

APEC report release uncertain

BY ALEX BUSTOS

OTTAWA (CUP) — Canadians may never get a chance to read the final report of the APEC inquiry, the newly appointed solicitor general said Tuesday.

"The report is given to me, and then I will decide whether it will become public or not," Lawrence MacAulay said barely 24 hours after being assigned to the post left vacant by Andy Scott, who resigned Monday under the heat of allegations he prejudged the APEC investigation.

"What I want to happen is to have the [RCMP] Public Complaints Commission do their job and submit their report to me, and then I'll deal with [the report]," MacAulay said outside the House of Commons.

MacAulay's remarks caught some members of parliament off guard.

"When you call something the public complaints commission it's a little hard to think it wouldn't by made public," NDP MP Dick Proctor said outside the House. "It's hard to imagine why the new solicitor general would say that."

Others said MacAulay's statement highlighted the need for an independent judicial inquiry to replace the RCMP Public Complaints Commission hearings,

which are looking into whether officers used excessive force against protesters at last year's Asia Pacific summit in Vancouver.

"When the public complaints commission does report, it goes to the commissioner of the RCMP and the solicitor general," Conservative Party MP Peter MacKay said.

"What they chose to do with it is completely done behind closed doors. They're not under any obligation to make it public. They're not under any obligation to even act on what the commission reports," he said.

MacKay also said an independent investigation is needed because the current inquiry has no mandate to investigate the government.

For months, opposition parties and students have accused the Prime Minister's Office of ordering the Mounties to quell student protesters at the meeting of 18 Pacific Rim leaders.

"As has been pointed out time and time again, this commission is not the proper forum to look at political interference," said MacKay. "And political interference is what is at very base of these questions [over APEC]."

The prime minister, however, told the House Tuesday he would co-operate with the APEC inquiry if asked.

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U of T considers helping homeless

BY CARLA TONELLI

TORONTO (CUP) — The University of Toronto should implement strategies for assisting the city's homeless, particularly in the coming cold months, one of the university's top governing boards says.

A motion urging the university to look into the matter was passed last Tuesday by the University Affairs Board in a move that was applauded by campus activists who have been calling on the university to respond to Toronto's homeless crisis.

"We have a whole range of expertise we can bring to this complicated issue," said Margaret Hancock, warden of U of T's Hart House.

"People who are needing shelters these days are in worse shape than before. It's not just a matter of providing a roof over their heads and a cup of coffee anymore," she added.

Hancock pointed to a proposed long-term assistance plan that will address health, social, and funding issues alongside the more immediate band aid solutions of shelter.

"It's a good first step," said Holly Baines, vice-president of the school's Graduate Students' Union. "It's a really simple undertaking."

The fact the vote was passed

unanimously indicates the immediacy of the crisis in the city, says Chris Ramsaroop, president of U of T's Students' Administrative Council.

"Awareness has increased around the issue, and the university has a responsibility to respond to that awareness," Ramsaroop said.

"We have got to get off this idea that we're in an ivory tower and what happens on campus doesn't affect us because first and foremost there are students who are homeless," he said, adding he hopes the university will have relief measures in place by December.

The vote comes on the heels of several recent commitments to tackle the problem of homelessness in Toronto.

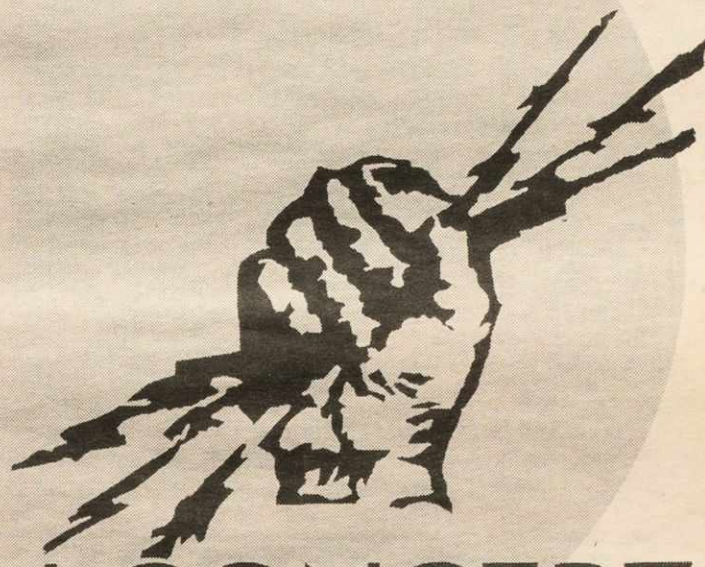
Prompted by the efforts of a local coalition group, the City of Toronto recently declared homelessness a national disaster, a move that was matched by the cities of Ottawa and Napean, Ontario shortly after.

Concern for the city's homeless — estimated at between 50,000 and 100,000 — has also surfaced at the U of T.

Hancock says she has already received a slew of phone calls from students, faculty and graduates interested in helping with the university's line of action on the issue.

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