

Moir, Rita. "Writing Program Acclaimed, B.C. Closing Fine Arts College". Globe and Mail. January 6, 1984 Friday.

Writing program acclaimed B.C. closing fine arts college

BYLINE: RITA MOIR; SPCL

LENGTH: 416 words

DATELINE: NELSON, B. C.

By RITA MOIR
Special to The Globe and Mail

NELSON, B. C. - The Social Credit Government is closing the David Thompson University Centre here, just four months after saying the institution would continue to operate.

Education Minister Jack Heinrich announced Wednesday that the fine arts institution will close on April 30 because of low enrolment and high costs.

Richard Pearce, a senior official of the centre, said yesterday, however, that enrolment has been increasing and costs have been coming down.

The university combines courses offered by nearby Selkirk College in Castlegar and a degree program through the University of Victoria. The school is known nationally for its writing programs and education courses designed for teachers working in isolated communities.

Rumors persisted through December that the University of Victoria might cut its program, but the decision by the Cabinet of Premier William Bennett to close the institution entirely is sending shock waves through the town and the arts community.

The centre, which employs 100 people and has an enrolment of 300, is a major source of income in Nelson. The town of 9,000 is already in severe financial trouble, with an unemployment rate close to 35 per cent.

The university, overlooking the west arm of Kootenay Lake, has attracted writers from across Canada.

Vancouver poet Tom Wayman is one of many writers who have headed for Nelson to teach and recharge their creative batteries. "This (decision) is really a kick in the head," Mr. Wayman said in a telephone interview from Vancouver. "The writing program was unique in Canada and the United States. . . ." It combined a high level of creative writing studies with teaching people skills to support themselves as writers - using computers, typesetters, editing manuscripts and learning journalism." Mr. Pearce, the Nelson campus director appointed by the University of Victoria, said the Cabinet's decision will set rural education in British Columbia back 10 years. David Thompson is the province's only degree-granting institution outside of Victoria and Vancouver.

Mr. Pearce said the Government is applying short-term cost-cutting policies that will cause long-term devastation.

He said the Education Ministry will save \$2.7-million a year by closing the school, but will put 100 people out of work and will spend \$2-million in severance pay in the first year.

He called the Government's move a "morally devastating blow" to the community.

Moir, Rita. "Help save university, B.C. logger asks artists". Globe and Mail. February 28, 1984 Tuesday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

February 28, 1984 Tuesday

Help save university, B.C. logger asks artists

BYLINE: RITA MOIR; SPCL

LENGTH: 578 words

DATELINE: Victoria BC

By RITA MOIR
Special to The Globe and Mail

VICTORIA - A logger has called on artists from across Canada to come to the Kootenays to form a "university of the resistance," and not to allow the closing of the David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, B.C.

Corky Evans, speaking to a crowd of about 200 outside the provincial Legislature yesterday, said the school is the "only university to the people who dig the ore, farm the land, raise the food, cut the timber and build the dams." Most of the people attending the rally were Nelson-area residents who travelled 700 kilometres to voice their displeasure over the announced campus closing.

Mr. Evans, a Nelson resident, said people at the university help the residents of the resource-rich Kootenays to find "some way we can deal with the confusion we have as they (the B.C. Government) stripped the guts out of everything else we have." Nelson Mayor Louis Maglio, who has health problems, has not been able to get a meeting with Education Minister Jack Heinrich to present him with the city's proposal for keeping the school running on sounder economic footing.

During question period in the Legislature yesterday, Mr. Heinrich said he would not reconsider the university's future. He announced on Jan. 4 that the school will close on May 1. He said it was one of the Government's most difficult decisions in five years.

The crowd outside the Legislature appeared dismayed by New Democratic Party Opposition Leader David Barrett's statement to them that it is "probably too late" to save the university. "My dear friends," Mr. Barrett said, "you are talking to a mind-set, immoral Government that has no commitment whatsoever to needs beyond sustaining power, and until you understand that, you're going to be very disappointed." He urged them to bring back the NDP.

Nelson-Creston NDP MLA Lorne Nicolson promised that an NDP government would re-open the school.

Residents of the Kootenay area say they are being cheated by the Government, which gets revenue from the area's resources such as timber and hydro-electric power, but is closing the only degree-granting university in the British Columbia outside the Vancouver-Victoria area.

Surindar Dhaliwal, a student in the school's rural education program and vice-president of the DTUC student society, told the rally that her father, who grew up in India, compares the education financial cuts in British Columbia to the state of Third World countries. "The way you maintain control over people is to keep them ignorant," Miss Dhaliwal said.

