

Lacking definite policy

Government hesitates over junta recognition



Frank Rooney photo

Students marched in Toronto and Ottawa protesting the military coup in Chile.

By JACKIE GREATBATCH

OTTAWA — Since the military coup in Chile on September 11, groups of university students from Chile have been working to obtain the support of the Canadian government on three points of major importance. They want the government to refuse to recognize the junta, to offer asylum to political refugees from Chile and to raise and support measures of censure in the United Nations against the coup.

These students, along with groups such as the Canadian Peace Congress and the Latin American Working Group and many concerned individuals have formed the Canadian Committee for Solidarity with a Democratic Chile. This group operates in Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa and Vancouver, organizing rallies, demonstrations and teach-ins, and trying to inform and gain the support of the Canadian people.

Activities since the coup have been centred around a trip to Ottawa for meetings with governmental groups. The trip took place Thursday, September 20, and was attended by roughly 30 Torontonians. The Canadian Committee for Solidarity with a Democratic Chile (CCSDS) had obtained 1,000 signatures on petitions addressed to the prime minister.

The Toronto group met with the Ottawa CCSDC at Parliament Hill and set up a picket in front of the House of Commons. The demonstrators were

prevented from distributing leaflets because of a bylaw specially invoked on that day.

Meetings had been arranged with Liberal, Conservative and N.D.P. Members of Parliament. The Conservatives were unsympathetic toward the three demands. They pointed out Canada's acceptance of other revolutionary regimes such as those in China and Cuba.

The N.D.P. Members were the most supportive, agreeing with all three demands. Members also offered to raise questions and motions in the House in attempts to aid the CCSDC.

The Liberal caucus was "upset by the coup". The only clue to the government's proposed actions was a statement saying the government would probably not recognize the junta "for a while".

Later meetings were with representatives of the External Affairs department, to whom the petitions were presented. Mr. J. Charpentier of Latin American Affairs outlined Canada's policy on recognition of revolutionary juntas.

The stipulations for recognition are the guaranteed safety of all Canadians within the country and assurance that Canada's business interests in the country will not be threatened.

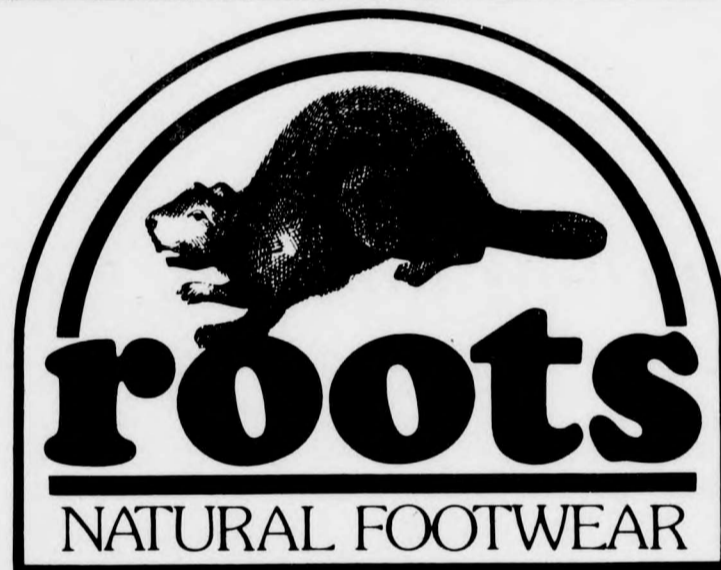
The Chilean students were discouraged by what they felt was the evasive attitude of government officials.

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