

# students stand in 1980

Last Christmas, the Liberal government neatly side-stepped opposition, and rushed through Bill C-14. It disqualified more than 250,000 people, most of them women and students, from receiving UI benefits, and reduced benefits for everyone from 66 2/3 per cent of insurable income to 60 per cent. It meant a total saving to the federal government of more than \$1.5 billion.

People entering the labour force for the first time now have to work at least 20 weeks instead of 10-14 weeks to qualify for UI benefits. And those re-entering the labour force, like students in the summer, now have to work at least 24-28 weeks over a two-year period instead of 10-14 weeks to qualify.

For those who work part-time to qualify for UI benefits, earning \$48 a week is no longer enough. They now have to work at least 20 hours a week, or earn at least \$72 a week in commission. Teaching assistants, most of whom are required to work not more than 10 hours a week, fall prey to the part-time earning clause.

The Conservative government was preparing to make a few changes of its own before it was defeated on December 13. An internal discussion paper was circulated early in the fall, that suggested benefits might be cut for seasonal workers, applicants living with another income earner, applicants out of work because of pregnancy or illness, and applicants who quit their job or who were fired. In their budget, the Tories proposed increasing the cost of UI premiums to workers and employers, and shifting the cost of Canada Employment Centres from the federal treasury to the UI program.

What do the parties want to do with Unemployment Insurance?

The Liberals said that they were not considering any change at this time; while the Tories said that they would support measures to reduce abuse of the program. The NDP took a very different position. Making sure to get their licks in on both of the other parties, the NDP said that they would rescind the cutbacks begun under the Liberals and continued under the Conservatives. They also said that they would reduce the waiting period for UI applicants to receive benefits.

## Federal funding of post-secondary education

The federal government's funding practices for post-secondary education in the 1970s and 1980s is rapidly undermining the development of post-secondary education that was stimulated by federal government post-secondary funding practices in the 1960s.

Ottawa got involved in post-secondary funding in a big way in 1967. The Liberal government introduced a cash and tax transfer agreement called the Fiscal Arrangements Act (FAA) that yielded the provinces either half of the operating costs of post-secondary education, or \$15 per capita, whichever was the greatest amount.

Provincial governments were required to spend the transfers on post-secondary education. Also, in order to get more federal funds, provincial governments had to make sure that they provided the money to expand the operation of post-secondary education in their province.

By 1971 the federal government was complaining that the price tag for FAA had doubled since 1967-68. Though the provinces convinced it to extend FAA until 1976, Ottawa unilaterally imposed a ceiling that limited the growth of the FAA transfer to the provinces to 15 per cent a year.

FAA was scrapped in 1977, and replaced with a cash and tax transfer program that would save the federal government even more money. Transfers for post-secondary education were combined with transfers for medicare, and hospital insurance, in a funding agreement called Established Programs Financing (EPF). It meant that increases in federal transfers were not based on the increase of provincial expenditures in those three programs, but were based on the growth of the

government's tax base and the growth of the Gross National Product.

To appease the provincial governments for cutting program funding, the feds removed the restriction on the transfers that made them conditional on their use exclusively for post-secondary education, medicare, and hospital insurance. That allowed the provinces to spend EPF funds in whatever way it wanted, and in most provinces education, medicare, and health insurance suffered.

Ottawa, or any of the provinces can now demand that EPF be renegotiated. In that event renegotiation would begin in 1983.

The student questionnaire asked if the parties supported the position that EPF funds transferred to the provinces should be conditional on their use in post-secondary education, medicare, and hospital insurance.

The Conservatives said only that they thought the cash transfers to the provinces should be used exclusively for the programs covered under the EPF agreement. They did not mention the tax transfers that make up the bulk of the EPF funds.

The Liberals skirted the question altogether. They would only say that the federal government cannot at this time control the administration of EPF funds since the provinces would see it as an incursion on their jurisdiction.

The NDP was predictable in its response. They have been campaigning

with the CLC and provincial labour federations to save medicare in Canada, a program they pride themselves with initiating.



OH HELL TALK ALL RIGHT, BUT HE WON'T GIVE YOU A STRAIGHT ANSWER.

## Drums Presents:



om 56

p.m. at St. Joseph's Cathedral Parish Hall,  
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## STUDENTS' UNION AWARDS: 1980

This year the Students' Union will offer awards to students who are highly involved in activities of the University. The awards available will be the *Lorne Calhoun Memorial Award*, the *Maimie Shaw Simpson Award* and the *Walter A. Dinwoodie Award*.

The Lorne Calhoun Memorial Award is given in memory of Lorne Calhoun, B.A., a student at the University of Alberta from 1946 until his death in 1951, and consists of a book prize and distinctive shield. The Award is for contribution to student life in a broad variety of activities along with academic achievement.

The Maimie Shaw Simpson Award is to honor the first Dean of Women at the University of Alberta and is open to female students who have contributed to student and academic life with sincerity and efficiency.

The Walter A. Dinwoodie Award to perpetuate the memory of the Permanent Business Manager of the Students' Union from 1949 - 1962 is to be given to a returning student who has obtained an adequate academic standing and made an outstanding contribution to student life. The Award includes a one hundred dollar (\$100) prize from the Students' Union.

All awards must be applied for by February 18, 1980 and will only be given if the Awards Committee decides there is sufficient merit. Contact Chanchal Bhattacharya, Vice-President Academic at 432-4236 for more information.