

Commission to probe

French education

by Paul Creelman

The new Commission on Acadian Affairs of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia will primarily look at education issues, says Nadine Boudreau, chairperson of the commission.

According to Boudreau, francophones in the province still have problems with obtaining education in French.

"That stems from our concerns that people have a right to obtain education in their own language if numbers are sufficient. But that number has never been specified," said Boudreau. She added that there is a problem finding money for administration of francophone schools.

However, according to Jean-Denis Comeau, the Progressive Conservative consultant on Acadian Affairs, there has been a Supreme Court decision on the number of people necessary to establish a francophone school.

In the case in question, the court decided to act as mediator

between the government and the people asking for a francophone school in Sydney. As for the lack of funds available for administration of francophone schools, Comeau said, "I don't see that as a problem. Acadian school councils in their regions have never indicated any trouble in financing the Acadian schools in their area. I don't know what she was referring to there."

Boudreau said the Liberal Acadian Affairs Commission is looking at a proposal to give the Provincial Centre of Pedagogical Resources at the University of St. Ann's a central role in the education system as the French centre of the department of education. "This sounds like a pretty weird proposal to me," said Comeau. He added that the centre in question has provided vital until now in providing teaching aids to francophone schools. "If the Liberals want to replace the Department of Education with that, it's their business," said Comeau.



PHOTO: KATHLEEN JOHNSON—TRACY

Family solidarity: the pink collar ghetto goes on strike and the kids back Mom all the way.

Strike continues

by Tony Tracy

ANTIGONISH — A group of striking bank workers in this town are gaining support from their community, as well as from labour organizations and all three major political parties.

These eleven female workers from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Antigonish have been on strike since November. They walked out to protest their low wages. Although some of these workers have been on the job for over ten years, they are receiving only \$15,000 per year, two to three thousand less than comparable workers at a nearby credit union.

A rally was held Saturday in support of the workers. The rally was attended by well over four hundred supporters, including town residents, members of the provincial Women's Action Coalition, representatives from the

Canadian Labour Congress and the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, members of the Halifax-Dartmouth District Eight Labour Council, Truro Local CUPW members, representatives from the provincial Day-care Workers Union, students from St. Francis Xavier university, and others. Many of the supporters wore buttons saying, "Support Antigonish Bank Strikers . . . Can You Count on the Commerce?", which were sold to support the strike fund.

Bill Gillis, local MLA (Liberal), spoke at the rally, calling attention to the low pay the women work for, and calling on the CIBC Headquarters in Toronto to act quickly to settle the ongoing dispute. Lawrence O'Neill, local MP (Conservative), also spoke in support of the workers, as did representatives from the provincial NDP caucus.

Representatives from the CLC

presented the local union with a donation to their strike fund, as did the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour and other organizations. A Women's Action Coalition representative spoke of the troubles women in labour have in organizing unions, as well as in going on strike.

Over five hundred people have signed a petition in support of the right to better wages, and many have signed another petition saying they will withdraw their money from the bank if the strike is not settled soon. The local volunteer fire department has decided to withdraw its money from the bank in support of the workers already, and has also given other support, such as organizing a time for coffee for the supporters after the rally at the local Fire Hall.

The workers are, to date, still on strike, awaiting negotiations with the bank.

Boycott ends

MONTREAL (CUP) — Students at Concordia University have ended a boycott of O'Keefe products after the brewery apologized for racist comments a company employee made last year.

The Concordia student council voted January 11 to allow the beer on campus after reading a letter of apology written by a local O'Keefe official.

Sales of Carling O'Keefe products were banned last September after it was revealed that a sales representative had referred to council co-presidents Maxine Clark and Robert Douglas as "niggers".

Originally, O'Keefe had been boycotted by Concordia and McGill students because of its

financial ties with South Africa.

While McGill ended the ban when Elders XL, the brewery's new owners, announced they sold their holdings in that country, Concordia students decided last September to maintain the boycott because of the racist comment.

In the letter, O'Keefe public affairs vice-president André Pilon writes, "I would like to extend sincere apologies for the behaviour and inappropriate language by the employee."

Despite the decision, the Concordia student council will continue to ban the sale of Miller beer on campus. An American brand brewed in Canada under license by O'Keefe, Miller is boycotted because the U.S. brewery has ties with South Africa.



PHOTO: PAUL GRANDY

Dal sociology student Sylvia Bushwana holds daughter Yolanda last Saturday night.

Homecoming

by Heather Hueston

You've probably seen these faces in the news already. When six-year-old Yolanda Bushwana walked off the plane at Halifax International Airport, she met the horde of reporters and cameras her mother Sylvia had alerted. It's not every day that a family of South African refugees are reunited after a two-year separation.

Sylvia Bushwana and her husband Mlungisi are Dal students who came here in August 1986 as part of the World University Services Canada student refugee program. They fled their jobs at a

Cape Town school after the help they gave to students detained in the violent riots of 1985 jeopardized their own liberty. When they fled to Lesotho, they left Yolanda with a relative because "we weren't sure of the situation [there]".

Dalhousie paid the Bushwanas' tuition and expenses for their first year. After that, WUSC students have to find their own job or student loan. (Unlike foreign students, refugees have the same right to work as landed immigrants.) Karanja Njoroge, International Students' Centre co-ordinator, helped Sylvia and Mlungisi when they first arrived. He says as students and

refugees, WUSC students have a major crisis of culture shock and poverty. The Bushwanas were working to support themselves and pay back the airfare to WUSC. As far as Canadian Immigration was concerned, they couldn't meet the financial standards for sponsoring a refugee, their daughter, in Canada.

It was only through Rev. Laird Stirling of Woodlawn United Church that Yolanda found a sponsor. Once Rev. Stirling, who spent four years in South Africa, talked to Sylvia, he offered his help in sorting out the bureaucracy. Once Yolanda's visa came through in November 1987, the congregation raised \$1500 in one week. More came from local schools, and even Air Canada donated the plane fare.

Stirling calls it a "small victory over a regime that destroys family life."