

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

As was reported in the October issue of the Bulletin, the Executive Director, Desmond Morley, again appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, and presented a brief on the Federation’s behalf. [See page 4 - Ed.]

The Committee’s Fredericton hearings, scheduled to be held this

year on November 3, were cancelled. However, a place was opened for the Federation to appear before it on November 4 in Halifax. Mr. Morley’s overnight travelling expenses were paid by the Committee to permit him to appear in Halifax without the Federation having to suffer any financial prejudice as a result. This being the seventh consecutive annual “invitation only” appearance of the Federation before this influential committee, which advises the federal Finance Minister on national funding priorities, this gesture clearly indicates that the Committee still is interested in what New Brunswick university faculty have to say.

We continue to enjoy measurable success in having editorials, on a

variety of post-secondary issues, published in the various anglophone provincial daily newspapers. I am pleased, therefore, also to be able now to inform you that, after a recent expression of tentative interest by l’Acadie Nouvelle in publishing an editorial prepared for it exclusively by the Federation, an article was submitted to it in mid-December. I hope that, by the time you are reading this, the article [reproduced on page 2 -

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Notice
Board Meeting
All FNBFA Board meetings are open to individual faculty members, and an invitation to attend is extended to anyone wishing to do so.

For more information concerning dates of upcoming board meetings, log on to: www.fnbfa.ca

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Ed.] already will have appeared in print.

Another Festive Season has come and gone, and on behalf of the Federation I sincerely wish a happy and healthy 2004 to each of our colleagues and their loved ones.

Claude Dionne
President

FEDERATION CONTINUES TO GET INK!

The Federation has had another successful year in getting our message into the print media. During 2003 we managed to get 11 articles published in the province's daily newspapers: **Universities Merit More** and **Universities Need More**, in the *Times Transcript*; **Don't Tamper With Universities**, in the *Daily Gleaner*; and **Universities Must Keep a Solid Grip on Autonomy; Universities Must Rein in Costs; Stem the Rising Tide; Human Resources: Are We Investing Enough?; Petty Politics Keeps Aid From Students; Budget Wasn't Friendly to Universities; Social Welfare, Universities Also Need Funding; and Education Can Help Cure Health Care Woes**, in the *Telegraph Journal*. As before, these articles will be bound into a Portfolio and sent to all MLA's, New Brunswick MP's, Home and School Associations and members of the MPHEC.

All the above articles are posted on our website at www.fnbfa.ca under the "Activities" section.

Ian H. Fraser,
Chair of the Communications Committee

(The following article, written by the President, Claude Dionne, has been submitted to l'Acadie Nouvelle for publication)

Every year, for their entire working lives, university graduates can make an average of 17 percent on their investment in their education, according to a recent announcement by a prestigious Ontario provincial task force.

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In other words, every \$1,000.00 invested in a university education today could show a return of as much as \$534,000.00 in income and other benefits over a 40-year period.

This is a staggering figure, because an investment of \$1,000.00 on the Toronto Stock Exchange over the last 40 years would have earned only \$17,600.00.

Certainly, here in New Brunswick university graduates enjoy the lowest rates of unemployment and the highest incomes.

While the average unemployment rate for the general population was 10.4 percent in 2002, it was only 3.3 percent for university graduates. According to the 2001 Census, the average annual income of New Brunswick university graduates was \$42,000.00, followed by that of trades persons, who had an average annual income of less than \$28,000.00.

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission recently reported that, in 1997, the \$27,100.00 average first-year employment income of New Brunswick's 1996 university graduates was slightly higher than the average income of all wage earners in Canada. Also, by the year 2000, the average earnings of this group had then increased by more than a third, to \$36,600.00.

The best news is that, despite earlier – and sometimes significant – differences, both francophone and anglophone university graduates appear to be sharing at least equally in this prosperity. In 2001, of those individuals surveyed, the average francophone who had graduated in 1999 and was working full-time in New Brunswick reportedly made \$16.61 per hour; slightly more than the average anglophone, who made \$15.88 per hour. As well, French-speaking university graduates were more likely to have full-time jobs in fields closely related to their fields of study.

