

Dramatic headlines misleading Boom to bust in education

Analysis by Jim McElgunn

A sharp boom to bust cycle continues to plague the faculty of education, and there is no end in sight.

Enrolment in education is down to 2,945 full-time students compared to about 4,200 in 1976-77. But according to Associate Dean of Education, Patricia Browne, the sharp drop is levelling off and reversing itself as word of an impending teacher shortage spreads.

Why is it no other faculty is subject to such sharp cyclical swings in enrolment?

Browne says reports on the number of teaching jobs are much more publicized than for other jobs. Dramatic headlines proclaim that there are 1,000 fewer teaching jobs in Alberta this year and enrolment falls sharply in response. But what is not so well-publicized is that this is a less than five per cent drop in demand.

Other reasons for enrolment zigzags are fluctuations in government funding of schools and changes in the attrition rate among teachers, says Browne.

The impact of these fluctuations is enormous. Encouraged

by reports of teacher shortages, students flooded into education in the mid-1970's. By the time they graduated, however, there was an oversupply of teachers, and many found it difficult to find a job.

As news of this spread, enrolments plummeted 30 per cent in four years.

But as in previous cycles, this drop overcompensated for the decrease in demand. So, not surprisingly, studies predict that even with a large influx of teachers from other provinces, a

teacher shortage will reappear in Alberta and British Columbia by 1984.

Once again, enrolments are responding to this news. Compared to last year, first-year enrolment is up from 502 to 531 and second-year enrolment from 611 to 626. As news of the approaching shortage spreads — through articles like this — the cycle will begin again.

But is there no way to break the cycle?

One possible solution is to set

a quota on enrolment.

Although the present enrolment is below any likely quota, as it climbs the debate will probably flare up.

The University of Calgary education faculty has a quota, but it has never been reached. The University of Lethbridge has ceilings on a few specializations but no faculty-wide quota.

But "I can't see us imposing a quota per se," says Browne.

Instead, she says a "random quota" exists insofar as the faculty

decides whether or not to accept late applications. This year, about 50 students were accepted despite applying late.

But beyond that it seems prospective teachers will just have to live with the fluctuations.

"It's an endless cycle," says Browne.

As well, the faculty is trying to even out the cycle by studying attrition rates among students and teachers to improve the accuracy of its job forecasts.

Separatist incites hysteria

Analysis by Alison Thomson

"They want to rape and plunder you and me, and I'm not going to stand for it," was the battle cry, and over 2400 people responded by roaring their support for western separatist Doug Christie at a rally Thursday at the Jubilee Auditorium.

The crowd was characterized primarily by its fanaticism. It yelled its approval as Christie criticized Pierre Trudeau for expressing "passion for Canada after avoiding military service in the Second World War."

Christie catered to Conservative Albertans, undoubtedly the vast majority of the audience, by expressing support for Lougheed's position on provincial rights. But he stopped short of inviting Lougheed to lead the West out of Confederation.

The crowd approved of such comments by Christie as his explanation of Joe Clark's defeat: Toronto and Montreal got rid of him when they realized they couldn't trust a Westerner.

Fear of communism figures large in Christie's rhetoric; the crowd loved it when he complained about Trudeau's cuddling up to the Soviets.

"America's our friend" he said, "and we won't forget that."

America may be our friend, but Western Canada Concept isn't proposing that we join up just yet; Christie's people are advocating a constitutional monarchy made up of the four western provinces and the two territories. Ironically, they advocate a centralized system of government; Christie would abolish provincial governments altogether. This certainly prevents difficulties with separatist movements.

Alberta Liberal leader Nick



photo Wild Bill Ingler

Taylor obviously enjoyed himself. He told the audience he'd expected the reception he got when he'd realized the full moon was out.

"You're being orchestrated by Premier Lougheed," he said. "He's lost negotiating and he has no economic leg to stand on." Taylor also claimed an independent West would have an NDP government since the party is so popular in B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

But Taylor was an all too easy

mark. All Christie or the audience had to do was shout "You're in bed with Trudeau" to discredit him. He was shouted down even before he began, and heckled incessantly.

Taylor probably did the federalist cause a disservice. He simply provided the rabid crowd with an object of vilification.

