

Education Funding*Continued from page 11*

since taking office in 1993.

"The Millennium Scholarship Foundation is a way to help students to go to university but it's not a way to decide what will be the teaching at universities," said Dion.

"The provinces have the full role of that - it's not the government of Canada. We're only there to help students go there with money. This is a role the government has fulfilled for over a century now, so it's fully within our responsibility."

Dion was drafted into cabinet by Prime Minister Jean Chretien after the federal government nearly lost the 1995 Referendum. Coming from the world of academia as a professor at the University of Montreal and possessing no prior political experience, Dion was given a key governmental position as the minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and the president of the Privy Council.

Dion and his government have been criticized by the government of Quebec trying to maintain too much control over education - a provincial responsibility under the constitution.

Following the Speech from the Throne in October, Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe accused Ottawa of attempting to control how the provinces spend money on education. The separatist leader was angry that the Liberals

were only giving money to special research initiatives, rather than through increased provincial transfer payments.

In November, provincial education ministers called on the federal government to increase transfer payments to the provinces, after federal finance numbers indicated a budgetary surplus estimated between \$60- to \$90-billion over the next five years. But Dion says his government is not overstepping federalism boundaries by setting up new research funding bodies or scholarship funds.

"Education is terribly important for the future of the country. Here we are in a new economy, where it's so important to be competitive with technologies, and the government of Canada is involved with funding post-secondary education involving research, involving funding students and we will do the most we can," said Dion.

"This being said, the provincial role in education is paramount. It is their exclusive responsibility under the constitution. So the government of Canada will play its role while respecting the role of the provinces."

Nonetheless, the government has been aware of the impact of its education funding in regard to Canadian unity. Documents obtained from the Privy Council Office under the Access to Information Act show

extensive briefing notes for ministers throughout the creation of the Millennium Scholarship Fund's creation regarding impacts on Quebec and national unity.

Numerous pages track the responses of Quebec politicians during negotiations over the distribution of scholarships to Quebec students, focusing most commonly on reaction from Quebec Liberal Leader Jean Charest.

Briefings indicate Ottawa believed the media were more willing to side with the Quebec government than the federal government.

Negotiations between the Foundation and the Quebec government eventually broke off. An agreement for the distribution of funds only came about this past December after current Minister of Human Resources and Development Jane Stewart stepped in to mediate the situation.

Now, Dion says 90 per cent of his time is spent dealing with work unrelated to unity while almost all of his media attention deals specifically to separatism threats. "There is a difference between the image I project and the reality of my work," he said. "What is unfortunate to me is that I will be known when there is a dispute, especially with the Quebec government. So I may be portrayed as the minister of disputes."

National Day of Action

*By B.J. McCarville
VP External SU &
P.E.I. CFS Rep.*

February 2nd has been declared a national day of action. Students from coast to coast will be protesting the continuous funding cuts to education in our country, demanding that something be done to stop the crisis in higher education. It's all part of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) "Access 2000" campaign.

Access 2000 is a national campaign calling for \$3.7 billion dollars to be restored in Federal transfer payments to the provinces for education. \$7 billion has been cut in the past five years and as a result students are facing much higher tuition and debt.

UPEI students are no exception. Tuition here has increased by 89% in the past decade.... and as debt increases along with the cost of living we've even seen the opening of a food bank on campus.

This shouldn't be taken

lightly. Post Secondary Education is a basic requirement in today's society, so it is increasingly important that everyone has access to education. Students should not be forced into poverty or to accumulate mountains of debt to get an education.

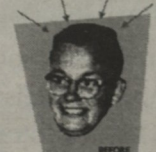
UPEI students want to let government know that we are concerned. We may not be having a student Strike on Feb. 2nd, but we will be taking part in the national day of action. Putting a creative spin on the issue, UPEI students have declared Wednesday Feb 2nd "Kraft Dinner day". Students will be serving this favored staple food, FREE, in the Robertson Library "Breeze way" from 11-2, hoping to raise awareness. A discussion panel is being planned for Wednesday evening to address rising tuition, the condition of Post

Secondary Education and other student concerns.

Access 2000 is an ideal way to start the fight against continuous tuition increases at UPEI. Watch for posters around campus for further details and be sure to drop by to show your support. □

the NEW cadre helmet

Completely unprotected!



Have you been running around without a helmet for too long? Finally a fashionable solution to the head protection problem! Leave it to the Cadre to come up with a helmet so functional ... yet stylish.

unisex design looks great on girls too!

the Cadre



Ah... that's better ... safer!