

# DEAR Prime Minister

October 1, 1990

Dear Prime Minister,

As one of 400,000 members of the Canadian Federation of Students, I have concerns about your government's record on post-secondary education.

The Federation I belong to represents college and university students from across the country; we meet twice yearly at general meetings to set policy and directives.

The federal government plays an important and often unacknowledged role in the provision of post-secondary education. We believe it is the government's responsibility to safeguard our education system.

We have always been a strong supporter of a federal presence in higher education. Our constitution states that our ultimate goal is to achieve "a system of post-secondary education which is accessible to all, of high quality, and nationally planned...".

An educated and highly skilled workforce is clearly a pre-requisite to Canada's economic competitiveness in international markets. Undeniably, skills training and research and development is dependent upon quality post-secondary education.

Mr. Prime Minister, at the Progressive Conservative General Meeting on August 25, 1989, you stated that your government "will carry its fair share of the burden to ensure that all young Canadians receive a first class education as they confront a world class challenge." Given your government's record on post-secondary education, I am forced to question the sincerity of this commitment.

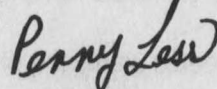
By the end of your second term of office your government will have:

- Cut back \$ 3,277,294,000 in transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education;
- Forced tuition fee hikes across the country in order to make-up for the shortfall in government funding;
- Imposed a 3% tax on student loans - those students who can least afford the cost of a post-secondary education are being taxed for going into debt;
- Established a record of yearly cut backs to the student summer employment program - in 1990 alone the program was cut by 35%;
- Reneged on its commitment to research and development - the Matching Funding Policy relies on the private sector for maintenance and growth of research funding;
- Introduced Canada's first tax on books, newspapers, magazines and journals - the 7% Goods and Services Tax will increase student costs;
- Departed from long standing government policy to grant total assistance to native students - overriding treaty rights;
- Done nothing to improve the quality and availability of daycare on campus.

Mr. Prime Minister actions speak louder than words. We are still waiting for that "first class" education system. Education should be your governments' number one priority.

On October 17 - National Student Day - the Canadian Federation of Students will be releasing our Strategy for change. Our hope is that this will encourage your government to critically examine the state of post-secondary education in Canada, so that together we can build a better education system.

Sincerely,



Penny Less  
Student