The message for francophones in these facts is clear. With over 70 percent of all the new jobs created in Canada last year requiring a university degree, we must continue to attend university in increasing numbers to ensure a prosperous and secure future for ourselves and for our community.

**Brief of the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations
Presented to
The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
September, 2003**

The following passage appears in the Introduction to the September, 2003 **Statement to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance** of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

“...If post-secondary education is a key element in promoting social development and economic growth, then it needs to be a national priority.

The Federal government must play a lead role in rebuilding Canada’s colleges and universities to ensure that Canada’s institutions are accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality. The federal government now has the fiscal ability to achieve these goals. What is required is the political leadership to act decisively and enhance core operating funding through mechanisms that are transparent and accountable, ensuring that federal dollars are spent as intended.”

The CAUT **Statement** discloses that

- the federal government is likely to post another budget surplus this year, of the order of \$8 billion, and that cumulative federal surpluses in the fiscal years 2002 to 2005 may reach as much as \$36 billion;
- that per capita, federal funding for post-secondary education is, however, now less than half what it was only 10 years ago;
- that as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, federal spending on post-secondary education at this time is at its lowest level in more than 30 years;
- that the disparity in the respective annual undergraduate tuition fees in the lowest- and highest cost provinces in which to study has more than tripled – from \$1,041 to \$3,695 – in only a dozen years;
- that, between 1991 and 2001, in families with the lowest incomes, the proportion of after-tax family income consumed by undergraduate tuition fees rose by 7 times as much as it did in those enjoying the highest incomes; and

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- that, with estimated average debt loads of \$25,000 upon graduation, Canadian students have the highest levels of debt in the world.

Recently, for the second consecutive year, the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations circulated a bilingual public awareness pamphlet, entitled “**Did you know...?**” which contains current information on the state of post-secondary education in New Brunswick and Canada. The most recent issue states, in part, as follows:

- Provincial government funding per full-time student for New Brunswick’s universities has fallen by more than 10% in the last decade;
- New Brunswick now spends 16.7% less of its Gross Domestic Product on post-secondary education than it did ten years ago;
- Average university tuition fees in New Brunswick have more than doubled in only the last decade; and
- University enrolments in New Brunswick recently fell while they increased, overall, by 6.6% in the rest of Canada.

It is readily apparent, then, not only that the situation in New Brunswick reflects that in Canada as a whole, but also that it probably has resulted from it. What has brought us to this point?

As the CAUT points out, more than \$7 billion was pulled out of federal cash transfers to the provinces in 1996, with the replacement of **Established Program Financing** transfers by the **Canada Health and Social Transfer**.

Since then, virtually nothing has been done to restore these funds to their former levels. CHST funding is now lower in “real”, or “constant” dollars, than it was in 1996. Yet, from 1996 until only recently it also included social assistance funding – which previously was a separate transfer from the EPF transfer. The separation of the CHST funds into a **Canada Health Transfer** and a **Canada Social Transfer** in the last federal Budget did not, nevertheless, result in a net increase in real funding for either envelope.

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According to the Census data published earlier this year, almost 50% of the 1.3 million new jobs created between 1991 and 2001 required university qualifications, while only 25% required high school graduation. In contrast to this, New Brunswick continues to produce, by national standards, a higher-than-average number of high school graduates and a below-average number of post-secondary graduates.

The same Census also tells us that, since 1991, per capita incomes in New Brunswick not only have failed to keep pace with inflation, but have actually fallen by more than two per cent. One can justifiably surmise, therefore, that the correlation of rising tuition fees and falling real incomes are major contributing factors to New Brunswick's lower-than-average output of university graduates.

Let us not be misled by data in the Census which indicates that, between 1991 and 2001, the number of New Brunswickers in the workforce who had completed some form of post-secondary education had increased by almost 10 per cent. This resulted from half a generation of elderly individuals – some of whom had not even completed high school – having retired from the workforce during that time, and not from a large group of well-educated people having been added to it.

