

Final Report on the First Premier's Forum on Youth

Held in the Wanda Wyatt Dining Hall, UPEI Campus
May 21, 1998

Prepared by Laura Hagen

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FOREWORD

In the summer of 1997, Janice Ployer, a student working with the Institute of Island Studies, brought together some interested individuals to listen to a presentation by Paul Murphy from Newfoundland. Paul oversaw the creation of the organization FINALLY (Future In Newfoundland And Labrador's Youth).

This meeting was the first in a process by the Institute of Island Studies to endeavour to give Island youth more opportunities and a louder voice. Ongoing consultation with young people and youth organizations resulted in identification of the need for a public meeting organized by youth for youth.

On May 21, 1998, over ninety people between the ages of 16 and 29 gathered on UPEI campus to delve into the issues facing our generation of Islanders at the first ever Premier's Forum on Youth. This forum was co-sponsored by the province of Prince Edward Island and the Institute of Island Studies.

The presenters ranged widely, as did the audience for the event. Each speaker, with the exception of the Premier, was under the age of 29 and represented a different area of Prince Edward Island and viewpoint.

This report is a compilation of the presentations and conclusions made throughout that day. As well, included in the document are the results participant evaluation of the forum, the background paper prepared by Sean McQuaid and the minutes from meetings held in the planning phase of the forum. This report is designed to be a reference document for those who attended the conference as well as anyone interested in youth issues on Prince Edward Island.

A clear opportunity is present for the youth of Prince Edward Island to take control of the issues that face us and solve our own problems. This document and the forum should only be the beginning of our move to do things by youth for youth.

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ITINERARY

Premier's Forum on Youth

**The Premier's Forum on Youth
Wanda Wyatt Dining Hall, UPEI Campus
May 21, 1998**

8:00 - 8:45 am

Registration

8:45 - 9:00

Welcome from the Conference Chair

9:00 - 9:45

Youth Panel:

- Dennis Cahill, Student, Tignish
- Stacy Dunn, Council of the Disabled
- Sean Kelly, Generation XX
- Justin MacLeod, Timeless Technologies
- Jennifer Mooney, LOFT

9:45 - 10:00

Questions from the audience

10:00

Break

10:15 - 10:45

Labour Market Outreach Worker, Sherri Fougere

10:45 - 11:30

Group Sessions

11:30 - 12 noon

Group Reports

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Lunch, Wanda Wyatt Dining Hall

Keynote Speaker, Premier Pat Binns

1:00 - 1:45

Presentations on Youth Council Models

- Michelle Snow, President of FINALY
Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador Youth
- Janice Ployer, Martinvale, PEI
Master's student reporting on Malta Youth Council model

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1:45 - 2:00

Questions from the audience

2:00 - 3:00

Group Sessions

3:00

Break

3:15 - 4:00

Group Reporting and Closing Remarks

SPEAKERS

Stacey Dunn lives in Charlottetown, she obtained her B.A degree in 1996 from UPEI and her public administration diploma in 1998. Stacey intends to go to journalism school in the near future and is currently a member of the Women's Network PEI, Disabled Women's Network PEI, and Queens County Disability Advisory Committee.

Dennis Cahill is twenty-one and is from Kildare, Prince Edward Island. He is a student at Holland College in Westisle

Shawn Kelly is a sixteen year old grade eleven student at Three Oaks Senior High. He is the youth president of Generation XX, a member of the Prince County Hospital Youth Foundation Board and Student Council. Shawn works in the winter as a snowboarding instructor and in the summer as a sailing instructor.

Justin MacLeod is pioneering the development of a vigorous high tech industry on PEI. MacLeod's company, Timeless Technologies, has evolved from developing software solutions for sports facilities niche to the creation of a new package, Client master. Timeless Technologies exports its products all around the world. MacLeod recently won the Business Development Bank of Canada's young entrepreneur award for PEI.

Jennifer Mooney is from Souris, PEI. She is a graduating student from Souris High School and the public relations chairperson for the LOFT (Looking Out For Teens) drop-in centre in Souris.

Sherri Fougere is a Labour Market Outreach Worker working with Human Resources Development Canada and the Western School Board on Prince Edward Island. Since March of 1998 she has been working with young people in Kensington and Westisle Senior High Schools, helping to prepare them for the work force.

Michelle Snow is the Provincial Chairperson of Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth (FINALLY!). She is 24 years old and from Clarke's Beach Newfoundland. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics and Business Administration from Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of her many volunteer activities, Michelle also serves as: regional director with the Baccalieu Board of Economic Development, treasurer and past chairperson of the Baccalieu Trail Youth Council, Avalon West School Board Partnership Committee plus many other community organizations.

Janice Ployer is a resident of Martinvale, PEI studying towards her Master's Degree at York University in Ontario. In the fall of 1997, she spent five weeks in Malta helping to organize a youth conference. She spent her time in Malta studying their National Youth Council format and was asked to be the rapporteur for the youth conference.

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YOUTH PANEL

What have you as a young person on PEI come up against in terms of challenges and how have you dealt with them?

Stacy Dunn

Employment

- only able to find summer employment after graduation;
- funded bachelor degree through special grant, Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons, which dwindled over years (Federal Program) now close to being cut;
- got a student loan for public administration degree, loan payments kicked in before she got employment;
- hard to lower payments on student loan while unemployed;
- has dealt with her challenges by planning to further her education in a specific skill: journalism;
- thinks liberal arts education is a good thing to have;
- gets involved in the community and non-profit organization;
- believes this is a good way to get the foot in the door, know broader range of people and may help with getting employment ; and
- recommends that people get involved with nonprofit organizations to offer a youth perspective.

Entertainment:

- Generation XX should be commended for their initiatives;
- Charlottetown needs something other than Myron's ; and
- there should be more competition for Myron's.

Health Care:

- The health centre on UPEI campus is in danger of losing funding;
- students use health centre for confidential services;
- students need to say that the health centre is necessary.

Dennis Cahill

- There are large amounts of money borrowed is being borrowed by young people to go to school;
- jobs are seasonal in western part of the island, full-time jobs are scarce;
- options are only going straight to university or college;
- university often isn't an option because of cost and employment is not guaranteed;
- seasonal jobs encourage to high school drop-outs ;
- biggest part in western part of the island is transportation;
- need a car to get to work, can't get car without job, so running around in circles;
- need trade to get full-time employment;
- to get a trade, need to go to school;
- must pay to go to school so need work and the circle continues;
- one of the first courses to pay students to take course is in Westisle, students get education and are prepared for workforce;
- more programs need to offer money to students would increase skills; and
- government should help train people.

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Sean Kelly

- Generation XX is a place to go Atlantic Canada's first ever indoor skating park;
- it started almost two years ago;
- 30% decrease in calls related to youth crime to police in Summerside;
- the group received Premier's crime prevention award;
- they were nominated for YTV achievement award and nominated for a commonwealth award;
- attitudes of youth in Summerside have changed;
- biggest problem was getting respect from adults;
- before club was started, youth were looked down on by adults;
- adults thought Generation XX would be a place for drugs and would not amount to anything;
- key to their success is perseverance, wouldn't give up;
- attributes success to negative attitudes pushing them to prove them wrong;
- even with awards, are still getting negative reactions from adults;

- the kids do all the work;
- got an employee through HRDC and attribute success to his participation;
- budget of \$60,000 per year, \$30,000 goes to paid employee;
- able to fundraise \$30,000 to keep business operational;
- applied for a grant from municipal, provincial, federal governments for paid employee;
- funding became constant struggle; and
- feel are valuable asset to community.

Justin MacLeod

- He owns a software company in Belfast, PEI;
- rural Prince Edward Islander and wanting to stay a rural Prince Edward Islander;
- received Computer Science degree from UNB;
- other students from PEI realized it would be difficult to find jobs in their field on PEI, versus larger centres;
- working on PEI is a challenge;
- married with children, really wanted rural lifestyle;
- started running software business from Belfast, PEI;
- 5 employees;
- hard to grow and keep operating;
- of four Islanders who were in his program at UNB, only one still on PEI;
- high percentage of people in that field end up working elsewhere;
- hard to establish credibility in starting up new business with people and financial institutions;
- young people should work with mentor, he uses his father-in-law as his mentor;
- mentoring is crucial to getting his company where it is;
- mentor has had the time to learn from mistakes;
- must overcome image of PEI as potato farmers locally and nationally;
- inferiority is present within Islanders;
- people don't believe quality product can be made here on PEI;
- wanted to live in rural PEI;
- things are centralized in Charlottetown;
- trying to develop PEI to make it the first choice for young people;
- tries to look on challenges as positive things; and
- form direction for the future and make PEI the best place in the world to live and work.

