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In the fall of **1971**, just returning to my elementary school principalship from a secondment to the London Teachers' College, I got a phone call from our OECTA local president asking whether I'd serve as a member of the committee to negotiate the **1971-72** contract. After hemming and hawing, I agreed.

Predictably, a few weeks later he called again: He couldn't find any other volunteers. Would I chair the committee (oh, and by the way find some committee members). I agreed.

At the time, teachers were bound by these constraints. They had no right to strike. They could not negotiate multi-year contracts. They could resign only at two times during the school year: November 30 to take effect at end of the year and May 31 to take effect at end of the school year. Women teachers on permanent contract (usually after two years of successful teaching) would be placed back on probationary contracts as soon as they married.

As negotiations went nowhere into the spring, we had to consider how to bring pressure on the board. During those conversations, someone suggested we could all resign, an idea first ignored. As we went into May, it was reconsidered. We believed that if we chose that route, it would be more difficult to hold our teachers together over the summer than over the Christmas break.

When negotiations for **1971-72** went into November of **1972**, we asked our colleagues to give us their resignations (we promised "All back or none back"), which we would present to the board by the end of the month. 94% did so, and we presented their resignations in boxes to the director of education.

During the break, we negotiated an agreement that provided a 22% (!) gain. More importantly, it led to the passage in 1975 of the School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act which gave teachers full collective bargaining rights.