

Universite de Quebec á Montreal students strike

MONTREAL (CUP) - A four-hour meeting attended by 1,400 students at the Universite de Quebec a Montreal (UQAM) Feb. 7, ended in complete solidarity between full and part-time students.

The UQAM students also voted overwhelmingly to continue with their strike and to initiate direct negotiations with the provincial

The rally was the largest since the UQAM student shut down the university by striking Jan. 25, in opposition to the university's plans to expell 3000 students for late payment of fees.

The meeting was originally called by an ad hoc committee of students from the administration module of the university.

The ad hoc committee proved incapable of running the meeting, however, and COPE members had to take charge.

The members of the ad hoc committee were called on to answer questions from the general assembly. The students demanded to know who had financed the ad hoc committee, why the committee call only evening (part-time) students to meet, and who had given them a mandate to call such a meeting.

The assembly participants rejected a proposal calling for a mediator to settle the controversy, and denounced the committee's attempt to split student ranks.

COPE then gave a half-hour summary of the strike situation. The spokespeople said the UQAM administration's recent actions are part of a province-wide educational policy of conducting severe cutbacks in the number of university students. The new financial barriers would be especially burdensome for working class children.

All this comes at a time when the administration is unveiling plans for a \$55 million expansion program.

COPE proposed the strike be continued and that a five-person negotiating team be set up to deal directly with education minister Francois Cloutier, rather than the administration.

The proposal carried - 1300 for and ten against.

Twenty minutes of cheering and chanting followed the overwhelming vote of solidarity.

Money to pay for the facilities used for the meeting was then collected, as the student insisted the administration not have a hand in the operations. Students also signed up to work on the picket lines.

Meanwhile at the Universite de Montreal (Ude M) decided Feb. 6 to boycott all classes in arts and social sciences until Feb. 8, when a general meeting was held to discuss further actions.

The students at U de M are also protesting the threatened expulsion of several hundred students for non-payment of their first term fees.

Students from Montreal universities came together at McGill University Feb. 3 to hold a teach-in on the current struggle of Quebec students against the provincial government's new fee ruling. The teach-in occurred as the student strike keeping the Universite de Quebec a Montreal (UQAM) closed, entered its second week.

The ruling states that students must pay all past debts to the universities, including second term tuition by February 15 or they will be expelled permanently. The order presently applies to the UQAM and the Universite de Montreal.

A student from UQAM expressed the necessity for solidarity among students from all universities who, if not now, will later face similar economic blackmail.

The speakers detailed the number of students at their respective universities who would be expelled for inability to pay fees by February 15. About 3,000 of UQAM's 11,000 students and 1,000 Universite de Montreal students will be expelled by the ruling.

With the opening of CEGEP's (junior colleges) and the Universite de Quebec in the 1960's, the student population of Quebec greatly increased. But, because of today's economic crisis and the

resulting rising unemployment, the government is trying to cut back on the already too large number of university graduates.

The students most affected by the ruling are people from the working class who must rely on part-time jobs and government loans and bursaries to pay their tuition. Although 3,000 students at UQAM receive government aid, only 300 do not have to repay the province.

The students have denounced "economic measures that become selective measures". They want up to three years after graduation to pay their fees, so no one will be denied an education through lack of money.

They pointed out that the \$15 million they owed the university is nothing compared to the \$55 million the administration sees fit to spend on building a new UQAM campus.

The UQAM administration continues to insist that the university is open despite the fact picketing has shut down the university since the strike began. Students went on strike Jan. 25 when they realized that the situation had reached an impasse. The strike followed a brief student occupation of administration offices Jan. 24, which was broken up by riot-squad police.

The professors' union has

declared its solidarity and recommended that professors not cross the picket lines. Because of their own problems with the university, they have joined the strike.

At U of M, the administration has backed down because of widespread student protest and has extended the fee deadline to next September. But, students are still opposed to this inadequate half-measure and plan to intensify the struggle along with UQAM students in the weeks to come. They emphasized the need to fight the ruling now rather than wait until summer when the government could railroad the ruling through with very little opposition.

