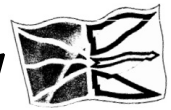


APRIL 11, 2003

Noteworthy



YAC presents first annual report

The Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) has presented its first annual report to Premier Roger Grimes and Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education Minister Anna Thistle.

The report entitled: A Youth's Future is Today, reflects on the work of the committee since its inception in June 2001. It also outlines 22 recommendations, many of which have already been implemented by government. Reforming the province's student aid program is just one example. Other recommendations include: for the department to develop and maintain a directory of all programs and services designed to service the youth of the province; and actively co-ordinate all provincial government programs and services designed to serve the youth of the province.

"There is a need for action on issues facing the youth of our province and this committee has given us a voice that the provincial government is listening to," said committee member Dan Hill of Sheshatshui.

The YAC comprises 15 members from around the province, ranging in age from 16 to 29. They are advised by four adult mentors who serve as a support mechanism. The committee provides a forum for the open discussion of key issues affecting young people in Newfoundland and Labrador, and advises the Minister of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education on government's youth related programs and policies.

During the next several months, the YAC will be addressing issues relating to youth empowerment and equality, including such things as the equity of access to quality education in the province's rural and aboriginal communities; the transition from high school to post-secondary institutions, substance abuse; and exploring with the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada, the means to promote amongst youth a sense of place and pride for the province. ☞

Decision on CHANCELLOR PARK Pilot Project

Health and Community Services Minister Gerald Smith announced the conclusion of the pilot project at Chancellor Park, the province's only private nursing home. Minister Smith also stated that government will continue to subsidize the care for those residents who were part of the pilot project.

"Those residents that were part of the pilot project will continue to be financially supported to remain at Chancellor Park. However, there will be no new admissions under the 'single entry' public system to Chancellor Park," said Minister Smith.

Minister Smith explained that the recent review indicated Chancellor Park provides a quality of care comparable to the public system, which reinforces the view that the private sector can provide quality long-term care in this province, as now occurs in most other provinces. "However, given the interprovincial conclusions regarding the cost of long-term care, our goal is to bring costs, public and private, in line with other provinces. Given the costs of Chancellor Park, we cannot enter into a longer term arrangement with the facility at this time." ☞

Minister reaffirms commitment to affordable post-secondary education

Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education Minister Anna Thistle restated government's commitment to making post-secondary education affordable for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and ensured continued dedication to assist young people in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

"Newfoundland and Labrador was one of the first provinces in the country to address the problem of high tuition at post-secondary institutions, by implementing tuition freezes in 1998, 1999 and 2000," said Minister Thistle. "Since 2001, we've reduced tuition rates for Memorial University's undergraduate and graduate programs by 25 per cent; the most recent decrease of five per cent was announced in Budget 2003. We currently have the lowest Canadian university tuition rate in the

country - something all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can be proud of."

Tuition rates at College of the North Atlantic, the Marine Institute and Memorial's Medical School remain frozen. "There is no evidence that young people from this province have been scared away from pursuing a post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador because of high tuition rates," said Minister Thistle. "Our post-secondary institutions are preparing graduates for the world job market, with continued prosperity in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is anticipated that our graduates will remain in the province, contributing their experience and knowledge to our social and economic development." ☞

