By-laws provide for the rotation of officers, and limit the time that a member may hold the same office to four years, that is, two two-year terms.

**Election to the Board of Directors**

That there is no general pattern for attaining the position of a member of the Board seems to be clear. There was wide variation in the interval of time between joining the local association and going on the Board. Six members in our sample did not take office as a Director until more than ten years after they had first joined a Parent-Teacher Association; four had been members for from six to eight years, and three had had less than four years membership before their appointment or election. Many served on Committees of the Board before becoming Board members, thus preparing themselves for executive office. This appears to be a good leadership training device, and Board members look for potential candidates in their own associations for their committees.

Two members of our sample had Board Membership conferred upon them automatically by virtue of their positions as Council Presidents. This rule is no longer in
force; only the Chairman of Council Presidents has a place on the Board, and this is an elective office. If a member is active in her Parent-Teacher Council, her progress toward Board membership may be slower than if she by-passed the Council entirely. Four members in our sample had never held a Council office, although as president of a local association she may have attended Council meetings and gained some familiarity with its activities.

The Board has the power to fill vacancies, as provided for in Article X, section 5 of the By-laws. Two members were appointed to finish an unexpired term of office, because of their association with the committee involved. Members of the Board may be nominated by local associations, by members of the Board of Directors, and by Life Members. In this way a Board member can provide for a promising candidate an opportunity to try for election to the Board. Four of this group were nominated by Board members and subsequently elected at the Annual Convention. No one had been nominated by a Life Member. This honour is given to members upon recommendation of the Board or of an Association, for exceptionally meritorious service to parent-teacher work, over a minimum of fifteen years, and life members on the whole are not as actively interested as younger members.

We have seen that there are many avenues open to positions of leadership in the Parent-Teacher Federation.
In the next chapter we will attempt to relate these findings to previous studies that have been made of the leadership process, and to discuss Board membership of the Federation in the light of these concepts.
CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FEDERATION

In the first chapter of this study the role of the voluntary association in contemporary society was examined. In this concluding chapter conceptions of leadership will be discussed, the findings of this study will be reviewed in relation to the leadership of this type of organization, and the significance of leadership for the voluntary association will be assessed. Finally, an attempt will be made to suggest some areas worthy of further investigation.

Some Abstract Concepts of Leadership

It has been suggested by Arnold Rose that the voluntary association has the potential capacity for making a substantial contribution to education for participation in the democratic process.\(^1\) Association membership, says Rose, presents the individual with the opportunity to "acquire as much power in the community or the nation as his free time, ability and inclinations permit him to".\(^2\)


\(^2\) Loc. cit.
He adds that through participation in such an association, the individual may "become aware of how processes function ... how things are done in at least the limited sphere in which they operate." If members can learn to use these processes, then perhaps it follows that the voluntary association has implications for leadership.

In order to understand the relevance of the quality of leadership in the voluntary association, we will first examine some of the abstract concepts of leadership as it is presented in the literature. Leadership is often thought of as a specific attribute of personality, a trait that some persons possess and others do not, or at least a quality that some achieve in high degree and others scarcely at all. The results of research seem to indicate that leadership qualities, so-called, vary indefinitely as the needs of the group vary. Viewed in relation to the individual, leadership may be regarded not as an attribute of personality but as a quality of role within a particular and specified social system. Viewed in relation to the group, leadership may be regarded as a quality of its structure. Without leadership, says Gibb, "there is no focus about which a number of individuals may cluster to form a group ... here defined as two or more people in a

1 Rose, op. cit., p. 69.
state of social interaction."

"Leadership depends on attitudes and habits of dominance in certain individuals and submissive behaviour in others."\(^2\) Certainly there is a division of labour within a group that is accepted by all its members. Gibb concludes that coherence occurs because of the common understandings or cultural traditions as to how the members of the group should behave.\(^3\) The concept of leadership as a cultural norm plays a considerable part in the emergence of a leader. Ross, in her study of control and leadership in women's groups, found that group norms controlled female participation in voluntary fund-raising organizations, where factors of feelings about obligations were paramount, but like Gibb, concluded that leadership was specific to a situation.

