



Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

Congress 2012 Pg 3	General Secretary Report Pg 5	Financial Statement Pg 11	Work to Contract Pg 13	Training Session for School Reps Pg 14
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SSTA Newsletter

CONGRESS 2012

BULLETIN OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Congress Address



The recurring theme of my last several District Secretary Reports, and indeed motions to Congress, was that of 'Groundhog Day,' ie, that each year we faced again the same issues of indiscipline, large classes and unrealistic expectations of teachers, in addition to ongoing pernicious issues such as workplace bullying and intimidation. There was, several years ago, a brief moment when we thought things might be changing –

The McCrone Agreement with its recommendation of 'time and place working' allowed teachers at least a modicum of control of where and when they undertook their duties (provided of course, nobody wanted them for anything else). Working Time Agreements at least in theory allowed teachers the discretion to prioritise their commitments. Annexe E, even if never fully implemented, was there to protect us from undertaking

unreasonable or inappropriate duties. 'Collegiality' became almost a buzz word.

The Teacher Induction Scheme, admired across the world, transformed the experiences of probationary teachers and future generations of Scotland's children, with guarantees of support put in place and a reasonable work load accepted as a right.

Maximum class sizes of twenty in S1 and S2 English and Maths seemed a good start – what a difference that made for teachers and pupils alike.

The Chartered Teacher Scheme, also admired in other countries, might not have been without its flaws; however, it did guarantee that, after many hours of additional work and no small expense, teachers could aspire to professional salary levels while continuing to work in the classroom to improve outcomes for young people.

How things have changed so quickly. The SNCT Agreement of 2011, which this Association formally rejected, represented an appalling erosion of teachers' hard won conditions and seriously undermined professionalism by pitting one group of teachers against others. Probationers, supply staff, those on conserved salaries, Chartered Teachers, pregnant women and new mothers – these were the biggest losers – but no teacher was unaffected. Pay has now been frozen for two years during a period of continuing inflation not seen for twenty years and, adding insult to

injury, we are now offered a 1% increase in pay come April 2013. I am not alone in thinking this to be derisive and offensive.

Now the McCormac Review – remember no teacher with recent classroom experience, actually served on the McCormac Committee – recommends 'flexibility' within the working week, i.e.. effectively an end to the 35 hour week. The pitiful level of discretion that 'time and place' offers teachers (and offered to almost every other Council worker) is under threat. Chartered Teacher is dead in the water and there are even suggestions that some aspects of teachers' jobs could be performed by so called 'experts' lacking teaching qualifications.

McCormac recommends that Annexe B, which outlines the duties and responsibilities of teachers, be scrapped, and that the GTC 'Standard for Full Registration' be adopted in its stead – never mind that that standard was never intended to be a 'ticky box' list of competencies but rather a philosophical/holistic attempt to identify the qualities needed in a teacher (and never mind that no teacher on the planet could be expected to meet all aspects of the standard day in day out).

And what about the GTC – that bastion of teacher professionalism, now extolled as the 'first fully independent Teaching Council in the world? Yeah right. Reducing the number of elected teacher representatives, guaranteeing



places to Headteachers whether or not they actually achieve the required number of votes, and establishing a committee structure which would see teachers deprived of their livelihoods by people who are democratically accountable to nobody, but who have volunteered to take on a public duty – is not my idea of independence

....and of course, there is no money. Whether you blame the bankers, the previous government, the current government, the Greeks or the Americans, or perhaps more realistically a combination of the lot, is largely immaterial – the brutal reality is – THERE IS NO MONEY!

Now I know there is money for wars and bankers' bonuses and other such necessities, but to invest in education? Don't be daft.

At a time of curricular innovation, confusion and upheaval, resources are simply not there. The inclusion agenda continues unchallenged but the support services to make it work are eroded constantly. The trained librarians who could have helped teachers cope with some of the issues associated with the so called 'Curriculum for Excellence' have been replaced by people who stamp books in and out. Technical support and support in practical subjects have gone. Even Attendance Officers have disappeared but the mantra to 'do more with less' continues to drone at us.

And of course, don't forget the real threats to your so called 'gold plated pension. No wonder November 30 saw the first industrial action taken by teachers in nearly 30 years and we are now embarking upon a Work to Contract following an 85% 'yes' vote in our recent ballot.

We are told that our pensions are 'unsustainable,' and that it is unreasonable to expect the taxpayer to support 'Gold Plated Pensions' enjoyed by public servants – yet no evidence is provided to support these claims, leading us to the inevitable conclusion that the changes to our pensions are nothing more than a stealth tax specifically targeting public sector employees.

And what of the assurances we have been offered that no major changes will take place for twenty five years? No government, of whatever persuasion can make such a claim. The assurance means nothing at all. Anybody who can add and subtract and do not very hard sums – and I am no mathematician – could tell you that very minor changes to the scheme – such as an increase in the state retirement age – or a change to the level of employee contributions – could have a massive impact on the pension actually received in retirement.

