

# Education not incarceration

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Signs and slogans evoked memories of the Nazi holocaust and Canada's internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War Two.

But the roughly 200 people who marched through downtown Vancouver recently were protesting proposed changes to the B.C. Health Act that would give medical officers increased legal power to detain and isolate people with AIDS and other communicable diseases.

## legal power to detain and isolate people with AIDS

Bill 34, the so-called "quarantine" bill, would also give more legal clout to provincial medical officers requesting research and private patient information.

While the proposed legislation only clarifies the legal procedures for powers already outlined in the Health Act, a coalition of community and civil rights groups fears the

changes will drive people with AIDS, or those who think they have the disease, underground.

"In the 1930s the U.S. government rounded up prostitutes to try and stop the spread of syphilis, and it didn't help," said Bob Tivey, speaking for the Coalition for Responsible Health Legislation.

Tivey said one of the coalition's main concerns is that legislation is being considered in a province without adequate protection of gays and lesbians.

At present in Nova Scotia, there is no provision for sexual orientation in the human rights code

After pressure from the community, a South Shore man was denied the right to teach in elementary school because he tested positive for the HIV virus. No medical evidence showed the disease could be passed on to any of the students.

Eric Smith plans to challenge the school board decision, which gives him a non-teaching position.

The Nova Scotia Teachers' Union has a policy stating that teachers of students who test antibody positive have the right to teach or attend class unless

they require special treatment.

AIDS experts say Smith is absolutely no threat to his students.

Among the alternatives suggested by the coalition are a "hard-hitting education campaign" and better counselling and support services by re-establishing funding to AIDS Vancouver and AIDS Vancouver Island.

The provincial government recently refused the two groups a \$250,000 grant.

## "Health and educational cuts promote AIDS"

Protestors carried signs saying "Education not Incarceration" and "Health and Education cuts promote AIDS".

They also reminded the crowd that thousands of gay men and women were slaughtered by the Nazi regime during World War Two, and that gays and lesbians are still open targets for hatred and institutionalized discrimin-

ation.

"The Jewish community has a saying that goes something like, 'We will never let this happen again'. Let that be our slogan too," said Tivey, evoking a roar from the crowd.

The demonstration was endorsed by over 20 organizations, including NDP Federal Health Critic Margaret Mitchell, NDP Federal Justice Critic Svend Robinson, and the B.C. Federation of Labour.



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