

International Women's Day

by Chuck Spar

"The aim of the demonstration is to publicize feminist demands, to tell the government that we won't accept social cutbacks passively", said Christina Simmons of the Halifax Women's Action Committee at a march marking International Women's Day.

More than 50 people participated in the demonstration organized by the International Women's Day Coalition, March 8.

The coalition of women's or feminist groups in the city includes: APPLE (Atlantic Provinces Political Lesbians for Equality), A Woman's Place, Rape Relief, Transition House, Voice of Women and the Women's Action Committee. Other interested individuals and groups were also present.

Participants assembled at noon at Victoria Park. The organizers distributed information and song sheets, and picket signs to the crowd.

There was a rehearsal of an American women's liberation song called "Bella Ciao", and women practiced shouting their slogans.

Banners were hoisted which read "International Women's Day", "APPLE", and "Have No Misconceptions, Planned Parenthood".

Their picket signs stressed a number of issues including economic demands such as, "Cutback Someone Who Can Afford It for a Change"; "Rent and Food are Not Free"; and "Women too Need UIC". And there were political demands and statements like, "We are women; we are workers; we are fighters."; and "Matrimonial Law Reform Now". The procession marched through the streets of the city to the Grand Parade in front of City Hall. Along the way they sang "Bella Ciao" a song that calls for "revolution now", and they shouted slogans like, "Up from the kitchens; up from the

bedrooms; up from under, Women Unite".

In the view of one of the participants, Georgina Chambers of APPLE, the demonstration served to "get women together to show some kind of international solidarity. Women rarely get a chance to get together to talk about common problems and struggles. This is only the beginning."

At the Grand Parade, Christina Simmons read the statement of the international women's day coalition before a cheering crowd. She began by talking about the history of International Women's Day. "When the first women's day was celebrated in 1911, men stayed home to mind the homes and children, while women marched through the streets to show their strength and demand their rights, as we are doing today."

"Women today fight on several fronts at once in our lives as paid workers; in our

domestic lives as unpaid workers; in our sexual lives as partners in marriages; as the bearers of daughters and sons getting a sexist education; as citizens whose lives are most deeply affected by restrictions of government services; and as people whom the culture portrays as targets of physical violence."

She elaborated on the demands of women in Canada, such as "women's right to paid employment" and "an end to violence against women".

Simmons concluded with a quote from the anarchist, Emma Goldman who said, "true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in the courts. It begins in women's soul. History tells us every oppressed class gains true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that women learn that lesson, that to realize that her free-

dom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches."

International Women's Day was also being observed in other parts of the country. In Ottawa, for example, Marc Lalonde was saying how the status of women is not likely to change in the next ten years.

Other events held March 8 included women's films at the National Film Board, and an exhibit of art and handcrafts by local women at the Turret in the afternoon. In the evening the Dalhousie Student Movement, the CPC(M-L) organization on campus, held a meeting at which a female student gave a talk on International Women's Day and the revolution. Also that evening a "Women's Social Event" was held at the Turret which featured a dance demonstration and live music by local women.

Grits grumble

by Nigel Allen

The Nova Scotia government's social services policies came under fire at a panel discussion at the N.S. Liberal Association's annual meeting March 10.

Susan Ashley, counsel for the N.S. Status of Women Advisory Committee, and Bill MacEachern, former Liberal social services minister, criticized the government of John Buchanan for continuing to deduct support payments to deserted or separated wives, whether or not the women received these court-ordered maintenance payments. The former Liberal government had agreed in principle to pay the about 800 women with dependent children the full amount of welfare to which they were entitled, and to attempt to collect support payments from the women's husbands or former husbands itself, MacEachern said.

Ashley said the new government's reply to a request that the policy be brought in was "it'll cost money and we aren't spending any more."

MacEachern told the 100 delegates present that one "can't expect many exciting or innovative social services in the future". "We live in reactionary times", he said.

Replying to a question from

the audience, federal solicitor-general Jean-Jacques Blais said that there has been little reaction to cutbacks in unemployment insurance. "Although there has been some negative impact", Blais said, "there have been no large representations."

Before the changes came into effect, he said, maritime M.P.s were "very concerned, and made strong representations to minimize the negative effects of the changes."

Dan Munro, mayor of Glace Bay and a federal Liberal candidate, spoke in favour of the cooperative housing program scheduled to end March 31. Residential rehabilitation money should be available throughout a municipality, he said, not just for those areas which the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation considers rundown.

He urged an emphasis on cooperatively developed housing, arguing that "home-owners make better citizens." "Public housing is very expensive, both in initial costs and in the ongoing subsidy."

Although federal officials consider single-family housing inefficient, rural Nova Scotia's relatively low land values make single-family dwellings feasible, Munro said.



A contingent of Halifax women celebrate International Women's Day by protesting government cutbacks.

Gazette photo/Alan Adams

Students protest

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cutbacks questionnaire that was distributed to the different faculties and the other is informing students of the issues. B.J. Arseneault, Acadia student union president and chairperson of SUNS said leaflets are being distributed to prepare students for next week's march.

Mike McNeil, external v-p of Saint Mary's student council said they are having an information day with a session for

both day students and residence people. A faculty member will be presenting a motion to senate asking for classes to be cancelled on the 21st. A poster campaign is also being held.

"We're hoping for a big turnout", McNeil said. "Students are more interested than other times. They can see their money disappearing. People are worried."

At Mount Saint Vincent University a walk-a-thon to raise

money for the new social/athletic complex had been planned for the same day as the protest. But the students will still support the march according to Janet Mrenica, council external v-p. "The two can work hand in hand", Mrenica said. "We are doing something constructive. We hope people who don't participate in the walk-a-thon will go to the march", she said. "We'll have a banner there to express our support."

Rebate in N.B.

FREDERICTON—New Brunswick students taking a program which is offered in Nova Scotia but not in any New Brunswick institution will be eligible for a Loan Remission Program, the Department of Youth, Recreation and Cultural Resources announced last week. The Loan Rebate Program applies only to students graduating with a first undergraduate degree this year at a New Brunswick degree granting school or at a school outside the province offering programs unavailable inside the province. Students

enrolled in a program where a first undergraduate degree is not granted, such as science students in medicine, will be eligible for the program at the completion of four years of study. The program applies only to loan amounts exceeding \$3000, calculated on the amount of loans left outstanding at the end of four years.

Applications for the rebate and a transcript of marks must be submitted in the first four months following graduation. Write The Student Aid Branch, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1.