The demonstrators left Nelson on Sunday morning for the 15-trip by bus and ferry to Vancouver and Victoria.

Nelson residents contributed \$1,400 in several days to help pay the way for those who could not afford it, and the Nelson labor council donated the cost of one of the three buses.

The protesters found themselves trooping through endless lengths of ferry terminal corridors, carrying large wooden silhouette cutouts of people who couldn't travel all the way for the rallies.

Along with the political songs, composed and sung on the bus by the theatre, writing and music students, organizers spent the long journey through the mountains planning strategy for the next few months before the university centre is scheduled to close.

They are not specifying the details of their plans, but said polite negotiations ended yesterday and they are considering acts of civil disobedience now.

Moir, Rita. "Forests Ministry announces cutbacks Layoffs one more blow to B.C. town". Globe and Mail.
February 4, 1984 Saturday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

February 4, 1984 Saturday

Forests Ministry announces cutbacks Layoffs one more blow to B.C. town

BYLINE: RITA MOIR; SPCL

LENGTH: 404 words

DATELINE: NELSON, B. C.

By RITA MOIR
Special to The Globe and Mail

NELSON, B. C. - This city has received another economic blow. The province announced yesterday that 49 jobs in the Ministry of Forests will be cut by May 1 as part of the Social Credit Government's plans to reduce the number of employees on its payroll.

May 1 is also the day the Government will close the David Thompson University Centre here. The centre employs 100 people. Last year, the B. C. Timber plywood mill in Nelson closed, putting 175 people out of work.

The Government, the university centre and the mill are the major employers in Nelson.

Debby Offermann, staff representative for the B. C. Government Employees Union in the West Kootenays, said the parks branch and lands branch have already laid off employees here, and cuts are expected next in the Ministry of Highways. "Between the closure of the David Thompson University Centre and all this, we certainly are getting to the point where the economy of the community will suffer," she said. "It's not only the layoffs, but people who are insecure in their jobs don't buy things." She said the BCGEU is expecting more terminations to come in the Throne Speech when the new session of the provincial Legislature convenes.

Steve Thompson, a soil scientist in Nelson who lost his job in the Forest Ministry yesterday, said the layoffs are part of a Government plan to hand more power to the large forest companies.

He said the Forest Ministry will be granting more tree farm licences to large corporations and with the layoff of ministry employees there will be less scrutiny of the companies' logging and reforestation plans.

John Cuthbert, manager of the Nelson forest region, said some work will have to be farmed out to district offices within the region, some will be done by industry, and some work "won't be done." "Our ability to do things will be reduced. There will be less monitoring" of logging, he said.

Mr. Cuthbert said jobs previously handled by union members, like carpentry and mechanical work on forest service vehicles, will be contracted out to private industry.

Forest Minister Tom Waterland announced yesterday that his ministry's budget has been reduced by 25 per cent, with "redundancy notices" going to 506 employees across British Columbia. By the end of the 1984-85 fiscal year, jobs in the Ministry of Forests will be reduced to 4,185 from a 1983 level of 5,527.

Moir, Rita. "B.C. to shut institution in Nelson". Globe and Mail. February 17, 1984 Friday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

February 17, 1984 Friday

B.C. to shut institution in Nelson

BYLINE: CP

LENGTH: 111 words

DATELINE: Victoria BC

VICTORIA (CP) - The B.C. Government reaffirmed yesterday its decision to close the David Thompson University Centre in Nelson in southeastern British Columbia.

Education Minister Jack Heinrich said he is closing the centre despite the strong representations made by many supporters of the centre to keep the facility open.

Mr. Heinrich said he recognizes the plight of Nelson, but he does not believe the continuance of the centre is the answer. He regrets that the economic reality does not allow the Government to respond favorably to those who supported the institution, he said.

What remains to be determined, he said, is how the campus and its facilities will be used.

Moir, Rita. "Help save university, B.C. logger asks artists". Globe and Mail. February 28, 1984 Tuesday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

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Mr. Evans, a Nelson resident, said people at the university help the residents of the resource-rich Kootenays to find "some way we can deal with the confusion we have as they (the B.C. Government) stripped the guts out of everything else we have." Nelson Mayor Louis Maglio, who has health problems, has not been able to get a meeting with Education Minister Jack Heinrich to present him with the city's proposal for keeping the school running on sounder economic footing.

During question period in the Legislature yesterday, Mr. Heinrich said he would not reconsider the university's future. He announced on Jan. 4 that the school will close on May 1. He said it was one of the Government's most difficult decisions in five years.

