

# Prime Minister meets Island press

## Kim Campbell quizzed by local media

**K**im Campbell visited our island last Wednesday, Oct. 6. It was a quick trip, but it was definitely not uneventful. Just the night before, ferry workers held a protest against the fixed link and held up ferry traffic for hours. They feel they've been left out of the discussions concerning the fixed link. They wanted to make this especially clear Wednesday night when their representatives entered the round table discussion with Kim Campbell, which was for local media only. The protesters were asked politely to leave three times before they did. They would not give up, though. "What about the fishermen?", they yelled as the Prime Minister entered the Elfin Room in the C.P. Hotel (site of the Charlottetown Accord's signing).

When asked in the press conference what kind of compensation the fisherman and ferry workers would get and when, Campbell said that they could not determine that during an election campaign. "It is not the role of a candidate to determine that".

When asked why she would not meet with the ferry workers and fishermen, Campbell said that it was because of the "overwhelming consensus" on the project.

"But they have not been able to show their side", said one reporter. "There have been numerous public forums on this" she replied, evidently assuming that they had ample oppor-

tunity to present their case then, regardless of whether anyone listened.

Another major concern of Islanders' addressed by Campbell was accessibility (or lack thereof) to abortions. Campbell is a feminist, and Pro-choice, but because of the way our government works her influence means nothing when it comes to abortion, she says. "It is a provincial decision, not federal...plus you have to know that there are doctors who are willing to perform the procedure." Campbell also mentioned that she had looked into possibilities of making some kind of change, but she said her hands are tied.

There have been rumours circulating that the Conservatives were planning to make cuts in the P.E.I. Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest employer in Charlottetown. Campbell blamed George Proud, Liberal candidate for Hillsborough, for these rumours, saying "No, we do not have any plans to make cuts at DVA, the only people talking about that are Liberals...DVA has a significant mandate with no signs of cutbacks."

When asked about her alleged outstanding student loan of \$16,000, she said "it was money I received in grants to do doctoral studies."

More significantly, Campbell couldn't really explain how the proposed changes to the student loans program, specifically the "risk sharing", would be beneficial to students. At

the moment student loans are 100% guaranteed by the government if someone defaults. With the proposed risk sharing, the banks would be sharing the responsibility with the government.

Some believe this would mean that only those who have collateral would be eligible for a loan. Kim Campbell sees it differently: "I don't think it would work that way. It makes more money accessible to the Student Loan Program, we have made it less discriminatory and more accessible. We have also raised the amount of the loans."

This answer didn't really explain why it wouldn't work that way. She did state, however, that this was not the first step towards the privatisation of the Canada Student Loans Program, as many people fear it to be.

Campbell spoke frankly about the GST, admitting that the Tories have no plans to eliminate the unpopular tax. "We need the revenue to continue working in the black", she said, referring to the government's goal of taking in more money than it is spending, with the extra money going toward the deficit. Though frank in this regard, Campbell remained evasive concerning many other questions, and as a result may have failed to alleviate some of voters' fears regarding various issues.

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