Now let me return to what our Vice President, James Forbes has called my 'hobby horses,' (they are of course, his hobby horses too) or for the linguists among you, or as Francois Hollande might say, 'Revenons a nos moutons...'

Issues of indiscipline, workplace bullying, low morale and career stagnation as more and more opportunities are withdrawn as schools and districts embark on cost driven 'management restructuring,' are still very much with us.

Make no mistake. We have an uphill fight to defend the rights of secondary teachers, to ensure that hard won rights are not lost forever and that teachers are accorded the dignity, respect and proper remuneration they deserve. Nonetheless, fight we must and fight we will!

Recently, at the STUC Congress in Inverness, I was flabbergasted to hear a delegate from another teaching union state repeatedly that 'Union principles do not save jobs!' I am reminded of Groucho Marx's quip: 'Those are my principles, and if you don't like them...well, I have others.'

Well Colleagues, I accept that sometimes it is necessary to negotiate rather than confront, but I ask you, if we sacrifice our most fundamental trade union principles, what are we left with and is it worth having?

This Association will work tirelessly to ensure that our members' rights are not further eroded and compromised. We will work co-operatively and collectively with fraternal unions, with local authorities and with Scottish and UK governments to these ends, - in fact, we will work with the Devil and his cat if necessary - but we will not compromise our trade union principles!

Colleagues, please enjoy this 2012 Congress and go back to your schools ready to energise your members and to encourage them to participate fully in and to engage with, their union. To coin a now infamous expression you might have heard elsewhere, but which here does most certainly apply, 'We are all in this together!'

Congress 2012

Congress was held in Peebles on 11/12 May. Major items included:-

- The RT Hon. Dame Elish Angiolini addressed Congress on the reasons for young people becoming involved in illegal activity. She spoke eloquently about impoverishment of ambition and poverty before discussing the detriment suffered by a whole family if one member is convicted of a crime and jailed. In particular she discussed the cyclical effect of deprivation leading from the imprisonment of mothers. After her address she answered a number of questions effectively and in detail. The Association thanks Elish for her address which encouraged us to review long-held beliefs. The speech was particularly well received, and many delegates took the opportunity to further discuss issues with her during the evening.
- The Associations' representatives were joined by guests from other unions, The Scottish Government, STUC, SQA and the GTCS.

Reports were heard from the Associations' Representatives on:-

- Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers
- GTCS working group on Professional Update, previously known as Re-accreditation
- SQA Working Groups
- Pensions Working Group
- McCormac Working Groups

The motions debated:

Motion A

Congress notes that teachers are now facing intolerable stress levels as a result of the impending changes to National Qualifications. Faced with inadequate details of the coverage of courses, teachers now have insufficient time to prepare appropriate schemes of work, lessons and resources.

In the best interest of Scotland's pupils and teachers congress therefore calls on Executive to call a ballot on industrial action if the government does not announce a delay in the implementation of these new qualifications in the immediate future.

Motion B

Teachers' return to work interviews should be conducted only by suitably trained senior line managers who should receive support from qualified H.R. personnel. School business managers, not being the line managers of teachers, should be removed from participation in absence management meetings. Any such participation would constitute a clear breach of the confidentiality which the teacher is entitled to expect.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion C

The Association calls on the SNCT to change existing Grievance Procedures concerning teaching staff. This change would add the requirement for a person independent of the local authority to be present at all meetings concerning the outcome of a grievance. This would lead to a greater degree of objectivity in the grievance procedures currently applied.

During debate, Gordon West,

seconded by John Gray, successfully proposed amending the motion by changing "change existing Grievance" to "change its existing guidelines on Grievance" in the first line.

The substantive motion was carried nem con.

Motion D

This Association calls on the SNCT to hold a thorough review of supply teacher contracts to ensure that they receive an appropriate remuneration for the essential professional service they provide in our schools.

After a number of contributions in support, the motion was carried unanimously.

Motion E

The SSTA acknowledges that workload is seen as a major problem by many teachers. The SSTA should, in addition to raising workload issues at every available public forum, remind members as to the detail of their contracts of employment and encourage members, for their own health and wellbeing and for the long term future of education in Scotland, to take control of their own workload.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion F

Congress calls upon all local authorities to abandon attempts to merge Teachers' Conditions of Service with those of Single Status Staff.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion G

The SSTA deplores the axing of the Chartered Teacher qualification and requires that the Scottish Government commits to an assurance that the accrued

rights of existing Chartered Teachers be protected.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion H

This Association demands that the Cabinet Secretary agrees a delay to the implementation of National 4 and 5 in the light of research showing that most schools are expected to implement these courses from June 2012 when assessment material will not be available until April 2012.

The motion was largely carried.

Motion I

We call on the association to authorise and manage a "mail the minister campaign" to demand the setting up of national writing teams for each secondary subject that will also provide guidance and support on all forms of assessment relating to CfE.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

Motion J

Congress instructs the General Secretary to seek representation on the National Partnership Group which has been established to implement the recommendations contained within 'Teaching Scotland's Future'.

