

The Realities

By Margaret Duffy,
Canadian Federation of
Students Representative

The main theme of the CFS campaign is accessibility. Funding cutbacks, rising unemployment, deteriorating student aid, tuition fee increases, and changes to the vocational education program have had a serious impact on accessibility to post-secondary education.

It often seems impossible for students to have an impact. Sure we can have marches carrying caskets, sit out of classes, or even have a national hunger strike but our federal and provincial governments are not stupid. They know that further cuts into our post-secondary educational system will hurt. There is no more excess fat; even the slightest scrap will be from muscle and organs. Some of our less prosperous departments are really in a crunch. Already they are being told "Tough, those are the breaks" when they go begging for just a few dollars.

Both levels of government are planning major changes to their vote in post secondary education. The major thrust of these changes is to gear the educational system to the "needs of industry". What this really means in practise is a scaling down of the arts and science department. The emphasis

would shift to professional programmes and technical education by streaming students into these programmes. These priorities would be established in line with the federal governments economic strategy to the exclusion of any other needs in the economy.

The aim of the federal government, and to a large extent, the provincial governments, is to reshape the post secondary education system in Canada. The movement is away from a multi-faceted educational system to a smaller system serving a narrower section of society and the economy. This process will mean the elimination of many departments as well as reducing the total number of people attending colleges and universities. Not to mention the professors and equipment that will go without a second thought.

There are two important questions to be dealt with here. 1) Is this the proper direction for the educational system to be moving, and 2) Why are students, faculty, and the public being left out of this fundamental debate?

No, there were no massive walkouts or even mournful wakes during out National Week of Action, but is our provincial government blind, deaf, and dumb? Can't they see what they are doing to post-secondary education? Will it soon be only a plaything for the rich?

LEAVING OR STAYING?

By Barry MacKinnon

If Island youth wish to have a future on Prince Edward Island then they must fight for it. For too long the youth of PEI have departed for places unknown without actually asking why or putting up any kind of resistance. If the youth of PEI are actually its future then why is our future leaving?

I personally believe that as long as the general thinking of poll chairman continues the possibility of new industries on PEI is very unlikely. It appears that poll chairman are so heavy into the needs of the primary industries that they avoid or slide to one side the benefits of new ones. These new industries could provide a future for their sons, daughters, and other Island persons who choose different vocations. Looking at the number of new industries that have recently appeared on PEI would indicate that this kind of thinking has prevailed for some time now. I fear that unless new attitudes arise the youth of PEI will continue to be an unwilling export to other provinces because of their parents' tunnel vision towards new industry. If, for example, a poll chairman happened to be a potatoe farmer then he is not really interested in new industry. His main concern and interests lie in the problems affecting

the potatoe industry. As one poll chairman said, "I have three children working in Alberta" - I wonder why?

Poll chairman are the key to the future of Prince Edward Island for they have the control of electing and nominating candidates to office. Let's hope the candidates that they support are open minded towards new industries and have some to offer.

Creating new industries for PEI will demand greater courage, determination, and boldness on the part of Islanders in the years ahead. Harvesting the future is one area that is open to us if we can meet the challenges that it offers. As I see it, the issue of new industries will become one of the major items determining the next government of PEI.

Since seeking the liberal nomination in 2nd Queen's I have become more aware of the major obstacles facing the youth of this province and will be glad to serve and support their interests if at all possible. Please write to me, Barry MacKinnon, Cornwall RR#4. giving me your name, address phone number, and your feelings towards having to leave Prince Edward Island. Please write, do not allow yourselves to be victimized any longer. If the government is unable to provide you with new industries then it is their turn to leave, not yours.

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