The crowd outside the Legislature appeared dismayed by New Democratic Party Opposition Leader David Barrett's statement to them that it is "probably too late" to save the university. "My dear friends," Mr. Barrett said, "you are talking to a mind-set, immoral Government that has no commitment whatsoever to needs beyond sustaining power, and until you understand that, you're going to be very disappointed." He urged them to bring back the NDP.

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Moir, Rita. "City votes to buy B.C. university". Globe and Mail. March 3, 1984 Saturday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

March 3, 1984 Saturday

City votes to buy B.C. university

BYLINE: CP

LENGTH: 242 words

DATELINE: NELSON, B.C.

NELSON, B.C. (CP) - City council voted yesterday to purchase the threatened David Thompson University Centre for \$1 from the provincial Government and operate it as a private institution.

Under terms of the offer, the Government 'will recognize and treat the (centre) as other private educational institutions in the province . . . in terms of providing funding.' The city's offer was made as a result of a Government decision to close the centre May 1 as part of its program of budget cuts. Despite protests in Victoria and Vancouver on Monday, Education Minister Jack Heinrich refused to reconsider the decision to close the centre.

The centre, with its 100 workers, is a major employer in this West Kootenay city of 10,000, where the unemployment rate is 24 per cent, compared with the provincial average of 15 per cent.

The centre serves about 500 full-time and part-time students. Jointly sponsored by the Castlegar-based Selkirk College and the University of Victoria, the university centre offers degree-granting programs in education and fine arts as well as college-level courses in music, creative writing and theatre.

Under the city's proposal, Nelson would establish a board of management accountable to council for the operation and maintenance of the centre.

The province would also agree to help the city obtain funds from 'such other sources as the federal Government, the private sector, foundations, organizations and individuals.'

Moir, Rita. "ACROSS CANADA B.C. students occupy minister's riding office". Globe and Mail. March 7, 1984 Wednesday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

March 7, 1984 Wednesday

ACROSS CANADA B.C. students occupy minister's riding office

BYLINE: CP

LENGTH: 139 words

DATELINE: Vancouver BC

VANCOUVER (CP) - About 15 members of a group called Students Against the Budget occupied the constituency office of Universities Minister Pat McGeer yesterday.

The students were protesting against Government cutbacks in education financing and the closing of David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, B.C. Spokesman Bill Collar said the group plans to remain in Mr. McGeer's office for a couple of days and that protesters will have to be dragged out if police are ordered to remove them. He said he does not expect the Government to pay much attention to the occupation. "It's going to take a long time before this Government will move," he said. "This is just another part of the campaign to fight back." In a telephone interview from his University of British Columbia office, Mr. McGeer said the occupation does not disturb him.

Moir, Rita. "300 join protest as move goes on at Nelson centre". Globe and Mail, May 1, 1984 Tuesday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

May 1, 1984 Tuesday

300 join protest as move goes on at Nelson centre

BYLINE: RITA MOIR; SPCL

LENGTH: 320 words

DATELINE: Nelson BC

By RITA MOIR
Special to The Globe and Mail

NELSON - About 300 people, including Kootenay West MP Lyle Kristiansen, linked hands to form a human chain around the library at the David Thompson University Centre here yesterday, in a gesture of support for the senior citizens and students who moved in to occupy the building last Thursday.

The protesters are refusing to leave until the provincial Government guarantees in writing that books and equipment will not be removed from buildings on the campus.

The campus closes today, under the orders of the Social Credit Government, which says the fine arts centre is too expensive to operate. Nelson residents have been fighting the decision since January.

During the demonstration yesterday, elderly residents sat on a couch blocking a moving van which had come in to begin removal of typewriters and filing cabinets from the school's administrative building. The equipment will go to nearby Selkirk College in Castlegar. The demonstrators said they will allow a limited amount of equipment to go, but are keeping an inventory of everything that leaves.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Jack Heinrich said in a letter to the mayor of Nelson that the province will begin to remove books and haul away portable sections of the library as early as June 8. Mr. Heinrich said he "would regret a negative reaction to the relocation of the required equipment." The protesters in the library say they are firm in their resolve to stay there until they are dragged out. They are worried that once the books are taken away there will never be another university here.

They are pinning their hopes on a proposal to use the campus for a new umbrella university, which is already drawing proposals from 14 universities from across North America.

The protesters range in age from 62 to 78, and include a United Church minister and several retired university instructors.

Moir, Rita. " Occupation resumes over library access at former university". Globe and Mail. July 20, 1984 Friday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

July 20, 1984 Friday

Occupation resumes over library access at former university

BYLINE: SPCL

LENGTH: 91 words

DATELINE: NELSON, B.C.

