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Over 200 postcards were sent this week to Flora MacDonald, Minister of Employment and Immigration, by students at UPEI concerned about the loss of over 600 PEI summer jobs due to the cancellation of the Canada Summer Works Programs. (Photo: MacLeod)

Students mad about the food

By Jonathan Orlowski

The majority of students who live in Bernardine and Marian Halls are dissatisfied with the university's Food Service, an informal *Netted Gem* poll discovered last week.

Meal plans, high food prices, food quality, and health regulations are the students' main concerns.

"I'm on meal plan 2," said one resident, "and I go home on weekends. The average coupon special costs about \$3.50 (a well-balanced meal). I worked my budget out to \$5 a day. If I buy a well-balanced meal at supper, that leaves me with \$1.50 for breakfast and lunch."

"I can't survive like that," he added.

Jim Griffith, Director of Student Services disagrees with this kind of calculating.

"You cannot divide the meal plan into specific days, because every student does not have the same consumption; some eat more, some less."

He says he can't put a specific price on the meal plan because the food is included with room and board in the residences.

One student at least has the feeling of being cheated, "Bernardine has good kitchen facilities on each floor, but they're no good to us because we're forced to eat at the cafeteria."

Griffith responded to the question of kitchens: "The kitchens are for house parties and individual snacks. The building was not designed for mass cooking, as Blanchard (Hall) was."

One student charged, "I'm not getting enough protein and nutrients with the meal plan I have now. When I lived at Blanchard I ate comfortably on \$30-35 a week because we group-ate a lot." He says that since moving into Bernardine he struggles on \$65 a week, has lost ten pounds in two months, and has to spend even more money buying extra books of food coupons.

Andy Dean, manager of Saga Foods Limited on campus, says, "If students take into consideration the cost of the product, cost of labour, and a marginal profit then compare with other food services, our prices are very competitive."

He explained that students buying the coupon special but changing one item must be charged for each individual item, in response to an often-voiced complaint.

While there are students who don't have enough, there are also those with too many food coupons.

"I have to sell my extra books or I'll get caught with them at the end of the semester and they'll be useless," complained one such resident.

"We pay \$50 for each book. Once the semester begins, the business office sells books for \$30. I can't get \$30 for my extra books because students think the business office is making a

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What the parties are saying about our jobs

OTTAWA (CUP) — Angry opposition MPs demanded in the House of Commons Jan. 23 that the Tories immediately reinstate the Summer Canada Works program which created jobs for 86,000 students last year.

Led by Liberal leader John Turner, the MPs said tens of thousands of students are becoming increasingly anxious about their summer job

prospects and need to know soon what the federal government will provide. Summer Canada Works, the country's largest student job creation program, was killed Nov. 8.

Flora MacDonald, employment and immigration minister, replied she has already told the House that the Tories will announce the program's replacement in the first week of February. She

said she notified the House Jan. 21.

On that date, MacDonald said: "... I am pleased to tell the House that those programs will have the co-operation of the provincial governments and the private sector.

"I may also add that these programs will be more career-oriented than those of the past, so that students working this summer will be able to use that experience as a training ground for permanent jobs in the future."

Bolstered by the shouts and catcalls of Liberal MPs surrounding him, Turner decried the Tories for what he called the "savaging" of job creation programs for young people. The Tories virtually eliminated the Summer Canada Works program in their Nov. 8 economic statement, when they announced \$85 million from the program would be cut.

"We must not lose a generation in this country for failing to respond to their needs. The meat-cleaver approach taken by this government to existing programs for youth is counter-productive to that renewal approach," Turner said.

"Our young people do not want to hear the words 'cut, cut, cut.'"

Turner said, in a later interview, he thinks the government is not committed

to creating jobs for students and is alienating its greatest investment for the future. He added the timing of the program's elimination is ironic because 1985 has been proclaimed International Year of Youth.

"It's going to be a tough year for students. Obviously, the lead time to make the program effective is running out."

In his economic statement, finance minister Michael Wilson said the \$85 million would be taken from the program's base budget of \$100 million. But according to Liberal government press releases issued last year and the year before, the actual amount of money pumped into the program was \$201 million. The former Liberal government allocated \$170 million in December 1983 and added another \$30 million in its February 1984 budget.

Jean Wright, Canadian Federation of Students economic researcher, said the cut actually represents a decrease of \$186 million and means more than 80,000 students face grim job prospects this summer. Only two Summer Canada Works programs — Canadian Employment Centres for Students and summer internships for native students — remain intact.

Said Turner: "At a time when half a million young

people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed and hundreds of students will soon be emerging from universities and colleges looking for work, the government does not see as its main priority the creation of jobs for young people."

NDP MP Howard McCurdy, youth and post-secondary education critic, said in an interview outside the Commons he fears the government will announce a job creation program designed in the interests of big business, not of students.

"I'm becoming very worried. My suspicion is the emphasis will be placed on private enterprise. Unless it has appropriate regulations to ensure it won't benefit employers more than students, it's gonna fail," he said.

"Students will not be the kind of career preparation they need."

Liberal MP Jean LaPierre, youth minister in Turner's cabinet, said he thinks the Tories will introduce either a wage subsidy or tax credit program allowing businesses to write off expenses incurred from hiring students.

LaPierre said the government might also unveil a national capital venture program, similar to those implemented in British Columbia and Ontario which encouraged students to risk

their personal savings setting up their own summer businesses.

"I'm afraid they might lean on a tax credit type of thing. They're definitely pro-business; they're pro-everything except students."

LaPierre and McCurdy slammed the Tories for not releasing the program's details before the Christmas holidays, saying students must now hastily prepare for the summer and make plans to finance their education. They said the delay will create a bureaucratic nightmare because new application forms must be drawn up.

"I think for anyone trying to plan this summer the delay is causing quite a problem," LaPierre said. "The Tories are putting young people's opportunities in jeopardy."

Community groups across the country, McCurdy said, are also anxiously awaiting the program's release. He said hundreds of social service groups depend on Summer Canada Works to provide student workers and now many face an uncertain summer. A few have written letters of concern to the government.

And as many as 500 positions in the employment and immigration department could be axed, says Alan Lennon, spokesperson for the Canadian Employment and Immigration Union.

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