

cross-canada briefs

Saturday's rally start of Common People's revolution

TORONTO (CUP) — Toronto made history on Saturday with the largest political protest in the history of Canada and set off what many people say is the birth of a people's movement in Ontario.

The rally was organized by labour, students, and community groups to end off the Metro Days of Action, a week of resistance to provincial funding cuts to social services. It attracted over 275,000 people to the front lawn of the Ontario legislature from noon hour until early evening. Thousands of students, teachers, faculty, and staff gathered outside the Ministry of Education Friday afternoon to protest the destruction they say Premier Mike Harris' government is causing to the province's education system.

As well, on every day last week thousands of students across the country demonstrated against the cuts to post-secondary education and rising student debt.

The Canadian Federation of Students' Pan-Canadian Week of Action, which kicked off in the Prairies on Monday and ended in Metro Toronto on Friday, translated into a full week of pressure put on the federal and provincial governments, says Brad Lavigne, national chairperson of the CFS.

After four days of action in Toronto, an estimated 20,000 university and college students, teachers, high school and elementary students, faculty, and parents attended the rally at the Ministry of Education.

The Nutty Professor

BY LAUREL FORTIN

OTTAWA (CUP) — A prolonged period of depression, overwork, and personal stress impaired the judgement of the University of Ottawa's dean of social sciences last week. The impairment resulted in his arrest for the attempted murder of his mother and his resignation, said his lawyer.

Henry Edwards' lawyer, Bob Wakefield, says his client is undergoing voluntary treatment for acute depression which led to what police suspect was an overdose of sleeping pills administered to his 85-year-old mother Rosalbina.

Regional police found Edwards' mother in need of immediate medical attention after Edwards, 57, walked into the Casselman provincial police station on Tuesday, October 15 and told officers to check on her.

If convicted of attempted murder, Edwards could face a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The dean's arrest and resignation is only the latest in a series of misfortunes incurred by the social sciences faculty. It comes on the heels of allegations of sexual misconduct by other professors in the faculty: criminology professor Robert Ross is facing 19 charges in a Kingston court ranging from rape to breach of trust, and sociology professor Jean Lapointe continues to teach despite admitting to misconduct.

Students win mid-semester curriculum change

BY JILL BRYANT

CALGARY (CUP) — Journalism students in Mount Royal College's new degree program are breathing a collective sigh of relief after winning a battle with the administration over curriculum.

A meeting was called by two students, Randall Heidt and Robert Ashcroft, after students began expressing concerns with the applied degree program, which is in its second of four years.

Students at the meeting felt it was unreasonable to receive no credit for photography, a course which taught them skills they would need immediately in their work terms, yet have to devote many hours to classes they would have little use for until after graduation.

After almost three hours of discussion, a possible solution was found. The entrepreneurship course could be moved to the program's final semester, while the photography course could become a credit course, effectively replacing entrepreneurship for this semester and reducing the students' load to five courses.

A formal proposal was drawn up by Heidt and Ashcroft, who presented it to Ken Robson, dean of arts and communications.

After presentations to both Robson and College president Tom Wood, the proposal was accepted. The course changes were made immediately.

Ashcroft was also quick to praise the Communications faculty's response to the students' proposal.

"We had a problem and they rectified it," he said. "They really came through for us."

Students win victory over HST

BY KAVERI GUPTA

Students have won the fight against the new Harmonized Sales Tax on books.

Tax on books will remain at the current level of seven per cent, instead of the fifteen per cent tax proposed as part of the harmonized tax.

According to Michelle Lassaline, manager of the Dalhousie Bookstore, no information has been received from the government regarding any general guidelines for the handling of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). The individual bookstores may handle the new system themselves.

"I will be meeting with the director of the bookstore and Dalhousie Student Services, so hopefully within the next month or so we should have something more definitive," Lassaline said.

The general rule for the new tax is that anything that was previously taxed by the Provincial Sales Tax (PST, eleven per cent) or the Goods and Services Tax (GST, seven per cent) will now be taxed by the one combined tax (HST, fifteen per cent). This eliminates the ugly idea of a "tax on a tax" which is one of the main selling points of the HST.

Items previously taxed with

both PST and GST will fall in price, but the new tax will be a much broader tax. This means many goods and services previously exempt from the PST will cost more under the new HST.

Books were one of the items targeted for the HST. Pressure from students, librarians, authors and booksellers led to an HST exemption for books.

In general, the HST contains good and bad news for students and consumers. Effective April 1, 1997, the lower tax rate will cover more items. Price stickers will now include the tax in the price so that consumers will know how much an item costs when they go up to the cash register. But receipts will separately state the amount of tax so that consumers can see how much they paid. This will avoid the concerns about having a "hidden tax."

Lassaline sees a problem in this idea.

"Most books come to us pre-priced; it is not efficient to put stickers on top of all of them just to state the price plus tax," she said.

"Also, we just installed a new computer system to handle our present system. All of this will have to come into consideration when we decide how to deal with

the tax."

Another perk of the new tax is the decrease in income taxes. Other items experiencing a decrease in tax include: car repairs, computers, audio/visual equipment including televisions, V.C.R.'s and movie rentals, household items, phone service, cable, clothes and footwear over \$93.46, magazines and periodicals purchased in a store, non-prescription drugs, and food and drinks over two dollars purchased in a restaurant or delivered to your home.

Some of the items students increasing under the new tax include: home heating fuel, clothing and footwear under \$93.46, personal services like haircuts, travel services within Canada (but not the rest of the world). The tax on electricity will increase from 10.21% to 15%.

Basic food and groceries, residential rent, the purchase and sale of used homes, public transit, tuition, child care, and health care will all continue to be untaxed.

Overall, the government is looking at a relatively neutral impact on the cost of living. It is apparent, though, that day-to-day expenses will increase first with the savings coming later.

DAGS in need of constitutional changes

BY MONICA GILLIS

Constitutional amendments are long overdue at the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students, according to a judicial review board.

The current members of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) council asked the board to review amendments passed by last year's council.

Last week, the results of the judicial review were presented to council. The board found that last year's DAGS council had not followed the proper amendment procedure when it made changes to the 1979 constitution. The board also concluded that council should still be operating under the con-

stitution passed in 1979.

During the 1995-96 school year, the DAGS council passed several amendments to the 1979 constitution. The changes made by Alexander Ross, last year's DAGS president, created two vice-presidents — an external and an internal where there had only been one — and reduced the number of councillors from 1 per 50 graduates to 1 per 100 graduates. Since last year's elections were conducted under the revised 1996 constitution, these changes were found to be in violation of the 1979 constitution.

As a result of the judicial board's decision, Vice-President External Kimberly Wakefield was relieved of her position. Council must also elect 12 new councillors to DAGS.

The reason for reverting back to the 1979 constitution was that DAGS failed to submit their revised version to both the Dalhousie Student Union and the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. Also, it was believed that the proper amendment procedures were not followed. The 1979 constitution requires a referendum to be held for all constitutional changes. Ross said that there was some confusion over what constituted a referendum.

This year all DAGS council positions were acclaimed. As a result, the review board suggested that there was no need to rehold elections. They will, however, have to fill — by election — the twelve empty council seats left vacant by the constitutional changes.

Watergate!
Whitewater!
Wickwire?

Write news for
the Gazette.
Staff meetings
Monday at 4:30 pm.
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