

Federal Election '88

Bud Bird, Progressive Conservative Candidate



Photo By Blair T. Sawler

J.W. 'Bud' Bird

Bud Bird cites the free trade issue as one of the key factors influencing his decision to run in the upcoming election.

Speaking on the importance of the free trade agreement to students, Mr. Bird says "Every student in Canada should be vigorously waving the free trade flag and parading in support of the vast horizon of opportunity which free trade offers to every Canadian." He says that the deal means an increased potential for prosperity, greater trading opportunities and more jobs. In his view, free trade will abolish regional disparity and "allow students to find jobs, careers and futures at home (in New Brunswick) and stop the constant exodus of brains and ability to other regions."

Mr. Bird dismisses criticisms of the free trade agreement as

being based on "emotional and mythological reasons." He says "No country ever lost its identity or sovereignty by growing stronger in its economic performance and raising its standards of living. The reverse has always been true."

On the global scene, Mr. Bird says that protection of the environment is "perhaps the most important priority of all in the long run. The quality of life we have here in New Brunswick particularly is something we all value highly and keeps us here even though economic prospects may be less attractive than in other parts of Canada and the U.S." He says, "the completion of the free trade agreement will open the door and set the precedence for competition of an acid rain agreement in short order. Prime Minister Mulroney is the only person who could possibly accomplish this."

The Mulroney government has been criticized for cutting back funding to post-secondary institutions. Mr. Bird says that "the federal government record has got to be viewed in the context of the whole economic scene and it seems to me that over the past four years the Mulroney government has particularly addressed itself to the creation of jobs and to gaining control of Canada's massive deficit." He calls the government's record in this area "outstanding". Unemployment among young people and women has fallen by one third and the deficit has been reduced by almost that much over the past

four years.

The Canadian Federation of Students and other youth groups have been vocal in their criticism of the federal government's summer job creation 'Challenge' programme.

They claim that the length of employment and the wages paid (usually minimum) are inadequate and do not allow students to meet the expenses of their education. To this charge Mr. Bird replies that "All of these programmes have got to be viewed in the context of the alternative, which is unemployment. There is no question that salaries from the Challenge Programme are not adequate to meet all the needs and requirements of a student, but ... to totally provide all the

support that a student requires has not been the objective. The objective has been to provide help." A prime objective of the Conservative government is "to create an abundance of career opportunities for students upon graduation."

According to the CFS, one in ten students graduates with a debt load in excess of \$10,000. Mr. Bird does not support a proposal to write off debts. He believes that students would prefer to be able to get a solid job and repay their own debts and have the "satisfaction of having paid their way." However, he says that "no student should be brought to ruin over a student aid debt that they haven't

been able to pay." Student loans should have a generous repayment schedule and the conditions governing the award and repayment of student loans in Canada should be similar or more generous in areas of high unemployment and economic disadvantage.

Mr. Bird notes his lengthy experience in public service. He served as Mayor of Fredericton for five years and as the provincial Minister of Natural Resources for four years. He says "I think the Conservative Government is clearly the only choice in this election and I am a good candidate representing that government and the best choice for the students of Fredericton."

Allan Sharp, New Democrat



Photo By Blair T. Sawler

Allan Sharp

By NUJMA YAQZAN

While it may seem unusual for a Physics professor to become so interested in politics, Mr. Sharp's interest was sparked by several factors: As a physicist, he has seen how his "profession has provided the military with sophisticated and damaging weapons. It is important for us to ensure that science is used for peaceful means, and not only military. Being the founding member of the NB chapter of "Science for Peace," he believes he understands the problems. In addition, "it made me angry," he says, to see the Liberals announce cut-backs in higher education and then to see the Conservative government promise increased funding, only to do the same thing as the Liberals before. "I watched the Tory convention when Brian Mulroney was elected. I heard unfair politics. It was about a different Canada than I had in mind - this country is built on cooperation, not competition."

The Free Trade deal concerns him as well; "The Trade deal is opposite to what I think Canada is about. The nature of Canada is at stake."

In response to what his goals are, Mr. Sharp responds that his party's goals include putting more fairness and trustworthiness into the Canadian government. He also feels that "tuition fees (at universities and colleges) should over time be abolished." He opposes the Free Trade deal because he believes it will "Americanize" Canada and provide a bleak future for students looking for jobs and needing to become "more American" to get them. He also would like to see two times more research funding than is presently being provided for graduates of Canadian universities.

He is completely against the proposed tax reform where 20% tax will be charged on almost everything a person buys. "Students will be major losers," he acknowledges, "it's not fair."

Other goals include working to eliminate nuclear weapons, and trying to safeguard the environment against pollution. However, Mr. Sharp emphasizes his interest in post-secondary issues.

What about summer employment for students? The present Challenge program does not meet the needs of many students as far as money goes. "We will make it more possible for community groups and private sectors to provide employment. (We could) also institute a summer internship program for students to assist faculty members." It would provide an "impetus to research and would help

students to find career-oriented jobs." Mr. Sharp is willing to see a raise in the present scant hourly rate students normally receive during summer months.

According to Mr. Sharp, the present Canada Student Loan Program is "crazy, unfair, and puts the student in a major hole before even starting (his education)." He would "lean on the Provincial Government to provide more funding for grants" and he supports the idea of national funding for students for their first two years. He is prepared to look for more federal money in such areas.

From a period beginning in 1982, "the Liberals cut over 2 billion (from higher education funding). Brian Mulroney did not reverse that, and managed to cut a further 1.5 billion during the 1984-90 period, promising to cut 700 million per year afterwards. It's a sorry record and it's why students are paying higher tuition fees," he claims.

At present, the Federal Government allocates a certain number of dollars to the province for health care and higher education. The health care system must legally get its due share, but the rest of the money does not all go to higher education as it should. Mr. Sharp believes in a 50-50 sharing plan between the Federal Government and the province, and a "binding contract" that would ensure funds would not be diverted to areas other than higher education.

The differential fees that international students must pay are "totally unfair," according to Mr. Sharp, "we should do away with them."

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