

# The Netted Gem

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## Students have the ear of Premier Lee

By Carolyn Ryan

Lack of communication between government and the University of Prince Edward Island is the most immediate problem in relations between the two groups, Premier Jim Lee told three UPEI student representatives Monday.

The students had come to see him about MPHEC (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission) funding increases and jobs for post-secondary students, though.

"We're generally pleased with the meeting," said Student Union President Michelle Dorsey who, along with Canadian Federation of Students provincial representative Cathy Campbell and Student Ombudsman Jacinta Gallant, met with Lee for an hour in his comfortable Shaw Building office.

Lee listened attentively as the students outlined their concerns about funding and job creation, and told him that the university needs a 5 or 6% increase over last year's funding in order to stay out of the red.

The premier said he had met with the council of Maritime Premiers the previous week, who expressed surprise that the MPHEC had recommended only 4.5%.

"We've been telling them to start living in the real world for years," Lee said adding that the 4.5% figure looks acceptable to his government, but possibly not the other two.

He could not reveal the increase the province will recommend in its budget, though.

To highlight real problems caused by underfunding, Gallant showed Lee a UPEI calendar with large crosses

drawn through over half the courses in the Political Studies Department.

"These are courses that have not been offered this year because profs have gone on sabbatical and haven't been replaced," she told him.

The library has seen a cut in hours of over 10,00 in the last ten years, and students in Engineering have no machine shop, and so suffer when they progress to other Maritime Universities, the Premier was told.

"This is the problem — we don't know your concerns," said Lee.

He thought the ignorance could be remedied through greater communication, especially on the Board of Governors level.

The provincial Cabinet is meeting with the Board next Wednesday, February 20, in the first meeting of this kind Lee can remember.

"We've been in a position of having to pick up what's going on from your President's speeches to Rotary," Lee said.

Both Dorsey and Lee hope the "new Board of Governors" as this year's has been called, will be active and interested enough to change this situation.

The issue of funding for the renovation of Main Building and the construction of a Sports Complex was spoken of, but Dorsey said, "We want to be able to get a major in Political Studies before we go playing racquetball."

Still, all four agreed that the construction of any new facilities will be "a drawing card for UPEI".

"The university was going nowhere but down before the Vet College agreement," said

Lee, "and now it's going up."

Lee and the students also discussed the federal government's newly-announced job creation program, called Challenge '85, which has allocated \$205 million for the creation of jobs in the private sector, in municipalities, and in communities.

Campbell asked the premier if the PEI government would request of Flora MacDonald that the majority of available funds be channelled to community projects, saying these are the most needed on both sides and give students the most valuable work experience.

Prince Edward Island will receive \$715,000 in funding and Campbell fears the money may not be used if it is

left to the private sector to create jobs, given the Island's economy.

"I think (MacDonald) will take direction from the province on that," said Lee, who has met with the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The premier volunteered to set up appointments with the Deputy Minister of Industry with the UPEI students, who asked to be given a voice in

job creation decisions made.

Dorsey also asked Lee if his government would match the \$1000 to \$1500 the Student Union hopes to make on its Main Event this Thursday, for use in creating a summer job for one student, not necessarily on campus.

Lee said the money would have to come from the departmental budget of

Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce Wilbur MacDonald, and suggested the students talk to him.

The students appreciated the reception Lee gave them.

"Where else but in P.E.I. could a group of students come and talk with the Premier for an hour, just like that?" wondered a bemused Cathy Campbell, on the way out.



Residence students about to take off during a recent outing to Brookvale for skiing and tobogganing. The day was a success, with about 50 people attending. Another is planned for March 1. (Photo: Underhill — Yearbook)

## Details of job program announced

OTTAWA (CUP) — The federal government says it will gainfully employ 95,000 Canadian student this summer, with a little help from big business and a new \$205 million student summer job program.

Flora MacDonald, employment and immigration minister, announced Feb. 6 the government is putting an emphasis on career-related jobs for students this summer in a newly created program called Challenge '85. She said 95,000 jobs will appear.

Of the \$205 million, the government will allocate \$163 million for wage subsidies, \$30 million for loans allowing students to create their own summer businesses and \$10 million for jobs in federal departments and agencies.

The \$205 million, though touted as an increase by MacDonald, is actually a decrease in the amount of money spent last year when inflation is taken into consideration. The Liberal government spent \$201 million on Summer Canada Works last year, the country's largest student job creation program. It was eliminated in the Tories' Nov. 8, 1984 economic statement.

MacDonald said she will personally challenge the private sector to create additional jobs for students and has approached chief executives of eight corporations who promise to bring as many as 10,000 young people into their ranks. The corporations include IBM,

Noranda Mines Inc., Imperial Oil, Northern Telecom, Bell Canada and the Royal Bank.

"This summer, instead of offering pre-packed federally funded projects that only provide next year's tuition and little else, we are challenging our economic partners to join us in coming forward with meaningful jobs that improve students' ability to contribute to society now and in the future," she said at a press conference.

The program also includes four components of the Liberals' Summer Canada Works which roughly receive the same amount of money as they did last year. They are: the \$13.6 million Canada Employment Centres for Student, the \$2.3 million internships for native students, the \$13 million national defence department's cadet and reserve training and the \$1.2 million RCMP law enforcement and keeping the peace program.

Two new components — work orientation workshops and business drive for jobs — will be created. The government will give \$0.5 million to the former in the hope of helping disadvantaged high schoolers and potential dropouts, and \$1.3 million to the latter to urge leading corporations and businesses to hire students.

MacDonald, accompanied by youth minister Andree Champagne under the hot glare of television lights, beamed as she said the

government wants to expand the business drive next year if the promotion proves successful this summer.

Opposition MPs following the press conference and in the House of Commons during question period that day blasted MacDonald for what they considered an ironic and hypocritical announcement coming shortly after the Tories proclaimed 1985 as International Year of Youth.

"I had hoped consultation would have created an exciting new program," said Liberal youth critic Sheila Finestone. "I am very disappointed; there is nothing new, no facts, no figures. It's all confidence and business. Our young people are too important to play political captive with."

In the House, NDP leader Ed Broadbent asked the employment and immigration minister why she announced a program similar to the one created by the Liberals last year, which she called inadequate to meet students' needs. He said he wonders why she is simply changing the program's details when the economic climate is the same or worse than last year.

"... is (MacDonald) aware that companies in Canada now have more than an average 30 per cent of employees on lay-off? Why in heaven's name, when they already have lay-offs, will they want to hire students? The government is leaving students out there swinging

and the minister knows that," he said.

MacDonald replied: "I can advise the honorable member that I did something last evening which I do not believe he could have done ..." The House filled with sniggers and catcalls.

MacDonald then mentioned her meeting with the corporate executives and later said to another question that she does not apologise for her "nocturnal activities" when they result in 10,000 more jobs for students.

Other NDP MPs pointed out that the program simply makes the private sector do the minister's job and that it does not contain affirmative action measures for women.

MacDonald failed to consult the Canadian Federation of Students, Canada's national student lobby, before she made the announcement. The minister is expected to meet with the federation Feb. 11.

"It's typical of this government to say they will consult with everything and then refuse to consult with the most significant group in this area," said NDP MP Howard McCurdy, post-secondary education and youth critic.

CFS chair Beth Olley said she was disappointed MacDonald did not bother to meet with the national student organization before drawing up the program but hopes CFS representatives will convince the minister to increase the amount of money available.

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### Quote of the Week

from a survey ...

"The Netted Gem (name) has almost become a symbol of the paper's amazing transformation from a complete rag to a credible newspaper."

Second year Arts student