LIP co-ordinators not eligible for UIC

LONDON (CUP) - People who worked on Local Initiatives Program (LIP) projects should be grateful for the chance "to do their own thing" with no personal risk, prime minister Pierre Trudeau said Feb. 4.

He was talking to protestors representing 15 co-ordinators of London-area LIP projects who have been unable to collect unemployment insurance, although they may have made contributions to the plan during their employment days. Trudeau was in London for a private meeting with Liberal Party officials.

LIP co-ordinators are ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits once their government-sponsored projects expire, because they are supposedly "self-employed".

The co-ordinators were given the chance to gain experience as entrepreneurs at taxpayers' expense, Trudeau said. He could not understand why they should seek unemployment insurance when the grants ran out.

Trudeau described the co-ordinators' action as merely "beefing" and "bitching", during his 10-minute discussion with them.

One of the co-ordinators' representatives told the prime minister they recognized the opportunity they had received, but there were small flaws in the program they wanted to bring to the government's attention.

Trudeau said private employers cannot seek unemployment insurance if their business fold, even though they had to take "risks" to set up the businesses. The LIP co-ordinators are private employers, he implied.

People who had LIP co-ordinator jobs last year are now being forced to return money obtained from unemployment insurance benefits, as the Liberals have expanded the Unemployment Insurance Commission's (UCI) "special investigators" force. The co-ordinators are easy marks for the investigators because the department of manpower and immigration administrators LIP grants. With little digging, the UIC sleuths found who

received LIP grants and UIC money.

Co-ordinators say when people submitted grant proposals to LIP, projected expenses included UIC deductions for co-ordinators. Apparently the department made no objections at the time. The ruling on UIC benefits also appears to have been made retroactive. Former LIP co-ordinators thought the department of manpower and immigration was the actual employer.

In some cases, the department has had the final say in hiring and firing of project personnel. Project co-ordinators also had to submit a monthly progress report and financial statement to the department which did nothing to correct the impression it was the actual employer.

One Victoria former LIP co-ordinator may have to return over \$2000 if the UIC says he is ineligible for unemployment benefits because of his former job.

Unemployment rates increase

OTTAWA (CUP) - Canada's unemployment rate increased by 1.2 percent in January according to figures released by Statistics Canada Feb. 6.

But, after statisticians accounted for seasonal trends in employment, the country's overall unemployment rate appeared to have dropped by half a percentage point, from 6.7 to 6.2 percent.

Even allowing for seasonal variations, the January figures

offered the Liberal government little cause for comfort. The unemployment rate was as high as it was in January 1972.

Women and people in the Atlantic region suffered a higher unemployment rate in January than in December. The unemployment rate for Canadian women increased from 5.5 percent to 5.6 percent, and the Atlantic region's unemployment rate kept that area the worst in the country at 9.5, up

from 9.4 in December.

In real figures, which Statistics Canada admits could be as much in error as the seasonally adjusted figures could be, the number of unemployed people was 688,000, 122,000 less than the seasonally adjusted figures, but still the highest in 10 years. The actual figures also show that unemployment increased in every sector. The hardest-hit, as usual, were young people from 14 to 24 years of age. Their unemployment rate soared from 11.0 percent in December to 13.3 percent in January.

Other information was difficult to glean from the new slicker format Statistics Canada is using to provide data to the public. Information on provincial rates for all categories of people and the length of time people have been unemployed are omitted from the new package. They were included in the monthly statistical releases until this month.

University Loans

MARCH MEETING

Applications for University of New Brunswick Student loans (NOT Canada student loans) are now being received by the Awards Office, Room 109, Memorial Student Center.

University loans are low interest loans ranging in value up to \$300.00. Students may receive only ONE loan per academic year.

There are three loan meetings a year to consider applications for university loans - late October, mid-February and mid-March.

Should you require a university loan apply at the Awards Office prior to March 2, 1973. This is the FINAL loan meeting of the academic year 1972-73.

Room 109, Memorial Student Centre.

Have you ever Been a Ranger, guide or brownie?.. ARE YOU

interested in what's happening now? -- TREFOIL come to a Get Together at Barb Kissick's 792 Jones Street - 455-5900 Wed. Feb. 28 - 7 to 9 pm.

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