

cross-canada briefs

Justice system discriminates against Aboriginal peoples

BY SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) — Aboriginal nations within Canada should have the right to create and administer their own laws, says a new royal commission report.

The report concludes that aboriginals are over-represented in criminal litigation and prisons across Canada. They are also more likely to be denied bail and are twice as likely to end up in prison than other Canadians.

Currently, 13 per cent of the inmates in federal penitentiaries are aboriginal people even though they represent less than five per cent of the Canadian population.

"The over-representation of aboriginal people in [Canada's] court systems and prisons casts a long shadow over Canada's claim to be a just society," states the report, released Feb 23.

"The Canadian criminal justice system has failed the Aboriginal people," it concludes.

The commission recommends that an aboriginal justice system be created, including a separate Criminal Code, court system, and penalties.

The report also points out that the high levels of Aboriginal crime are linked to the experiences of colonialism, which has "systematically undermined the social, cultural and economic foundations of Aboriginal peoples, including their distinctive forms of justice."

The commission says that the current European-style justice system emphasises punishment, and does not work for aboriginal people. A separate system would ensure a more holistic approach, as aboriginal societies focus on healing and working with the offender in the context of the community.

"Aboriginal conceptions of justice must be understood as part of the fabric of social and political life rather than as a distinct, formal legal process," says the report.

Toronto gays want to give Harris an award

BY JEFF BLUNDELL

TORONTO (CUP) — Toronto's gay and lesbian community wants to give Ontario Premier Mike Harris an award.

Harris is one of six nominees for the Stinkweed award, given to the person who is most out of touch with gay and lesbian issues.

The dubious honour is part of a collection of awards recognizing outstanding contributions in the gay and lesbian community.

Harris made the list because of his track record on gay issues over the past year, says Kevin Sheard, organizer of the awards and a member of the selection committee.

"His vision of what a family is not in tune with the 1996 definition of a family."

Sheard adds that Harris has been unwilling to even discuss the issue of benefits for same-sex couples.

The awards include 39 categories, including Outstanding Contribution to Gay and Lesbian Rights, Best Bartender, and Best Publication. Winners will be announced at a banquet on March 10.

Federal government promises more jobs for youth

BY SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) — The federal government jumped into the second half of its term last week promising more jobs and a better future for youth, but some student leaders say it's more hype than action.

On Feb. 27, in the second Throne Speech since being elected, Jean Chretien's Liberal government pledged to double the number of federal student jobs this summer.

The following day, the Prime Minister stood before the House of Commons and challenged the business community to double the number of students they hire this summer to match the federal government's promise.

He further challenged businesses to invest in creating first-time jobs for new graduates.

"No true balance sheet can ignore the heavy and growing costs of chronic unemployment," said Chretien.

Youth aged 15 to 24, have an unemployment rate of 16 per cent — 6.4 per cent higher than the national average, according to Statistics Canada figures for January.

Other highlights of the throne speech include calling a first ministers meeting on job creation and the social safety net and replacing the GST and provincial sales taxes with a single harmonized federal-provincial tax.

The throne speech indicated that more "Team Canada" trade missions will be organized to promote exports. The Liberals also pledged to developing a policy and regulatory framework for the information highway.

Football makes it on ballot

BY PATTI WALLER

The upcoming elections period could create something Dalhousie has not had for twenty years...a football team.

James Dann, Dalhousie Student Union VP Community Affairs, has moved to put a football referendum question on the ballot.

The official wording of the question on the ballot reads "Do you support a football fee of \$10 per full-time student and \$5 per part-time student to be collected by the DSU to start the commencement of a football programme at Dalhousie University by the 1998-1999 academic year, as long as it does not financially impact other varsity athletic programmes?"

This development has come about as the result of an initial plebiscite held last October, when Dann realized that student support existed for the rebirth of the team. However, he contends that the money that will be collected if the question receives a majority 'Yes' vote is only about a third of the necessary funding.

"If we don't get corporate sponsorship on board, if we don't get alumni on board, then it's not going to be enough to support a football team," Dann said.

Dann admits that capital is the most important aspect of this project.

"Right now, we have no facilities set up for a football team besides the field...Dal athletics does a really great job, we don't have a weak team...we don't want to put a team out that's going to compromise those other teams," he said.

The story that has circulated since the demise of the Dalhousie football program in 1976 is that the head coach went to the university president requesting additional funding for the program, stating he couldn't "fire a cannon from a canoe." The president's reply is inherent in the fact that for the past two decades, Dalhousie hasn't had a football team.

