

## Royal Commission given outline of universities' roles in Canada today

By GARY SYMONS

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) presented the Macdonald Commission with a brief on the role of universities in Canada's future at a conference at the Hilton Harbour Castle Hotel on Tuesday.

The 12-member Macdonald Commission, officially known as the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, was appointed last year by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to seek "long-range" solutions to the nation's political and economic problems.

"The commission's broad mandate instructs it to explore Canada's economic prospects and how to achieve them; to examine the Canadian Federation; its regions, institutions, and governmental structures, and suggest how they can be made to work better and more effectively in achieving national economic goals," said Commission Chairperson Donald Macdonald in a June 11 interview with the *Financial Post*.

The commission is touring 27 Canadian cities to gain input from representatives of business, educational, and social organizations. The commission will be in Toronto until tomorrow.

During their half-hour meeting with the Macdonald Commission, OCUFA representatives elaborated on concerns expressed in their brief about insufficient government funding of universities and restrictions on fundamental research.

"As a result of underfunding, the provision of access to universities is in serious jeopardy," Bill Jones, Professor of Psychology at Carleton University and OCUFA President told the Commission.

In an interview after the conference, he said he did not expect the Commission to immediately affect the funding problem one way or another, but that he did "anticipate a rise in funding" over the next few years as a result of public pressure. "People will start to see that their kid, who could get into university this year, won't get in next year. Eventually the government will be forced to raise funding," he said.

"Underfunding is the most serious impediment to the ability of the universities to perform their work," states OCUFA's brief.

"The universities of Ontario have been systematically underfunded throughout the '70s, and particularly since 1977-78 when the Government of Ontario stopped taking the funding advice of its own advisory body, the Ontario Council of University Affairs (OCA), the report went on to say. "Taking inflation and enrollment increases into

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3



Is this a student who has just written an exam, or an example of modern art? To find out, turn to page 9.

Photo: NIGEL TURNER

## Lalonde expresses support for dialogue

By CAROL BRUNT

Finance Minister Marc Lalonde showed encouraging support for a national dialogue on post-secondary education after meeting with representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

CFS Chairperson Graham Dowdell, Executive officer Diane Flaherty, and researchers Bruce Tate and Eileen Dooley presented the proposal to Lalonde in a meeting last Tuesday during discussions of the ongoing negotiations of the Established Programs Financing Act (EPF)—a federal funding program for social services.

CFS's goal is to "develop a national long term plan for funding and direction of post-secondary education," said Flaherty.

She said student funding has become dependent on "economic short term forecasts rather than according to societal needs." This has been enforced, she said, because the return on the dollar is more evident in areas other than post-secondary education and the danger is arising that social program funding is being evaluated from a purely financial sense.

The dialogue would include representatives from universities and colleges, both levels of government, and interested community groups and be initiated through the department of the

Secretary of State rather than the finance department.

The meeting was part of pre-budget consultations that Lalonde holds with between "20 and 40 national groups with special interests in funding," said Flaherty. This was the first year that CFS has had a "real" opportunity to be part of the discussions.

The EPF became effective in 1977, replacing the previous funding arrangements whereby the federal contribution was determined by the spending of provinces. The federal government currently uses the blockfunding approach, contributing a lump sum to the provinces to fund both health and post-secondary education—calculated independently of provincial program expenditures.

"EPF removes the incentive (of the provinces) to spend on post-secondary education since the transfer of federal funds is no longer conditional. The provinces are now able to divert federal funds intended for post-secondary education to other areas," said Mike Connolly, information officer at CFS-O/OFS.

According to Flaherty, Lalonde expressed dismay at the present arrangements. The federal Government lacks control over provincial spending because federal funds go to the general operating budget of the provinces

and are not specially "earmarked" for health and post-secondary education, she said.

The federal government has recently announced its intention to split the blockfunding arrangement into components. According to a statement released by the Provincial Ministers of Finance and Treasurers in April, the federal Government wishes "to cap the growth per capita federal contributions for higher education at 6 percent in 1983-84 and 5 percent in 1984-85."