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Jennifer Mooney

- The biggest challenge in Souris is lack of need to change;
- generalizations about young people are challenging;
- youth get a bad reputation because of few people's actions;
- LOFT shows people that youth can do good things;

- the LOFT organization looked doubtful;
- three or four adults encouraged the youth to do set up LOFT without hand-outs;
- finally had right people behind them, pushing;
- mistakes were made and learned from;
- only way to get over challenges is to fight fair; and
- hope that, in the future youth will always have someone who believes in them, it does not mean there will be less challenges, but they won't seem as overwhelming.

PRESENTATIONS

SHERRI FOUGERE

Guidance counselors across Prince Edward Island expressed a need for more information in the schools regarding labour market information (LMI) and job search strategies (JSS). The result was the Youth Initiative Project. With the direction of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Department of Education, a partnership was developed between HRDC and the school boards. I am a Labour Market Outreach Worker; there are six of us across Prince Edward Island and we each have two schools:

- Sherri Fougere - Kensington and Westisle;
- Tara Deglan - Souris and Montague;
- Lorne Acorn - Bluefield and Colonel Gray;
- Greg Anderson - Charlottetown Rural and Morell;
- Sam Dalton - Kinkora and Three Oaks; and
- Gerard Peters - François Buote and École Évangéline.

Our role as outreach workers is to deliver LMI and JSS in the high schools. What we have seen so far is that students are soaking it up like sponges. They have questions we can answer and I believe it could make all the difference.

What is LMI? It is information you need to choose a career and find a job. There are three steps: (1) research, (2) choose a career, and (3) find a job. Don't go backwards: getting a job, finding out you hate it and then doing research to pick a career is expensive and you will be miserable. Do the research up-front!

Some examples of LMI are:

- future outlook,
- demographics,
- education requirements,
- wages/benefits,
- working conditions,
- potential employers,
- government programs, and
- industry trends.

Places this LMI can be obtained include HRDC, LMI analyst, Labour Market Outreach Workers, Statistics Canada/Industry Canada, Training Institutions, Media, and even the supper table.

Examples of three LMI products provided by the HRDC include:

- Occupational Profiles — detail all facets of an occupation including wages/benefits, trends/outlook, nature of the work, main duties, training, conditions, employment by age and gender, etc.
- Occupational Summary — is similar to Occupational Profile but it has more statistical information.
- Labour Market Review — is an excellent source of information; it is essentially a catalogue of all labour force happenings on Prince Edward Island.

There are varied ways to access LMI. You could obtain it in paper form from HRDC, or electronically on Internet sites, at kiosks in malls and at Human Resources Centres, and from Community Access Sites. As well, labour market information analysts at HRDC could help with the information, as, of course, can labour market outreach workers.

So why is all this information important? Let's say I'm from PEI and I want to be a lawyer and start a practice in Summerside. I get accepted to McGill University in Montreal and do my undergraduate and Law degrees there . . . that is seven years of school! Then I go back to PEI to start my practice and discover there is a surplus of lawyers in PEI and many firms have gone bankrupt! I've just made a huge mistake. Not only am I in debt for my education, but I have no job to make money to live, and I won't be able to live in my home province. No money and no happiness and seven years of school. If I had done the research and asked the questions and gone in with my eyes open, this would be a happier scenario — that's what I wish for all of you. Like your work — it is the biggest part of your day. Avoid the hiccup from your education to the work force.

The realities of today's workforce are that there is less full time work. People must plan for the future since they will likely change careers seven to eight times. Life long learning is important and as the population ages, home based business is popular. Domestic business are now global with the help of information technology and manual labour is changing to technology.

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The following is a list of employability skills to have in this new workforce:

- Speak — Listen — Learn
- Can do
- Team player
- Adaptable and flexible
- Problem identification skills and solutions
- Innovative
- Balance
- Time Management

- Crash proof
- Buying in.

Sectors of growth on PEI are aerospace, information and communication technology, tourism, and small business.

That is what we do! My personal experience has been that there was an overwhelming need for this kind of information in the high schools and I enjoy doing it. If you are a high school student, contact your Labour Market Outreach Worker. If you are in college or university or are a graduate, contact the student services department of your alma mater or the local schools who will also help outside graduates. There is also HRDC, which is open to everyone. There is hope in information. The information is being provided— seize the opportunity. Thank you.

MORNING GROUP SESSIONS

Groups 1 & 2

Education

Biggest issues for education: money, student loans, issue is not whether or not I can go to school but whether or not I can afford to go to school.

- How are we educated: media friends home and teachers.
- Education in rural areas is better because smaller classes and students receive more attention. There is, however, less course selection since there aren't the numbers of students to support the variety.
- Guidance counselors push students to stay on PEI and go to university.

Groups 3& 4

Employment

- Entrepreneurship must be an option, we have to make our own jobs.
- Some people thought no adults would take them seriously.
- The small economy in PEI makes it hard to support business, hard to decide what business to go into.
- Good jobs are available only to people on Employment Insurance.
- A university education, does not guarantee work, it is hard to get into workforce.
- Young people must accept low pay at the beginning of their careers.
- We have to decide how to reduce seasonal work.

Groups 5 & 6

Culture

- Prince Edward Island is slow paced.

- Our culture is who we are.
- We are identifiable by our accent, laid back attitude, open, friendly, love getting to know people, red clay on shoes.
- What makes us leave Prince Edward Island? It is too small, there aren't enough jobs, our interests are different and we want to get away for a little bit.
- People come back to Prince Edward Island because they miss the Island, their families and friends are here, it is safe and small.
- We want to change people's point of view, educate people about youth.
- We don't have our unique culture, we are part of Canada.
- How do we pay for university, requirements are high, tuition is going up.
- Why do people leave? Work is seasonal, try to further their education, more jobs off-island.
- We would stay if there were more jobs.

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Groups 7 & 10

Transportation

- There is a lack of public transportation on Prince Edward Island.
- We don't have the population to support public transportation.
- We have tried to have public transport but have failed.
- A successful shuttle service operates in summer.
- Does this affect our employability? It does, since where you live depends on how far away you can work. If you don't have a car, bicycle, foot or car pooling hinders your flexibility.
- Transportation is important in education, hard to stay after school if your parents can't pick you up.
- Also, in attending university, there is no mass transportation system, therefore people have to have a car to get around.
- Is transportation part of our culture?
- The Confederation Bridge and the ferry service is part of "Island Way of Life."
- Without a car we are restricted.

Groups 8 & 9

Community

- What and who are we in our community?
- We are looked on as bad people because of stereotypes adults have about youth.
- We are looked on as not people, but something that is just there.
- There is not much for teenagers to do in communities, not many places to go.
- Rural communities offer: less noise, parents are more willing to drive their children around, not as many activities, boring, everyone knows everyone else, it is comfortable, but know everyone else's business.

- There is a bigger sense of community in smaller areas.
- Who comes to these conferences?
- A lot of young people don't get asked to go to conferences like this.
- Shy people are not invited.
- What happens after a conference like this is people go back to school and no one hears about it, the effort is pointless.
- Only smarter or more outspoken people go.
- Only those who go find out what is going on end up going to these events.
- Cliques in schools pose big problems.
- There is some stereotyping in clique: a person can get a bad rep by hanging out with certain people.
- The student council does not offer enough for whole school to do, make activities are geared at that group.

