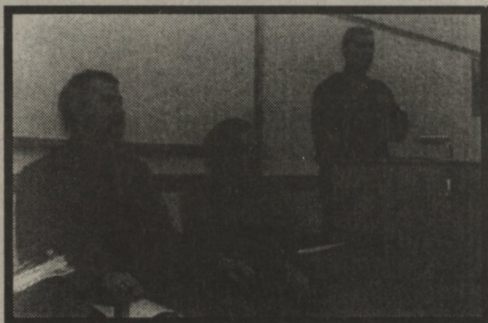


burden of the numerous cuts to education funds. MacLauchlan was proud to say, that although hit by an 89% rise in tuition in the last 10 years, and a 3% drop in grants, the university (UPEI) had succeeded in improving a n d maintaining the calibre of the education expected and received by its students.



“Our Department of Education has enjoyed a good relationship with the university,” said Gillan, who admitted that Canada Health and Social Transfers (CHST) had not been kind to the province or its institutions.

In the past, UPEI asked for a long term financial strategy from the Department of Education, but this strategy may not have been as successful as expected, Gillan said that the provincial government had done its best to satisfy the university's requirements.

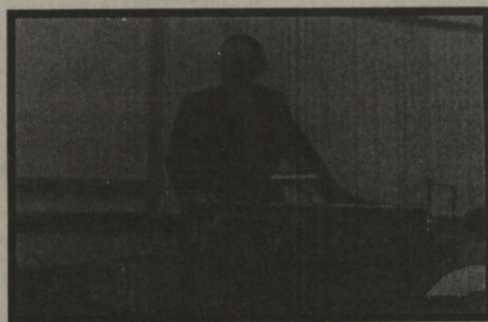
“The government has the responsibility to deliver money to post-secondary education,” said Maddix, who insisted that it is up to the current provincial government to decide where the extra 100 million dollars added to the provincial coffers should be allocated. “The dollars are there,” he insisted. “It is a matter of using [them].”

Although the Federal government, claims to be putting money back

into education, MacLauchlan believes that programs such as the Millennium Scholarship Fund come as a mixed blessing and do very little to help students.

The terms of these

scholarships came as a surprise to several students. Many expected to use the money to pay for their current tuition, but rather were forced to put those



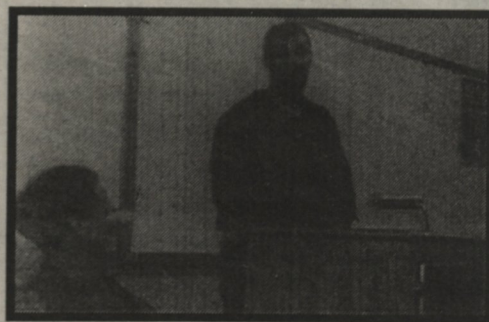
federal dollars towards their student debt. This, according to students, may be of some help in the long run, but does very little to help them in their current academic endeavours.

Similarly, Maddix believes that education officials should discredit the belief that only students are responsible for their success. Provincial and Federal governments should play an active role in developing the skills for the future work force, Maddix contned.

Gillan echoed MacLauchlan's view on the Millennium Scholarship Fund, as he pointed that student debt only shows its ugly face after graduation. Therefore, financial relief should be granted to students in order to prevent such a financial handicap, rather than trying to eliminate it after the completion of one's degree. This would reduce interest on the usually substantial amount owed.

Maddix on the other hand believes the Millennium Scholarship Fund may be a solution to reducing student debt, but perhaps it is not the whole solution.

MacLauchlan also pointed to the fact that up to 85% of federal money to be invested in research will be distributed amongst the 10 richest universities in Canada, leaving small institutions such as UPEI out of the loop and forcing them to find alternative funding to



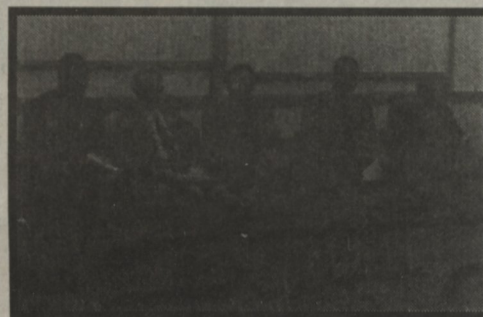
maintain quality research on its campus.

“Post secondary education has paid the most for [budgetary] cuts,” said MacLauchlan, “[and this is a] failure to

value post secondary education.”

Maddix agrees. “It is a matter of setting priorities, and post-secondary education is a priority for PEI.”

But post-secondary education does not only depend on government



funding, and the increasingly noticeable presence of privatization can be seen on many campuses across the country, including UPEI.

“There is no question that we are in a crisis... as there is a drive towards privatization and deregulation,” said Broderick, who fears that accessibility to post-secondary education for many students is being threatened by these factors.

“[They] move to eliminate students from post-secondary opportunities.” His point was illustrated with examples of students who are contractually bound by confidentiality policies for research subsidized by particular corporate donors.

Private enterprises are part of society and therefore they cannot be ignored, explained Gillan. Nevertheless, Gillan believes that although the private

sector should be encouraged to participate in funding public institution, there should be no strings attached to these corporate donations, and universities should be entitled to spend the money as they feel necessary in order to improve the quality of their services.

Broderick, who claims Canada is one of the last OECD countries to charge tuition fees, believes C a n a d i a n students should

not be forced to pay for quality post-secondary education, and that the federal and provincial governments should strive to eliminate tuition fees.

Although, Gillan believes this would be ideal, the Education Minister does not believe everything could be free.

Maddix agrees with Broderick.

“There is money in this country and this province,” explained Maddix, “to fund any student who wants to attend university.” Students, Maddix insisted, are being denied access to public education at the post-secondary level, not because of a lack of funding, but rather an inadequate use of it.

C o n t i n u e d involvement from the PEI government, and an increased activity of students will hopefully set the stage for an improvement in post-secondary education on Prince Edward Island in the near future. □