The provinces are not pleased with "these developments" according to Val Jacobson, coordinator of Program Policy Development with the Ontario Government. Jacobson said the provinces want the federal transfer to remain a single payment and have raised the complaint that provinces will be losing money applying the restraint guidelines. They are also having difficulty in maintaining quality programming as a result of the cutbacks, she said.

CFS supports the federal move to split funding arrangements, said Flaherty. "Right now it's very difficult to tell how much is being spent on post-secondary education and how much on health. By splitting the two, it becomes more visible and clearer if there are major cuts."

## Former York graduate student has 'the right stuff'

By LERRICK STARR

A former York graduate student is one of six Canadians who have been chosen to venture into space on the U.S. space shuttle in 1985-86.

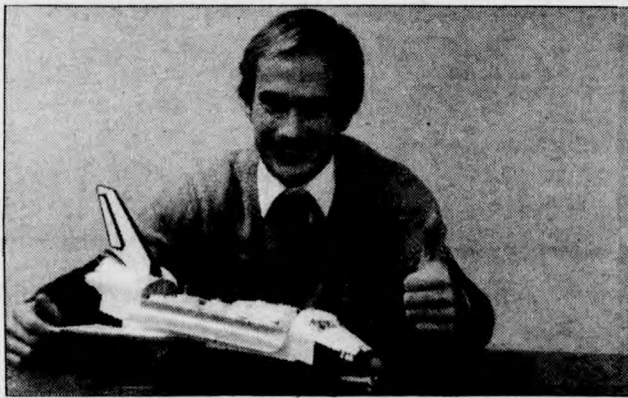
Steve McLean, who received his honors B.A. in physics in 1977 and finished his Ph.D. in January 1983, was at York yesterday speaking to students about his selection. He said he was raking leaves at his home in California when the news that he had been chosen arrived. "I was jumping up and down," said McLean. "You feel really good—what can you say?"

The names of the six finalists, two of whom will go into space as Canada's first astronauts while the other four act as backups, were announced Monday. More than 4,300 men, women, and even a few children applied for the positions.

McLean said he did not suspect his work at York would ever lead to such an "exciting assignment." His focus while studying was the analysis of the properties of interstellar dust by various methods including the use of the laser.

When asked if he had any clue his work would lead to a space assignment he replied, "No, though I thought I would be involved with the Canada space program but not at this level. It didn't exist! When I was a kid I watched every launch, cut out all the clippings. It was really exciting. I didn't have to read science fiction."

This was confirmed by his mother Helen McLean who said she still had the stories Steve had saved from the Apollo moon landings. "He was a very athletic child," she said, recalling how she took her young son for a walk in the carriage.



York graduate/astronaut Steve McLean.

Photo: LERRICK STARR

Asked if he would be disappointed if he doesn't get to fly he said, "for sure, but the point is that if the six of us act as a team and do well in the program, we'll expand and all of us will get the opportunity to fly."

McLean's experiment, which he is designing for the shuttle mission, involves a state of the art laser system, diagnostic in nature, which will examine the interatomic structure of hydrogen. It will "attack the fundamental laws of physics and be a confirmation of existing theory. It's frontier stuff. The work began 10 years ago and we're now only starting to get close to the answers."

At York McLean was well known for his athletic prowess. He was a member of the University's gymnastics team as an undergraduate and a member of the Canadian Men's National team for two years in 1976-77. He won the Canadian University Championship in 1976. As well, he coached York's womens gymnastics team, winning the nationals in his second year of involvement.

He describes himself as conservative, but also an adventurer. He has climbed the Himalayas, the base camp on Mount Everest, and enjoys technical rock climbing in California. "I really like to travel," he stated.

When asked to rate York as an educational institution he replied, "My feeling is that it is good. York does a good job, but it's young and hasn't developed a reputation. It offers an excellent opportunity for the student to excel. All York needs is a little more time. We have a lot of talented researchers here in terms of what research is going on."

"York gives you the opportunity to get a good physics background. (From here) I made it to Stanford (University in California) which has the best laser research program in the world," he said. "The astronaut program needed a well-rounded individual. My involvement in space science at York really helped."

When asked for his personal feelings, McLean straightened in his chair and said, "I feel very honored and I'm looking forward to meeting the challenge."