

# Feds may cut our share to equal provincial increase

OTTAWA (CUP) — Post-secondary institutions in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland could be heading for financial disaster if the federal government accepts the recommendations of a recently released report.

The report, made public by secretary of state Walter McLean March 14, says the federal government should only increase its transfer payments for higher education to the provinces by the amount that the provinces increase their funding.

The report says such a measure would encourage the provinces to boost their spending on post-secondary institutions, but points out that four provinces — B.C., Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland — have steadily reduced the amount they have paid in education operating grants since 1977.

The 50-page document notes that, on average, the federal government makes up 80 per cent of core financing for higher education, while at least half of all provincial governments rely almost solely on federal funds to finance universities and colleges.

"The provinces would now have a powerful incentive to move towards the Gross National Product rate in increasing their grants to universities and colleges, since every dollar of their increase would, in the average case, trigger an 80 per cent contribution from the federal government," the report says.

If the recommendations became law, those four provinces might continue to decrease their share of post-secondary funding. Nothing in the recommendations could force them to pour in more money and universities and colleges would be caught in the middle.

The report says since 1977 B.C. has reduced its share of provincial education funds by

more than 25 per cent. Manitoba has put in more than 22 per cent less, Ontario has decreased its portion by 15 per cent and Newfoundland has done so by more than 23 per cent.

In particular, the report notes that B.C. will make a profit of about \$20 million on transfer payments for education this year, receiving \$482 million but only passing on \$462 million of it to universities and colleges. Ontario now only assumes 11 per cent of the direct costs of running its post-secondary institutions.

Donald Savage, executive secretary of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, says he is skeptical of the "powerful incentive" for the provinces, which he says is the same as the federal government threatening to stop pumping so much money into higher education.

"We want to see real incentives, not threats. The incentive is actually a threat, not even a disguised one, because it clearly says the federal amount would drop in accordance with the provinces' spending," he says.

Still, Savage says, he thinks the provinces will not likely continue the trend of slowly withdrawing funds because they would be normally obliged under this scheme to chip in more money and could only gain by doing so.

Savage says the Tories have been nurturing a feeling of goodwill among their provincial counterparts and that the report's recommendations are simply a continuation of that good relationship. The report notes that Ottawa would "respect and follow" the provinces' priorities.

The federal government now contributes \$4.2 billion in transfer payments for education to the provinces. Next year, it plans to increase that amount by 7.3 per cent, under an agreement hammered out in 1977 called the Federal/Provincial fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-

Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act.

Savage and Jean Wright, economic researcher for Canada's national student lobby group, the Canadian Federation of Students, says the federal government should provide additional incentives to the provinces in the form of extra money for those that maintain or increase their operating grants.

"The government should make a commitment to offer

additional funds if the provinces maintain an adequate level of funding or if they give an amount of money that exceeds that level," Wright says. "This would be one of the most clever ways to ensure universities and colleges are not in the bind they are now."

The report, which was prepared by former CBC president A. W. Johnson at the old Liberal government's re-

quest, also recommends the federal government increase funding of its three research granting agencies and redirect \$250 million of federal transfers to cover the costs of indirect research.

It says the government should set up a "blue ribbon committee" of private and public sector representatives to develop proposals for the funding of "centres of excellence" — universities, col-

leges, faculties or schools in Canada that would be internationally known and respected.

McLean said in a recent speech in Ottawa he will meet with provincial education ministers in mid-April and hopes to make a decision on any changes to the financing arrangement by this fall. He has said he has released the report to stimulate discussion but is keeping silent on the issue.

## Classics safe for now

By Carolyn Ryan

Classical studies at UPEI will survive, following a decision three weeks ago by the Board of Governors to form three joint majors with other disciplines, which will require the teaching equivalent of two full-time professors.

Now, says Classics prof Father Jim Kelly, the Department will begin actively promoting Classics to students who previously had no experience with the discipline.

Classics is the comprehensive study of the ancient Greek and Roman world, and thus the origins of Western thought. The methodology includes the study of the literature, art, history, philosophy, and religion of Greek and Roman civilization.

