

Police tear gas students

LONDON (CUP)—Police wielding truncheons and hurling tear gas at students during a rowdy homecoming party at the University of Western Ontario have arrested more than 20 people and charged them with a variety of offences.

Dressed in riot gear, police ordered a throng of 1,500 students Oct. 19 gathered at a private town-house complex to disperse. The students responded with exploding firecrackers and flying beer bottles, according to police inspector John Robinson.

One hour after the initial request and numerous warnings, police fired four tear gas cannisters into the crowd. They immediately rushed at the students to break up the party.

"I felt the only safe way to disperse the crowd without a lot of physical violence was by using tear gas," Robinson said.

One woman was taken to hospital after being overcome by the gas. Numerous people suffered cuts and bruises, and four officers were hit by flying debris.

Robinson added: "If I hadn't used the tear gas, injuries would have been much worse."

Police charged 13 people with unlawful assembly, two with obstruction and numerous others with liquor related offences.

The next night, Oct. 20, students again gathered in large groups, but police broke up about 10 parties without having to use tear gas.

Two people were arrested when "they dropped their pants and underwear and jumped up and down" in front of about 350 spectators.

Vandals, believed by police to be

students, also stole a six-foot statue of Ronald McDonald and a plastic seat from a local fast food outlet.

Robinson called the UWO homecoming "the biggest party we've ever seen." □

Mother pleads for transfer for one of Vancouver Five

OTTAWA (CUP)—The 53-year-old mother of one of the "Vancouver Five" is desperately appealing to the federal government to transfer her son from the infamous Archambault prison near Montréal to a penitentiary in his native B.C.

Agnes Stewart, who left her

school teaching job in B.C. to lobby Corrections Services Canada officials, wants her son to be moved immediately. She fears his health—he began the 20th day of a hunger strike Oct. 25—is slipping away.

"I'm getting a little worried. I don't want him to die from his hunger strike. It's reaching a dangerous stage," Stewart said in a recent interview in Ottawa.

Her son Doug started his fast Oct. 6 in protest of his transfer from Kent penitentiary near Vancouver in July to Archambault. He wants to be returned because he is thousands of miles away from his family and friends and does not speak a word of French, the main language of the institution.

Stewart pleaded guilty in June to the bombing of a B.C. Hydro power plant on Vancouver Island and received a six-year sentence for his part in the action. No one was injured in the blast.

"He felt he can't cope with the extreme isolation and loneliness," his mother said. "He was prevented from doing any meaningful work and says he can't bear to stay there."

Stewart says her son was transferred without any warning. After repeated attempts by letter to find out why he was transferred, the mother says federal corrections service officials told her he was moved because he is considered a "security risk" at Kent, a maximum security prison. The authorities also told her Doug had to be separated from the other members of the group and from his home territory.

"Another reason was that they

thought it would be best for him and I think none of their reasons are justified," she said. "It was a harmful move. He has really deteriorated since the transfer."

Stewart said when she visited her son last week he appeared despondent and pale. Upon a second visit, however, she said he was more lively. Doug has only been drinking water since his hunger strike began, although federal guards are leaving trays of fruit and nuts beside his bed in the prison infirmary.

As of Oct. 25, Doug had lost about 12 kilograms. Although his mother said she originally came to Ottawa to talk him out of the hunger strike, she changed her mind when she realized the conditions he faced at Archambault. Doug has not spoken to either guards or prisoners for days.

The 27-year-old was fired from his job in the prison machine shop because he was considered a "security risk," was rejected from a computer course only offered in French because there was no more space and quit another job in the prison shop in protest. The guards then threw him into isolation for 23 hours.

"I don't want to try to talk him out of it, but I'm very concerned. I want to know in my mind that the situation is resolved before I leave," his mother said.

Stewart plans to stay in Montréal until she receives word from the solicitor-general's office. She is also seeking legal advice on the issue.

Ruth Fahlman, a close friend of Doug's who came to Ottawa from Vancouver with his mother, says support groups in Ottawa, Montréal, Vancouver, Toronto and other cities in Ontario and the Prairies are pressuring the government for Doug's return to B.C.

Fahlman says she hopes Doug's case will show the Canadian public the abuses in the country's prison system. "This case provides a window for people to see inside. It's important for people to see what's done in the name of justice," she said.

"Unless you have a loved one in prison, most people have no idea of the conditions and the kind of power that exists over people's lives." □

Waterloo sues CFS

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estimates the amount will be similar to that of NUS's suit, or about \$17,500 which includes interest and legal costs.

"If we're successful, there'll be an incredible impact on NUS and thus on CFS. All the other schools that have paid NUS fees could get their fees back. And with CFS being responsible for NUS and thousands of dollars in debt, anybody could guess what would happen," Allison said.

Allison refused to comment further, saying: "It's obvious what would happen. I don't want to be cruel."

Allison said he did not know how many student councils would sue NUS for back membership fees if Waterloo wins its suit. But about eight universities and colleges, including York, McMaster and Trent Universities and the University of Western Ontario, still pay fees to NUS.

NUS and CFS chair Beth Olley refused to comment on the issue.

"It's nuts. It's a suit and a counter-suit. Once it goes public, I'll be more than happy to comment," she said.

At a council meeting Oct. 14, Waterloo council members were told that according to a new lawyer assigned to the case, they are legally entitled to the fees paid in 1982.

"The [council's] lawyer felt that a counter suit claiming a refund from NUS for the period of 1981-83 might force NUS to drop its claim for fear of creating a precedent-setting situation for other student unions," minutes from the council meeting say.

Allison has admitted that the suit is an attempt by the council to force NUS to back down and did not dismiss the possibility of an out-of-court settlement.

"To have one student government suing a national student movement, it's a no win situation for everybody," he said. "[But] NUS has more to lose than we do."

The court date for NUS's suit is not expected until next year. □



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