In fact, New Brunswick still has some 20 per cent fewer of its citizens between the ages of 20 and 24 than the national average enrolled in some form of post-secondary education.

Despite this, earlier this year, Parliament refused even to debate a private member's motion - from a New Brunswick Member of Parliament – to remove the mandatory parental contribution from the Canada Student Loan formula to permit more widespread eligibility for federal tuition loan funds.

This year, tuition fees will increase in New Brunswick by an average of almost 8 per cent; even though, according to Human Resources Development Canada, 97 per cent of all university graduates in New Brunswick were employed. Furthermore, their average full-time salaries – on which they pay federal income tax at rates which increase progressively in response to increases in salary levels – rose by more than 30 per cent in the first four years after graduation alone.

It is time, therefore, we all acknowledged that education has become a lifelong continuum that does not screech to a halt at high-school graduation. Long having

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been one of the cornerstones of economic growth and of social progress, it is not an exaggeration to say that education is now their foundation. In all its formal stages it should, therefore, enjoy the same status in our eyes; and its tertiary component should not be deemed to be any less of a social imperative than its primary and secondary manifestations.

In other words, it is time for tuition-free post-secondary (or “tertiary”) education to be offered to Canadians.

We have for too long tolerated the argument that post-secondary students should contribute to the cost of their education because they are the ones who will benefit from it. It is time for us to reject this notion for the arrant nonsense it is.

With more than 50 per cent of all new jobs now requiring university credentials, society as a whole benefits from the education of its citizens to the post-secondary level in at least the same measure as it did from the doors of the one-room schoolhouse ultimately being thrown open to our forebears at no cost.

It is recognized that tuition-free access to tertiary education is a provincial, and not a federal responsibility. However, a sufficiently large commitment of federal funding to underwrite this endeavour would be necessary in provinces such as New Brunswick. Such an investment would, without doubt, pay huge dividends in the foreseeable future.

Respectfully submitted September, 2003 by

Dr. Claude Dionne
President

Desmond A. Morley
Executive Director

PRIX NICOLE RAYMOND AWARD: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are sought for potential recipient(s) of the 2004 Prix Nicole Raymond Award, sponsored by the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations. The Award is customarily presented at the Annual Plenary Session and General Meeting of the Federation.

Nature of the Award

The Award is given to a person, group of persons or an organization in recognition of a distinguished contribution to the advancement of post-secondary education. It is awarded by the Federation in memory of the contributions to academic life through her teaching, research activities and involvement of the late Professor Nicole Raymond of l'Université de Moncton.

Selection Procedures

Nominations for the Prix Nicole Raymond Award should be forwarded to the FNBFA office prior to March 1, 2004. A Committee of three members of the Board of Directors will study the nominations and will present its recommendation to the Board. The Award will be presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation in the Spring.

Only one Prix Nicole Raymond Award is given any academic year, but is not necessarily presented annually.

For further information, contact the Federation office.

Executive Members 2003-2004

President: Claude Dionne
(506) 858-4602

Vice-president: Hans vanderLeest
(506) 364-2557

Secretary-treasurer: Daniel
Bélanger
(506) 737-5151

Past President: Jack Vanderlinde
(506) 453-4723

Committee Chairs

Status of Women Committee
Vacant

Legal Defence Fund
Jon Thompson (AUNBT)

Prix Nicole Raymond Award
Vacant

Communications Committee
Ian Fraser (FAUST)

Scholarship Awards
Daniel Bélanger (ABPPUMCE)

Federation Office
65 Brunswick, suite 297
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 1G5
Tel: (506) 458-8977
Fax: (506) 458-5620
Email: fnbfa@nbnet.nb.ca

Executive Director
Desmond Morley

Secretary
Patricia Lewington

Editorial Board
Ian Fraser, Editor

Your Opinions are Welcomed

A special invitation is extended to those members of local associations who are interested in commenting upon university life in general. Readers are invited to send their opinions and/or comments, in writing, to the address above.

Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are not necessarily those of the Executive and/or Board of FNBFA/FAPPUNB