The motion was carried unanimously

Motion K

The Association welcomes the publication by GTCS of revised advice to teachers engaging in social networking and applauds those teachers using online tools to enhance the learning and teaching of their pupils, as well as enhancing their own CPD.

Congress believes that not only do the benefits of such technologies far outweigh the pitfalls but also that all teachers should have access to them and be supported

in using them effectively. We call on all local authorities to ensure that this support is in place.

Congress recognises the societal move away from desktop computing to mobile computing and calls upon the Scottish government and all local authorities to facilitate the appropriate adoption of such technologies in our schools as aids to learning and teaching.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion M

The SSTA calls upon all local authorities, GTCS and providers of online platforms and social networks to ensure that teachers, as well as pupils, are protected from abuse online.

Congress instructs the Association to develop appropriate advice to members.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

Motion L

Congress reasserts the SSTA's willingness to engage with other teaching unions who have members in Scotland's schools, to discuss possible routes to unity in defending Scotland's teachers' working conditions and the educational, social and economic progress of our young people. This Association further believes that professional unity among Scotland's teaching unions would be best achieved via a federated structure of sector based organisations.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

Life Membership

The President conferred Life Membership of the Association upon Albert McKay and George Sturrock.



George Sturrock and Albert McKay with their Life Membership scrolls

Albert McKay is a Past President and a joined the Association in 1973 on taking his first teaching roll. Albers has a long serving District Secretary for Aberdeenshire and also represented the Association on a number of National and International Committees and Working Groups over the years.

George Sturrock is a Past President and has been a member of the Association since 1973/74 session. He has District Secretary for Dundee City since its inception and has also represented the Association on a number of National and International Committees and Working Groups over the years.

General Secretary Report



Ann Ballinger, General Secretary

Colleagues

We are once again reaching the end of a session when teachers' conditions of service have been under attack from every quarter. I would say unprecedented attack but unfortunately there are a surfeit of precedents.

Last year the urgent issue for congress was the cynicism of the 2011 Agreement and dreadful effect it would have on the working conditions of certain teachers. Cynical is the most appropriate label because this agreement deliberately targets minority groups of teachers, damaging their working conditions and placing the deficit burden unfairly on their shoulders.

Colleagues we had no idea how bad it would be! Even now, one year into the process I am still surprised and disgusted by the antics used to squeeze every last penny from supply teachers. Authorities who:

- Attempt to count the minutes a supply teacher stood in front of a class and pay only for those minutes.

- Demand a supply teacher arrive in the building 30-60 minutes before the start of their paid contract
- Treat cover for individual teachers in the same school as separate contracts, therefore avoiding the need to every pay a supply teacher at the higher rate.
- And, of-course, those who suddenly find enough internal cover to avoid using a supply teacher on day five of their contract.

Who would have predicted that?

Over the course of the year our Solicitor, on behalf of the Association, has begun the process of taking action at employment tribunals on behalf of members who are supply teachers. On each occasion the employer has settled and our member has received a well deserved financial recompense. Let me be quite clear! Each of these individual

cases involved a particular set of circumstances and, as yet, no case has set a precedent we can make use of. However we remain committed to supporting supply members by all means possible including, where necessary, legal action.

The 2011 agreement has some clauses still to be implemented. Many members will be adversely affected when cash conservation begins to have an effect on salaries, possibly next April. The 1% promised to all public sector workers will do nothing to alleviate the difficulties caused by the pay freeze and increasing costs. Not receiving it will, however, be a real blow to those members who are conserved.

Added to this toxic mix is the harsh reality of increased pension contributions, increases to the cost of living and a pay freeze. The proposed changes to our pensions are quite simply an additional



stealth tax on public sector workers, forcing us to pay for the mistakes of bankers and politicians. Already we have evidence of young teachers withdrawing from the pension scheme in an effort to save money and many others choosing not to join in the first place. Every proposed change to the scheme reduces its value both as a retirement income fund and as a recruiting tool for young graduates considering this profession. The proposed 1% pay increase planned for next April is unlikely to even begin to redress this detriment. Is it any wonder teachers are quitting the profession to drive busses or taking their skills to a country that offers both appreciation and a reasonable salary for the job?

The other major issue this session has been, and remains, Curriculum for Excellence. You will not be surprised to hear that an increasing number of members report severe stress and workloads which simply cannot be sustained. The situation deteriorates on an almost daily basis. No one in this Association believed the DEEP AUDIT, reported in March, was going to solve any problems. Nor were we shocked when it became obvious that this deep audit was actually ridiculously shallow. With notable, and honourable, exceptions the audit was compiled by member of the Local Authority Education departments, all of course renowned for their in-depth knowledge of the current situation in every department of every school in their fiefdoms. In other

words the deep audit will be an absolute waste of any paper used to produce it, will give us no reliable information of readiness to implement CfE in certain authorities, and has simply wasted 2 months which could have been spent developing materials. When will they learn that the real experts in education are Teachers? Let me put that another way:

“The theorists are not, or are no longer, engaged in the daily practice of teaching children themselves. And, therefore, are



The General Secretary addressing Congress

not in a position to apply that constant checking process that all theories ought to receive before being promulgated. Unfortunately, some of those who provide the educational theories only do not have the responsibility of putting them to the test themselves, but are in a position to impose them on practising teachers who may well have weighed them and found them wanting; or, on practising headmasters, who, if they had been consulted beforehand, could have told the back-room boys that their bright idea wouldn't work.

