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OPINION...

"They don't know what is happening in this country"

- Sen. Jacques Hebert

By the time you sit down and read this newspaper, Ken Quigley, Editor in Chief of the *Brunswickan* will have begun his Hunger strike in support of Senator Jacques Hebert. Not ANOTHER WELL MEANING BUT ILL ADVISED FIGHT FOR A CAUSE, you say. I bet you just can't stand the thought of some guy who figures the world owes him some well deserved recognition-so-he-is-going-to-stand-up-and-get-it-all-by-himself! However, if you will bear with me, I will give you my opinion of what Ken and Senator Jacques Hebert believe is important enough to go through enormous hunger pangs.

Several weeks ago, our illustrious and "well-meaning" government in Ottawa decided to take one of Canada's most highly successful and popular youth programs and put it up on the chopping block. The recent federal government budget eliminated the 19.7 million dollar youth program with the intention of replacing it with more direct job creation activities designed for young people. Never in my life have I heard of such stupid and empty promises! Katimavik, the axed youth program in question, provided necessary job training skills that no job creation program will ever be able to give - namely responsibility, self-respect, french-language training, and the chance to meet and live with Canadian youth from all over this country of ours.

Living and working together on community projects from Victoria to St. John's, Katimavik volunteers got the opportunity of a lifetime that would otherwise not be available to them. In countries such as Finland, for example, programs of a similar type are highly successful in their endeavour to give youth the chance to prove that YES, I CAN DO IT!

While on a recent visit to Quebec I had the opportunity to see Katimavik in action - kids from all over Canada, with different cultural backgrounds, religions and languages were living together in a kind of mini-Canada, learning not only those life skills that they would never have got in the work place but most important of all, learning toleration...And now Mulroney's henchmen want to put an end to it all.

It really is a shameful disgrace, but what really makes me so mad that I just want to write nasty Opinion columns is how someone like that Dodo, Andree Champagne, can continue to receive a paycheck of upwards to 100,000 dollars including an expense budget, for work not received. As Minister of a Youth Portfolio which no longer exists due to the P.C.'s bloodthirsty tactics, she should resign or at least be fired for mental incompetence. In light of her recent allegations that someone forged her signature on a secret document which called for government money to be used in PC recruitment of youth, she should be fired. Her only rationalization once she had been caught deceiving Canadian taxpayers with her lies was that such measures were in the interest of our youth. Bull! If her job was axed in a way similar to the Katimavik program, more than 200 University students would be able to work this summer and save money to continue their education. If advertisements like the one which appeared in this month's *Chatelaine* for example, were stopped before the program was terminated, 7 to 10 students could have worked this summer to save money and thus pay their exorbitant tuition costs.

I see the employment of Andree Champagne as Minister of a Youth Portfolio which does not exist, has no budget, and no objectives as an incredibly ridiculous waste of taxpayers money. So ridiculous in fact, that words escape me whenever I read something like the editorial which appeared in Wednesday's *Gleaner*. Once again, the *Gleaner* has demonstrated its brilliant ignorance of the real problems facing our youth today. Jobs and self-respect is all we want, yet the *Gleaner* suggests that instead of programs like Katimavik Canada should "follow the example of Sweden and other European countries which require or encourage young people to serve two or three years in the armed forces." In the military, the *Gleaner* says, "They receive useful training and a regulated and disciplined routine which is beneficial to their future lives."

I suppose by inference then, that Katimavik did none of those things, yet the *Gleaner* was more than willing last year to praise that very program when Oromocto was the beneficiary of their slave labour at the cost to this government of one dollar a day. And what about those young people who believe in the cause of peace and who wish to have nothing whatsoever to do with the military, or who simply have no liking for the military life. In conversation with an "army brat" last evening, it was quite clear that the only thing the military ever teaches impressionable 18 year olds is how to become alcoholics, and really good ones at that. Once again, the *Gleaner* has gone off its rocker when dealing with the real issues that face youth today by suggesting we all join the military so that we can be unemployed when our time is up.

Katimavik must be reinstated, if not, the P.C.'s will never be forgiven for abandoning our precious youth. Andree Champagne should be reassigned to Arctic duty. People like us, the students who are going to suffer in future government cuts, should support Senator Jacques Hebert and our Editor as they stand up for something that they think is right. Katimavik is a precedent setting incident. In the future, you can be almost certain that the PC governments' plan to provide youth with "real" job creation activities will only be another finger in the proverbial dyke, and that someday not so far in the future, Canadian youth will be forced out of sheer necessity to go on their own hunger strikes because they have no jobs, and no money to put food in their stomachs!

By MELYNDA JARRATT
Brunswickan Staff