Special to The Globe and Mail

NELSON, B.C. - Occupiers of the David Thompson University Centre say they will refuse to leave the library if the British Columbia Government takes over security of the building.

The occupation ended Wednesday when protesters were assured the city of Nelson would take over the library. It resumed when Selkirk College, a former administrator of the Nelson campus, refused to turn over the keys.

Yesterday, the education ministry said Nelson Mayor Louis Maglio had agreed to let the province take over campus security.

Moir, Rita. "High school for rich to open in Nelson". Globe and Mail. July 12, 1986 Saturday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

July 12, 1986 Saturday

High school for rich to open in Nelson

BYLINE: RITA MOIR; Special to The Globe and Mail

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A11

LENGTH: 519 words

A new private high school for the rich is scheduled to open in 1987 on the site of the old David Thompson University Centre.

John Christianson, board chairman for the new David Thompson College, said the school hopes to attract international students paying \$12,000 annually for room and board.

The private school is seeking accreditation under the Baccalaureate Program based in Geneva, Switzerland, thereby boosting its drawing power among the world's wealthy.

Mr. Christianson, who served as welfare minister in the Conservative government of Duff Roblin in Manitoba, estimates that the high school will contribute between \$1-million and \$2-million to Nelson's battered economy in its first year.

The Social Credit Government closed Nelson's Notre Dame University in 1977. Its successor, the David Thompson University Centre, was closed in 1984 by the Government's restraint program. The city has also lost its plywood mill and sawmill.

While many Nelson residents are delighted that the campus is being renewed, some find the notion of a private school, in a city that has fought so hard for public education, hard to swallow.

"I find it very ironic that a school for the elite of nations will be in Nelson, while public education has been gutted, and teacher and student morale are so low in B.C.," said Caroline Woodward, a former student of David Thompson University Centre. "But when public education is so poor, I can see why people would get so fired up about this."

When the David Thompson University Centre was closed, senior citizens led a 90-day occupation of the university library and Nelson residents blockaded the removal of equipment from the campus.

The occupation succeeded, and the campus remained intact, with its 70,000-volume library open to the public while the city hunted for a university willing to take over.

The provincial Government wasn't willing to provide public funds to run another university, but it did sell the campus to the city for \$1 when the private high school proposal looked firm. And the Government will continue to pay \$500,000 a year, for 17 years, on mortgages and property.

An intact campus, a complete library, a town looking for education, jobs and students, and one of the most attractive recreational locations in Canada was a good proposition for a group of educators based in Manitoba.

The administrators are obviously sensitive to feelings in the town. They are consulting with residents' groups and are committed to opening the campus to the public.

They are also careful to make no attempt to take over the library, an almost sacred symbol of the town's right to education. Instead, the school will help staff the library, while its students gain access to it.

Dedie Dodds, one of the senior citizens who helped save the campus, said no one wants to deny the chance for jobs, but "my guess is, the Government wouldn't give the campus to the city unless the school was something the Government wanted. We were had. I wish the school success, because we don't want another failure in this city. But people here want post- secondary education and we'll keep fighting for it."

Moir, Rita. "Province makes deal ending Nelson sit-in". Globe and Mail. July 30, 1984 Monday

The Globe and Mail (Canada)

July 30, 1984 Monday

Province makes deal ending Nelson sit-in

BYLINE: SPCL

LENGTH: 260 words

DATELINE: NELSON, B.C.

Special to The Globe and Mail

NELSON, B.C. - Occupiers of the David Thompson University Centre library will move out today after reaching a settlement with the provincial Government.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Government will give the city the keys for the entire campus while Selkirk College, a former administrator of DTUC, removes equipment and books agreed upon by the city and the occupiers. The province will then resume custody of the building until a final lease for the library has been worked out with the city.

Nelson Mayor Louis Maglio, who met with the occupiers and Government negotiators Friday, said yesterday that he has to "commend the occupiers for taking the stand they did." Mr. Maglio is confident a lease can be completed this week, which will allow public use of the library. Under the agreement with the province, almost all of the 72,000-volume collection will stay in Nelson.

The Government closed the school May 1, intending to remove all the books and cart away sections of the library building.

Occupier Betty Daniel said the more than 80 people involved in the 96-day sit-in are satisfied with the agreement. She said more and more communities will have to take unusual steps to force negotiations with the province.

The occupation had ended July 18, but resumed the same day when the province said it had no intention of handing the keys to the library over to Nelson City Council. But occupiers believe that when local Social Credit Party members became involved in the protest, the Government was forced to settle.