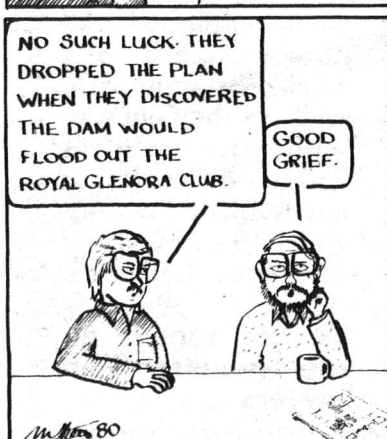
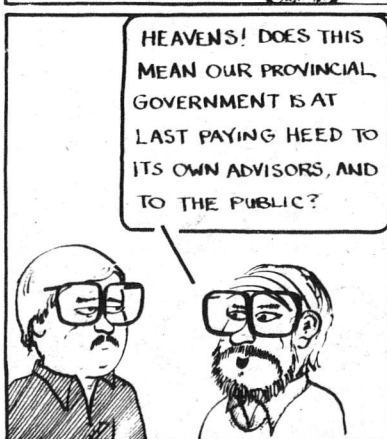
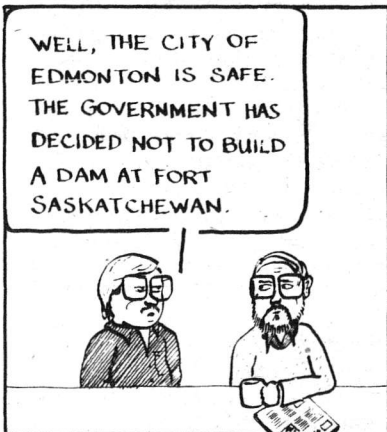
Who were these people? A mixed bag. The audience was, on average, middle aged, middle class and angry. It was a frightening crowd. The meeting felt on the

verge of violence all evening, and in fact there were several fist-fights and scuffles outside the auditorium. The three quarters of the audience who rose when Christie asked who would fight for the west would have been right at home at a revival meeting.

Many of the audience walked into the meeting already believers. One man said he was sick of the millions being spent on going metric. Another wanted to get rid of "all those coloured people."

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Baz by Skeet



Sindlinger speaks Maverick gives own brand

by Vanda Killeen

"I'm surprised it didn't happen a long time ago."

According to MLA Tom Sindlinger, who spoke to the



Independent MLA Sindlinger

Political Science Undergraduate Association Friday, the unanimous decision of Premier

Lougheed and Conservative MLAs to dismiss him from the Conservative caucus was no surprise.

Sindlinger is currently an Independent representing the constituency of Calgary Buffalo. He spoke to a receptive audience of 55 about the provincial government, energy, the constitution and Western separatism.

Sindlinger made a few unconventional moves in the caucus. The last one, literally speaking, was stating that the federal constitutional proposal was a beginning.

"It's a start, let's work on it and see what happens," he said. But this was in direct disagreement with the view of the caucus, who "terminated" his Conservative membership.

There are two major reasons for bringing the constitution home, Sindlinger said. The constitution cannot now handle the

overlap of jurisdiction. Both federal and provincial governments have rights over natural resources and this is causing a tremendous conflict.

"We can in some way reconcile that overlap" by bringing the constitution to Canada, he said.

The BNA Act does not deal much with energy, Sindlinger said. A new constitution must settle energy jurisdiction, he said.

As for energy, Sindlinger doesn't think Canada has an energy crisis, nor does he foresee one. There may be a crisis in the price of oil and gas, but the real problem lies in the distribution of revenue between governments and energy producers.

Sindlinger said he doubts the provincial government's claim that an oil-pricing agreement was reached with the Joe Clark government last year. He asked the provincial government to produce some type of proof that a

deal had been made. This request was never fulfilled.

Premier Lougheed and energy minister Merv Leitch assured Sindlinger that a deal had been made. However, recently they began referring to the deal as "the nearly completed agreement".

Sindlinger said he made another mistake by asking questions about the Heritage Savings and Trust Fund.

This fund is much bigger than anyone expected it to be. If left relatively undisturbed, it will increase from the present \$7.5 billion to \$40 billion by the turn of the century, Sindlinger said.

Sindlinger said he expects much of the fund to be invested in American companies, thus creating jobs for Americans. Why the U.S.? "Let's invest it in Canada, where it will do things for Canadians," he said.