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110,000 new jobs for youth - Federal Liberals

KURT PEACOCK

THE BRUNSWICKAN

In what may be seen as either a pre-election ploy or a real attempt to address youth unemployment, the federal government has announced that over 110,000 work experience opportunities for youth will be created. On Wednesday, February 12, Human Resources Development Minister Pierre Pettigrew announced that the jobs - resulting from \$315 million set aside for youth employment in the 1996 Budget - are part of an enhanced strategy to get young Canadians into the workforce.

With as many as 1 in 4 Canadian youth participating in the labour market currently without a job, the federal government's strategy consolidates over \$2 billion in funds for youth programs in order to take action. The government has launched a new web site (<http://www.youth.gc.ca>) to provide better information for youth programs. "Many young people today are experienced users of information technology," noted Minister Pettigrew at the launch,

"government has to catch up."

The Government is also investing more money in various government programs that provide students with employment - including Youth Service Canada, Youth Internship Canada, and the Student Summer Job Action.

Andy Scott, MP for Fredericton-York-Sunbury, applauded the government initiative. "This new strategy will be very beneficial for my riding, which is home to both UNB and STU," said Mr. Scott, "any announcement like this is welcome news. Hopefully, it will attach our University graduates into Fredericton's growing information economy."

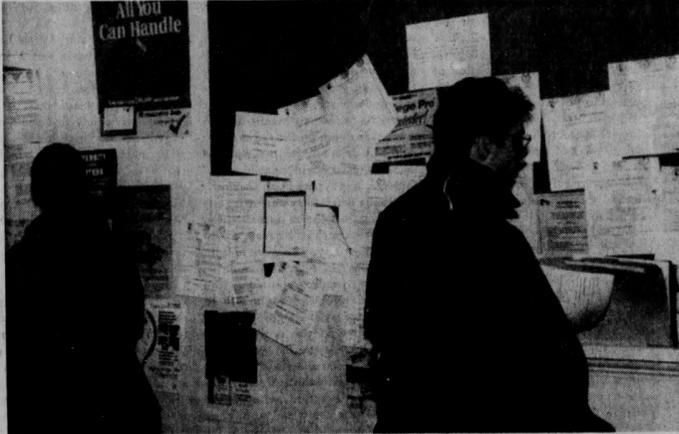
To critics who dismiss the announcement as a pre-election ploy, Scott defends the government's action as a realistic commitment to youth, and not a "Johnny-come-lately" approach. "Much of the programming that we've announced are refinements on programs already in place," the MP notes, "we've refined it, we've improved it, and we've added more money."

Other groups aren't so sure. The 1997 Alternative Federal Budget,

published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, has noted that due to government cutbacks average student debt loads have climbed from \$8,700 in 1990 to \$17,000 in 1996. Réal Duguay, spokesperson for The Canadian Federation of Students has cried out that "it's a national scandal that our youth unemployment rate continues to be nearly double the general unemployment rate."

Whether or not the recent government announcement will help UNB students find employment remains to be seen. Kevin Bonner, Manager of the Student Placement Service at Neville Homestead, suggests that students start looking for employment early in the school year, regardless of government announcements. "We encourage students to start thinking about summer employment programs in November," notes Mr. Bonner, "the longer you wait, the greater the student pool."

With an ocean of UNB students filling out FSWEF (Federal Student Work Experience Program) applications, hopefully some of the federal government's 110,000 jobs will come to Fredericton.



The Federal government just announced 110,000 new jobs for youth. These anxious students can't wait to see the results in Fredericton. JUDSON DELONG PHOTO

Tuition protest heats up

AARON MACEachern

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Students banded together Thursday in a rally to protest tuition increases, hoping to send a message to task force administrators that proposed increases will significantly affect students.

This is a milestone for students, representing the first time this year students have approached the Student Union with an issue of concern and aspirations of organizing an event of their own.

A press release sent out to the media by SU VP External Affairs Anthony Knight, had protest organizers very confused and bewildered on Tuesday. The tuition hike protest was scheduled to occur yesterday at 11:00am. The press release had given an incorrect time for the rally, but organizers quickly corrected the error.

In the press release, Knight invited students to come to the rally organized by the Student Union and concerned students, after students including Steve Allard and Julianne Fraser approached SU President Joie Hellmeister and informed her of their plans to organize a rally.

Hellmeister jumped at the idea of the protest and encouraged the group of students to come and seek any assistance from the Student Union they would need. Hellmeister attended the groups first meeting, and Knight the second, in hopes of aiding the group in any way they could. "I have an overwhelming amount of pride for the students here at UNB," said Hellmeister. "For them to come together and stand for themselves on such an important issue says a lot about student representation, how much it obviously means to us all and how sparse it was in the beginning."

