

Projections prove false

Student enrolment stable

OTTAWA (CUP)—Preliminary national statistics show that full-time university enrolment this year is unchanged from last year while part-time enrolment has decreased—shattering projections that enrolments would increase annually until peaking in 1982.

Although full-time university enrolments increased in the West, the Atlantic and Quebec, Ontario's full-time university enrolment dropped by 2.4 per cent.

Zolten Zsigmond, of Statistics Canada's education, science and culture division, said the figures are based on preliminary university enrolments and include medical interns and residents.

Zsigmond said last year's total of full-time graduates and undergraduates in universities was 376,880, while this year the preliminary total is about 376,000. "Basically, it is about the same: there is no change. There should have been, demographically speaking, an increase, because the 18 to 24 age group is increasing," he said.

He said Statistics Canada had expected about 390,000 full-time university students this year, but "I'm afraid we won't get that."

Zsigmond said that part-time

university enrolment is down to about 185,000 this year from about 191,000 last year. Statistics Canada was anticipating about 197,000 part-time university students this year. He said the part-time decline, of about three per cent, was the same for part-time undergraduates as graduate students.

Although there are no preliminary figures yet for community college enrolments, Zsigmond said he expects a national increase of about six per cent.

Zsigmond speculated that part of the reason university enrolments aren't keeping pace with projections is that more students may be turning to community colleges to provide an education more likely to lead to a job.

"It is possible that many students are going to colleges. We are expecting a good increase in college enrolment. It could be some kind of switch from universities," he said.

And he suggested that enrolment patterns among university students are changing.

"I don't have any enrolments by faculty. But I am expecting a decline will occur in arts and sciences; I am almost sure that

commerce will be up. But this is only speculation."

Zsigmond added a possible reason for the decline in part-time enrolments is that many part-time students traditionally have been teachers updating their certificates, but they may no longer be as eager to update their qualifications because teacher education doesn't seem profitable in the near future.

He said the shortfall in expected full-time university enrolments comes from both graduates and undergraduates—graduate enrolments were down in every province except Newfoundland, while undergraduate enrolments were about the same or slightly up.

The 2.4 per cent decrease in Ontario was one of the most surprising results of the preliminary figures. Although advance sta-

tistics said Ontario's full-time university enrolment would increase to about 165,000 from nearly 164,000 last year, this year's total is actually only 160,000.

He added that the largest increase in community college enrolments is projected for Quebec's CEGEPs, which are expected to increase enrolments nine per cent this year. The significant jump is due to a large graduating class this spring because of a revamping of the secondary school program several years ago which combined two grades.

In the West, full-time university enrolments increased 1.2 per cent, with the largest increase of 6.1 per cent in Saskatchewan; in Quebec, enrolments increased 1.5 per cent, and in the Atlantic they rose 1.8 per cent.

Provinces decrease education funding

OTTAWA (CUP)—Government statistics show that the provinces are reducing their post-secondary education spending under the new federal-provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act.

A senior federal official who told a House of Commons standing committee that provincial spending had not dropped, later admitted, after hearing the figures, that such a decline was a "theoretical projection I can accept."

Asked if the reduction was a cutback, Merrick Spaulding, director of the federal government's education support branch, said: "It's up to you to call it what you want."

Spaulding said that when he told the standing committee about "provincial" spending he was also referring to the federal transfers and private funding which is absorbed by the provincial purse. He was not speaking of the portion of spending made just by the province.

Federal statistics show that the federal contribution to post-secondary education in 1976-77 was 38.7 per cent of the total amount spent. In 1977-78—under the new Fiscal

Arrangements Act—the federal contribution rose to 44.9 per cent. During the same period, the percentage paid by private sources remained the same, meaning that the provinces' contribution must have fallen.

Dan O'Connor, secretary-treasurer of the National Union of Students, said the reduction in the provincial share of the spending is not unexpected. "It looks as if the deal reached by the governments is working as planned, to enable provincial governments to reduce spending on education."

On Sept. 14, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said the new fiscal arrangements would encourage "fiscal restraint" by the provinces and would give them "greater incentive to implement what are admittedly difficult measures designed to restrain spending in these fields to reasonable levels."

Previously, federal transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education were made according to a 50-50 cost sharing formula. The federal purse would match whatever the province or private sources came up with.

Acadians lose hope

CHARLOTTETOWN (CUP)—Acadians from Prince Edward Island don't expect to receive French education facilities in the future, according to a spokesperson for their provincial association.

Father Pierre Arsenault of la Societe Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, which represents a majority of PEI's Acadians, said that the province's education system is "based on a tolerance of French rather than a recognition of the rights of Island francophones to a French-language education. There must be more than tolerance," he said.

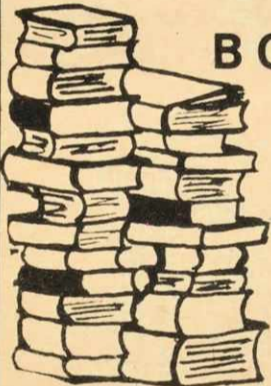
The society calls for a law

recognizing French education rights as part of a long term plan to safeguard the Acadian language and culture. Such a law would assure Acadians that French-language education would be guaranteed at all levels in P.E.I. and that schools would not become bilingual or entirely English.

"French education has never been legally guaranteed, so we now have a ministry of education that offers only study programs for those interested in French," Arsenault said. "French as a subject among others does not satisfy the Acadian community."

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