I have been struck on more than one occasion by the flimsiness of the evidence on which those

apostles of change found their demands for very doubtful reforms. No educational publication should, in my opinion be passed for printing; no educational decree should be promulgated, unless it is fully documented with facts and figures which give adequate support to any proposed change.”

Not my words colleagues, but those of Dr J N C Clark, rector of Peterhead Academy and President of this Association, from his speech in May 1960. He adds “Administration is necessary, inspectors may be helpful if the inspector has been a successful teacher not too long ago. Psychologists occasionally discover things we don't know already. But these are ancillary occupations, necessary only so that they may oil the wheels to let the teacher get on with the real work of education”

In short we have been explaining the facts of education to successive governments for over 50 years and they have all refused to listen. The lesson isn't that difficult – having been to school once does not make you an education expert, teaching hundreds of pupils every week does!!

HMIe have asked us for information about departments or schools who are not ready to implement CfE and to be useful this must come with names and schools attached. A request will be sent to members next week but I appreciate how difficult it will be for any member of staff to raise their head above the parapet, particularly in an authority declared ready by local authority

management. Anyone who responds to our request with information can be assured of our full support and protection: and they assure us that of HMle.

We are, at last, beginning to receive information from SQA which will enable teachers to begin the process of developing courses, which would be wonderful if many of us were not faced with having to begin teaching these courses in some 4 weeks from now. Responses to the material have been mixed and subject specialists have already identified some real problems. This information will be forwarded to the SQA who inform us that they welcome our feedback.

There is no sign as yet of the promised, and badly needed, developed courses for N4&5, nor will there be for some time. Apparently the process of identifying development teams will begin in the next few weeks, realistically meaning that very little coursework will be written until next session. This means teachers will start the session at a disadvantage, already stressed and anxious. Nothing about this debacle is excellent and, at this stage, I struggle to imagine an excellent curriculum developing from it.

Our campaign against the imposition of pension contribution increases, and the proposed changes to our pensions, continues with a 'work to contract' beginning on Monday. Members will be fulfilling their contractual obligations (of course) but no longer gifting an extra 10 – 15 hours to their employers every week. I will, of course, keep you informed of progress with both the

work to contract and the pension negotiations.

At least one Authority has changed their policy on compulsory transfer to include an assessment of teachers' discipline and attendance records. There are so many reasons why this is unacceptable that any list produced would keep us here for hours. One can only imagine the effect on the receiving school, and on the transferred member, of this policy.

I wish to make our position clear. We will not accept mistreatment of members under any circumstances, or for any reason. We will act to support members mistreated in this way.

I now turn briefly to our relationship with other unions. With teachers under attack from so many directions members have every right to expect their Associations to co-operate to protect their rights. Most of the time their expectations will be realised, with members of different unions working in co-operation to produce the best possible result for all teachers. Sadly not all unions understand the merit of fair and honest relationships. I raise this issue now because I want to publicly welcome Brenda Bleakley to her first SSTA conference. Brenda is the organiser of the new Primary Union, the SPTA that, in the last twelve months has been created, certified as a trade union and completed their first AGM. A stunning achievement by any standards! Brenda you are very welcome to the SSTA congress!

I would also, briefly, like to thank the Scottish organiser of the NASUWT for the support offered

to this Association at the STUC, a support maintained despite enormous pressure applied by others.

And finally as you all know there have been changes in the Association office this last year. Jim retired at the end of March and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his generous support, encouragement and friendship over the last 10 years. Alan McKenzie, past president, Professional Officer and singer of Congress welcomes, was appointed Depute General Secretary and is already making his mark on the Association. Alan, Fiona, John, Andrew, Michelle, Julie, Claire, Carine and Erika are the team who provide our excellent service to members. In addition 3 of our field officers, Bill Fitzpatrick, Richard Goring, Fred McEvily and Graham Souter have ably covered Alan's post this term. Without their support my job would be impossible and I'm delighted to thank them publicly.

CONDEMNED TO REPEAT THE PAST?

A few days before Congress a letter was received from Archibald Clark, a retired Architect, whose father was President of this Association 1959-61. Mr Clark very kindly enclosed a report on the speech his father made in May 1960, because he thought it might be of interest 'given current concerns over the Curriculum for Excellence'.

The article, reprinted here, could have been written this year. It captures the problems we face so effectively I included part of the text in my report to Congress. Our employers have, it seems, learned nothing in the last 50 years.