Temperament appears to be a factor in the emergence of the leader. According to Frank, leadership is a dynamic emotional relationship in which the personality of the leader orients the personalities of the followers so that they are directed toward him by reason of the

---


reciprocal relation between one who dominates and those who wish to be dominated by him.\(^1\) In other words, holding a leadership position appears to fulfil urgent personality needs of the leader. While Frank feels that the leader must arouse an emotional response, at the same time he says that "leadership has been institutionalized and built into the very fabric of social life, so that it functions pervasively and effectively, with little opportunity for any contrary ideas or feelings to be expressed or received."\(^2\) His hypothesis is that only the aggressive leader, who wishes to dominate, can and will emerge and find acceptance. The rare individual of original creative power, whom we might hopefully wish to rule us, does not need to exploit others for the fulfilment of his personality.

Paul Pigors in his classic study of leadership, defines it as interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specific goal or goals.\(^3\) Leadership may also be thought of as a concept applied to the relationship of personality and environment to describe the situation when one, or at the most a very few,

---


2 *Loc. cit.*

personalities are so placed in the environment that his, or their will, feeling, and insight direct and control others in the pursuit of a cause.¹

Like Gibb, Murphy in his discussion of the components of leadership, proceeds from the hypothesis that leadership is a function of the whole situation, and the leader meets a critical need, coming into being when he as an individual meets certain social needs of the group by releasing into the situation ideas which are accepted by the group because they indicate solutions of needs which have been only dimly sensed.² Therefore, he says, self confidence, and the confidence of the group are components of leadership, and when the situation includes elements in which the skill of the individual counts, the retiring person may become dominant. However he emphasises the point that in his opinion there is no carry-over of components from one situation to another unless the situations contain identical elements.³

If we subscribe to a theory of groups composed of dynamic entities or personalities in interaction, may we

³ Loc. cit.
assume that individual characteristics and actions change under the varying influence of factors in the social field? There are accepted ways of behaving within the cultural framework which tend to determine the forces acting in the group situation. Therefore it would seem logical that groups have a capacity to propel to leadership one or more of their number.¹ The choice of a specific individual for the leadership role will be more dependent upon the nature of the group and of its purpose than upon the personality of the individual, but it will be most dependent upon the relationship between the personality and the group at any particular moment.

According to Gibb, there is no justification for saying that the qualities of personality which make for leadership exist in a latent form when not being exercised in a social situation.² Any qualities of personality common to leaders in varying situations may also exist in persons who never achieve leadership status. If individual accession to the leadership role appears to be dependent upon the group goal, and upon the capacity of the individual to contribute to the achievement of that goal, then the corollary should also hold true, that there is no leadership

¹ Gibb, op. cit., p. 268.
² Loc. cit.
in isolation. An individual is not a leader until he is engaged in social interaction toward some objective goal seen by both leader and follower.¹

Jennings concludes that the 'why' of leadership "appears not to reside in any personality trait considered singly, nor even in a constellation of related traits, but in the interpersonal contribution of which the individual becomes capable in a specific setting eliciting such contribution from him."²

When once the group activity has become dominated by an established and accepted organization, leadership tends to disappear and is replaced by domination or headship. The position of the leader, when maintained through an organized system and not by the spontaneous recognition of the individual's ability to contribute to the group goal, may be a position of headship, although the fact of the organization does not necessarily preclude leadership. Indeed, in many situations, headship and domination are ineffective without leadership.

Although many, like Plato, feel that the wisest should rule, the leader in our society does not appear to

² Loc. cit.
need superior intelligence. Indeed, intelligence far superior to the group he leads might hamper his leadership.\(^1\) According to Gouldner, superiority of intelligence beyond a certain degree, relative to a group, may prevent an individual from obtaining or holding onto leadership,\(^2\) but he tempers his conclusions with respect to the relationship between the intelligence of the leader and the average intelligence of the group. First, he says, the leader tends to have an intelligence higher than the average in his group, and second, there is a limit to the superiority of intelligence which a leader may possess. The most that can be said, adds Gouldner, is that access to leadership is inhibited for individuals with lower than average intelligence, and that having higher than average intelligence than the group does not guarantee leadership.\(^3\) The whole question of intelligence as a component of leadership is apparently still in the realm of investigation although Gouldner cites Maurice Krout to the effect that "the great men of the civilized world have been analyzed for us by competent psychologists on the basis of materials sufficient to determine brightness or intelligence. The results seem to show that 'great men', including outstanding leaders in