Group 10

Government

- Government runs too much, it is not in the community so how do they know what we want?
- Government should work more together with communities, there is too much government control.
- Government does not represent young people.
- The whole focus is on money not on real life.
- Cornwall bypass, has taken years to discuss, but lights at the North River Causeway were set up quickly because a business needed them.
- The school system is a big concern. History doesn't teach us about our culture, and is based on rich white European males.
- At sixteen a person can drive, at the age of 19 that person can drink, but, supposedly you are an adult when you reach 18 and you can't even buy cigarettes.
- Youth feel isolated with decisions taken by the government.
- The private sector advertising bombards us-- too much advertising geared at young people.
- Child labour is ignored for profit.
- Governments do not regulate industries as much as they should.
- Prices in local businesses are too high. We want to buy locally, but prices are too high.
- Finding work is hard with no experience.
- Around here, it's who you know that gets youth a job.
- The biggest problem in the future: there is no place for business on PEI.
- The voting procedures are too formal and youth cannot relate to the candidates.

PREMIER PAT BINNS

It is a great thrill to have spent the morning here with you at this Forum. I think it is very exciting to have all of you together talking about the challenges that exist on PEI for yourselves and for youth in general. Then for you to take the opportunity to reflect on ways to meet these challenges

and overcome the obstacles that we all see every day: where will I get the money to pay for my education; where am I going to get a job; how will I get over my own fears of going out to face the world; and how do we address that?

I am really pleased that the Institute of Island Studies has coordinate this conference and given us an opportunity to reflect on how we meet these challenges. I believe this is an important first step today: bringing people together to look at how we meet these challenges long-term. Before I go any further, I would like to note some people in the audience, Robert Maddix and Richard Brown, Elaine Noonan, Deputy Minister of Education and of course what we are talking about today is related to education.

This morning when I was coming into town, I had my daughter who is in grade nine at Montague Junior High School and my son who is in first year university, now working at a part time job. I asked them what I should talk about today. They said, number one, tell everyone how important it is to get an education and I think you all know that. Education gives you the opportunity to do whatever you want to do. And number two, they said, tell them not to be too reliant on government because it can't do everything for you. Maybe it can't do anything for you. So self-reliance is very important, government can do some things but it cannot do everything for you. The recent collapse of the communist system in the world would suggest that is in fact true. A government that can do everything for you can also take everything from you. I think that is what happened to a lot of those regimes around the world, they took people's possessions and their creativity and the systems eventually could not support themselves and so collapsed.

When Justin MacLeod made the remark that his goal was to make PEI the best place to live and work he couldn't have said it any better for me or probably for all of us. Really that is what we want to do is to make PEI the best place in the world to live and work. There is no doubt in my mind that this really is the best place to be, we just have to figure out how to make sure we have a comfortable living and we can raise our families here productively. When Jacques Cartier was sailing off the North Shore in 1534 and first saw the Island, he noted in his diary that this Island was the fairest land that it was possible to see. Now here is a man who had been out looking all over the world for places to locate settlers and I think he was right. We have a very special little jewel here and it is up to us to make sure that this jewel reaches its potential. That is why I am so pleased that you all have come together to help us out with that.

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I do not blame anyone for leaving PEI for a while, but do not forget where your roots are and I know you won't. I think everyone will come back and contribute. Sometimes we have to experience the benefits and things that are happening in the world to realize the opportunity that is here for us.

The new millennium really is a focus on change. From the remarks of the people on the panel this morning, three people said that education was the most important thing, three out of five mentioned money for education and, in particular, two out of five said jobs were the most important. But the biggest concern that I heard from the panel was, how do I get respect from adults for what I am doing or trying to do? How do I get credibility for my ideas or where I am

and how do we jointly overcome our inferiority complex? We all sometimes feel that we are inferior, sometimes, PEI feels inferior. Inferiority is only a state of mind that we have from time to time. I really believe that if we believe in ourselves that we can overcome any obstacles that we encounter. It is okay if some people at the mall do not like the sunglasses you are wearing or the way you cut your hair or the skateboard you have under your arm. You do not need everybody to love you. That is just the reality of it. If that were the case then nothing would ever happen, we would all be so paralyzed by what people thought of us that we would never get up in the morning. I do not think you should worry about that. You do not have to have everyone believing in you. Not even everyone voted for my government we only got 47 percent of the vote but we won. All things are possible to believe and that is the way you have to look at every day.

This afternoon I'm going to a funeral for Jim MacNeil. I do not think he every worried about the way he looked: you could always say he had a bad hair day. He did not care what people thought of him walking down the street and yet he came to PEI twenty-five or thirty years ago with the idea of starting a little newspaper business in Montague, in rural PEI. He had no customers, he did not even have any money, but he had a belief in himself. He thought he could build a newspaper in Montague and he did. He did that because he believed in people. He believed in himself, number one, and number two he knew that he did not have to sell his newspaper to everyone. If he knocked on a enough doors, some people would buy his advertising and even if it took 20 no's if he got a yes then he was on his way. He received an honorary degree on the weekend from Kings College in Nova Scotia and he told the audience at the convocation that his motto was: "Never let the bastards get you down." He really believed that and never let anyone get him down. He just kept on trucking. I believe that if you have a believe in yourself it doesn't matter if some people say no to you.

I had a bit of personal experience with that motto. When I was going through college I did not know how I was going to pay my way through so I decided to take a chance selling Electrolux vacuum cleaners. The manager of the little office that offered me this job said that everyone out there needed an Electrolux. You just have to go out there and get them to agree. So, I would get to the first door and say, "Morning ma'am I think you need a new Electrolux." She'd say, "Sorry son, I already have a nice Hoover and I'm quite happy with it and I'm very busy, so be on your way."

That would happen 10 times and you'd be pretty discouraged. What I'm trying to say here that the manager back in the office was right. Some people really did need a new Electrolux. If you knocked on enough doors you'd find that place that needed one. Some approaches did not work. I asked the wrong questions when I started off. What I found I had to do was say "Ma'am can I show you a way to make your house a little cleaner?" Sometimes they'd let me in and I'd do a demonstration. I found out after a while that you couldn't sell electrolux in a dirty house because those people are quite comfortable with dirt. But you could sell Electroluxes in a clean house. It was to the clean freaks you sold the most Electroluxes. So it was just a matter of believing in yourself, and that is all my point is. Do not worry about a hundred no's or people that do not like the cut of your bellbottom jeans or the skateboard under the arm that is all roughed up. You do not have to have everyone believing in you. If you believe in yourself, you can make things happen. I think Jim MacNeil knew that better than anybody.

When Sherri Fougere was up here earlier today she was talking about where the future may lie in terms of jobs on PEI and one of the areas she mentioned was aerospace. When the Canadian Arm Forces Base in Summerside closed, and I was part of the government in Ottawa that made the decision to close that base, it was a shock that rocked PEI. This was going to be the end of Summerside, there would be all these people unemployed, and all the spending that used to take place in the community would all of the sudden disappear. All the businesses were going to dry up and blow away. That was a very negative hit when it started.

What happened? We were able to turn a negative into a positive. And that is what you have to do every day. How did we do that? Well we looked at what we had. We had an asset in a good landing strip and good hangars and lots of housing. So we set about to establish a new development corporation: Slemmon Park Development Corporation. We hired a manager who was good at attracting businesses and we decided to focus on aerospace. Then we set out to attract some aerospace companies to that park.

The result of the number of years in attracting those industries is that

now we have more jobs at the old CFB Summerside than there were before and it is a dynamic growing business that is part of where we are today. It is a business that uses information technology with a lot of the people up there sitting behind computers designing the interiors of aircraft around the world. Then they install those interiors in the aircrafts. Other people are rebuilding engines for aircrafts. One of the companies rebuilds all of Pratt and Whitney's 100 series engines across the world. Our biggest export from PEI today outside of potatoes and lobsters is rebuilt aircraft engines that are going to the United States. Our biggest single state in terms of exports is Texas today. Because we can do it here and do it better than anyone else, were getting repeat business and a lot of growth in that sector.

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In fact, where Justin mentioned that four of his colleagues in Fredericton in UNB had to go off-Island to find jobs in high technology, we have everyone of the firms at the aerospace today, looking for workers who are trained in computer systems and technology and programming. So we have to find ways to match our employees' skills with the opportunities that are out there. That is why Holland College and UPEI are in the process now of trying to train people for the expanding and changing industries. That really is our biggest challenge to recognize the new opportunities that are out there and make things happen.

