

Students disrupt Commons

by Romeo St. Martin and Monique Beaudin

OTTAWA (CUP) — Members of Parliament marked National Student Day Oct. 17 by dodging flying macaroni in the House of Commons.

About 20 University of Ottawa students were kicked out of the public gallery for throwing pasta and postcards at MPs during question period.

The protest coincided with campus demonstrations across the country denouncing the federal government's decision to introduce a three per cent tax on student loans.

The outburst occurred after NDP education critic Howard McCurdy asked the government about the three per cent tax, which will come into effect in August 1991.

The chanting students were escorted out by House of Commons security.

"The security guards were quite rough with us," said Lesley Cornish, a U of O student. "They grabbed us and pushed us straight out the doors and (told us we) could be charged with disturbing the peace."

U of O council executive Marc Molgat, one of the student ejected, said the protestors were trying to attract attention to the problems faced by Canadian students.

"These (politicians) are eating

steak and potatoes every night, while roughly half the students are eating macaroni," Molgat said.

"They (the government) are saying that this tax will encourage students to pay back loans," he

co-ordinator of the U of O's Ontario Public Interest Research Group.

Earlier in the day, Molgat and David Russell, a Carleton University student council executive, held a press conference on Parliament

that does not have a national system of grants.

According to 1987-88 statistics from the Department of the Secretary of State, 29.3 per cent of final-year students with federal loans had

"We believe that there should be no financial barriers to education." CFS's "bold funding alternative" comes at a time when the country's universities and colleges are in dire need of an influx of cash, Arnold said.

Overcrowded classes, outdated equipment and poorly-stocked libraries are becoming commonplace in Canadian institutions, she said.

"If the government follows this (plan) from A to Z, there will not be an underfunding crisis anymore," Arnold said. "All those who are qualified will get into the system...(and) receive a quality education."

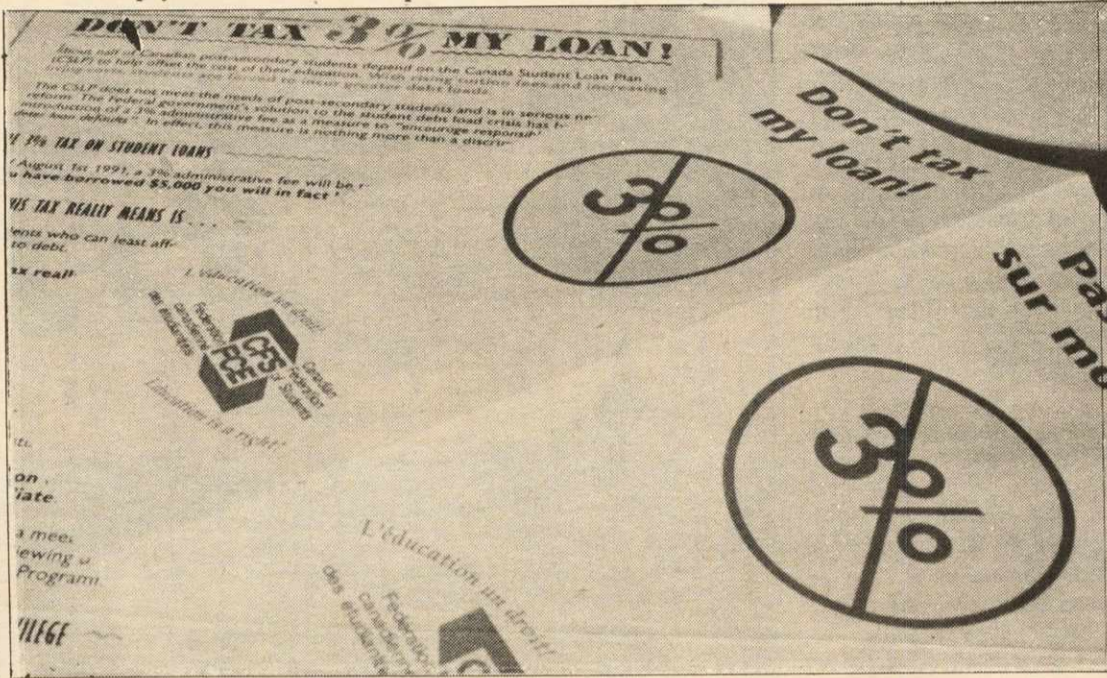
Howard McCurdy, the NDP's education critic, said his party supports many of CFS's reforms, including eliminating tuition fees and increasing provincial accountability.

