

The Chelsea Series

By Robyn Hume

What is it? It is a lunchtime lecture series with different speakers who promise to be interesting and informative.

I had the opportunity to attend the first of the series with Sister Maureen Larkin who spoke of her deportation from the Dominican Republic.

In 1979 Sr. Maureen, as a member of a missionary team, went to the Dominican Republic to live with the people for as long as possible in order to learn of their culture and their struggles, and perhaps aid in any way possible.

Her first year was spent living with a family, to help in learning the language, and getting generally acquainted with the country and its people. Later, her time was divided between working in the country and organizing the farmers, and living in the Barrio helping and encouraging her neighbours.

She told us of harrassment by the secret police, raids on villages, no water or medical aid in the slum area of the city, children and adults with no education, sporadic employment, and overall disparity.

Centers were organized to help the people see the "reality" of their struggles, the forces that put them there and how possibly to overcome them. She worked more with her neighbours, encouraging them to fight for their water, visit the doctors, and to organize. Organization was the key and people were listening. Naturally the government was getting rather disturbed to say the least and started deporting those aiding the poor. This action was all part of a plan to control any movement of the poor.

One day, after her Barrio had fought

vehemently for water, the secret police picked up Sister Maureen. They held her without cause for two days, then sent her home, without her things but with a pat on the back and a "see you soon". She has heard nothing more except that she is forbidden to re-enter the country.

In closing she told us - as we sat in front of our dessert and coffee - that "The people are asking for a chance to live... we have to respect this. They don't want us to run the struggle for them but support it."

I am indeed looking forward to the next luncheon. Care to come?

Clear As a Blinding Snowstorm

By Terry Palmer
My Fellow Workers:

A document which is being called a budget was recently presented to the House of Commons by Finance Minister Allan MacEachen. The implications of this budget as it relates to post-secondary education and specifically to the Established Programs Financing funding arrangement are about as clear as a blinding snowstorm. In other words, nobody knows what the hell is going on!

On one hand MacEachen states in his budget that "The government of Canada proposes that new federal-provincial arrangements for the financing of post-secondary education and human resources development be devised, in consultation with the provinces, for incorporation in the new federal legislation

by March 31, 1983." Well yes! We agree with that. To me that is supposed to mean that no cuts have been made at this point because of student pressure on the government.

But wait! The Nov. 12 budget has dropped what they call the "revenue guarantee" which is linked in some way to the EPF formula. The government, it seems, did live up to its promise of EPF cutbacks. This revenue guarantee was introduced in 1972 to help the provinces adjust to income tax reform of that year. It was supposed to end in 1977 but was continued by the government at that time by an adjustment through the new EPF formula.

By dropping this revenue guarantee, the government feels it's well within its limits to do this because they say it was never intended for

the financing of health care and PSE. The provinces, however, argue that it should not be taken into account in computing federal contributions for these programs. The feds say, then, "if that's the case, removal of this revenue guarantee will not lower the level of federal support in areas of health care and PSE."

So, the ball now seems to be in the provincial court. Although there is a reduction in general revenue to the province, they say that it's not tied to programs coming under the jurisdiction of the EPF program. It's now up to the provinces to make the next move. No one knows what that may be.

In conclusion, even through the constitutional struggle has ended, the EPF cutbacks are still undecided.

Were cuts to EPF funding brought down in the budget or not? We may have to wait for a while for the answer to that question until somebody figures out what's going on!!



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