Sherri also mentioned demographics. There are a lot of opportunities down the road for all of you. They can be in the private sector and some will be in the public sector in teaching, government work etc. I just wanted to make the point that in the PEI civil service there are 1300 employees. When we break it down, only 24 people out of those 1300 are under the age of 30. What that tells us is a lot people on the higher end age brackets are coming up to retirement: there is a major shift coming down the road. More and more of those people will be retiring and that is going to open up new opportunities for young people to come into the system. The same thing occurs in the teaching profession on PEI and many other professions. The demographics are such that it is a good news story for you generally. You say, "What about tomorrow, I need a

job right now." Well, I do believe there is opportunity out there, in the long-term things look very good.

During this decade, 8200 new jobs have been added to our labour force for people with post-secondary education. 1400 have been lost in our PEI economy in this decade for people that have less than a post-secondary education. It goes back to my point that education is very critical to your future. If you can, try to work in a field you really like, make your hobby your work then you'll never feel like you are going to work. Maybe in the short term, you have to take a job that is not career oriented to give you some spending money. But keep that objective in mind. I am a good example of that. I never really knew what I wanted to be, my wife says I still do not know. I remember starting university in the law program and I discovered I really did not want to be a lawyer. Then I switched into rural development and I stayed in that area for a long time. I have had fourteen jobs in twenty some years in the work force. Change is everywhere. When one door closes, another one is always open, do not be afraid of the future.

I was listening to the reports that were given here just a minute ago and one of the comments I just heard was, can you afford your education? Can you take on the debt? I do not have a magic answer for that, but I will say that not all debt is bad. I do not like to pay interest to the banks but it is a reality sometimes that a certain amount of debt is necessary.

View the debt that you take on for your education as an investment in your own future. We all take on debt, governments take on debt if they are viewed as good investments for the future. The Confederation Bridge cost a billion dollars there was not one dollar come in from that until all the money was spent. So it was a huge debt but it was also an investment. Look what happened the first year the bridge was open, our tourist traffic to Prince Edward Island increases from 700,000 to 1.2 million. 500,000 more people came to PEI in the first year as tourists after the bridge opened because of that investment of money. That debt was not a bad thing. Imagine the billion of dollars the United States government spent on developing a space program. Look at what has happened as a result of that investment, now we have computer industries flourishing around the world. We have information technology companies growing here on PEI because we used satellites, fiber optics, and fax machines and all of the technology that is available to do business here in this province. A lot of that would not have happened had it not been for the investment made in the space program. But we do have to find ways to help you keep that student debt down.

On the comment about guidance counselors and them not being interested in what you do. It just goes to show that you need more than guidance counselors. You need mentors, as Justin talked about, someone who will give you some encouragement along the way. So join those nonprofit groups with people who are interested in the same things you are, that is where you will find your mentors. People said, "PEI has such a small economy." Did not you hear about the Internet and the 2.5 million people in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia? It is a huge market for PEI, it is not that we are too small just that we have to focus a little differently.

Someone said, "everything is seasonal," it is true, we do not have seventy or eight degree temperatures year round but we do not need to. We have to be more creative. When I was an MP in Ottawa, I would return to PEI in March and would meet people from Florida on the plane to

PEI. They said, we are interested in ecological tourism and we want to go see the seals off the coast of PEI. There is an opportunity that we did not recognize, people are interested in the things we have to offer. They are interested in winter tourism. Everything does not have to be seasonal, we just have to think of ways to do it better.

You have said today, "we are slow paced, we are too small." Then came the prejudices: "I'm not from here." Well, neither am I but I have not let that get me down. I wasn't born here, but you do not have to be born here, PEI is a very accepting and open place. Anybody that wants to join in, get involved and participate help people. Islanders aren't saying, where are you from because they do not like you, they are just curious so they can get to know a little better.

Transportation, that is an area that needs further work. I was interested in the remark about who comes to these conferences. They said that it is probably the smart kids. Its not the shy kids. How do we get beyond that? I think that is a big challenge for all of us. How to get more people involved. How do we get people who are shy to move out of their shell a little bit? I only have one bit of advice. If every day each one of us could reach out to a shy person. Smile at them and say "how are you doing? " Make them feel good. And pretty soon they'll start to come out of their shell, and feel better about themselves. Pick a person every day and open up to those shy people.

The comment was made that government had too much control in our lives, we did not balance the budget. You're right. Because some of you said that we did not spend enough on education, so if we ought to spend more money on education, how do we balance the budget? These are challenges that we have to try and deal with.

Another comment I heard was, government doesn't regulate big business enough. It is probably true. We did, though, implement land laws in this province that restrict how much a corporation can own. We have said no to some companies who wanted more government money to further their own business agendas and we said no to them if we did not believe it was in the best interest of PEI and we will continue to do that in the future.

So, there are lots of challenges out there and I'm very excited about the future and I really believe that PEI has never had as much opportunities as it has today. We have eliminated two of the main obstacles to growth. If you look at Canada and where the growth has come from I believe that two things have contributed to the growth in Canada as a whole. The first contributor to where economic development went was related to transportation. Think about Toronto, Quebec City, Montreal. They were the hubs for air service, sea ports, railways, highway systems and where were we on PEI? We are an Island. We are not very well advantaged on any of those things up until now. But I believe the bridge has eliminated a very major obstacle in terms of transportation. I believe that were are now on a more level playing field in terms of transportation than we've ever been before. It is no problem to move trucks on and off of PEI and that why we had a 35 % increase in truck traffic in the first year of the bridge, not just in tourists. We've had an amazing increase in truck traffic. This means there's more business flowing back and forth to PEI.

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The second major thing that is now in our favor, and this is obvious to all of you, but for years and years we were severely disadvantaged in communications. We were probably one of the last areas in Canada to have a good telephone system. I'm not sure if everyone remembers having the old ringing system on their telephones, it wasn't a very good communications system relative to what the some of the world had out there. All of those inadequacies in communications have been eliminated. We now have the best communications system anywhere in North America. We lead all provinces in terms of the broad band being extended across PEI. All of the schools, our libraries, our regional service centres, our hospitals are all connected. Businesses in Belfast can use the Internet to do business in Australia. We are no longer disadvantages compared to Toronto or New York.

We've overcome those difficulties that have been with us since we were discovered here on PEI if you add to the fact that we have a very well educated workforce that we have a clean safe environment, PEI is on a level playing field. This is the nicest environment in my opinion, in anywhere in the world. You can still leave your car out here in the parking lot and come back in an hour and 99% of the chance it will still be there. You cannot do that in most places.

It is safe, it is clean, we are well educated, we are no longer disadvantaged in transportation or communication and we believe in ourselves. All of those things together, this new millennium really does belong to Prince Edward Island. It belongs to you and all I can say is I'd like to thank you for coming. I want to thank you for rising to the challenge of thinking about where we are and where we are going. It is going to be a lot of fun taking advantage of the opportunities that are out there and I just thank you very much for the opportunity of having the morning with you and I wish you every success. Thank you.

AFTERNOON PRESENTATIONS

JANICE PLOYER

Let me first begin by asking you, the audience, the question: Do you know where Malta is? Only six or seven. Hmm. Just as I expected. In short, Malta is located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, 93 kilometres south of Sicily. Now allow me to pose another question: Do you know where Martinvale is? Gee, about the same number as those who knew where Malta is. Well, for those of you unaware of Prince Edward Island's most secret of hot spots, I'll tell you that Martinvale is a rural community located in the heart of King's County, about halfway between Montague and Morell. Hence, I attended Montague Regional High School. I graduated in 1988, which means that I have a ten year reunion to look forward to this coming summer. Knowing this, I've recently begun to reflect on how I've changed in the ten years since leaving Montague High.

At this time, ten years ago, I was anxiously awaiting my upcoming graduation which, to me, signified freedom, escape from Martinvale and Prince Edward Island. Why did I feel this way? Well, I was growing weary of the smallness of the Island. I was tired of my parents, grandparents, and relatives knowing everything about the family of the people I knew their address, their religion, their political party alliances and any past familial "embarrassments". I

wanted to explore new places and people, unfamiliar places and people. I yearned to escape to a place far away, anyplace that was not PEI.