Dr J N C Clark, President 1959-1961 had Life Membership conferred in 1968. He was also a highly esteemed Head Teacher of Peterhead Academy, where the pupils gave him the nickname of 'Nobby Clark' perhaps because he did not have a Peterhead accent. He died in 1973. Another esteemed Life Member, J D Roy, remembers him as small in stature but with a commanding presence, and always referred to as Dr Clark. Dr Clark was, however, friendly and approachable, and was held in high regard within the Association and in Scottish Education. He was also a gifted artist with work acclaimed in 1931 in 'La Revue Moderne'. On retirement from teaching he learned Braille so that he could teach pupils classics at the Blind School in Edinburgh.

In his Presidential Address in 1961, "Valley of Decision" he used the same quotation with which

James Porter concluded his Congress Address at the Congress which took the decision to establish the Association. This was an extract from the poem by James Graham 'My Dear and Only Love' which reads:

*He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That puts it not unto the touch
To win or lose it all.*

Please take the time to read Dr Clark's words which put our current discussion on curricular matters into a historical perspective, and once again emphasise the need for employers and Government ministers to understand that the only real experts in education are those teachers involved in teaching pupils.



Dr J.N.C Clark; 1959

The Buchan Observer & East Aberdeenshire Advertiser 17th May 1960

'Class-Teacher the Real Educator' Peterhead Academy Rector Lambasts The Back-Room Boys Of Education with

"believe me, the teachers of yesterday were not quite the fools that some of the bright education theorists of to-day seem to imagine. There is always a tendency among the apostles of new ideas, not merely to point out the real defects of their predecessors – which is quite legitimate – but to exaggerate and decry those defects out of all reason, and out of all relation to historical facts; and to swing to the other extreme in order to avoid the charge of being reactionaries"

Delivering his Presidential Address to the sixteenth annual general congress of the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association, Dr.J.N.C.Clark, one of the foremost educationists in Scotland to-day, has given the country a timely warning of the tendency of educational theory to outrun sound practice; and has put in a strong plea for educational experiment to be left in the hands of competent and enterprising teachers.

The theorists, to a large extent, Dr. Clark said, though admittedly connected with the fringes of education, are not, or are no longer, engaged in the daily practice of teaching children themselves. And, therefore, are not in a position to apply that constant checking process that all theories ought to receive before being promulgated.

Unfortunately, some of those who provide the educational theories not only do not have the responsibility of putting them to the test themselves, he said, but are in a position to impose them upon practising teachers, who may well have weighed them and found them wanting; or, on practising headmasters, who, if they had

been consulted beforehand, could have told the back-room boys that their bright idea wouldn't work.

BASIC

"I have been struck on more than one occasion by the flimsiness of the evidence on which those apostles of change found their demands for very doubtful reforms," said Dr. Clark. "No educational publication should in my opinion be passed for printing, no educational decree should be promulgated, unless it is fully documented with facts and figures which give adequate support to any proposed change."

As things are, he added, inadequate documentation is too common, and opinions are too often expressed in educational circles capable of influencing policy which are insufficiently supported by actual records. The Report of the Working Party on Secondary Curricula is not above criticism in this respect.

"Though we recommend acceptance, we were more than somewhat lukewarm about it. And I myself signed the document on the understanding that I was committing myself to a general acceptance of a series of recommendations, and not surrendering my freedom to the laws of the Medes and Persians," said Dr. Clark.

DANGER

But, I knew then, as I know now, that freedom can only be maintained at the price of eternal vigilance. I sensed a feeling last year that some delegates opposed to the Working Party's Report on the ground that it placed too much freedom in the hands of the wicked and irresponsible, or just plain crazy, headmasters. And indeed the Report was widely heralded as a charter of freedom for the headmaster. But I remain convinced that that is not where the danger lies."

Pointing out that the headmaster and class-teacher had in fact much the same outlook, Dr. Clark stressed that they were both in personal contact with their pupils, and that the headmaster was generally only too glad when his own duties allowed him to return to the class-room for a spot of teaching.

One or two incidents in the course of the past year, in widely separated parts of Scotland, had, however, caused a suspicion that the administrative side of education may, for administrative or financial convenience rather than on truly educational grounds, make use of the Report by quoting that part of it which suits its policy, while it quietly goes counter to another part.

DUTY

"I am convinced," said Dr. Clark, "that it is the duty of those who feel that educational interests are being subordinated to considerations of administration or finance, to resist such policies by every reasonable means. For it is we practising teachers – and I hope no one will object to my including headmasters in that category – who are engaged in the actual work of education.

"Administration is necessary. Inspectors may be helpful, if the inspector has been a successful teacher not too long ago. Psychologists occasionally discover things we don't know already. But these are ancillary occupations, necessary only so that they may oil the wheels to let the teacher get on with the real work of education. And here I must admit, in spite of my efforts to claim equality for the headmaster, that I never so fully understood that the class-teacher was the real educator as when I ceased to be one."

Is it not therefore a curious thing, asked Dr. Clark, that it is the gaps in the real educators' ranks that are being plugged with

unfinished material? A short time ago he had expressed himself rather critically with regard to certain proposals to get rid of all temporary uncertificated teachers by the simple expedient of "shooting them out of the schools," partly on the ground that he was afraid that such a policy would soon kill all the QUALIFIED teachers by putting too heavy a burden on them.

