

Doc busted and his records seized

EDMONTON (CUP) -- For some time now Doctor David Craig, an Edmonton physician, has worked at a clinic that specializes in helping the down and out residents of the surrounding area. Craig is a specialist in the treatment of heroin addicts and prescribes methadone for many of his patients. (Methadone is a synthetic addictive narcotic used to help addicts to relieve some of their sufferings. In the cases of individuals wanting to get off heroin altogether, methadone makes heroin ineffective and in the case of addicts sincere about getting off heroin, an addict can gradually get off methadone afterwards as well by gradually reducing the dosage. Methadone is also legal and can be obtained from a doctor.)

As a result of association with addicts in the city, his files contain a lot of information on them.

On Monday January 17, Craig was visited by the Edmonton city police, arrested, and charged with having defrauded the

Alberta Health Commission of \$43 in April, 1970. At the same time his files were seized by the police as evidence in the case against him, an act they probably would not have performed legally without having arrested him.

Bail and fee was set at 152 dollars but Craig was kept in custody because he was short by four dollars until 4pm that evening. His files remained in the hands of the police.

On Tuesday, he appealed for a court injunction which would force the police to release his files, but the appeal was denied and the police can use the files in what ever way they wish.

Doctor Doug Armstrong, a professor at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine and acting chairman of the Health, Housing and Welfare Branch of the Alberta Human Rights Association came out in Craig's defence:

"AHRA protects the police action on several fronts: First, the laying of criminal charges for such a minor offence; secondly the refusal to release him

on bail; thirdly the harsh treatment they subjected him to at the station (Craig was stripped, photographed, and fingerprinted); and fourthly, and most of all, the seizure of his confidential files."

"Seizure of files violates the confidentiality of the patient-doctor relationship as well as the right to privacy of each of the doctor's patients. AHRA is concerned that this case could set a very dangerous precedent regarding the rights of doctors and patients."

Armstrong said the AHRA demands an explanation of the affair and in order to get it he said the organization has contacted the offices of the Alberta premier, Attorney-General, and the Federal Justice Minister. All have been asked to investigate it.

Craig also treated transients. About 200 have come to him without having medicare numbers and some \$12,000 worth of remuneration for the treatment of these patients remains uncollected on the part of Craig from the health Commission.

"The police department spent nine full months investigating Dr. Craig's dealings with the Health Commission before they found the \$43 discrepancy", said Armstrong. "Nine months' work for the sake of \$43? The whole affair seems to indicate either Dr. Craig's honesty, or police insufficiency." Armstrong was also critical of the Edmonton Journal's coverage.

"The coverage of the entire affair was very poor," he said. "They printed the police press release on Tuesday and nothing else since. They have so far totally failed to perceive that this case involves the welfare of hundreds of unfortunate people."

An Edmonton city lawyer said, "Police should not have arrested Dr. Craig. Normal procedure in such cases is to issue summons. It seems unlikely that a well-paid doctor would

deliberately bother to risk trouble by defrauding the government of such a piddling sum as \$43.

Police Staff Sergeant Joe Poss in charge of the investigation refused to discuss the matter over the phone. Also silent was the College of Physicians and Surgeons, a body which has now the power to suspend Craig's licence since he has been charged with fraud. A College spokesperson said, "We don't have all the facts so it would be unwise for us to comment on the matter".

The CPS is also said to disapprove of Craig's method of treating heroin addicts.

Craig is unsure of what will happen to his patients,

"Some will be referred to other doctors; some will be referred to Vancouver; and the rest will likely go back to heroin, possibly resorting to crime to feed their habits," he said.

CLC launches holy war

TORONTO (CUP) - The Canadian Labour Congress appears to be launching a holy war against the increasing solidarity and militancy of the labour movement in Québec.

In a private speech Monday (January 31) to Congress personnel, Donald MacDonald, president of the national labour organization warned of the danger of what he described as the "clearly Marxist" policies advocated by the Quebec Federation of Labour and other large trade union centrals in Québec.

MacDonald told CLC Quebec organizers they would be fired if they were to pursue such policies. He also told those present that anyone responsible for leaking the proceedings of the meeting would also lose his job.

The precise wording of MacDonald's salvo against the 235,000-member QFL -- which is

officially chartered by the CLC -- has not yet filtered through. However, in general terms what the Congress president told the meeting was that national policies set up by the CLC must be upheld in preference to decisions made on a regional level. Provincial labour groups must either follow the national organization's line or get out of the CLC.

He said that while the CLC which is the Canadian affiliate of the giant AFL CIO in the US opposes totalitarianism in all forms, it would never support any form of Marxism, Trotskyism or Maoism.

There are rumors that a number of CLC organizers in Québec have already been threatened with dismissal by the CLC hierarchy for their support of the recent actions and declarations of the QFL.

Early in December several

of the large labour centrals including the QFL and the 225,000 member Confederation of National Trade Unions, launched a "common front" and advocated a general strike in support of locked-out workers at Montreal's LaPresse.

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