

300 attend weekend conference

Women call for tribunal in abortion campaign

By MAUREEN SMITH

The Canadian government will be put "on trial" November 3 for crimes against women. A tribunal, sponsored by the Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws, will hear testimony from women who have been forced to seek illegal abortions and from doctors who have performed illegal abortions.

The decision to hold a tribunal in Ottawa this fall was made at the second annual conference to Repeal the Abortion Laws, held at the University of Toronto on the weekend.

Some 300 women from across Canada came together at the conference to discuss the recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that laws against abortion were unconstitutional and to plan actions to see Canada's anti-abortion laws repealed.

Henry Morgentaler, a Montreal doctor now facing three charges under the criminal code of Canada for performing abortions and for "conspiring to perform an abortion", spoke at the conference's opening rally on Friday night. After a standing ovation from the audience, Dr. Morgentaler related how his Montreal clinic had performed "thousands" of illegal abortions in the last several years. He was satisfied, he said, that the physical and mental well being of these women, and in many cases their very lives had been safeguarded by the availability of safe abortion performed by qualified doctors.

After Dr. Morgentaler, two other doctors rose to state that they too were guilty of "conspiracy" and of performing abortions. As the conference progressed several women testified that they had undergone illegal abortions.

Isabel LeBourdais, author of the Steven Truscott Case testified that she had had an illegal abortion and proposed that testimonies be solicited from women and doctors across Canada. These testimonies will be presented at the November tribunal, as an act of civil disobedience, similar to the campaign being carried on by women in France in protest of the anti-abortion laws of that country.

Despite the January decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, and despite urgings from MP Grace MacInnis that debate on the abortion question is crucial, the Canadian government has refused to consider any motion of repeal of the current laws which make abortion the only medical procedure covered by the Criminal Code of Canada.

The fall tribunal on abortion, therefore, will seek to "expose the daily suffering of women as a result of restrictive abortion laws and to indict the federal government for refusing to recognize women's basic right to control, and make decisions about, their own reproductive lives."



Pam Hallas photo

Women at the Friday night rally of the second annual conference to repeal the abortion laws gave a long and emotional ovation to doctors and

women who came forward to say they were "guilty" of "conspiracy to perform an abortion" — a charge under the Criminal Code.

Courts lean on press: writer

By CARL STIEREN

Canadian journalists are facing increasing pressure from the government and the courts, according to Cameron Smith, assistant editor for the Globe and Mail. The trend towards restricting information and forcing reporters to inform on their sources began in the United States with controversy over the Pentagon Papers, the Charles Manson murder case, and the Watergate bugging scandal.

Wilfred List, the labor reporter for the Globe, was served with a subpoena at 10:30 one evening and was told to be in court at 9:30 the next morning with all the material he had on the elevator strike. List then contacted the Globe's lawyer, who arranged a later hearing so that List could drive his mother to the hospital that morning. When the court appeared to be fishing for information, List refused to produce his notes, unless he was asked a specific question.

Courts in Canada had formerly asked reporters to bring their notes on a specific incident only. Previous courtroom practice had been to ask reporters questions that related to specific incidents only.

Government pressure upon the press may come from a bill which Liberal parliamentary leader Alan MacEachen plans to introduce on the confidentiality of unreleased government documents. Such a bill would have made the Globe liable to legal action for its story on Manpower's secret memorandum giving priority to job-hunters receiving unemployment insurance benefits. The Canadian Forum's publication of the Gray report on foreign ownership also would have been illegal under such a law.

Ironically, a further limitation upon the press may come from the Ontario Press Council, a voluntary association set up to point up unsound reporting and opinion. The Globe has refused to join the council, and Smith said the council could not fulfill its goals because in its present form it was controlled by the Southam papers and the Toronto Star. Smith felt that the net result of the Press Council would be to take the pressure off any individual paper.

Support for this opinion of the Ontario Press Council came from

Stan Fisher of the York Department of Information, who wrote to Davidson Dunton, the council's president, last October. A letter from Dunton's office to Fisher said that Dunton was on holiday in Europe at the time of the federal elections — one of the most crucial times for checking inaccuracies and

imbalance in newspaper coverage. Smith then listed a final limitation on the press by the police: radio broadcasters and the smaller daily newspapers in southern Ontario have been pressured into withholding stories involving crimes until police permission has been given.

Staff raises in air

Faculty and staff salary increases are up in the air until the end of April, vice-president Bill Farr said Wednesday.