Well, in the ten years following graduation, I have managed to do just that. I have lived on PEI for only four of the past ten years, with an occasional summertime return. I have travelled to various regions of the world and seen a great many fascinating things. Yet, now, as my high school reunion approaches, I find myself wanting to return to Prince Edward Island. What I find most amusing about this turnaround is that the reason I wish to return to PEI now is precisely the same reason I wished to leave in the first place the small size. Now yes, I still do have the same criticisms as I had previously, but I now realize that the Island's small size is also a great strength. With a population of only 133 000, Islanders have considerably more say in the provincial decision making process than anywhere else in the country. In how many other provinces would the premier spend half his day with a group of young people, for instance? Or how many people our age in other parts of the country can say that they have had lunch with their Premier? Not many I suspect.

So what does all this have to do with Malta? Very much, as the Maltese recognize the value of their smallness. Malta is a very small island nation. The land area is only 316 square kilometres, which makes Prince Edward Island about 14 times larger. Its population of 365660 residents seems like few for an entire nation, but it is extremely heavily populated with a population density about 45 times greater than that of PEI. Incredible considering that PEI's is the highest population density per province in Canada.

With such a densely populated island, there is little space left for agriculture. The topsoil is very poor regardless, which forces the Maltese to import approximately 60 per cent of their food. As for fishing, the Mediterranean has been overfished to the extent that there is little fish available to support an industry. For drinking water, the Maltese use desalination to create a supply as there are no rivers or lakes. While the Maltese have very limited natural resources, the one resource which they have in abundance is people, i.e. human resources. In order to maintain that human resource, youth issues are looked at very seriously as youth are recognized as essential to the future prosperity of the island nation.

So what is Malta doing to promote youth? First of all, the national government has a Parliamentary Secretariat of Youth, Sports, Culture and the Arts. This position is filled by an elected member of parliament, similar to what we in Canada would refer to as a Minister. The Parliamentary Secretariat of Malta's main responsibility in terms of youth is developing a National Youth Policy. S/he also compiles, publishes and disseminates a listing of youth organizations in Malta. This is an extremely valuable document containing over 150 youth organizations from the entire of Malta. As well, the Parliamentary Secretariat organizes public forums for discussion of issues pertinent to youth, such as housing or employment, and various other activities such as international exchanges and cultural activities.

In 1991, an Institute of Youth Studies was initiated at the University of Malta. This Institute offers both certificate and degree programmes in the area of youth studies. To complete the requirements of the degree, all students must complete a major research paper on some aspect of youth society in Malta. This not only proves to be a valuable experience for the students, but also

it has created a library of information specifically on Maltese youth. I found this quite exciting as here on PEI, we have information for Canadian youth, but acquiring information specific to Prince Edward Island is not as readily available.

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Finally, and most importantly, is the National Youth Council (NYC). The Council was government initiated in 1991 and serves as an umbrella organization for the 150 Maltese youth organizations. NYC represents all Maltese citizens aged 16-31. The council consists of 20 elected members who serve for two years. Membership is voluntary; the council only has one full-time staff member. This staff member receives her salary from the Parliamentary Secretariat of Youth, Culture, Sports and the Arts. The government also provides office space and a working budget for the Council. The Council also receives a small budget from CEYNC, the European Commission of National Youth Councils.

While the Council is state supported, NYC acts separately and independently from the government as a nonprofit agency. In fact, within five days while I was in Malta, the National Youth Council organized a student rally in protest of the Governments proposed educational legislation and worked with Government to facilitate a youth forum on housing. Besides forums, the Council organizes a National Youth Day, during which last year's highlight appeared to be a soccer match between a youth group and some members of Parliament. As well, the Council publishes a quarterly magazine dispersed freely to Maltese youth. This magazine describes current NYC and other youth activities as well as any news which has an effect of youth in the country. NYC delegates participate in international youth conferences, mostly within Europe. The topics of such conferences again are youth issues and European youth policy. NYC has a bi-weekly radio noticeboard on which youth groups are able to advertise at no cost their upcoming events. Media including television, newspaper and radio is also utilized by NYC for creating discussion amongst young people.

Why has the National Youth Council been so successful in such a short period of time? I believe it is simply because the Council takes advantage of Malta's size. Change can take place much more quickly in a region of a few hundred thousand versus a region of millions. The National Youth Council provides Maltese youth a mechanism through which to voice their opinions, to be heard and included when decisions are being made. For that reason, I view the Maltese example a good one for young Prince Edward Islanders.

Thank you.

MICHELLE SNOW

Good Afternoon everyone! First of all I would like to thank Premier Binns, Ms. Laura Hagen and everyone with the Institute of Island Studies for inviting me to speak to you today.

I will start by telling you a little about myself. I am 24 years old and I am presently the coordinator for a unique Youth Service Canada project which uses cable television to teach. Teaching Visually creates quality educational and entertaining community television shows.

I graduated from Memorial University in 1996 with a BA in economics and business administration.

Around the same time, I read an article in my local paper about this youth organization involved in regional economic development. I had just moved back home with my parents after five years of being out on my own and was not exactly thrilled by what life in small town-rural Newfoundland offered me. I had a university degree, tonnes of energy and ambition and very little work experience.

In 1995 the province of Newfoundland and Labrador was going through a period of extreme change. It had been three years since the Cod Moratorium and many families were leaving the province, entire communities were shutting down.

So the Government at the time developed a strategy to help revitalize the economy. They devised a strategy which saw the province divided into 19 Regional Economic Zones. Each of these zones was to be governed by a volunteer Board of Directors to administer and coordinate activities to help foster development within the region. The members of these boards were chosen from various stakeholder groups in each region: Business, Education, Tourism and a host of others.

With perhaps one exception, youth were not included as one of these stakeholders.

These Boards were going to be developing five year strategic plans. Now I ask you, if it takes 1 to 2 years to develop these SEP's and then certain initiatives in the plan take anywhere from 2 to 7 years to develop, who are going to be the ones to reap the reward of these plans if they succeed or suffer the consequences if they fail???? YOU...ME...YOUTH!

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So it was obviously vital to have youth involved in these Boards, right? Well it was not that simple. Many of the people who came forward initially to serve on these boards were the same individuals who had been involved in various sectors for years. (Lion's Club, church groups, town councils, etc.) They were very skeptical, to say the least, at having a 16 year old sitting at the board table with them.

And to a certain extent they had a right to be cautious. Nothing like this had ever been done before. Suddenly you had all of the key groups and organizations coming together to make common decisions. That was powerful stuff and also a big responsibility.

So how to get youth involved was the key question. Government recognized the importance of this but how to do it?

A group in St. John's, Extension Community Development Cooperative, with the help of a young lady, Fiona Heald, submitted a proposal to the SRDA to "engage youth in the Regional Economic Development process." They proposed to do this through a series of video vignettes, a

newsletter and a youth forum in each of the zones. The idea was to promote the activities of the RED process to young people and to mobilize youth to become involved.

The outcome was they were funded complete 8 videos (they completed 15), 4 issues of Youth High Tide newsletter (they completed 9), and held forums in approximately 17 zones resulting in 15 seats in Boards and 12 Councils. All of this was completed on time and under budget! Not bad for a group of "kids"!

The process for establishing a council in each zone varied to meet the needs of those regions. Some councils consist entirely of high school students, some have youth mostly over the age of 20. In order for this to work the model had to be flexible and be molded for each zone's needs.

Some councils were easy to establish with much community support and buy-in from Boards, while others were not.

Examples:

1. Labrador had unique challenges w.r.t. climate and geography.
2. Zone 16 (Burin Peninsula) was the first zone to elect a council and gain a seat on the RED Board. It currently has no functioning council and a vacant seat on the Board due to turnover of the youth council members.

In the Spring of 1997 FINALY had come to a plateau in its development. Our original mandate as we had been funded in 1995 was done. There was still work left but for the most part we needed to broaden our wings. Some of the senior members of the group saw a need for FINALY to take on some new challenges.

We had developed a group of regional councils and regional networks who were all part of FINALY but provincially there was a need for solidification of that network.

At our AGM in October 1997 we developed a structure for a Provincial Youth Council.

