

More discussion than action

Highlights of "Legacy of Restraint" Panel Discussion

ONE HIGHLIGHT of National Week of Action was a panel discussion held with a moderate student audience in Duffy Amphitheatre last Wednesday. The discussion focused on the financing of post-secondary education and the responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments.

The panel, Moderated by Prof. David Milne of the Political Studies department, featured Philip MacDougall, deputy Minister of Finance for PEI, Roger Burke, PEI Deputy Minister of Education, and Nigel Chippendale, director of Policy and Analysis of the educational support branch of the Federal Secretary of State. UPEI Students, faculty, and staff were also represented on the panel.

Also included were Olive Bryenton, president of the Canadian Organization of Part-Time University Students (COPUS), Leo Cheverie, president of the union representing university support staff, Ian MacDonald, director of Student and External Services, Verner Smitheram, Dean of Arts, and Dr. Leon Loukes, professor of chemistry.

Each panel member was allowed to speak for about 5 minutes after which questions from the students were allowed.

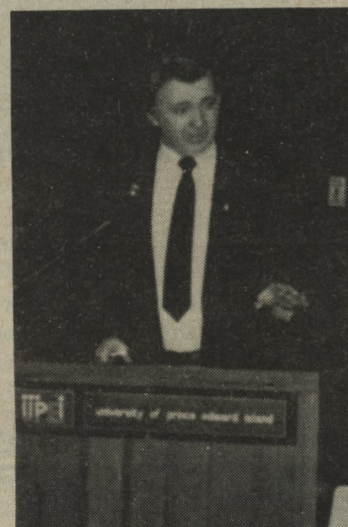
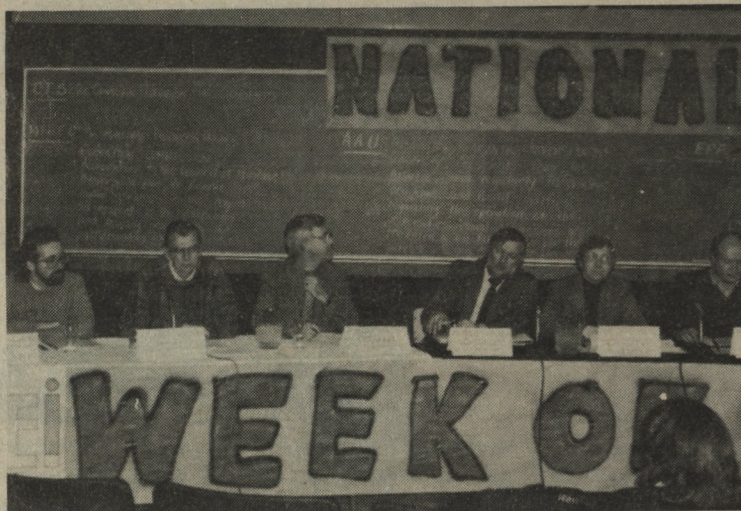
Philip MacDougall attempted to describe the workings of the federal Established Programs Funding transfer

payment which funds PEI's health and higher education systems. He addressed the problem that the province is not obligated to spend the full transfer payment allotted to education and problems of determining the exact amount of the complicated transfer.

PEI's deputy Minister of Education Roger Burke discussed the national Forum on post-secondary education he attended last year and how it examined accessibility to quality education and the need to create a greater public awareness. Burke stated that now education is higher on the agenda of both federal and provincial levels of government as a result of the forum. He said that the next step is for the delegates to the Forum to meet with the Council of Ministers of Education to draw up a national agenda for post-secondary education.

Representing David Crombie, Nigel Chippendale of the Secretary of State agreed with Burke about the forum and expressed the federal government's desire for closer cooperation with the provinces, students, and the private sector regarding higher education. Chippendale outlined federal government support and described a new program to fund studies in science and engineering.

Dean of Arts Verner Smitheram delivered a heated speech about the cuts going on in his department.



"Like a mosquito in a nudist colony each small cut draws a little blood", he said.

Smitheram gave the example of the student-teacher ratio in the History department. In 1979-80 it was 1 to 78, he said, while now it is up to 1 to 133.

Students had several questions for the panel. The first asked why the Maritime Provinces

Higher Education Commission, the body that each year recommends the minimum amount each province should spend on higher education, only recommended a minimum amount. Ian MacDonald, UPEI's representative on the body explained that they realized there was a loss in dollar value from year to year. He said last year they attempted to upgrade the recommendations but they realized there was not enough money being given to do it.

Roger Burke was asked why PEI spend even less than the MPHEC recommended minimum on post-secondary education. Burke acknowledged that funding has been reduced below sustenance levels and explained that different provinces dealt with the recommendations in different ways. MacDougall also responded saying PEI has met the recommended levels 5 times in the past 8 years.

Another student asked that despite government predictions, university enrollment keeps increasing and does government funding take it into account. Roger Burke responded by saying they have given up trying to predict enrollment patterns now. Dean Smitheram joined the discussion to say that there would be less problems with higher enrollments if more students took courses in classics, fine arts, and other low-enrollment programs to balance things out.

The next question from the floor dealt with the debt students have to take on to get a degree. Chippendale said the federal government was concerned with accessibility and debt load. MacDougall stated that the government absorbs 80-85% of the costs of post-secondary education.

"When is the last time someone made an investment on your behalf and you didn't contribute", he said.

UPEI President Eliot was also present at the discussion and praised the government's responsiveness and attitude towards higher education. Regarding program cuts, he reminded students that the Atlantic Veterinary College was a new program for the region. However, Eliot warned of the increasing costs of research and the growing reluctance of the government to fund it, especially in smaller centres.

Fitness testing!

Come one, come all!
Activities include:

1. Muscular Endurance - Situps, Pushups
2. % Body Fat - skin fold measurement
3. Flexibility - stretching
4. Cardiovascular - exercise bike

At your convenience!

Name
Phone
Preferred Time
Clip and Save

* Complete form and return to Secretary in downstairs office in Gym.

Where: Weight Room, (Downstairs in Gym)
When: Monday - Thursday 4-6 pm, February 1-4, 1988

or