PARENTS

"The alternative – to make the qualified teachers go round by putting the pupils on part-time education, did not seem to me to be consistent with our calling as educationists. But I see very well the idea behind such proposals – which are of course not new – and if I thought that the introduction of such a policy would shock the apathetic public immediately into forcing the government of the day to face the problem honestly at long last, and admit that you must pay competitive prices for what you want – in salaries, yes; but also in conditions of work and in professional status – then I would be inclined to support them."

Dr. Clark admitted that some certificated teachers were remarkably good, but there were others whose qualifications were laughable, or who, having deliberately taken a temporary job to tide them over until the time came round for them to sit some examination in which they had already failed, were not prepared to interest themselves sufficiently to present their subjects with any degree of adequacy.

"If parents, instead of complaining to the headmaster about the badness of the teaching and discipline, would bombard their M.P.s with demands that the government of the day should tackle the situation properly, instead of fiddling about with every mean

little cheese-paring dodge – such as the veiled direction of labour now being timidly mooted they would form a pressure-group of a magnitude and force no government would dare to ignore.”

TEACHING

“And then”, said Dr. Clark, “we educationists would get a chance. Those who think that Education is a wide and woolly study pursued by superior people who, somehow or other, have a broader vision than the practising teacher – let me remind them that we educate children by teaching them definite related groups of knowledge – or subjects.

“Every good teacher educates by the way in which he presents his particular subject; by the breadth of knowledge he himself brings to bear upon it, by the standards of learning and conduct which he demands of his pupils and observes and practises himself by his philosophy of life, by, in short, what he is as much as by what he does or explicitly teaches.

“Lest any apostle of ill-considered change should accuse me of being against experiment,” said Dr. Clark, “let me repeat with emphasis that the good practising teacher is the safest and sanest exponent of real progress by controlled experiment.

EXPERIMENT

“This is the age of experiment. The material sciences long ago were launched upon their magnificent and rapidly advancing course on the understood principle that all theories must conform to observed facts, and that the observed and observable facts of nature must be supplemented by specially arranged conditions in which the behaviour of atoms, rays, or viruses could be studied as many times as the scientist might choose. This is the nature of experiment as a scientist understands it.

“It is an excellent, and, in fact, an entirely necessary means of pushing ever outwards the bounds of knowledge. The forward-looking, active mind in all walks of life, not only those labelled scientific, thinks it right to apply the method to every phase of modern activity.

But educational matters differ from other lines of inquiry in a very important respect. When a physicist wishes to send a human being into space, he first of all sends up sputniks, containing instruments alone. Then he tries the effects of space-travel on living creatures by sending up dogs, mice and monkeys into outer space before he begins to think of experimenting with what he regards as the more valuable life. So does the medical scientist seek to improve his techniques for benefiting the human race by experimenting on animals, even to the extent of employing such means as vivisection.

HOMO SAPIENS

“Whether or not homo sapiens has any moral right to use the rest of creation in this way is not at the present my concern. The point is that when it comes to education, the experimenters have no such resources for their preliminary sighting shots. The first and only subjects on which an educationist can test his theories are young specimens of homo sapiens himself. If his theories are mistaken, and his experiment fails, he has done a disservice to some of his human charges in the process; he may even have done them irreparable harm.

“This frightening thought ought always to remain in our minds whenever we feel the urge to try some experiment in teaching methods. What shall we do then? Shall we refrain from making any changes at all, lest evil may come of it? God forbid! But the experimenting must be controlled by constant reference to its results on the subjects concerned.

Every teacher worth his salt is a born experimenter, and is constantly seeking to improve his experience on presentation of his subject. But equally constantly he keeps a watchful eye on the success of every new method, and is quick to discard or modify it if the results do not correspond to the initial hopes he had of it. If educational experiment were left in the hands of competent and enterprising teachers, all would be well. We should have controlled and steady progress, without throwing away the solid achievements of the past.”

Senior School Managers' Seminar

In March of this year the Senior Managers' Panel held an extremely successful Seminar in Westerwood Hotel Cumbernauld. The Keynote speaker at the event was Craig Munro from Fife Council. He led a fascinating session on the issue of strategies for managing change in Secondary Schools. There were other sessions as well dealing with issues ranging from Pension Changes to current SSTA advice on Absence Management Procedures.

The seminar is an annual event run by the Association and naturally we would wish to achieve as high as attendance at the event as possible. Currently we are looking at possibility of holding the Seminar on a Saturday rather than on a school day in order to maximise attendance. Your views on this would be welcome.

The Convenor of the panel is David Macdonald who may be contacted via the SSTA Office. Alternatively, members are welcome to contact Alan McKenzie, Deputy General Secretary.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

In accordance with section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, please find below the Association's financial statement to members for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011.

1. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME

Membership Subscriptions	£ 1,005,207
Other income	£ <u>79,526</u>
	£ 1,084,733

EXPENDITURE

*Annual Operating Costs	£ 1,093,322
Appropriations SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	£ <u>(8,589)</u>
	£ 1,093,322

*including:

In respect of the General Secretary:

Salary	£ 73,728
Superannuation and NIC	£ 18,661
Employee's Superannuation contributions	£ 7,372
Key Person's life policy premium	£ 1,557
Essential user's car allowance	£ 1,000

Honoraria to elected Office Bearers:

General Treasurer	£ 7,600
Minutes Secretary	£ 5,600
President	£ <u>2,400</u>
	£ 15,600

The Association does not maintain a political fund.

2. STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH s32A(6A) OF THE ACT OF TULR(C)A 1992

"A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he may apply for material assistance from the Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members and should, in any case, consider obtaining independent legal advice."

A copy of the full financial report has been issued to each school representative and will be available for inspection. Any member wishing an additional copy should write to the General Secretary.

Independent auditors' report

to the members of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

We have audited the financial statements of Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association for the year ended 31 December 2011 which comprise the Cash Flow Statement, Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made exclusively to the members, as a body, and to the Association's Finance Committee, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members and the Association's Finance Committee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Association, its members as a body and its Finance Committee as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Finance Committee and Auditors

The responsibilities of the Finance Committee for preparing the Finance Committee's Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and for being satisfied that the financial statements give a true and fair view are set out in the Statement of Finance Committee's Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the information given in the Finance Committee's Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Association has not kept adequate and proper accounting records, if the Association's financial statements are not in agreement with these accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if certain disclosures of Finance Committee's remuneration specified by law are not made. We read the Finance Committee's Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the Finance Committee in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Association's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Association's affairs as at 31 December 2011; and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and the information given in the Finance Committee's Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Stephen Grant, Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of Tindell, Grant & Co, Statutory Auditors, 6 Munro Road, Springkerse, Stirling, FK7 7UU

Working to Contract

Phase one of the Work to Contract is now well under way. Members have begun the process of reducing their commitment to additional unpaid duties and, in many cases, realised with some shock the amount of additional time they gift to their employer on a weekly basis.

May is a difficult time to begin a Work to Contract because the reduction in class contact results in a flurry of other activities, many of them related to the development of courses for the following year.

Advice issued about school trips relates to those events already organised and paid for. During the Work to Contract members should not become involved in activities outwith the 35 hour working week and should refrain from involvement in:

- Events and trips not organised

prior to 14 May 2012.

- Voluntary committees
- Any meeting not included in the Working Time Agreement
- Lunch time supervision. Deputes may have no choice in this but can (and should) arrange to take their lunch-break at a different time.
- Other lunch-time activities. You may be surprised at how beneficial it is to have a break at lunch-time, and your afternoon classes will also benefit.

You must continue to:

- Teach assigned classes, including cover classes up to 22.5 hrs per week.
- Continue to complete up to 7.5 hours of preparation and correction per week
- Undertake agreed duties which are listed in your school

working time agreement.

School reps are beginning to report successful action to withdraw from additional duties, e.g. lunch-time supervision and supported study. This action was taken by members as a group and in one case resulted in other members of staff also withdrawing from the additional duties. One member put a notice on her classroom stating that the room was no longer available during lunchtime. Examples of this and other action taken are posted on the website and Facebook page.

Please note: this is not intended as an exhaustive list but as an indication of the type of activity which should not be undertaken during a Work to Contract. If you have specific concerns please contact us by email at info@ssta.org.uk

Education Scotland and the Deep Audit

Education Scotland are anxious to hear from individual teachers (and departments) who have concerns about their readiness to begin delivering the next phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

Concerns can only be raised by identifying the school and the department involved although it is possible to do so without mentioning an individual teacher. Both Education Scotland and this Association are committed to ensuring that no teacher suffers detriment for raising an issue of concern.

If you have concerns about your department's readiness to begin teaching new courses either in

June 2012 or 2013 please take the following steps:

- Inform your line manager of your concerns by either email or letter, and keep a copy
- Ask for a response in writing
- Be prepared to provide factual reasons for your concern. This is based on your professional judgement and could include e.g. a lack of course material; shortage or resources; lack to time for course development or simply a workload which is impossible to manage.
- Contact the SSTA with your concerns and copies of your correspondence.

We will discuss the situation with you and advise on the most appropriate next step, which may include:

- A formal request to your employer (the Local Authority) for support
- A conversation with your Head Teacher about the situation
- Contact with Education Scotland to advise them of the concern.

Please Note: We will never approach Education Scotland, or any other organisation, on your behalf unless we have discussed the matter with you and have your consent for the proposed action.

Training Session for School Representatives

The Association will hold a training session for school representatives on Wednesday 5 September. The training will take place at the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld.

All school representatives are invited to attend. Any rep who intends to give up the school rep position may wish to use this opportunity to attempt to recruit a replacement who might then attend the training session. It might be useful to point out to potential reps that SSTA School Reps are not “shop stewards” and have much reduced duties by comparison with other union workplace reps.

