

CROSS-CANADA BRIEFS

UVic may get men's centre

VICTORIA (CUP) — If George Pringle gets his way, the University of Victoria (UVic) might get a new Men's Centre, and the campus' Women's Centre might get a new name.

Pringle — a former student politician and presently a member of the campus men's club — is proposing radical changes to the UVic Students' Society (UVSS).

Among the changes to be voted on at a general meeting of students are proposals to rewrite the society's constitution and to rename the Women's Centre the Feminist Women's Centre Collective.

The main goals of the changes are to simplify the UVSS structure, focusing it on students, Pringle said.

As well as renaming the Women's Centre, Pringle hopes to open a Men's Centre on campus. He has also proposed changing the status of the LGBA, a lesbian, gay and bisexual student association, to greatly reduce their funding.

Student councillor Tathra Street said adding the word feminist to the name of the Women's Centre would create a bias towards the centre.

LGBA co-ordinator Lisa Landers said she feels the reason the LGBA has been "targeted" in the proposals is because of their vocal activities last year, such as bringing openly gay MP Svend Robinson to speak.

Landers said she doesn't have a problem with a men's centre being set up if it pursues positive goals, such as a space for men to discuss new issues emerging for them.

However, Landers says that it's unlikely the Men's Club would do that, considering their history.

Last year the club caused a stir on campus when they published a list of 130 ways to get women into bed. The list included such clever pick-up lines as "if you ever want to see your children again, do what I want."

In addition to doubts about the positive effects of the Men's Centre, Landers said she mistrusts any group that wants to remove other's rights to speak.

Prosperity or home?

BY JOANNE DEER

MONTREAL (CUP) — Balancing a bowl of cereal on his lap, Rob Scott reaches for the remote control and tunes into CBC Newsworld. "It's just like being home," Scott insists.

Scott left Halifax two years ago to get an education and seek out opportunities he was told he could not find on the east coast.

Young people are still leaving the Atlantic provinces, and many do not plan to return. But changing times and values are heralding a trend whereby many of those who do stray don't go too far or for too long.

Scott reads the Chronicle Herald everyday on the Internet to stay in touch and to keep his foot in the door for when he returns home.

He is one of a growing number of young exiles who not only plan to return, but who are staying or returning with the belief that they can enjoy the quality of life the Atlantic provinces offer without sacrificing challenging career opportunities.

A popular perception of the Maritimes and Newfoundland is that masses of people are forced to flee from chronic unemployment and stunted opportunities.

Out-migration is a reality that most provinces have had to face; only Ontario and British Columbia have consistently had positive migration.

Still, given their small populations, out-migration in the Atlantic provinces is significant. Between 1986 and 1991, 6,085 people left New Brunswick, 570 left P.E.I., 13,955 left Newfoundland, and 4,880 left Nova Scotia. The most popular destination for Maritimers is Ontario, followed by Alberta and British Columbia.

It's okay to read and write about pot

BY MICHELA PASQUALI

TORONTO (CUP) — In late September, the Ontario Court of Appeals dropped a motion it had before the Supreme Court of Canada to uphold a portion of the criminal code making it illegal to own or write literature on illicit drugs.

The case originated in April, 1992 when the police raided the home of Umberto Iofida, president of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws.

Police seized copies of High Times, a hemp culture magazine, the organization's membership applications and a copy of a David Suzuki prime-time special on the subject of drugs.

The charges were eventually dropped, but Iofida decided to contest the part of the law pertaining to writing about or owning literature on illicit drug use.

On Oct. 4, 1994, Iofida won his case when Madame Justice Ellen J. MacDonald declared sections 462.1 and 462.2 "overly broad" and ordered the reference to literature be stricken from the sections.

On Nov. 3 of last year, the Court of Appeals of Ontario filed a motion of appeal with the Supreme Court of Canada, a motion which it has now decided to drop.

Native rights ignored by separatists

BY SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) — Québec sovereigntists will need more than a mere referendum to achieve independence from Canada, say some native leaders. They will also need the go-ahead from aboriginal nations within the province, or Québec's claim should be deemed invalid and rejected by Canada and the world community.

A new royal commission report reinforces that view, and states that the federal government should resort to "whatever measures it deems necessary" to protect Québec aboriginal and treaty rights in the event of a unilateral declaration of independence by the province.

The federal government should take appropriate action in protecting aboriginal rights, but only after consultation with native groups says the study released September 15, by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Some of these actions may include denying Québec recognition as an independent state and lobbying the international community to do the same, as well as instructing federal officials to disregard the declaration, states the study.