\(^2\) Gouldner, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

\(^3\) *Loc. cit.*
the public life of Europe and America, range all the way from dull normal to genius."¹ More important is the relevance or significance of the leaders ability for solving the problems of the group that he expects to lead. "Potentiality," says Gibb, "cannot be directly known, any­more than capacity can be known, except as it can be inferred from expressed ability. The group leader is that person who is able to contribute most to progress toward the common goals."²

Leadership and the Federation

How does the quality of its leadership affect the Federation? John Tsouderos, in his investigations of the process of change in voluntary organizations, drew some interesting conclusions with respect to the growth and decline of this type of association.³ Briefly, he came to the conclusion that in voluntary associations membership growth precedes the growth of income, but after the peak of total income has passed and the social group is con­tracting, the association attempts to survive by continuing the process of formalization.


² Gibb, op. cit., p. 268.

Tsouderos found that the larger the membership grew, the smaller was the percentage of the membership taking part in voluntary activities necessary to the smooth running of that organization. With the increase in membership, the number of standing committees increased and in consequence so did the frequency of executive committee meetings. As a result, the hours of service donated by the executive officers of the association increased, and as these members are the least likely to withdraw, the greatest turnover is observed in the passive membership.

We may conclude that the devotion of the executive officers is greater and presumably they are capable and efficient in dealing with the extra burdens thus placed on them as administrative problems increase and membership decreases. From the information received from the leaders of the Federation, one could conclude that the Federation is not without good leaders, but that the leaders have a task that grows progressively larger and a pool of volunteers that grows progressively smaller. It is no surprise that students of the voluntary organization place the greatest importance on the factor of time: "To be effective, a leader must first of all be able to devote more 'time' to organizational activities than is expected of the rank

---

1 Tsouderos, op. cit., p. 207.
and file. "1

In the Federation, it has been noted that all the members who were interviewed were able to give this time, either by reason of having diminished household responsibilities or because of their ability to employ household help. In addition they must have a value commitment to the goals of the organization.

As we have seen, the question of temperament looms large in any discussion of the qualifications that are necessary for leadership. Only one of the members in our sample felt that she had in no way sought the leadership positions that she had held in the Federation. However even this member felt that she had made a contribution to the purposes for which the Federation stands. It is true that members of the Board of Directors are looked upon as persons with more prestige, knowledge and influence than members of the lower echelons of the Parent-Teacher organization. The influence of former Presidents is still considerable, especially if they live in the urban area where they may be consulted by Federation members now in office. This is one way in which the Federation retains the benefits of the experience of those with long tenure in the organization.

1 Sills, op. cit., p. 33; see also Ross, Aileen, op. cit.
However, as membership increases, so does the heterogeneous character of the organization, and the need for specialization in the functions of the leadership group. According to Tsouderos, this results in a decline in the feelings of intimacy and frequency of interaction, and as a consequence the membership grows passive and further and further removed from the leadership.\footnote{Tsouderos, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 209.} With a growing membership it is more and more difficult to maintain frequent face-to-face interaction, and the problems of communication between the leadership and the membership increase.

This problem of communication between the Federation and the local associations is one that is facing this organization at the present time. The decline in membership is troubling all the members of the Board, and in the interviews with the members of our sample it was apparent that all had given it a good deal of thought. Such is the concern felt by the Board that a committee to survey and evaluate the work of the Federation has been set up to investigate the problem. Although Tsouderos traced the growth and decline of the voluntary organization, he suggests two questions for consideration that he thinks need an analytical approach, and which he felt his research did not answer.\footnote{\textit{Loc. cit.}} First, Why do voluntary organizations have a
tendency to increase their membership to a certain point, and then reach a point of maximum growth, and why does membership decline after a period of time?

Communication between the Federation and the local associations is an increasing problem. It is possible that this problem is not a new one, but has been present since the membership began to increase rapidly, if we review our findings concerning earlier and later perceptions of the goals and purposes by the members.