A publicity release of the Classic Department says the course of study will appeal "to a person with a critical mind who wants to understand the spirit which animates his society."

This Department has been beleaguered since the Senate committee on Academic Priorities and Long-range Academic Planning recommended in the summer of 1983 that Classics be dismantled and its two professors lodged with the departments of History and Languages (no longer called Modern Languages).

Kelly and temporary Clas-

sics professor Ron Evans went to work on a report in response to the recommendation of the Smith committee (as it came to be known, after chair John Smith), and soon were garnering support across campus, starting with their own Faculty.

"The whole crisis jolted the Faculty of Arts to its senses", says Kelly. He explains that it had been trapped in a system of competition where the consequences to one's own department were the only aspects of a decision members considered.

"Now the Faculty saw the real threat — that there will always be a weakest department, and that starting a tradition of cutting the weakest without deep thought is extremely dangerous," he says.

Because of its numerically low enrolments and low profile on campus, Classics was at this time perceived to be "the weakest". A major has never in the history of UPEI been offered in the subject.

In an attempt to counteract this perception, Kelly and Evans worked on a detailed proposal for the offering of three new majors at UPEI: Classical/History, Classics/Philosophy, and Classics/Religious Studies.

Under the joint majors scheme, students will take a 14-course core made up from the two disciplines concerned and will be encouraged to take more major courses as well.

That proposal, which carried a net increase of two courses being taught by the Department (the Latin and Greek, will now be offered on an overload basis by the two regular Classics profs) received approval up to the level of Senate by June 1984.

Ever since, the proposal has been blocked by budget considerations at the level of the Budget Committee of the Board of Governors.

That opposition ended Monday, March 4, when the Board of Governors finally approved the joint majors plan.

"It was a tough decision, in light of the stringency atmosphere we're dealing with," says Kelly.

"They must have been persuaded it was essential by our arguments (from Senate) on the proven worth of the discipline and the quality of the proposed offering."

"We're dealing with an irrational market," he says, "where students haven't really been given leadership in the subjects they take."

He spoke of Psychology as a contrasting example. The advice of teachers, who have themselves been required to take courses in Psychology but not Classics, has a huge effect, especially on freshman students, in his opinion.

"Classics has survived, and remained constant over the years as an integral part of higher education," he concludes.

"Until this year, though, it has never been debated on its own merits, and on its place in a philosophy of education for this institution."

## Gemmie found dead!

By Jonathan Orlowski

Yesterday morning one of our own *Netted Gem* reporters was found shot to death in the editor's office.

"That was supposed to have been me in that chair!" sobbed a tearful Carolyn Ryan. "I was supposed to have been working late that night to do some final editing but one of my faithful *Gemmies* volunteered to do the editing and give me a much needed rest."

She ranted on "Now look what has happened ... sob ... one of my poor, loyal *Gemtypes* gunned down in the prime of their lives! What's the world coming to?"

The RCMP is not divulging

any information as to what motivation sparked the successful homicide attempt; they are also withholding the staffperson's name until next of kin have been notified.

The campus police are shell-shocked, running about "like chickens with their heads cut off," according to one observer.

"Nothing like this has ever happened on campus before," clucked newly appointed interim chief of Campus Police, Tommy Tippy. "The campus grounds looks so ... innocent. But I guess looks can be deceiving."

Looks sure can be deceiving. One *Netted Gem* reporter over-heard a conversation between an RCMP officer and a superior.

The reporter listened in on an extension to a voice on the phone: "... Sergeant, I don't want this case to get out of hand."

Officer: "Nosir."

Voice: "I don't want this turning into an international incident or my hide ... and yours too ... will be hung out to dry. GO IT???"

Officer: "YESSIR..." Click.

The dead *Gemmie* was working on a juicy article almost ready for the press. The story was a closely guarded one; only the editor and the reporter consulted on the article.

However, we have reason to believe it was an inside job — pending further investigation; BEWARE ARMENIAN CONNECTION.



Limited edition copy of a police photo. Do you know this reporter? (Photo: MacLeod)