

One leader speaks



Editor's note: Repeated efforts were made to obtain interviews with John Buchanan and Sandy Cameron, Premier and Liberal Opposition Leader respectively, were unsuccessful. Liberal education critic, Hugh Tinkham's commitment to speak to the Gazette was not honoured.

by Lawrence Brissendon

Many people are surprised to learn that Alexa McDonough is the first woman in Canada to lead a major political party. This distinction may well be only a symbolic achievement unless McDonough can win the unpredictable three-way race being waged in the riding of Halifax Chebucto.

In an interview with Gregory Hamara and Cathy McDonald of the Gazette on September 26, the optimistic leader of Nova Scotia's N.D.P. discussed her opinions on education, the election, and the issues (or lack of) during the current campaign. The following are some excerpts from this conversation.

On the proposed \$1.5 billion cut backs in post secondary education.

It has been estimated that MacEachen's cut back would shut down half the universities in Nova Scotia. That's absolutely ludicrous. The N.D.P., with student's groups, lobbied very actively against the cut backs and called for the task force to study it. This is now completed and it has endorsed the N.D.P. position against the cutbacks.

On tuition fee increases.

We're taking an extremely regressive step back to post-secondary education becoming available only to students from financially secure families or those prepared to endure incredible financial hardships.

On universities' lack of foresight.

In the previous decade, there has been rapid expansion in universities but not enough long range planning. Universities are faced with heavy capital loans and in effect are starving the students to pay

for these loans.

On the idea of more technical education.

I think you've begun to take away what is important in this society when you wipe out the liberal arts education and begin to simply turn people into productive agents for an industrial empire. It can also go too far in the other direction.

On the job market and economic planning.

We have so little economic planning it is not a satisfactory situation for students trying to plan ahead. I don't think students want to spend years in higher education when there is no application on the job market.

On political campaigns.

Campaigns are probably the least effective times to engage in political education because people are very sceptical, very cynical, about politicians making promises they have no intentions of carrying out.

On the N.D.P. prospects on October 6.

It has been predicted by various media observers, who are more independent than we are, that we are going to win as many as 10 seats.

On her prospects of losing in her bid for the Chebucto seat and retaining party leadership.

I am increasingly confident that is a problem I won't have to face after the election. I feel people who are not traditionally New Democrats are willing to elect me so I can carry on the role I'm playing.

On the present campaign.

We have constantly tried in this election to discuss the issues. The other two parties deserve to be the losers because they are failing to address the issues.

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