Structure: 4 Regions -)There elected representatives from each

Once established, this group set out to strengthen FINALY and establish it as the provincial voice for the youth of the province. Since October the PYC has accomplished the following tasks:

3. Developed a mission statement
4. Commissioned and compiled a 3 year strategic plan
5. Held quarterly meetings of the PYC
6. Partnered in a provincial youth forum on education

7. Distribute information

8. Strengthened the FINALY network

We are really proud of what we have accomplished during the past 3 years and we are looking forward to many more great things for the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been a lot of hard work and we could not have done it without the support of our partners, communities and other organizations. However, FINALY truly is a youth run organization.

While this is a lot of hard work, and right now almost everything is done on a volunteer basis there are endless reasons why a young person would want to get involved in something like this.

9. The opportunity to have a voice the decision making process which affects you.

10. Personally: establish a network of friends, colleagues and employment opportunities.

11. Gain skills in communications, management, finance, etc.

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12. It really is fun!

Summary of FINALY achievements.

Thank you!

AFTERNOON GROUPS: RECOMMENDATIONS

What can young people on PEI do to tackle the issues we discussed this morning?

1. Wider variety of courses at high school. Broader selection with more courses geared toward computer skills

Discussion: In order to do your job well in the future you have to have more skills and people aren't getting them in high school.

2. Make the concerns of young people more public. I.e. advertising, TV, radio, publications, youth forums, schools.

Discussion: Ties in with 1) if you learn more marketing skills then you would know how to sell yourself more and take advantage of the media

3. Maintain programs that provide youth with information: scholarships, employment, bursaries.

Discussion: Information is just as important as funding. Without information there is no way you can get the funding.

4. Make a model of a shuttle system to provide people with transportation to area with job opportunities.

Discussion: Environmentally friendly, creates employment and provides a service.

5. To have one central group with several different branches across PEI to represent the youth

Discussion: Similar to FINALY! in NFLD.

6. Have youth working with government acting as representatives on committees.

7. Implement a similar project like FINALY!

8. Need more funded programs to help support mentoring and entrepreneurship.

9. Provincial youth council with representation from all age groups from 16 to 29 and youth organizations.

10. Take the INITIATIVE! Be more self-reliant.

11. Initiate a youth council on PEI based on the FINALY! model.

Discussion: With regional and high school representation

12. Develop a delivery system for information to youth regarding job opportunities, labour market trends, youth training initiatives, scholarships, bursaries and positive experiences.

13. PEI government has to set up a ministry of youth. He or She would meet several times a year with youth to report to the cabinet. The minister would answer to us.

14. A committee that looks into the issues of youth. It would go to the schools to see what the youth are saying. It provides media attention to issues and positive things that youth are doing. For example, newsletters and opinion pieces in the paper.

15. Establish a youth council independent of government but cooperating with it, but not restricted by it. Youth ownership. Youth empowerment Ministry is directly related with the new council.

16. Publication for youth. Wide circulation and widely appealing. Many different types of publications. Newspapers and newsletters

17. Implementation of an annual youth forum to allow input from youth on issues of government policy.

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18. Establish a ministry of youth to be staffed and advised by youth to advise the minister on youth policy.

Discussion: In the past there have been groups on the island that have tried to get together to do things for youth, but they haven't bothered to figure out what youth need and if you don't know what the problems are you are creating more problems that actually solving them. They end up spending a lot of money and then they might think that its a waste of time to invest in youth.

Jane Ledwell tabled the following motion:

That we initiate a process to establish a youth council on PEI based on the models and recommendations of the 1998 Premier's forum on youth.

The motion was carried by a show of hands from the group.

APPENDICES

EVALUATION

What did you think of the forum today? Please take a minute to fill out the short evaluation form below. If you are interested in receiving the proceedings from the day, just fill in your address below and detach from the evaluation.

Please rate the different sessions of the day according to the following scale:

1 - excellent 2 - good 3 - fair 4 - poor 5 - very poor

Youth Panel (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Labour Market Information Session (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Morning Group Sessions (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Youth Council Model Presentations (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Afternoon Group Sessions (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Comments (please write on the back if you need more room):

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the report on this forum, please put your name and address on the bottom of this form and put it in the separate box for addresses at the door. Thank you for participating today and all the best to you in your future as a young Islander!!

Fifty-eight people completed the survey; here are the results:

Youth Panel (1) 10% (2) 60% (3) 21% (4) 7% (5) 2%

Labour Market Information Session (1) 41% (2) 40% (3) 12% (4) 5% (5) 2%

Morning Group Sessions (1) 25% (2) 39% (3) 32% (4) 3% (5) 2%

Youth Council Model Presentations (1) 26% (2) 43% (3) 21% (4) 7% (5) 3%

Afternoon Group Sessions (1) 25% (2) 37% (3) 25% (4) 7% (5) 7%

Some of the comments received include the following:

"Some youth on the panel poorly represented Island youth."

"If this was held again, I would like to see more hands-on activity or shorter presentations."

"It was well organized and well thought out. It should really be done again."

"Please don't let the recommendations fall into a crack in the floor like many recommendations from days like these."

"I hope this will be an annual event."

"Everything, especially the labour market information, was very interesting."

"Please note that most Islanders don't expect the government to hand them everything."

"The day was very long."

"Needed to focus on one topic."

"Well-organized, inspiring. I hope it leads to a youth council."

In general, the comments and evaluations were positive. It seems there was a general consensus that the day was too long for everyone. Perhaps in other sessions, there will not be a speaker during lunch. As well, a lot of people did not think that the youth panel best represented Island youth. However, the labour market information proved very popular as did the youth council models.

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MINUTES

*Minutes of
Meeting re: Youth Public Forum
April 8, 1998, Dalton Hall, 7 p.m.*

Meeting chaired by Laura Hagen, Institute of Island Studies

Individuals present:

Lynn Connolly, Eastern School Board
Wendy Boswall, 4H
Jane Ledwell, Institute of Island Studies
Melissa Somers, Allied Youth
Patrick Shea, Holland College

Lori Hughes, Holland College
Annette Ryan, PEI Treasury
Nancy Smitheram, Youth researcher

Groups contacted but unable to attend:

UPEI Student Union
Inner City Youth Connection
Junior Achievement
Internship Program, UPEI
Bluefield Student Council
Mayor's Youth Advocacy Committee
East Prince Youth Development Centre

Laura began the meeting with an introduction of herself and the Institute of Island Studies (IIS). She explained that the Premier's Public Forum on Youth will be held in late May of this year and the individuals were assembled tonight to discuss the issues that should be addressed at a public forum. She also noted that, pending funding from the province, \$3000 would be available for the day's activities. Leaflets about the IIS were handed out for further information.

The individuals present were asked to introduce themselves and were questioned as to which groups should be included in future discussions about youth issues. The following groups were mentioned: the Council of the Disabled, the Multi Cultural Council, Community Learning Centres across the Island, and East Prince Youth Development Center. Laura pointed out that young people should be talking for young people and to contact her if there were more names to add to the list.

Laura went on to describe the typical public forum set-up. It would be free with the Premier making either opening or closing remarks. The first presentation would provide background information to those attending and would be followed by discussion from the floor. The next speaker would provide a new topic, perhaps a young entrepreneur. Then the group would be divided into smaller teams with leaders to discuss the topic and then report back to the larger group. This would continue through the day with the last session being the most important topic, the future. She questioned the group about their personal experiences with similar set ups and Lori confirmed that the smaller groups led to more comfortable discussion.

Laura asked the group: So what are the issues? Personally, what did the people around the table worry about as young people on PEI? The answers are listed below:

Employment

- contract work makes it difficult to plan future;
- difficult to find fulfilling work on PEI;
- student loan debts make it hard to accept only contracts;
- must accept lower pay for staying on PEI;
- better school and training can be found off-island;

- better opportunities, more opportunities "away";
- perceived more exciting life elsewhere.

Lynn who is working with young people in high schools has heard the opposite, that

- people don't want to leave;
- they are too afraid to leave;
- youth employment is decreasing.

Other issues brought up by Laura include:

- employers on the Island who would love to contact "Islanders Away" with their job opportunities;
- possible partnerships between government, private sector, education, and youth.

