



Macerollo Calls for Action from UPEI Students

CANADIAN FEDERATION of Students Chair Tony Macerollo urged greater awareness and action from students during his two-day last week visit to UPEI. Macerollo says students must look at their own education, and if the quality of it has decreased, they must make it known.

Macerollo was on campus last Thursday and Friday as part of the nationwide CFS student awareness week, a series of events aimed at increasing student involvement in the issues affecting them. He says students have to lose the attitude of not being able to make changes in the present state of post-secondary education, and express their opinions to politicians.

"It only takes 5 minutes to make a phone call to an MP's office," he says, "it takes a

couple hours to come to a (student) council meeting, and takes half an hour to write a letter to a minister." Macerollo feels such contact is important, especially since the federal government has not been asking for input from students when making decisions on student loan programs, or cut-backs of transfer payments.

One role of CFS is to take the concerns of students to Ottawa, with the theme this year of "Funding the Future", a campaign to convince government that spending on education is an investment, not a loss. The federal government appears to be listening too, with the announcement in September's speech from the throne that it intends to hold a national forum on post secondary education. Macerollo feels this decision had a lot to do with

groups like CFS who have petitioned the government to be a leader in the discussion of post-secondary affairs going on across the country.

Macerollo says that "neither level of government is particularly keen on having a responsible discussion with the people who use the system, or use the (government) programs; namely the students." As an example he stated the Canada Student Loan Plenary group, which sets policies and administers the federal student loan program, did not meet this past fall. The Canadian Federation of Students used to attend those meetings, but now the Secretary of State and provincial Council of Ministers of Education meet by themselves, and Macerollo suspects that this is to "determine a way of de-



Photo: Shelli Wheaton

creasing their commitment to the whole student assistance program." This change went unannounced, and again the federal government sought no input from the students who actually use the system.

Macerollo feels that increased input from the students themselves will make the government more willing to

discuss student's concerns. He says CFS can help make students more aware of the situation, and identify channels through which students can express their displeasure.

CFS also lobbies for increased summer employment, because, he says "students don't want handouts. They just want

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Minister Comments on Winter Games



During the Student Council meeting Sunday night the Honorable Betty-Jean Brown, PEI's Minister of Education, spoke to our student representatives about post-secondary education. She was also questioned about the effect on the university of the Canada Winter Games PEI has requested to host in 1991.

"The impact on the univer-

sity will be quite considerable.", she said. "The university will close for about a month... The usual February break would be extended. The university Board of Governors approved the proposal, and if the games are awarded (to Prince Edward Island), then it will be further examined." Mrs. Brown expressed her hope that the games would be awarded to

the Island, if only because we are the only province to never to actually host the games. Rob Kelley, UPEI Student Union President, asked if a process has been started to examine what new facilities would be required for the games. It would be an important contribution to UPEI's currently out-moded athletic facilities if the games were to require suitable new facilities which could be located on the campus. In her reply, the Minister stated "There are a lot of things to be decided. Basically, the government would like it to be a province-wide games. We would like to see the money going into upgrading existing facilities rather than building new ones." This view will hopefully tie into to the university's plans to expand the arena currently in use on campus.

Mrs. Brown also noted that the possible location of the 1991 Canada Winter Games on Prince Edward Island would mean that there would be a change of emphasis on some of the sports involved in the games. "For instance," she said, "we do not have a very impressive downhill ski facility". She expressed the possibility that there might instead be an extended cross-country skiing event, as well as other sports not usually seen in the Canada Winter Games.

CFS Pushes for End to Student Loans

In an interview with The Gem on Thursday, CFS Chair Tony Macerollo said he would like government assistance to students be all non-repayable bursary, rather than student loan.

Macerollo says that students are getting it from both sides; university administrators raising tuition fees while the federal government is relying more on student loans than bursaries, and cutting back transfer payments to the provinces.

Macerollo says that an all-bursary scheme would involve a comparatively small amount of money. An education is a lot of money for the individual student to bear, but, he says, "not a lot of money in the grand scheme of things." The idea of a fully government financed education is an especially valid one when accessibility to an education "is based less and less on academic qualifications, and more on whether you have the money," he states.

"The whole term accessibility is rapidly beginning to lose its meaning as far as education is concerned," he says. "It's gotten to the point where the mainstream student now relies on student loan programs, rather than just the low income few the whole program was designed for in 1965." Macerollo states that the number of loan defaulters is rising, proportionate to the amount taking out loans, and many students wind up destroying their credit rating on a loan "they took out to better their employment prospects in the first place through an education."

This policy is directly opposite to the federal government's view that student assistance should entirely consist of student loans. Presently, the system allows a loan up to a certain amount, after which the assistance is in the form of non-repayable bursary.