

Flora's flowery praise; Barb's bashing

OTTAWA CUP
 Flora MacDonald, federal minister of employment and immigration, heaped roses and nightingales on her Challenge '85 student job creation program in a meeting with the Canadian Federation of Students last week.

"She's the consummate politician," said Barbara Donaldson, chair of CFS, the national student lobby group. "She said, 'I've never had the honour of running a program that was so well received' and I said 'Well, you've never been a minister of employment and immigration before.'"

At the meeting MacDonald invited CFS to the program debriefing three weeks from now, to critique Challenge '85 after final statistics come out.

"If she's sincere and she's listening to what we have to say, then we could get the program changed," Donaldson said. "They're getting ready to do the summer programs agains and she's getting lots of bad press."

Challenge '85 created 100,000 jobs this summer, according to Employment and Immigration statistics. Of these, 84,500 were Summer Employment Experience and Development (SEED) program jobs.

Among the SEED jobs, 67 per cent were "career-related", 31 per cent "work experience". Fifty-seven per cent were in non-profit organizations, 33 per cent in the private sector and 33 per cent in municipal government programs.

The average SEED job lasted 11.7 weeks and paid \$4.89 an hour.

Challenge '85 also provided money for RCMP hiring among other programs.

The ministry admitted at the meeting it had no way of knowing if the SEED jobs were related to

careers or not. "If a student said the job was career-related on the application, the ministry assumed it was," Donaldson said.

Donaldson is mainly concerned that Challenge '85 jobs did not provide students with enough money to survive during the school year. Student aid departments in most provinces assume students have worked 16 weeks at minimum wage, and automatically deduct 45 per cent of earnings when calculating how much a student gets.

Those students who worked less

than 16 weeks can't appeal for more aid, Donaldson said.

Donaldson also said Challenge '85 failed to correct regional employment disparities.

"Because Challenge '85 focused on creating jobs in the private sector, it worked best in places with a big industrial base: Toronto and Montreal," she said.

Unemployment among returning students in Newfoundland was down less than one per cent at 27.9 per cent, compared to the national average of 14.4 per cent. Student

unemployment was up in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and British Columbia, though down slightly in the rest of Canada.

CFS Executive Officer John Casola is skeptical of the government's claim that 85 per cent of students found summer jobs.

"I worked at a Canada Employment Centre for students this summer," Casola said, "I filled 30 to 40 jobs for the same guy: some for one and a half days, some for a few hours. Flora is going to call that 40 or 40 jobs placed."

Federal gov't screwed up job program

MONTREAL CUP — The Tories' new addition to student summer job programmes was designed to encourage in thousands of youth the qualities that would warm any conservative heart: entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking and business sense.

But disorganization, a late start and little publicity turned nice ideals into a big flop, according to Andre Diguas, chief inspector of the Federal Development Bank for

Quebec.

Student Entrepreneurs, part of Challenge '85, was designed to help students start their own businesses. The federal government provided loan guarantees to participating chartered banks to enable students to borrow up to \$2,000 interest-free.

Only 93 projects, each involving no more than two people, were launched.

"Hardly anybody knew about the programme," said Diguas, co-

ordinator of the Quebec banks' role in the project.

"You see it started very late — the middle of May — when it should have been well under way by February," he said.

He said that even once the project had started, when many students had already made their summer plans, "publicity was limited to radio announcements and information for student organizations."

Although Student Entrepreneurs was not very active anywhere in Canada, some provinces did better than others.

Quebec and Alberta had the highest number of projects — 32 and 42 respectively. There were only three in Newfoundland, 10 in Manitoba, two in Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories had only one. Other provinces did not participate. Some had their own

version of the programme.

Those students who became entrepreneurs must pay back their loans by the end of October. In Ontario, where the province runs a similar programme, 20 per cent of students defaulted last year. Asked if the Federal Development Bank would try to collect on defaults, Diguas said yes, and that he could not rule out legal action.

Although Student Entrepreneurs created few jobs, the rest of Challenge '85 was a success in Quebec creating 14,000 more jobs than last year's Summer Canada Works Programme.

An aide to Liberal employment critic Warren Allmand was not too critical of student Entrepreneurs' failure. She noted it was the first time the federal government had tried a programme to loan students money for launching businesses.

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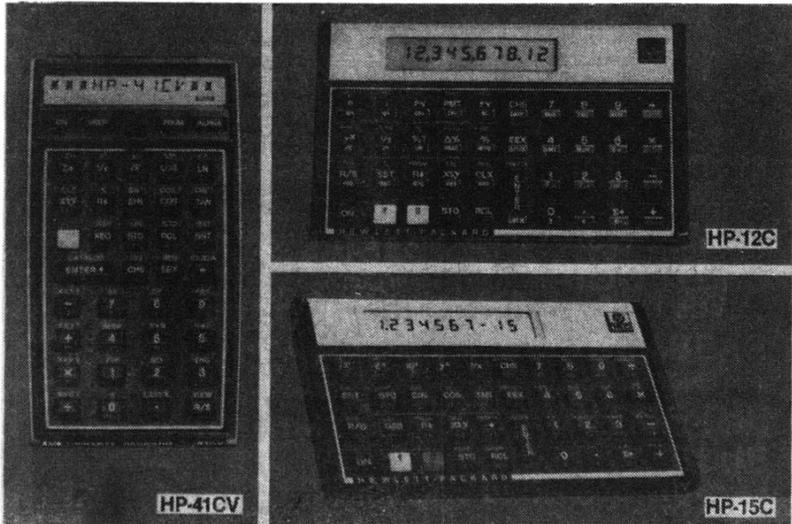
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