The board of governors, who must finalize York's budget, are "most reticent" to discuss any increases until certain information is in their hands, Farr said.

They want firmer enrolment projections (to date, York is down 18 per cent), and assurance that student fees owed to the university will be collected. At present, about 2,500 students have yet to pay their fees.

In addition, the board refused to

discuss salaries until it knows more about the monetary effects of the new government plan for financing universities. This plan, called the slip-year, is based on the previous year's enrolment instead of enrolment projections as a gauge for fund allocation.

There is a \$333,000 base-line deficit predicted for next year without salary increases. A three per cent increase for faculty and staff could add \$870,000 to this deficit, Farr said.

Last year, \$19 million was spent on faculty salaries and \$10 million on staff salaries.

OFS prepares retort to final Wright report

By ALAN RISEN

At the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) conference Saturday the report of the Commission on Post Secondary Education in Ontario came under close scrutiny.

A special committee was set up to draft a response to this report and is expected to report at the federation's annual meeting in mid-May.

Two other committees were also set up: one will organize the May meeting and the other will examine the government's proposed policy on foreign students in Ontario. The latter committee will also report back in mid May.

Other business at the meeting included ratification of the four executive positions which were filled on an interim basis Nov. 25 following the resignations of the previous office holders. The ratification was just a formal move.

The annual meeting in May should

prove to be a simple business session where a new executive and budget will be selected. Just before this an "education" conference will take place which will deal with current problems facing student councils.

The education session will come first and any resulting resolutions will be voted on at the ensuing business session. Both conferences will be three-day affairs covering the week of May 14.

When asked for a comment on the aborted fee strike, York's student council president John Theobald told Excalibur: "I'm very disappointed at how things turned out. At York we were very successful but other universities such as Carleton, Windsor and Western were not as successful. Perhaps if the rest of the campuses across the province were as successful as we were then we might have been able to put some pressure on the upper levels of the bureaucracy of the province."

York Briefs

Slater gets new finance job with feds

York's former president, David Slater, has been appointed director of the federal finance department's economic analysis division. He succeeds Cyril D. Hodgins, who resigned to return to private consulting work. The Globe and Mail reported in January that Slater was asked by the board of governors to resign because of his handling of the fall budget crisis and his losing the confidence of the community.

New CYSF council looks for help

The first meeting of the newly elected council of the York student federation will take place on March 27 in room S915 Ross. The new council will then appoint a speaker (non-voting) and one student representative to the York senate. If you are interested in either of the positions, contact the CYSF office, N111 Ross (667-2515) before March 26.

Morality of abortion is SCM topic

"The Morality of Abortion" will be the subject of a panel discussion to be held by the Student Christian Movement (SCM) on Monday at 8 p.m. in Behavioural Science building rm. 291. Panelists will include Ruth Evans, professor Esther Greenglass and professor Michael Dandy-Smith.

New Cabaret shows start today

The Cabaret will present two shows today and tomorrow at 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. in Winters Coffee Shop, Absinthe. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

Environmental conference starts here

Students in York's Faculty of Environmental Studies are hosting Intervention '73, a conference on planning, this week at the Royal York Hotel. The tenth annual conference of its kind, it includes student delegates from the universities of British Columbia, Calgary, Manitoba, Ottawa, Waterloo, Montreal, York and Queen's. Topics to be discussed include the possible founding of a planning students' national association. Tomorrow's sessions will be held on campus and are open to the general public. Professor Hans Blumenfeld will speak on the future of planning in Canada at 10:30 a.m. in Curtis Lecture Hall I.

Monte Carlo nite rolls Friday

This Saturday night, a Monte Carlo Nite is to be presented by the Jewish Student Federation. Beginning at 8 p.m. in the faculty lounge on the eighth floor of the Ross building. A variety of gambling games will be offered. Admission is \$1 at the door or 75 cents in advance. Tickets may be obtained at the Jewish student federation office (rm. CS106). Door prizes, free refreshments, and a guaranteed good time for all. All proceeds go to the United Jewish Appeal. For information call 667-3647-8.

York to give some free tuition

First year York students with over 80 per cent averages in grade 13 will have their tuition paid by a \$660 scholarship beginning next year. The university announced Friday the new scholarship was instituted "as a mark of its determination to stimulate and reward the attainment of academic excellence." The program is in addition to the 15 governors' scholarships already awarded by York to the Ontario grade 13 applicants holding the highest averages. All applicants to York will be automatically considered. As in the past, all monies will come from private financial resources rather than provincial operating grants.