Professional Update

A position paper has now been issued by the GTCS on Professional Update which is available on their website - <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/professional-development/position-paper-scheme-professional-update.pdf> . This paper explains the reasoning behind the introduction of this process and how it has been developed so far. There was a consultation conducted earlier this year which invited feedback from all registered teachers and representative organisations. A total of 185 individuals and organisations took part. All responses received during the

consultation will be made available shortly.

The key purposes of the scheme are defined as:

- to maintain and improve the quality of teachers and to enhance the impact they have on pupils' learning
- supporting, maintaining and enhancing teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.

The key responsibilities of those involved in the process are:

- a responsibility for teachers to consider their development needs
- a responsibility for the employer to provide a system of supportive PRD which can assist teachers to identify ways to update their skills, provide access to opportunities to address identified areas of development, help them to manage change and focus on their career development.

The operation of the scheme will include an annual update of personal details, i.e. address etc held by the GTCS on registered teachers. It will also involve the recording of the annual PRD discussion which will then contribute to the five-yearly Professional Update.

A pilot scheme is being introduced for next session involving three local authorities, the independent sector, further and higher education. Individuals will be sought to participate in the process in exchange for not having to go through Professional Update for another five years. Any issues highlighted from this pilot will be brought back to the Committee in order to inform the final introduction of the scheme in 2014/15. The local authorities taking part will be announced shortly.

The GTCS will be responsible for validating all Professional Update schemes introduced in order to maintain the same standard across Scotland. They will also be responsible for training those involved in the pilot and this training should commence in August 2012.

The introduction of Professional Update will hopefully ensure that good quality, validated, PRD schemes are in operation across all schools with teachers being given an annual opportunity to discuss their career development in a structured forum, by trained Line Managers and supported by good quality, appropriate CPD.

SSTA Members Services



Car Purchase: Tollcross Garage has arranged a scheme for SSTA members to purchase new or nearly-new cars at specially discounted prices; credit and trade-in facilities available. <http://www.tollcrossgarage.co.uk>



... the right hotel, at the right price, in the right location.

Ramada Jarvis Hotels Group has arranged discount of up to 20% on short breaks at over 40 hotels.



Holiday Inn Hotels & Crowne Plaza has arranged discounts and various special offers for SSTA



Competitive Car rental prices from National Car rental and Guy Salmon Prestige Rental.



Benevolent fund: The Association maintains a Benevolent Fund which is used to assist members or their families in case of need.

Planned Futures

Independent Financial Advisers

89 West Regent Street Glasgow G2 2BA
Phone 0141 353 6688 Fax 0141 332 5959



Discounted general insurance services: The Association has obtained the services of an insurance brokerage which offers to provide members with a full service on all aspects of

personal insurance, particularly household and motor insurance. Direct discounts through SSTA agencies are also available;

Life assurance, savings, investments, pensions, etc by special arrangement. A full range of financial services is provided for members by a leading company of independent financial advisers.



www.saferinternet.org.uk 0844 381 4772

email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre aims to address all online safety issues faced by all professionals and volunteers in the UK who work with children and young people.



To access any of these services (other than employment advice which is always accessed through the SSTA directly) telephone **0800 081 2207**

SSTA Members Services



Lighthouse Financial Advice Ltd is one of the largest providers of expert Independent Financial Advice in the UK. Our success is built on the quality of our advice and on our strong local presence. With over 250 Independent Financial Advisers covering all areas of the UK we are sure to have an adviser near you. We will work with you in a way that suits you best, meeting you at home, at work, or at a suitable local venue.

Our advisers are able to provide you with advice on all areas of financial planning including:

Pension and Retirement Planning
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Insurance and Protection
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In addition, as preferred financial advisers to major public sector Unions and Associations we have extensive experience in advising on NHS; Teachers and other Public Sector Pension Schemes.

For further information, or to request a meeting please contact email stuart.mccullough@lighthousefa.co.uk



Lighthouse Financial Advice Ltd is an appointed representative of LighthouseExpress Limited



Tollcross Garage has just launched a new website specifically aimed at providing a novel service for SSTA members that features a 'Virtual Showroom' with access to over 10,000 cars from nearly new up to three years old.

Lewis Pryor, Tollcross Garage managing director said; "We are delighted to be extending our long association with the SSTA with the launch of our new dedicated website featuring our innovative virtual showroom. "We can supply cars to meet individual member's needs sourcing from, for example, ex Motability fleet.

Start browsing now by going to www.tollcrossgarage.co.uk/showroom.

Contact Lewis Pryor or David Pryor on 0141 647 8415 quoting SSTA
Email: info@tollcrossgarage.co.uk

CONTACT US

The SSTA team are available to assist you from 9:00am – 4:45pm Monday to Friday.

T 0131 313 7300

E info@ssta.org.uk

F 0131 346 8057

M West End House
14 West End Place
Edinburgh EH11 2ED

W ssta.org.uk

We welcome letters and feedback to the SSTA Newsletter, but reserve the right to edit them for brevity if published.