

## Nielsen report weighs 34 lbs

**OTTAWA (CUP)** — The way the feds pay money to the provinces for colleges and universities in Canada is messy and causes more fighting than funding, and Ottawa should consider new legislation to gain more control, says a report to the Nielsen Task Force on Program Review.

The current money transfer system, Established Programmes Financing, does not establish any national education standards and encourages the feds and the provinces to "blame each other for any apparent deficiency."

"It is questionable whether the arrangement is still appropriate," the report reads.

The report is part of Nielsen's 21-volume inventory of almost 10000 government programmes, of \$92 billion of public services. The box of books, totalling 7,000 pages just in the English version, weighs 34 lbs. The French version is slightly heavier.

The report says Ottawa has four options in university financing: leave the system as is; continue to fund but on condition the provinces meet specific standards; pay students directly with vouchers, and let their university preference dictate which universities survive; or stop funding universities and colleges entirely.

The report seems to lean to the second option, and new law for post-secondary education financing. Because Canada's constitution says education is a provincial responsibility, this would spark a huge political storm, the report says.

"However, if federal financial support is considered necessary to ensure adequate institutional funding, or to ensure that national standards in the post-secondary educational system are maintained, the effort to secure provincial agreement will have to be made."

The report says the federal government could argue that it already funds most research in Canada, and since research and post-secondary education are closely linked, it should have a say in running colleges and universities.

The government could then set

the following conditions on giving its funding dollars, the report says:

- colleges and universities provide a supply of highly qualified personnel for the public, academic and private sectors,

- provinces ensure that all Canadians who can learn and want to learn will not be deprived of higher education because they can't pay,

- universities promote an authentic Canadian identity, including the two official languages.

Ben Wilson, Chair of the Ontario Manpower Commission, who headed the half-private, half-public study team, said in an interview that the report does not imply the government should put conditions on funding for higher education.

Education critics in Parliament and university lobby groups say they only support one option — keeping federal support for post-secondary education but making the provinces accountable. Executive officer of the Canadian Federation of Students, John Casola, says "the other three options will in one way or another help take the bottom out of accessibility."

Casola says the "voucher" proposal, borrowed from the Macdonald Commission's report released last year, will "raise tuition fees, hamper curriculum planning and probably result in universities hiring PR people to sell their programmes to students."

The study team's report says a withdrawal of federal support for post-secondary education may work, because "the expansive circumstances which brought the federal government into the financing of post-secondary education in the Fifties and early Sixties has passed."

A recent study by the National Consortium of Scientific and Educational Societies shows enrolment in Canadian universities has increased by 24 per cent since 1977-78, while per student expenditures declined 18 per cent

in that period.

On student assistance, the study team says its preferred option is to leave student aid entirely to the provinces.

Other options include reform in the present style or replacing the Canada Student Loans Program with a refundable tax credit for students.

McCurdy criticised the proposal to make student aid a provincial responsibility, saying it could increase regional inequalities.

by Donna Mayer

## Men met the Challenge

By Lee Parpart

**OTTAWA (CUP)** — More men than women got private sector jobs last summer through the federal employment subsidy scheme, Challenge '85.

The ministry of Employment and Immigration released a study this month showing women represented only 37.2 per cent of private sector job recipients in the summer employment experience development program, a section of Challenge '85, last summer.

According to the study, the private sector lagged a full 14.6 per cent behind the average number of women hired through the program. Non-profit groups and municipalities also received SEED grants to hire summer students.

Although the application forms contained a clause encouraging employers to hire women, disabled people, natives and visible minorities, there was no penalty for ignoring the recommendation.

Sandra Kearns, a public affairs officer at employment and immigration, admits the private sector "didn't respond well to the



Getting in on the action, 20 people joined arms and appetites for social justice in a 42 hour fast at the Atlantic School of Theology last weekend. The fast was one of 50 held worldwide to oppose Reagan's military support to the contras in Nicaragua.

clause," but denies employers were discriminating against female students.

"We don't think the private sector is not doing their bit, we just think they might not be doing as much as they could," she says.

Kearns says Challenge '86 applications are more specific in the request that employers hire disadvantaged students. This year's affirmative action clause states employers receiving \$10,000 or more in grants "may be contacted by a programme official ... with respect to the hiring of women, disabled people, natives and visible minorities."

But extra programme officials have not been hired by the ministry and Kearns says she didn't know how often regular programme officials would be sent to check on employers.

Janet Simpson, assistant to Liberal employment critic Warren Allmand, says the clause is still too soft on the private sector.

"The legislation needs to have teeth," she says.

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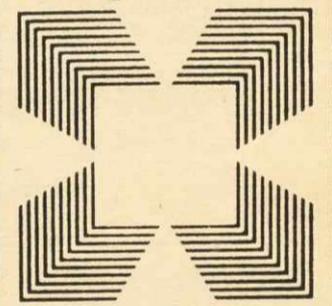
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Continued from page one

Miriam Stewart, a nursing professor who sits on the honorary degree nominating committee, said members "felt they were satisfied" they had nominated the right people for this year's degrees. Stewart said the committee had 45 suggestions for degree recipients, and because they can only refer a few, they "recognize that names we didn't put on the list may be considered for future convocations."

Denis Stairs, another member of the nominating committee, said he is glad the "very volatile issue" is settled, for the time being. "Some people think the committee displayed bad judgement. Maybe they are right," said Stairs.

Both Stairs and the committee chair, President Andrew Mackay,

said they were reluctant to get into a debate over individuals nominated, or not nominated, by the committee.

"I don't want people who have been nominated by members of Senate but not invited to receive honorary degrees to have any sense of insult," said Mackay.

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