

DISCOVERY OF POVERTY SPURS PARLEY

(The Campus Co-operative Housing Association is planning to hold a conference on POVERTY IN CANADA, March 9th and 10th, on campus.)

Someone has discovered poverty in Canada...! This was definitely the reaction on the part of the News Media and a good many Canadians, (Especially the university community), to the reports handed down by both the Special Senate commission chaired by David Croll and the Real Poverty (renegade) commission headed by Ian Adams.

...And they found that poverty was not just an isolated phenomena specially reserved for Native and Eskimo peoples,

but that it is so widespread in this society that nearly 25% of Canada's population are living in it, and that another 25% are barely escaping it.

As the initial attraction and the sensation generated by the Media's coverage of the reports begins to wear off, the student much like others who are privileged, forget all too easily. To the poor, however, poverty is not an intellectual curiosity, but the cold-hard facts of life.

Those who view any exposure of our "democracy" as conspiracies of one kind or other will take comfort in believing that the poor are shiftless bums and drunkards, deserving everything they got.

While others who pretend neutrality or friendship say that it is just a question of time and effort before the poor share in the "general affluence" of our present society. (Although dreams of rags to riches may make great copyright of films, it remains a far cry from what is actually going on).

If there are two points that both reports can come to agree upon, it is that the vast majority of those who are poor **DO WORK** — they are **NOT** unemployed — and that they live in what is called a poverty syndrome. They were born in it, they will live in it, and they will die in it. They are people who suffer physically from want of proper clothing, food and shelter, things most of us take for granted. But more importantly they are people who are ruthlessly dehumanized by the existing political and economic forces in this society over which they have no control; and are thus deprived of the necessary power to change their condition.

Let us assume for the moment that there was no government

commission on poverty, and therefore no reports to get excited about. Report or no report, one out of every four Canadians still hasn't a hope in hell; and yet you could count on the politicians and their American sugar daddies to keep on telling you that there ain't no such animal as poverty in Canada. (exceptin' of course those injuns). Imagine how absolutely absurd this must seem to the working poor.

The point is that workers, farmers, unemployed, and Native people making up 80% of our population have virtually no

access to the news media or the political platform. The poverty conference on March 9th and 10th, sponsored by co-op, will provide a platform for not only the politics of big business and the government, but also the politics of the worker, the farmer, the unemployed, Native people; not as somebody else sees them, but as they see themselves — their problems, and the solutions to those problems, both now and in the future.

Conferences like most things in this society cost money. The co-op hopes to cover the

expenses involved by a dance, A Beggars' Banquet, that will be held on the evening of Feb. 26th at the Central Academic Building with HOT COTTAGE doing the honors.

Senator Chelsey Carter was prompted to say during the Special Senate Commission's study on poverty, that "if every working man and woman knew and understood what that inequality meant, and the economic implications it had for them and their children, there would be a revolution in this country."

by Rene Detroye



UNEMPLOYED UNITE

HALIFAX (CUP) — The unemployed in Halifax, tired of the evasive tactics of the local office of the Unemployment Insurance Commission (UIC) have grouped together to form the Neighborhood Centre Union of the Unemployed (NCUU).

It is the second such union organized in the city. The first, started about a year ago, disbanded shortly after it was formed.

Last week, The Neighborhood Centre, a local citizens' group, refused to deduct unemployment insurance payments for its employees' pay cheques until the UIC rectified the problem of late benefit cheques.

This action resulted in the formation of the NCUU at a meeting held in the centre February 1. The new union passed resolutions favouring working with unions in the area to "give them strength in dealing with the UIC."

Union organizer, Clyde Marnett of the Neighborhood

Centre, said he felt the time had come for the unemployed to pressure the UIC because people needing money had to wait as much as two months to receive benefits. Another problem according to Marnett and other NCUU members, was the inefficiency of the UIC staff. Several people complained that they were told the reason for the delay in issuing the unemployment cheques was that they had been "misplaced."

The NCUU asked the Halifax director of the Unemployment

Insurance Commission, Ron Story, to attend a meeting held February 3.

Story took full blame for the situation, saying "Whatever happened to the UIC office was my responsibility." He promised to work in his office 24 hours a day "if the need is great enough" to solve the problem of inefficiency in his office.

Members of the NCUU went to Story's office that afternoon and received tangible results for the first time.

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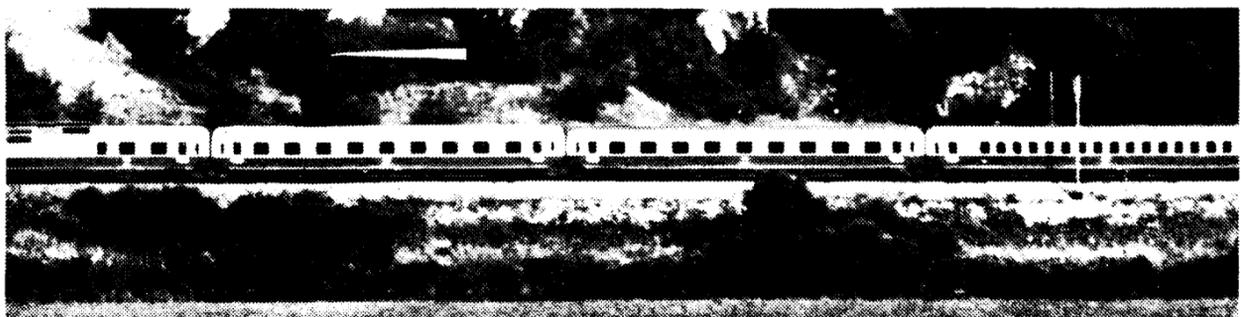
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