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Job security among gays' conference topics

TORONTO (CUP) — "One - three - six - nine - lesbians are mighty fine!"

"Two - four - six - eight - We don't overpopulate!"
These were some of the chants echoing through the street of downtown Toronto as 400 marchers gave an enthusiastic show of support of pride among lesbians and gay men.

The march was held the opening day of the Fourth Annual Gay Conference on September 4, 5, and 6. On the more serious side, demonstrators focused their concerns around job security and the need to have sexual orientation included in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The marchers rallied to hear a number of speeches emphasizing the need to change the laws and attitudes that discriminate against homosexuals in this country.

One of the first speeches came from a spokesperson for the

Committee to Defend John Damien. Damien, a former steward of the Ontario Racing Commission, was fired from his job in February 1975 because he is homosexual. He is challenging the dismissal, and his case has become a rallying point for gays across Canada.

Presently, gays in Ontario have no redress through the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). This code is a civil rights legislation protecting individuals from discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion and age but includes no provisions for sexual orientation.

The spokesperson addressed the rally on Damien's behalf reminding gathering that, as the law now stands, gay people are not secure in their jobs since they can be fired on the whim of an anti-gay employer. As the Damien case proves, there are no laws to protect gays dismissed for these reasons, and court costs for an appeal are crippling. Damien's pursuit of

justice for gays and the publicity he has gained in the commercial media have made him the symbol of gay oppression in Canada.

Organizers within the movement believe that once sexual orientation is included in the Human Rights Code more gays will come out to their family, friends and co-workers. They say gay acceptance can only start in a mass way if gays know they won't be facing reprisals for coming out of the closet.

The gay liberation movement is in its fifth year in Canada and increasing numbers of lesbians and gay men are motivated to educate a public that fears and ridicules homosexuals. Gay alliance centres have sprung up across the country offering moral support on an individual basis to people who accept their sexual orientation but have difficulty in facing a hostile world.

Counselling is sometimes sought by the parents of a gay daughter or

son. With the prevailing mood of homophobia in Canada many parents consider themselves failure and blame themselves for raising a gay child.

Marie Robertson, spokesperson from Lesbians of Ottawa Now (LOON) spoke of the different groups lesbians find themselves in when they work for their liberation, and said that this lack of unity is not necessarily wrong. "Some lesbians have been working within the feminist movement, other have been working in the left, and a few of us are working within the gay movement. We're all working towards the same objective, so we should go ahead and work where we feel most comfortable."

Jim Turk, president of the Ontario New Democratic Party, said the struggle for gay rights is one way of achieving a better life for the working people of Canada.

"One of the chief obstacles to this effect has been the practice of employers to exploit differences among working people, so that while a few are well paid, the majority are not; while a few are secure, the majority are worried from one day to the next," he said.

"It is inexcusable that today lesbians and gay men live in fear of losing their jobs because of their sexual orientation. Sexual orientation must be added to all human rights codes so that in law employers cannot continue this exploitation of gays."

Turk elaborated on the links between gay oppression and capitalism. "We need to question why changing the law isn't enough. The answer, I believe, is that the law operates within our all pervasive capitalist economic order."

"And capitalism thrives on competition in which the few exploit the many. The few, with their vast economic power, can control the cultural reality in which we all live. Through this control, the few are able to get us to be participants in our own oppression."

The march was considered a success by its participants, both for the large attendance and the presence of Jim Turk. Marie Robertson said, "When you get someone as established as the Ontario leader of the NDP making speeches for you, you know you've come a long way."

College enrolment due to rise

OTTAWA (CUP) — Enrolment in universities and colleges will rise about four percent this fall while the decline in elementary and secondary schools will continue according to Statistics Canada projections for the coming academic year.

There will be a total of about 616,490 post-secondary students with 385,090 in university and 231,400 in college. Because of the growing size of the 18-24 age group, post-secondary enrolment is expected to rise for the next few

years although more slowly than in the past.

The projections are based on 1972 population statistics.

Elementary and secondary schools will likely see 78,268 fewer students this year bringing total enrolment to about 5,531,795. As a result of the low birth rate in the last decade enrolment at this level is expected to decrease by more than 200,000 in the next two years.

At the same time the size of full-time teaching staff reflects enrolment trends. This year there

will be approximately 49,795 post-secondary teachers, an increase of 1,740 over last year while the number of elementary and secondary school teachers will drop by over 2,000 to 276,170.

Total education expenditures are estimated to rise by 12 percent this year to 14.5 billion.

The steady increase of degrees granted is expected to continue this academic year with bachelors up five percent to 84,570, masters' up 5.7 percent to 12,245 and Ph. D.'s up 3.9 percent to 2,110.

Story leads to copyright quarrel

VICTORIA (CUP) — The commercial press here shows little regard for copyright legislation - especially when the copyright holder is the local university student newspaper.

In their August 13 issue, the University of Victoria Martlet ran a copyrighted front-page story containing a controversial interview with the outgoing director of the university's so-called "think tank", Dr. Mason Gaffney.

Gaffney blasted the province's

two main political parties and the university under whose aegis the institute ran for three years.

Two local newspapers, the Colonist and The Times, and radio station CFAX quoted extensively from The Martlet in their versions - without crediting the student paper.

Sources at The Times said the original version of their story credited the Martlet, but the notation was deleted before being printed. Times senior editor

George Oake's only comment was "what are you (The Martlet) going to do about it, sue us?"

Canadian copyright laws forbid the republishing of any copyrighted material without the prior consent of the original publisher.

"Apparently the Times and Colonist feel their credibility would be impaired if they had to acknowledge The Martlet as being their news source," said editor David Climenhaga.

Expert says fresh spuds less marketable

OTTAWA (CUP) — The potato-eating habits of Canadians appear to have shifted away from fresh produce to processed which could result in low prices from producers according to an Agriculture Canada economist.

If the fresh potato market falls considerably this year "those producers with varieties suitable for only that market will have little or no marketing alternative especially if processing supplies are adequate," according to Bob Anderson of the Economics Branch.

"Growers should reconsider the

two markets and their dependence on each," he said.

The Maritimes, with a high number of potato producers, stands to be hardest hit.

A U.S. study released in 1972 showed that total per capita potato consumption increased from 108 to 120 pounds while fresh potato consumption dropped from 98 to 58 pounds in a period from 1953 to 1971. Per capita consumption of frozen french fries for that same period increased from one to 30 pounds.

Anderson said efficiencies in processing have reduced the cost of canned, frozen and dried foods,

making them more competitive with fresh produce - especially when fresh potato prices are high.

The convenience of processed products and public eating habits, which have moved towards more outdoor and away-from-home meals, have also contributed to the demand for processed food.

"The shift to processed foods is expected to continue," Dr. Anderson says. "Therefore, Maritime growers who are dependent on out-of-province markets should carefully consider the varieties and volume produced in future years."

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