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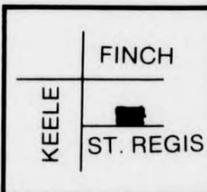
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"Tuition hikes have got to go," students shout to deaf government



University students marched to the office of the Minister of Colleges and Universities, Sean Conway, March 15 to protest tuition increases and chronic underfunding.

by Paul Gazzola

**"Sean Conway, Sean Conway
 Where are you, Where are you?
 We don't want your phoney
 Tuition hike baloney
 Piss on you, Piss on you!"**
(sung to the tune of Frère Jacques)

Last Thursday, aided by fine weather and loud voices, university students from across the province made it clear that they weren't going to quietly accept tuition hikes and underfunding.

The rally, organized by the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS), began outside of Ryerson. From there the crowd, consisting of students from such universities as Trent and Brock as well as York and Ryerson, marched to the office of Sean Conway, Minister of Colleges and Universities, at Bay and Wellesley. The Minister, however, didn't seem to appreciate the attention.

"Conway is not there," said OFS chairperson, Edith Garneau. "He's on holidays. He knew about the rally but he just doesn't care."

Not caring seems to be the way of both the federal and provincial governments when it comes to student funding. The provincial government plans to follow last December's eight per cent tuition increase with another increase. This second one, the result of Michael Wilson's latest budget which froze transfer payments to the provinces, is rumoured to be seven per cent. In dollars and cents this means that, according to the OFS, an Ontario arts undergraduate will be paying \$1,744.55 next year in tuition compared to \$1,517 this year. In the past three years, tuition fees have increased by 29.5 per cent. On top of this the federal government has placed a 3 per cent surcharge on Canadian Student Loans and has cuts millions out

of the summer job creation programmes. The Goods and Services Tax is the icing on the cake.

"The goal of this rally," said Garneau, "is to make sure the students know the problem and the community knows the problem." On hand to help create this awareness were speakers representing women and student groups as well as the NDP.

According to Lynn Kaye, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, women, who account for 60 per cent of part-time university students, will be especially hurt by these increases. "Women are more sensitive than men to these increases," charges Kaye. "With no financial support, no child care and lower wages it takes much longer for women to make it through the educational process."

Another concern expressed throughout the rally was the fear that the ever-increasing cost of

informal master of ceremonies. "You can't throw rocks through windows but you can wave banners."

To make it easier for York students to attend the protest, the CYSF chartered buses to take those who wanted to go. CYSF president Peter Donato estimates that about 100 York students went to the rally, a turnout that failed to impress some ralliers.

"If there is a one place that has zip school spirit," says second year student, Michele Chai, "this is the place. Universities from outside Toronto are sending down buses to attend the rally. If the universities within the city don't come to support it how is that going to look to those people from out of town?"

Other students blamed professors who did not inform their classes of the rally and the "I'm alright, jack" attitude of students who can afford tuition despite the increases.

"Education should be there for those who want it, not just for those who can afford it."

an university education will make it elitist.

"These are supposed to be Liberal reformers," Richard Johnson, NDP education critic, scoffed. "Education should be there for those who want it, not just for those who can afford it."

Johnson's words also contained a warning that "education is the only way to carry a country into the future. Instead of playing around with future increases you better drop it right now."

The crowd, which grew to about 600 people, was constant in its support. Chanting such slogans as "Freeze not fees" and "Hey, hey, ho, ho, tuition hikes have got to go" in between the speeches, the students displayed a strong presence.

There also was a limitless number of banners and signs.

"These people are frustrated," said Mike Akapata, the vice-president of the University of Windsor's student union and the person who acted as the rally's

Special mention should be given to York professors Miroslav Disman and Ted Madger who told their students that no new material would be covered so they could attend the rally.

NDP trustee Rosario Marchese called university underfunding "ongoing, insistent and persistent" and said that students had to be the same in their protests. He said that both the federal and provincial governments will continue to dump on the educational process as long as they are allowed to.

"The province has to pay its fair share or we will not support you again" is the message students have to send. Canadian Federation of Students chairperson Jan Arnold agreed, urging student not to give up their right to an education.

Akapata has no intention to stop protesting. Asked when the next rally would take place, he promised, "You'll see us again very soon, very very soon."