

Opinion

Jeff Cowley

Students sound off



At a meeting in the legislature's halls last Tuesday, onlookers saw a classic father-son confrontation. Advanced Education Minister Dave Russell represented the father. And the SCROLL campaign resembled the young son screaming for attention.

Representatives from Alberta universities had converged at the legislature to present the minister with a petition urging the government to give more money to post-secondary institutions. Students also sounded off a list of problems they say they are faced with due to government cuts to the university budget.

Given the record of recent government-student encounters, it wasn't a surprise when the minister said "he finds it hard to believe things are as bleak" as students described. In the past, Alberta students have had a reputation for "crying wolf" whenever government budget reports are released, and then clogging the legislature with "official student" protests.

The government, on the other hand, is noted for shying away from issues concerning Alberta universities. Student-generated publicity is often dumped in the bottomless filing cabinets of the legislature.

Although the minister's response to Tuesday's meeting suggests that there are still snags between government and student relations, the two parties did make some headway. At the students' request, the minister agreed to appear at a forum scheduled for March to discuss funding problems at the university. However, hard negotiations will be necessary to ensure that the forum doesn't resemble another case of a father patting an ambitious son on the head.

A public meeting between the government and students suggests that both parties are ready to approach the university's budget problems in a rational manner. The government has ceased to look upon students as though they were angry babysitters. And the students have shown that they can deal on the same bureaucratic level as the provincial government.

In March, when the forum occurs, it will be interesting to see whether or not the students can assert their adulthood... or if they will be forced to continue to squall and cry like an infant child.

The Gateway

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Letters

Straight talk crooked

It is shameful that the provincial government gave out the leaflet "Straight Talk on Free Trade" while the federal election is approaching. Not only that, but taxpayers have to put up with paying for what is actually just support for the Conservative Party.

The leaflet itself was not at all informative. I didn't read it, because I know what it says already.

All that and the government still refuses to give us any of the details of the FTA. They are not giving us any straight talk at all. Instead, they are keeping us in the dark like the Soviet government does. (Never mind the fact that people who vote for the NDP are asking for just such a government.)

This supports our worst fears. I can see it happening now. We will become the 51st state, medicare and all our wonderful, perfect social programs will suddenly vanish, and Canada will become a wasteland dotted with oil rigs. In short, it will be the end of the universe.

Like I said, I can see it happening now.

Peter Englefield
 Science II

Mandate overstepped

I am utterly appalled with the recent brochure distributed by Scott Thorkelson, Progressive Conservative candidate for Edmonton Strathcona in the upcoming election. Apart from the initial rhetoric on Free Trade's enormous benefits for all Albertans, the leaflet also contains a flagrant endorsement of the Free Trade Agreement by the president of the University of Alberta Students' Union — Paul LaGrange.

I have no objections to Mr. LaGrange using the name given him by his parents to support a particular candidate, but what audacity to use the title of Students' Union President to endorse such a highly controversial issue — on a partisan brochure, no

less. Is Mr. LaGrange completely ignorant of the fact that many of the students at this University are adamantly opposed to the Free Trade Agreement and, subsequently, Scott Thorkelson?

Furthermore, we have heard it espoused time and time again that the Students' Union is a non-partisan group working on behalf of all students. Indeed, Mr. LaGrange was elected Students' Union President for the purpose of serving students' needs, and his platform in the election last March made no mention of Free Trade, Progressive Conservatives, or Scott Thorkelson. Yet Mr. LaGrange has no qualms about using the Students' Union presidential title as a political tool to blatantly support his party.

I can assure Mr. LaGrange that not all of the students on this campus are 'together' with him in support of either Free Trade or Scott Thorkelson. It is quite obvious that Mr. LaGrange has overstepped his mandate, to which we have not even heard an apology.

James Kosowan
 Canadian Studies II
 New Democrats Spokesperson

Proof put forward

Re: "Cure" unproven (Nov. 10)

Upon reading Ahmed Hussein's letter, I strongly felt that a response is due. Mr. Hussein posed two strong questions concerning the Christian faith. He asked "What proof can you offer the readers that Christ is the cure (for man's sin)?"; and "why do you assume that (Christ) is the only cure for sin?" Both questions can be answered with a certain amount of ease.

Firstly, having been a Christian for five years, I have had the pleasure of hearing countless numbers of life-changing testimonies of those who asked Christ to control their lives. Some of those people used to be heavy drug addicts, Satan worshippers, and even killers. All testimonies seem to agree that no matter who the person is, he is able to experience a

new birth (or a renewed life style) when he asks Christ to control his life. Christ himself claimed to be the ONLY way to the father. In John 14:6, Christ said, "I am THE way, THE truth, and THE life. NO one comes onto the father EXCEPT through ME."

Secondly a countless amount of biblical evidence justifies the Christian claim that Christ is God-incarnate. In John 10:30, Christ said "I and the father are ONE". In another event, Christ healed a man who was born blind. Christ asked this man "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" When the man found out that Christ was speaking of himself, he started to WORSHIP Christ — only God accepts worship (John 9:35-38). The reader must realize that the reason why Christians claim that Christ is the ONLY way to initiate a relationship with God, is because Christ made that claim about himself. One could ask "how can you prove that the Bible is a flawless book?" Well, there is much evidence, which is beyond the scope of this article, to prove the Bible's authenticity. For those who are willing to put the time into it, there are a number of well-written books about this subject, and the reader is more than encouraged to research the subject.

Samir Girgis
 Engineering IV

Free Trade vital

Trade is vital. Most of our workforce relies on trade. Trade is responsible for our high standard of living. The U.S. is the largest and richest consumer market in the world. Many countries of the world all compete for the U.S. market. The U.S. is also our largest trading partner, accounting for 72 percent of our annual trade. In spite of trade enhancement programs for other countries, this figure has steadily increased in recent years. The U.S. has an annual trade deficit. This has prompted the U.S. to introduce the omnibus trade bill