

University grads overeducated, unemployed

By Mike Gordon
Canadian University Press

VANCOUVER (CUP) — They're engineers, biologists, teachers and nurses, and they all have one thing in common — they are out of work, or working outside of their chosen field.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, so renamed under Premier Bill Vander Zalm's first cabinet, contains more than a note of irony for B.C. students.

Unemployment in B.C. is more than three per cent higher than the national rate, at 11.7 per cent, according to the Statistics Canada figures for July 1987.

But of the 178,000 people out of work in B.C., almost 14,000, roughly eight per cent, hold post-secondary degrees or diplomas, compared to the national rate of five per cent.

"And those are the people who registered (for unemployment benefits)," says Joan Vincent, director of the Centre for Non-Traditional Unemployment in Vancouver.

"There are many who are simply not bothering to register any more."

Vincent says high unemployment in the province has created a growing number of "underemployed" people — those taking low-level, low-paying jobs out-

side their qualified field in order to pay the rent.

"One reason is the incredibly poor economic performance in B.C. in the last few years," says Rosanne Moran, a researcher for the Canadian Federation of Students, Pacific region. Moran links high unemployment in the province to the Social Credit government's costly business exploits, such as Expo '86 and other mega-projects.

"We're not convinced that kind of economic development is creating employment for students coming out of universities," she says.

"The government's priorities are ridiculous," says Amoure deCosmos, who graduated six years ago from Simon Fraser University with a geography degree. He now works in automotive restoration supplies. "We just don't exist," he says.

DeCosmos says he looked for long-term employment for 18 months after graduating, while supporting himself with temporary work. Now, tired and frustrated, he is applying for a master's program at UBC in hopes of eventually entering his field.

"We have a great number of highly educated people in this province," says Moran, "but we're not necessarily training them."

But Moran says CFS fears the

Vander Zalm government will respond to the unemployment situation by putting all the emphasis on job training, at the expense of advanced education.

"We have concerns that the comprehensive community college system will be turned into vocational and applied technology institutions."

"There's no real solution happening," says Neil Trainor, director of the YMCA Employment Initiatives program.

Trainor says youth unemployment has been a serious problem

since 1982, but now because the same number of people are still out of work, the program has shifted its age range from 15-24 to 17-30.

"It's upping the ante," says Vincent. "People are at the job entry level for longer periods now, whereas four or five years ago people 30 years old would have been in their chosen field for a couple of years."

Trainor says one problem is that university and college graduates are among the most disadvantaged because they have

been out of the job market for a few years, and hold unreasonable job, money and status expectations.

"Can you bank pride, eat it? No," says deCosmos.

"Ultimately, you will find a position," he says. "But you have to have realistic goals — don't hold your breath, you have to take what you can get," he says.

And if a master's degree doesn't get his foot in the door, says deCosmos, "there's always a doctorate."

Court approves white scholarship

TORONTO (CUP) — The terms of a university scholarship which awards funds only to white Protestants have been ruled valid by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Judge William McKeown ruled in mid-August that the Leonard Foundation scholarship, which has dispensed about \$175,000 a year since 1923 to students of "the white race", did not violate Ontario's Human Rights Code.

Further stipulations of the Leonard Will say that only 25 per cent of each year's money can go to women, and that no one "owing allegiance to a foreign government, prince, pope or

potentate" can receive funding. It is a private scholarship, available to (some) students regardless of what university they attend.

In his decision, McKeown ruled that "evidence was submitted to me of numerous educational scholarships in Ontario designed to benefit students of restricted classes defined by race, origin, sex, creed, and so on."

"The Leonard Scholarship is, in essence, but one more example of such an educational scholarship."

Sylvilyn Holt, Toronto region supervisor with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, said the commission will seek legal advice before making a

decision to appeal the ruling.

"The (Supreme Court) decision is a major issue with us," said Holt, adding the commission initiated an investigation into the ruling after "a number of concerns were brought to the Commission's attention."

Holt said the Commission will meet September 20 to decide whether to appeal the lower court's ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Meanwhile, at University College, trustees of another will have been told they can ignore a phrase which stipulates only students of "Anglo-Saxon" origin can receive the scholarship.



"Fun"
 "Stupendous"
 "A memorable experience"
 "Moving"
 "I laughed, I cried"
 "An important stepping-stone to my career"
 "Unique"
 "Bedazzling"
 "It was great, sigh"