Entrepreneurship

- Nancy mentioned Industrial Commissions where small businesses can get capital to start;
- Lynn pointed out the problem with loans due in full on October 31 of the year borrowed since students with tuition fees may not be able to do it;
- possibility of a forgivable grant of less money vs a loan due the same year borrowed.;
- Annette noted a young entrepreneur in Belfast, Justin MacLeod who may be a good speaker.

Possible Speakers

- Laura explained Newfoundland's moves toward a youth council (FINALY -Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador Youth) with elected youth representatives in each region. They have agreed to provide a speaker.
- Melissa mentioned AY sessions provided excellent motivational speakers.
- Lynn wondered if Sharon Cameron would be a good speaker, however, Laura said it would be better if all speakers were under the age of 29.
- A suggestion was made for a panel of young politicians.
- It was noted that the Round Table on Land Use was a panel model with people with different views presenting ideas and then opening the floor to discussion.
- A suggestion was made to call high school principals to get representatives to take part in the forum.
- As well, a large part of young people are dropouts and it was noted that they should also have a voice.
- The participants wondered if CBC radio would grant an interview for publicity and if public service announcements could be arranged on Island Radio;
- possible inserts in the Guardian, Journal Pioneer and the Eastern and Western Graphic; and
- it was suggested that contact be made with the Apprenticeship program with the provincial government, Compu College, Slemon Park, and Kent MacLean at the Native Council.

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More Issues:

- global economy and the information highway, we are now competing against the world;
- there is no work on PEI;
- seasonal work wastes talents in the winter;
- there is a regional imbalance in summer work, rural areas are disadvantaged for work opportunities;
- Nancy noted that PEI has the highest rate of summer employment in Canada, 72%;
- the new extended summer season works against students since they cannot work until mid-October;
- people stay here because of family and friends;
- we should build on what we do well, added value, primary sector;
- age structure is a hurdle, there is a large number of 40 year olds in the work force who are not moving anywhere, so entry-level jobs are decreasing; and
- the point was made that supply teachers are competing against retired teachers for the substitute teaching opportunities.

Laura asked:

So how can we communicate what we need to government, corporate sector, and educational institutions? How do we have one voice? How do we act as a group?

- People are so varied that one voice may not be the answer.
- Stress is terrible in Island high schools, mental and emotional stress.
- There is no support or system for these individuals.
- People have been convinced that a university degree will not get them a job, in fact they are the group that has suffered the least from previous unemployment.
- Holland College and UPEI now have career placement officers, career specialists.
- High schools now have individuals working with the guidance counselors and students to explore options.
- Nancy noted from her research that only 70% of people go to University or College out of high school, 40% graduate with less than grade 8 reading level and 20-24% drop out.
- Computer training in high schools should be better, but must start with training teachers.

More suggestions for the day:

- adults to invite include parents, corporate sector, Chamber of Commerce, HRDC;
- a suggestion was made to have someone from a company like Irving to speak to outline what they are looking for in a candidate.

Student Loans:

- they are too easy to get, people get suckered in;
- no special programs for single parents;
- criteria for awards do not cover single parents;

- more students are declaring bankruptcy because of student debt;
- the loans are not easy to understand, need plain language; and
- no face to attach to the claim, cannot ask questions to anyone.

Closing Issues

- We do pay a price for living here.
- Out migration will continue, can't keep everyone here unless the birth rate stalls.
- People move when are young and return with experience.

Laura passed out a proposal for the forum she had formed before the meeting, she noted the issues of student debt and minorities were not addressed in the proposal. She commented on the International Youth Conference in Newfoundland in 1999 that is for young people from islands across the world.

A committee is needed to work with Laura to organize the public forum in May and in two weeks another meeting would be called with the same individuals and some new people will hopefully join. Laura is going to Souris and Summerside to speak with people about the issues. There will be 3-4 more meetings before the forum.

Another issue raised is a young entrepreneurship workshop in Halifax May 7-9, 1998. The cost is \$100 each and the Institute had money in the budget to send a couple of people. Those interested were to get back to Laura the next day.

Things to think about for the next meeting, a title, getting the forum on the world wide web and possibly into school newspapers. Laura thanked everyone for coming and said she would call them with information on the next meeting.

***Minutes of Meeting
re: Premier's Forum on Youth
April 20, 1998, Generation XX,
Summerside, 6 p.m.***

Meeting Chaired by Laura Hagen, Institute of Island Studies

Individuals present:

Mark Greenan, Generation XX, TOSH Student Council
 Sean Kelly, Generation XX, TOSH Student Council, Prince County Youth Hospital Foundation Board
 Aaron Jackson, Generation XX
 Darren Smith, Generation XX
 Melanie Hughes, Generation XX, Kinkora Leadership Council
 Josh Rioux, Generation XX
 Daniel Albert, Generation XX
 Gordy Witlock, Manager, Generation XX

Groups contacted but unable to attend:

Kinkora Student Council
East Prince Youth Development Centre
4H

Laura opened the meeting with an introduction of herself and the Institute of Island Studies. Leaflets were handed out about the Institute for further information. The Public forum setup was outlined and the attendants were asked, if they had the whole day with the Premier, what would they like for him to know about youth on Prince Edward Island? The responses were as follows:

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Life on PEI

- the province is too small;
- there is nothing to do for young people;
- there should be more facilities for youth;
- it is a good place to raise children;
- it is a safe place; and
- they would like to go away and experience other places and then return to PEI.

Job Opportunities

- there are few;
- the population base is not large enough to support strong industries;
- no jobs unless they are in the primary sector;
- would stay here if there were guaranteed work;
- will move out west for work; and
- entrepreneurship is not an option explored by them.

When asked why they would move away and where, the responses were as follows:

Life "Away"

- good to experience the different cultures that other places offer;
- things are more exciting off-Island;
- will go wherever the jobs are;
- will go to a city Vs a rural community;
- would only go away if doing something for the rest of their life; and
- can make more money elsewhere.

When asked about the quality and cost of education on PEI, the following answers followed:

Education

- some of the programs offered here can only take individuals part of the way to a degree;
- tuition costs continue to increase because government is taking money from education;
- the cost stops some people from furthering their education; and
- the thought of debt and student loans is scary.

The question what is the culture of PEI, resulted in the following responses:

Culture

- potatoes, Anne of Green Gables, lobster, and fish;
- quiet place with no crime;
- PEI will soon become like other North American places with metal detectors in schools;
- PEI will become more urban;
- PEI has lost itself because of lack of strong leadership; and
- How can a National Centre like Confederation Centre be cut by Mike Harris?

When asked if they were ever discriminated against because of their age, the answers were as follows:

Discrimination

- when setting up their centre, people were surprised the idea came from them as young people;
- teachers discriminate;
- adults in general discriminate against them;
- store owners think they are stealing;
- skateboarders have a bad image;
- a minority is causing the problems and people then stereotype all skaters; and
- at Generation XX both skaters and preps hang out and talk, there is less segmentation.

Laura detailed the conference as several panels or speakers followed by smaller group discussions. She described the organization in Newfoundland called FINALLY and mentioned that other suggestions for the day were for employers to speak on employability qualities and young entrepreneurs. Their reactions are as follows:

Public Forum Content

- must be youth speaking to youth, no adults should speak;
- FINALLY sounds interesting and they would be interested in a speaker from there;
- also interested in employers talking about what they like in new applicants;
- were not interested in entrepreneurs since that is what they did to found their club;
- would like to know where (in the economy and province) and when there will be jobs available, a speaker on that subject would also be good; and
- an interest was expressed by the participants to have a representative of Generation XX speak at the Forum.

Laura thanked them all for their attendance and promised to keep Gordy updated as the forum draws nearer.

***The Spirit and Practice of Successful Business Thinking
Development Associates, Dr. Joseph Liven and Molly De Shong
Kinkora, Prince Edward Island April 15, 1998***

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A workshop put on by ACOA for rural community entrepreneurs. It is designed to address the more personal issues in starting and operating your own business.

Attendants:

Peggy Arsenault, ACOA

Andy Gallant, disc jockey

Dean Sutherland, ACOA Moncton

Mike Johnston, electronic repair

Dylan Thompson, market garden and horse boarding

Ryan Mattart, cabinet making

Laurie Weeks, co-owner of community care facility in Hunter River

Aiden McKeever, grass cutting

Peter Muslinski, sea kayaking manufacturing

Donny, trucking

Darlene Gerkowski, gift baskets

Beth MacDougall, women's accessories (wholesale)

The participants were asked: Why do you want to have your own business?

