

Political flashback

Some thoughts on the UPEI candidates' forum

On Thursday, October 21, the students at UPEI had the opportunity to listen to and question the candidates running for

office in Hillsborough. The candidates from the Progressive Conservative, Liberal, New Democratic, National, Natural Law, and Christian Heritage parties were all present. The Reform party candidate

was conspicuous by his absence. Whitty (Reform) had publicly stated that he would not be a part of a debate that also included the Natural Law Party candidate. UPEI President C.W.J. Eliot moderated the debate. Opening comments followed party lines, with little in the line of individual thought or commitment to specific policies. This was expected by most in the audience. Once the issues were touched upon by the candidates, the floor was opened to students' questions. Many of the questions concerned the Canada Student Loans Programme and the problem of funding in general. Candidates' responses ranged from Crane (NDP)

giving vague but hopeful comments on revising the CSLP completely, to Judson (CHP) asking why students were looking for "handouts" and

people with physical difficulties were broached, the wisdom of creating jobs in the country's infrastructure through highways and construction

was questioned, the CHP's definition of a "traditional family" was requested, and the plan to institute mandatory AIDS testing for all Canadians (also a CHP policy) was generally ridiculed.

It was also interesting

when students and candidates began to publicly question one another's "facts". For example, the percentage of students who default on their student loans was given as 25% and 5.2% by different sources. The lower figure is correct. MacMillan (PC) disagreed with the statement that his party has failed to increase the dollar amount awarded to students for approximately 10 years. He is wrong, according to government documents.

My opinion after leaving the debate was that the more I listened to politicians, the less sure I became about my opinions.

SHANNON YOUNKER

"I found many of the candidates' answers unsatisfactory, and judging from the murmuring I was hearing around me and the looks on people's faces, I think many agreed with me..."

saying that there are "no free rides" in this world. This was when people started shouting.

I found many of the candidates' answers unsatisfactory, and judging from the murmuring I was hearing around me and the looks on people's faces, I think many agreed with me; however, not every statement was booed. The question was raised as to whether the parties would involve students more directly in affairs such as funding. Crane admitted that consultation between student groups and government was needed, and people applauded.

There were questions posed which did not deal with student aid. The problems faced by

CAMPUS COMMENT

What do you think of the election results?



Worst day in Canadian history because the opposition is a group of people who want to destroy the country as we know it.

Chris Martin
3rd year Bio



Really good election because of the regional representation in the house of commons so we can screw first minister meetings. Now we can just ask the "block" leaders what they think.

Darren Stretch
2nd year business



I didn't like breaking the country into regional blocks with separate interests. I hope Chretien can pull the parts together to form a national outlet.

Peter Trueman
4th year Political Studies