The federal government would be responsible for protecting aboriginal rights because safeguards currently in the Canadian constitution would disappear with Québec sovereignty.

"Even if Québec included protections of aboriginal and treaty rights in its new constitution, those protections could be removed by Québec at a time," the report says.

Allen Gabriel, head of communications for the \$60 million commission, said that they have received no political response on the study from either the federal or Québec government.

John Bray, director of communications for Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said that the federal government would not issue any comment until the commission submits its final report early next year.

However, Indian Affairs Minister Ronald Irwin, announced last May that the federal government would honour its constitutional responsibilities towards aboriginal peoples, and that they would have the option of staying in Canada, with their territories, if the province separates.

He added that aboriginal people have been living in Québec for 10,000 years and have the right to self-determination.

Aboriginals claim that they should be able to redraw Québec's borders if the province separates. They maintain that only they can choose whether to join a new nation of Québec or remain in Canada.

The Cree Nation have taken an active role in the referendum debate, since Québec independence could make their plight in the province even more bleak.

Last month, the Cree flatly rejected a provincial government invitation to help draft a new constitution should Québecers

vote for independence.

The Parti Québécois (PQ) have had problems in gaining the trust of aboriginals in Québec and convincing them to separate because of past hostilities by the PQ towards treaty and aboriginal rights.

In the 1970's, the Cree were forced to allocate large segments of their land for mega-power projects.

Bill Namagoose, executive director for the Grand Council of the Cree, says that his peoples connections with their lands have lasted for thousands of

years before Québec and Canada even existed.

He is bewildered by PQ leader Jacques Parizeau's claim that the federal government's responsibilities to the Cree were terminated with the 1977 James Bay agreement.

The agreement extinguished the native groups' traditional aboriginal rights in exchange for compensation, but cannot be amended without the approval of the federal and provincial governments, and the aboriginal peoples.

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Expats get the vote

BY STEPHANIE PIERI

William Laurence and Thomas Singleton, two Halifax lawyers and expatriate Québécois, have been very busy since early August.

It was then that Singleton noticed an article in *the Globe and Mail* about a committee that had been set up in Montréal to register voters outside of Québec who would be eligible to vote in the Québec referendum on October 30. After talking to Casper Bloom, a prominent Montréal lawyer who headed the committee, Singleton realized that there were quite a number of Québécois living in the Halifax region.

According to a memo released from the office of *Le Directeur Général des Élections du Québec*, Québécois living outside the province, provided they meet certain conditions, have the right to vote by mail at a general election, a by-election, or referendum. One of the qualifying conditions is to have the "precise intention of returning to Québec."

This right to vote lasts for two years from the date of departure. With regards to government employees — whether they are Canadian or Québécois — and employees of international organizations of which Canada or Québec is a member, that two-year limit does not apply. The minimum estimate of eligible voters living in the other provinces, the United States, and around the world is roughly 50 000, though there may be upwards of four times that number.

There are an estimated five thousand eligible voters in the Halifax region, according to Singleton. They are comprised mainly of military personnel and their families, other Federal Government employees and their families, students and teaching staff at the five universities who are here for studies and intend to return to Québec, and others who may be here and fit the voter criteria.

"The basic reason for getting involved (is that) there is nothing more serious than the separation of Québec from Canada, and it is something that could have enormous consequences for this region," said Singleton. "All you have to do is look at the map to see the precarious situation the Maritimes and Newfoundland are going to be in if there is a separation of Québec."

There have been 15,000 approved applications of people who are presently living outside of Québec. In past elections, the number of people who had registered were only a few thousand.

When asked about the general feelings of the potential voters that they encountered, Singleton said all the people who came into the office, with one exception, wanted to make sure that they voted no.

With constant phone calls, a fax machine that rarely stopped, and people dropping by the office every couple of minutes, Laurence and Singleton are very busy. According to Singleton, he and Laurence are doing the job that should have fallen to the Parti Québécois, but for obvious political reasons, did not.

"Pierre Côté (Chief Electoral Officer) was on CBC's 'As It Happens' and he was explaining that he has to report to the Committee of the Québec National Assembly. The Liberal Party wanted to send out applications via postal lists of people who had moved within the last two years. There was also some talk of doing some advertising. Parti Québécois members, who dominated the committee, essentially vetoed it (the Liberal Party's idea)," said Singleton. "Côté's hands were tied and he couldn't do anything. The result was that it was left to private organizations to reach the people."

Though 5,000 eligible voters in the Halifax region may not seem significant, with such a close result expected in the referendum, these votes could make all the difference.