- it gives them a sense of pride;
- provides a challenge;
- chance to see your product grow;
- take advantage of a business opportunity;
- work best for yourself;
- can contribute to society;
- do something you enjoy;
- provides job security.

They then watched a video about a young entrepreneur in Newfoundland who made guitars. They were asked, how has your age affected your business?

- people don't trust them as easily;
- there is a perceived increase in risk;
- people are not as willing to give responsibility to young people;
- it is perceived that there is a lack of effort on the young person's part.

Doing business in rural areas:

- it is a natural market;
- everyone knows each other;
- word-of-mouth is the best form of advertising;
- people like to buy local.

Young Entrepreneurs:

- fear drives them to work harder;
- inspiration is what they come back to when times are hard, need that sense of direction;
- values are money, quality product and service, community, honesty, respect from customers and for customers, professionalism, independence, and value for oneself;
- work long hours;
- must be honest, direct, and blunt;
- have energy;
- support (family, financial, community) very important;
- treat self-employment as a challenge.

Other skills such as facilitation and team work were discussed and the participants commented that it was beneficial to get together as a group to discuss common problems. It was identified that there is a lack of cooperation and networking among entrepreneurs in the province.

***Minutes for Meeting
re: Premier's Forum on Youth
Dalton Hall Room 315
April 22, 1998 7 p.m.***

Meeting chaired by Laura Hagen

Individuals present:

John Munro, teacher Montague High School and formerly involved with Stay-In-School Program

Tracy Stretch, student and youth volunteer

Jane Ledwell, Institute of Island Studies

Annette Ryan, Provincial Treasury

Groups Contacted but Unable to Make Meeting:

Holland College

UPEI

Inner City Youth Program

Native Council

The meeting began with introductions and moved on to review the minutes from the last meeting. Activities since the last meeting were outlined as below:

- Laura attended a young entrepreneurs workshop in Kinkora,
- crime prevention conference in Summerside,
- meeting with Generation XX and members of TOSH student council.

Further meetings were planned for Souris on Thursday and Bloomfield and Montague next week. Laura announced the invitation has been extended to the president of the Newfoundland youth body FINALY (Futures in Newfoundland And Labrador Youth).

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The Forum was detailed as noted below:

- the Premier's financial and moral support has been confirmed by John Hughes of the provincial government;
- it is anticipated that the Premier will be able to attend for half of the day; and
- the date is May 21,1998 in the Wanda Wyatt Dining Hall.

Ideas for the Forum were also discussed as detailed below:

- a possible panel of young entrepreneurs and employers;
- presentation by Newfoundland president of FINALY;
- in order to deal with different issues for age ranges, they will be segmented according to age in group discussions;
- it was agreed that a broad range should be represented on the youth panel;
- need to reach unacademic youth;
- will ask principals of high schools to choose a cross-section of participants;
- student councils would also be useful;
- Acadian groups should be contacted; and
- a focus group on campus, Christian Fellowship, may be interested in being consulted.

The System and Youth

- Young people are exploited by the system, employers create jobs and then don't hire the youth after the funding runs out;
- young people also abuse the system - going program to program;
- youth council would provide advocacy;
- a forum would bring young people together and provide a starting point;
- must focus on creating solutions.

Budget

- Approximately \$3500 is needed to pay for the day, awaiting funding confirmation from the province;
- Janice Ployer has also been invited to speak about Malta Youth Council;
- no registration fee; and
- all facilities will be provided by UPEI.

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What would the people like to hear at the forum?

- A panel from across the Island;
- different perspectives, interesting facilitators; and
- must draw out issues that will be addressed later in the day to solve.

Title brainstorming came up with words such as future, focus, path, building, guiding, looking toward and phrases such as Where do we go from here? It was decided that Laura would consult further with other groups.

Marketing

- Guardian will help provide a full-page ad and
- press release out tomorrow.

Youth

- Definition needs explanation since many twenty year olds don't see themselves as youth and
- must decide how to reach over twenties, targetting through groups good strategy.

Next meeting to be on Monday, May 4, 1998 at 7 p.m.

***Minutes from Meeting
re: Premier's Forum on Youth
Souris Regional High School
April 23, 1998***

Meeting Chaired by Laura Hagen
Participants were:

Angela Gallant, the LOFT
Krista Laybolt, the LOFT
Jennifer Mooney, the LOFT
Lesley Ross, the LOFT

Laura began the meeting with a brief introduction of herself and the Institute of Island Studies. Pamphlets were distributed for further information. She described the Premier's Forum on Youth as a one-day forum organized by youth for youth. She commented that the Premier was committed to Youth initiatives on PEI and that it was a unique opportunity for people ages 16-29 to make themselves heard.

She then asked the people at the meeting about LOFT, what it was and where it was going. They explained that it was a group of people in the Souris region, headed up by Doug Lee, who were

trying to organize a youth drop in centre in the area. They described their fundraising activities and commented that negotiations on the lease of a space above the post office were underway and they hoped to have the centre open by June.

The following suggestions were made for the Forum's program:

- important to make it positive;
- should ask the panellists what they have done that has been positive;
- ensure regional representation;
- it would be good for young people to be in groups with the older "youth";
- the speaker from Newfoundland sounds interesting;
- employment is an important thing to have discussed.

Other issues that came up in the meeting were:

- teachers discriminate against young people;
- young teachers are needed in the school system;
- they have no idea what they want to do after high school;
- university does not guarantee a job;
- money is not an obstacle to obtaining an education, will find it somewhere;
- main problem is uncertainty, need to know what is out there;
- other places like Ontario and Alberta are more exciting;
- big cities offer more culture and more to do;
- employment in the summer is hard to get unless you know someone.

The people at the meeting expressed interest in the Forum and Jennifer Mooney confirmed that she would be very interested in sitting on the Youth Panel as part of the day. The meeting concluded and Laura said she would forward more information as it became available.

***Minutes from Meeting
re: Premier's Forum on Youth
Monday, April 27, 1998,
Westisle Composite High School - Holland College***

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Meeting chaired by Laura Hagen

Individuals present:

Matt Ellsworth, Youth Internship Program
Cory Shields, Youth Internship Program
Jason Robinson, Youth Internship Program
Myles Hustler, Youth Internship Program
Dennis Cahill, Youth Internship Program
Bobbi Jo MacWilliams, Youth Internship Program
Terry Smith, Youth Internship Program

Philip Griffin, Youth Internship Program
Ed McDougall, Youth Internship Program
John Phillips, Youth Internship Program

Laura began the meeting with an introduction of herself and the Institute of Island Studies: pamphlets were distributed for further information. She then described the Premier's Forum on Youth as a one-day event to be held in Charlottetown on May 21, 1998 for people ages 16 to 29 on PEI. It was explained that the purpose of this meeting was to get information from the individuals present as to what the current issues were for young people on the Island and how they thought they should be addressed. The following points were brought up in the discussion:

Education

- It is hard to know what jobs are out there;
- need more information on labour market;
- need skills necessary for hands-on work;
- access is a big problem, Summerside is too far to drive;
- like hands-on training and experience of their present program;
- would like to continue with education and get more skills;
- on-the-job-training is beneficial for getting skills;
- should have free tuition for certain programs that are in demand; and
- need long-term planning for accessible education.

Access

- A car is necessary for transportation to school;
- need money to buy a car;
- have to work to pay for car and insurance;
- need experience to get work;
- so a vicious circle is the result.

Suggestions were made for there to be more support for training and educating in non-central areas of the province. Other comments centered on providing free accommodations in places like Summerside so individuals wouldn't have to get vehicles to travel to school every day.

Employment

- They will go anywhere for work;
- need to know how to get work;
- don't believe there is any work on PEI;
- have traveled to other provinces to work during winter;
- would like to stay here if they could;
- but transportation is expensive;
- hard to go back to school when lose income.

The group stressed over and over again the importance of transportation in their area of the Island. They saw it as a barrier to education and training. A strong interest was expressed in the Forum and Dennis Cahill agreed to sit on the Youth Panel.

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