

Women's programs being cut

by Padraic Brake

HALIFAX (CUP) — Eighty women's centres across the country will be victims of the federal government's deficit-cutting mission.

The centres, in British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and

Newfoundland and Labrador, will lose their funding from the Secretary of State's Women's Program as part of the federal budget.

"It's unfair of (the government) to balance the budget on the backs of Canadian women," Liberal MP Mary Clancy said.

She said the government is

making a "concerted effort to diminish women and children" by cutting funding to women's programs.

The budget also cut funding for four national women's organizations — including the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities (CCLLO) and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) — by 20 per cent.

"Two years ago we had our funding frozen, last year we were cut by 15 per cent," said Linda Roberts, an official with CCLLO. "Now we face a further 20 per cent."

"The government is deliberately trying to silence women," she said.

Stella Lord, an official with the CRIAOW said her organization

may not be able to continue its research efforts.

"The net effect of the budget is to cut off and dismantle institutions that women have built up with a lot of work," she said.

The federal government will save \$1.6 million at the expense of the centres.

Nova Scotia NDP leader Alexa McDonough said the federal government has just signed a \$1.6 million lease on a Halifax office building for the occasional visit from a cabinet minister.

"I'm sure that women in Nova Scotia would not mind putting up the occasional visiting cabinet minister so that they could have their funding back," she said.

The federal government will release the list of women's centres affected by the cuts Mar. 13. But

the government has already warned some centres.


Clancy said the government was playing "divide and conquer."

"We know about some of the centres because we have been well organized, but we don't know about the prairies yet," she said.

The Antigonish, N.S. Women's Resource Centre will lose its \$43,000 grant from the Secretary of State after May 31.

The centre's coordinator Lucille Harper said the federal government is running the country with a "branch plant mentality."

"This is not some business (Brian Mulroney) is running, this is a country," she said.



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The new engineer

by Padraic Brake

HALIFAX (CUP) — A new organization of female engineers met for the first time in Ottawa last week to plot inroads for women into the traditionally male bastion.

"We have to deal with the sexist

attitudes and sexist acts of students within engineering," said Monique Frize, an engineering professor at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

Frize is the chair of the National Committee on the Environment for Women in Engineering.

"Until it stops, women will not go into engineering," she said.

The committee will examine the barriers and attitudes which women face when they are aspiring to be engineers.

Frize said there are many reasons why women do not choose to be engineers, among them a lack of role models, lack of an emphasis on science in our culture, stereotyping of careers, and the lack of incentive given to women when they are in high school.

One person who has beaten the odds is Heather Johnston. She is a Masters of Engineering student at the Technical University of Nova Scotia in Halifax.

"I was never given the option to become an engineer when I was in high school," she said. "I don't think it's a field of study that is presented to many women."

Frize is also Women in Engineering chair at the UNB, the only position of its kind in Canada.

"Half of my job (at UNB) is academically related," she said. "The other 50 per cent is to find some means to increase the enrolment of women in engineering."

Frize said there is a special need to go to junior high schools and upper elementary schools to tell students about engineering. "When I go to these schools I always bring along female and male engineering students to provide those role models."

"I have taken the long-term approach, especially when I go to elementary schools" she said. "But the time will come when there are as many women in engineering as there are in business, law or medicine."



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