A third factor which is hardly explained by the theory of emotional interaction proposed by Frank, is the need of the leader to have some skills.¹ Social skills would appear to be a necessary adjunct to the leadership role, in order to be able to deal with leadership in other organizations. Whether these skills are brought to the organization by the leaders, or whether they develop these skills within the organization, adequate leadership in an organization of the size of the Federation might logically presuppose certain administrative skills "appropriate to bureaucratic contexts."²

Development of Leadership in the Federation

The development of leadership within the

¹ Sills, op. cit., p. 33.
Federation structure is of pressing concern to all thoughtful members of the Board of Directors. The subject of leadership was discussed by the respondent in every interview. One said she was most concerned about the "lack of development of new leaders", another thought that the problem of out-of-town people in leadership positions was a pressing one, a third thought there was better operation of affairs at the Board level as a result of past efforts in leadership training, but that more work had to be done in providing lines of communication from the Board down to the local level.

The Board of Directors continually evaluates its activities in the field of leadership training, and goes to great efforts to arrange leadership training programs. A Workshop for Board members is held annually to discuss the Federation structure, and to conduct purposeful discussions on communication, decision making and problem solving. Together with the Department of Extension at the University of British Columbia, the Federation sponsors through its committees for Group Development, and other committees concerned, a Parents' Institute and a Workshop on Leadership and Social Action in one of its aspects. Leadership Training Workshops are taken to centres throughout the Province; in addition Workshops and Schools of Instruction are sponsored by various councils for the members and executives of local associations in an effort to develop
leadership at the local level. However certain areas of the Province have greater influence on the policies of the Federation than other areas, and this appears to be related to social class and status considerations.

A brief examination of the places of residence of the thirteen members in our sample reveals the fact that six of the thirteen have been or are associated with three schools in the city of Vancouver, and seven of the thirteen live west of Cambie in middle class residential districts. At least five other members of the Board who were not included in our sample also live within these boundaries. A disproportionate number of the members of the Board appear to come from a relatively small geographic area of the Province, an area which presumably would have excellent educational facilities for its children if there were no Parent-Teacher organization, because of the importance of the middle-class value of education.

The Challenge for the Future

Perhaps what is needed to arrest the decline of the membership in the Federation is some new salient issue which requires a specific course of action. When associations provided actual physical objects for the schools, the need for this activity could be seen by any member as necessary, because school boards did not have the funds to provide the extras. When objectives are more nebulous
and ambiguous, their achievement does not provide such concrete satisfactions and membership interest slowly disintegrates. Leaders perhaps ought to think about ways to give the apparently nebulous causes a more concrete character in order to diminish membership heterogeneity and increase the vigour of associational life.

Moreover, an area requiring further study is the relationship between the voluntary organization and the official agencies, namely the Parent-Teacher Associations and the public school system. As the public school system has changed, the content has become more technical, the management has become more efficient and professional, public support is becoming more adequate; and with the acceptance of education as a basic value in a democratic society, the relationships between this organization on the one hand, and the Parent-Teacher Federation on the other, appears to have become more complex. Certain functions previously undertaken by the voluntary association have been taken over by the school system, and these two groups are in a transitional state. This relationship, it would appear, needs to be examined, its functions clarified, and new needs identified. Leadership and the voluntary association can be challenged by these changes, and new activity and adaptation in terms of future action may be indicated.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. How did you become a member of the Parent-Teacher Federation?
   b. How were you recruited?
   c. How did you become an executive member for the first time?
   d. How many offices did you hold in the Local association?
   e. Were you an officer in the District Council? How long? How many offices did you hold?
   f. How were you elected to the Federation? How long have you been on the Board? How many offices have you held?

II. Why are you in Parent-Teacher work?
   a. How did you perceive the organization in the beginning stages of your membership?
   b. Did your view of the organization change with time?
   c. How do you perceive the goals now?
   d. How do you see your contribution to the Federation?
   e. Can you see any differences between the place it holds now and its place in the future?

III. Who are the members of the Federation?
   a. How many children? What age were they when you first joined the Parent-Teacher organization?
   b. What age were your children when you were elected to the Federation?
   c. What is your educational attainment?
   d. Do you belong to other voluntary organizations?
APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Presented at the Board of Directors Meeting, January 31 and February 1, 1963.


Young, Pauline V. Scientific Social Surveys and Research. Prentice Hall, New York, 1939.

Articles