Dann reports that there has been a very encouraging response from Dal alumni who want the team back.

"I've been talking to these people for weeks...they are the guys that were playing twenty years ago, who now have some affluence and they want to get things going again," he said.

The VP theorizes that a football team is sorely needed at Dalhousie.

"Homecoming at Dal sucks, in its present state...this would be the

type of thing that this University really needs...our undergrad group is growing, and they are desiring something like this more and more," said Dann. "The University puts no money into [homecoming], so why would you come back to it? Every other University determines their homecoming week-end by looking for their first home game...it just doesn't work."

The most curious quirk of the question may be that the funds collected are to be held by the Student Union. Dann maintains this clause was put in as a safeguard for students' hard-earned cash, simply because if the other blocks don't fall into place (alumni and corporate sponsorship), and we don't have a team on the field in a minimum of three years, the funds collected could go into something that the student body could decide on.

In addition, Dann added that voter turnout no longer stifles big decisions like this one. A football team funding drive could be started immediately, even if these elections yield only the usual 10-13% participation rate. A sidebar decision made in the past year ruled that no percentage of student population is necessary in an election to pass any of the questions.

Women only at CKDU

BY JEN HORSEY

In honour of International Women's Day, CKDU FM will be dedicating 26 consecutive hours of programming to women.

The aim of the day is to have women-positive, women-focused, and women-centred programming on-air for 26 hours from midnight, March 8 until 2 a.m. the next day.

This International Women's Day Programming will combine music and spoken word shows. The programmers on-air Friday will be exclusively women, playing women's music, and doing interviews and stories.

"It's a really small thing CKDU can do, but it's a really great thing to get all the women involved in the station on the air," said Karen Marchand, CKDU's Station Manager.

Male programmers at the station have willingly given up their regular time slots to allow the sta-

tion to put on this day of special programming, and most of the women who are scheduled for shows on Friday have volunteered to do them in addition to their regularly scheduled programs.

"The norm is generally the opposite, in a world where it's generally male-focused, it's great to give people the opportunity to listen to women all day," said Marchand.

"We do this every year, in some form," said Liz Van Berkel, CKDU's Current Affairs Director, who is coordinating the day of women's programming.

Van Berkel said although CKDU has participated in International Women's Day in this manner for at least five years, it was demand from CKDU's listening audience which prompted the station to continue the tradition this year.

"It's a good reminder of how CKDU normally sounds. There are more men on air than women,

and it makes you do a double-take on a day like this," said Van Berkel, who also noted that Friday's regular schedule is particularly male-dominated.

"I think we're going through strange political times right now, and I think that women are at risk at times like this...it is a renewal and reaffirmation of women's place..." said Van Berkel.

Some of the special programs planned for Friday's broadcast include a game show on women's issues, and a broadcast of a recent talk at the North Branch library given by the President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Sunera Thobani.

CKDU also participates in other days of focused programming throughout the year such as Sex-FM, and All Day All Gay. These have met with primarily positive support from the listening audience.

CKDU won a Standard Award for their 1995 SEX-FM broadcast.

International Women's Day Programming on CKDU FM

TIME SLOT	PROGRAMMER	SHOW NAME
Midnight—2am	Kate Macdonald	More Like Space
2am—7am	Laura Borealis	All-Niter
7am—9am	Joanne Merriam & Louise Malloch	TBA
9am—10am	Karen Marchand & Laura Scrimshaw	The Serpent Sisters
10am—11am	Broadcast of Sunera Thobani's talk	
11am—12am	Jane Kansas	TBA
12am—12:15am		BBC
12:15am—12:30am	Lyse Boyce	Women's News
12:30am—1pm	Women's International News Group Service	sponsored by the Dalhousie Women's Centre
1pm—2pm	Anne-Marie Walsh	Roots Music by Women from Around the World
2pm—3pm	Sandra MacDonald	TBA
3pm—3:30pm	Chantal & Belinda	Women and Violence Law Documentary
3:30pm—4pm	Kasia Morrison	TBA
4pm—5pm		Punk Show
5pm—6pm	Liz Van Berkel, Paula Dankert & Mern O'Brien	The Evening Affair/Artspeak
6pm—7pm	Tamara Skerratt	Women's History Game Show
7pm—8pm	Vanessa Smith	The Witching Hour
8pm—9pm	Jayn Ritchie	TBA
9pm—10:30pm		TBA
10:30pm—12am	Jenn & Siloen	
12am—2am	Karen MacMullen	It's Not Funny It's Sad