McCurdy said the NDP advocates establishing a "subsistence program" that would give living allowances to students. He said such a program would stop "young people from low-income families (from) choosing short-term training programs rather than university programs."

Calling it a "positive initiative," Liberal education critic applauded the CFS report, although he said the idea of eliminating tuition fees "is probably not realizable in the very near future."

He blamed the federal government for the current state of Canada's universities and colleges.

"There is no vision, no plan, no strategy, no focus in what the federal government is doing in post-secondary education," Duhamel said.



Dal photo: Maria Patriquin

Canadian Federation of Students campaign material opposing tax. Picked one up yet?

said. "That's bologna."

Molgat said he is "quite frustrated" with the federal government's policies on post-secondary education.

"(The macaroni) is symbolic of what students are eating right now," said Michael Stevens, the

Hill to denounce the three per cent tax.

Noting that tuition fees are not the only barrier to education, Arnold said a national system of grants is long overdue. The CFS report says Canada is one of the only countries in the western world

debts of over \$5,000, 13.9 per cent over \$10,000 and 4.6 per cent over \$15,000. The figures don't include provincial debts.

She said a national system based on a student's needs would make advanced education accessible to more Canadians.

CFS calls for corporate tax

by Andy Riga

OTTAWA (CUP) — Corporations should be helping foot the bill for Canada's higher education system, according to the Canadian Federation of Students.

In a report released to coincide with National Student Day, Oct. 17, CFS called for a three per cent minimum corporate tax that would allow for the abolition of tuition fees.

Money generated from the tax would also help the government create a national grants program to replace the current loan system. Canada's research councils could also expect a share of the increased funding.

"This country is facing a crisis in post-secondary education," CFS chair Jane Arnold said at a Parliament Hill press conference. "This crisis will not be resolved by increasing tuition fees, encouraging student debt and ignoring the vital role of university-based research."

She said the report — entitled Strategy for Change — contains the federation's plan to overhaul the financing of post-secondary education.

The overall cost of implementing the proposals would be \$1.7 billion.

Arnold said it is reasonable to expect corporations to help pay for the plan, since they "benefit directly

from a highly-skilled labor force."

The CFS report notes that 118,162 corporations with profits totaling \$25 billion didn't pay taxes in 1987.

CFS, which represents 400,000 students nationwide, wants the federal government to play a larger role in post-secondary education funding. It's calling for a federal higher education ministry that would establish national standards.

Although education is a provincial concern, the federal government provides much of the funding

through transfer payments. But, Arnold noted, there is no guarantee the provinces will spend the money on education.

CFS wants the federal government to force provinces to spend a certain percentage of transfer payments on post-secondary education.

They said the tax "decreases accessibility" to post-secondary education, adding that it hurts those who are least able to pay the most.

Russell said almost 50 per cent of the nation's 500,000 full-time

post-secondary students are in debt to the Canada Student Loans Plan, which the tax will apply to.



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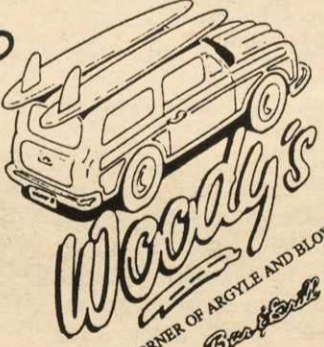
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