

Tories hassle student protestors at U of R

REGINA (CUP)—University of Regina students got a taste of what their newly elected Tory government and its supporters think of student protest at a pre-election rally.

Progressive Conservative supporters verbally and physically harassed student protestors carry-

ing placards while a grinning Brian Mulroney and two Tory candidates averted their eyes.

Lori Latta, U of R student union vice-president internal, said the students only wanted to express their views on the crisis in post-secondary education but were

pushed and shoved aside by Mulroney supporters.

"They shoved us and hit a little girl in the face," she said. "Some PC youths came up to us and said 'If you don't shut up we'll beat your face in.'"

Tory candidates Brian Keple from Regina East and Dan Stephens from Regina West claim not to have witnessed the harassment. Keple said he could not condone such an action, but quickly added he would likely get the same reaction if he walked into a 1,000-strong NDP rally.

Keple and Stephens, who failed in their bid for a seat, and Mulroney all thought the protestors were NDP supporters. During the rally, Mulroney said: "Don't be hard on

these NDP hecklers, they come to the only place where they can draw crowds."

Latta said the students were surprised by the hostility they encountered from the Tory supporters. "Most of the people who harassed us were men in three-piece suits and middle-aged women," she said.

Angered by the demonstration, Mulroney fans tried to push the protestors' signs out of their leader's view by putting their own in front, Latta said. The students' placards read: "Education is Job Creation," "Education Funding Improved the Economy" and "Rationalize Politicians not Education."

Some demonstrators carried signs reading "Mulroney is Pro-Reagan, and Reagan is a War

Monger." Leslie Mitchell, U of R student union vice-president external, said one woman dropped her sign only to have a Tory supporter stand on her hand and refuse to let her pick it up.

Before the protestors entered the hotel, Latta said Stephens examined the slogans on the signs and said they had a right to express their views at the rally.

But Stephens campaign manager Bob Valcov said he asked the demonstrator to leave their signs outside the hotel. "They refused and started pushing and shoving us. So we said, 'Okay, go ahead.'"

"What did they expect to happen? It was our hall—we paid for it," Valcov said. "But we still think these things should be open to the public."

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Human rights code could spurn gays

WINNIPEG (CUP)—Manitoba's new human rights code may not protect lesbians and gay men from discrimination because the concern is not a priority of the provincial government, a gay community spokesperson says.

"It's too dangerous politically," says Louise Fehr. "It's disappointing but it's not surprising."

The proposed human rights code gives teeth to existing laws against all forms of discrimination, but a clause specifically prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation may not be included,

according to Manitoba attorney-general Roland Penner.

Fehr says the NDP government fails to follow party policy on issues such as sexual orientation and reproductive choice.

Quebec is the only province whose human rights code bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. "We keep waiting for the rest of Canada to catch up with Quebec, but it won't happen," Fehr says. "The political climate in Canada has gotten a lot more conservative."

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