A motion was passed at last weeks council supporting a student organized protest against tuition increases. The motion, motivated by Knight, would allow students to assemble together and rally against the administrative task force and their proposed policies, without any fear of negative repercussions.

Although the Student Union and council thought the protest was a good idea, University President, Elizabeth Parr-Johnson did not feel the same. In an interview with *The*

Daily Gleaner Newspaper, Johnson said, "A protest seems to be the least reasonable way to make a case, when you have the opportunity to do so in a more productive manner." Parr-Johnson went on to say, "They can do what they wish, but I suggest they have a real opportunity to make representation within the process and I would hope that they would do so." The rally was planned for 11:00 Thursday morning to coincide with a meeting of the Board of Governors.

SU takes stand against changes to SUB lease

JOSEPH FITZPATRICK

THE BRUNSWICKAN

The UNB Student Union has come out against a proposal by the College Hill Social Club to rent the ballroom of the SUB.

A motion which reads "the UNB Student Union disagrees, in principle, with the commercialization of the SUB Ballroom by leasing it to the CHSC" was passed unanimously by the SU Council.

An earlier wording which would have read "the students of UNB disagree ..." was rescinded.

The matter of the lease for the CHSC is currently under consideration by the SUB Advisory Board, which will meet again on Wednesday, February 19.

SU President Joie Hellmeister, who sits on the Advisory Board as an ex-officio member, brought the issue to Council Tuesday last.

"[During the school year] the Social Club wants the ballroom every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Plus, they want first priority during the rest of the week," she told Council. "But, [the CHSC

presentation to the Advisory Board] said they wouldn't want it any other days."

To add credence to her claims that the ballroom is an important venue for the UNB Student Union, which can rent the room without charge, Hellmeister claimed that the SU booked the room 24 out of the 48 available days.

Monique Scholten, Vice-President (Finance & Administration) noted that the ballroom was "a unique venue" for its size and versatility. Vice-President (Student Services) Trish Davidson pointed out that the ballroom is the room most often used by the SU, adding that ballot counting and cultural events, plus Bar Services (operated by the Cellar, another SUB tenant) took place in that room.

"Besides," she added, "the Social Club is a capital-making venture. It would change the whole idea of the room."

Members of the CHSC Board of Directors were unwilling to comment, saying only that the matter was before the SUB Advisory and that, in their opinion, any deliberations of the committee should remain confidential.

12 Yes/No ballots in upcoming SU Elections Knight to run for SU President



Current Vice-President (External) Anthony Knight will reach for the Brass Ring and run for SU President. DREW GILBERT PHOTO

MARY ROGAL-BLACK

THE BRUNSWICKAN

One candidate has stepped forward to offer for the rough-and-tumble job of UNB Student Union President.

Anthony Knight is VP External and said his priority as SU President would be helping to improve the quality of university education.

"I think the Student Union, and especially the [SU] President, has a strong role to play when it comes to the changes in the structure of the system," said Knight.

One of a group of student leaders involved in planning Thursday's tuition protest rally, Knight said he thinks student groups have the potential to make change.

"In order for the Student Union to ensure that tuition fees are kept to a minimum, we should work with

the administration and ensure that there's student input on these decision-making bodies," Knight said.

He is pleased with the efforts of the SU thus far in response to the Task Force Report that recommends restructuring of tuition fees at UNB. Knight said that student representatives have proposed some alternatives, including work-study programs and low-interest loans for students from low income families.

"Dr. Parr-Johnston seemed very interested in working with us on the work-study issue," Knight said. Another priority, should Knight become President, is the issue of SUB Expansion.

"I've talked to students who are literally outraged about the fact that they've been paying for [SUB Expansion] for three years and

haven't seen anything come of it," said Knight, who served on the SUB Expansion committee this year.

As President, Knight said he would press forward with the project.

"We have to step up and say, listen, we've paid long enough," he stressed. "The UNB Student Union has to take a leadership role in SUB Expansion."

In the past year, Knight said, the project has been put on hold by the question of STU's involvement. Knight said he is not sure what path he would take if SUB Expansion does not go forward, but he is hopeful.

"I think we can be optimistic that Dr. Parr-Johnston will be willing to work with us on this. She's a very student-oriented woman."

The position of President is not the only uncontested one on the ballot. Of five executive positions on council, only the race for VP Finance and Administration has more than one candidate in the running. Jeff Clark, Daniel Malley, Stephen MacDonald and John Nicholas Valcours are all running for that position.

Richard Williams has offered for the position of VP University Affairs, presently held by Anoushka Courage. Kate Rogers has offered to replace Tricia Davidson as VP Student Services. Bob Prince is running for the position of VP External Affairs.

Of twenty-six available Faculty Representative positions, twelve students will be on the ballot as Yes/No propositions.

Elections for SU positions will be held from February 24-26.



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BALLROOM BASH

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