

# Halifax unemployed upset with Trudeau

by Scott Vaughan

Last week when Prime Minister Trudeau made one of his rare visits to Halifax, the Metro Coalition of Support for the Unemployed requested a meeting with both the P.M. and Premier Gerald Regan in order to voice their opinions concerning the present economic situation in the Maritimes. Regan's office responded by saying that the two leaders "would be too busy" for any such meeting; from the Prime Minister's Office they heard nothing.

"Trudeau spent three days last week in the Carribean, yet he doesn't have enough time to talk with us for a half hour," said Metro Coalition Chairperson Sharon Reilly.

"While the Prime Minister calls for National Unity and confidence in the economy, the policies of his government promote regional disparity and the highest unemployment rate since the 1930's," Reilly said. "It is becoming more and more difficult to believe that government and business representatives have any real concern for the over one million jobless Canadians."

The government is catering to the wishes of the corporations at the expense of the workers, according to Metro Secretary Georgina Chambers. "The government is granting huge tax concessions to multi-national corporations, and at the same time cutting back on basic social services and education because of the lost revenue from those taxes. The corporations meanwhile are making huge profits and then leaving the country in search of

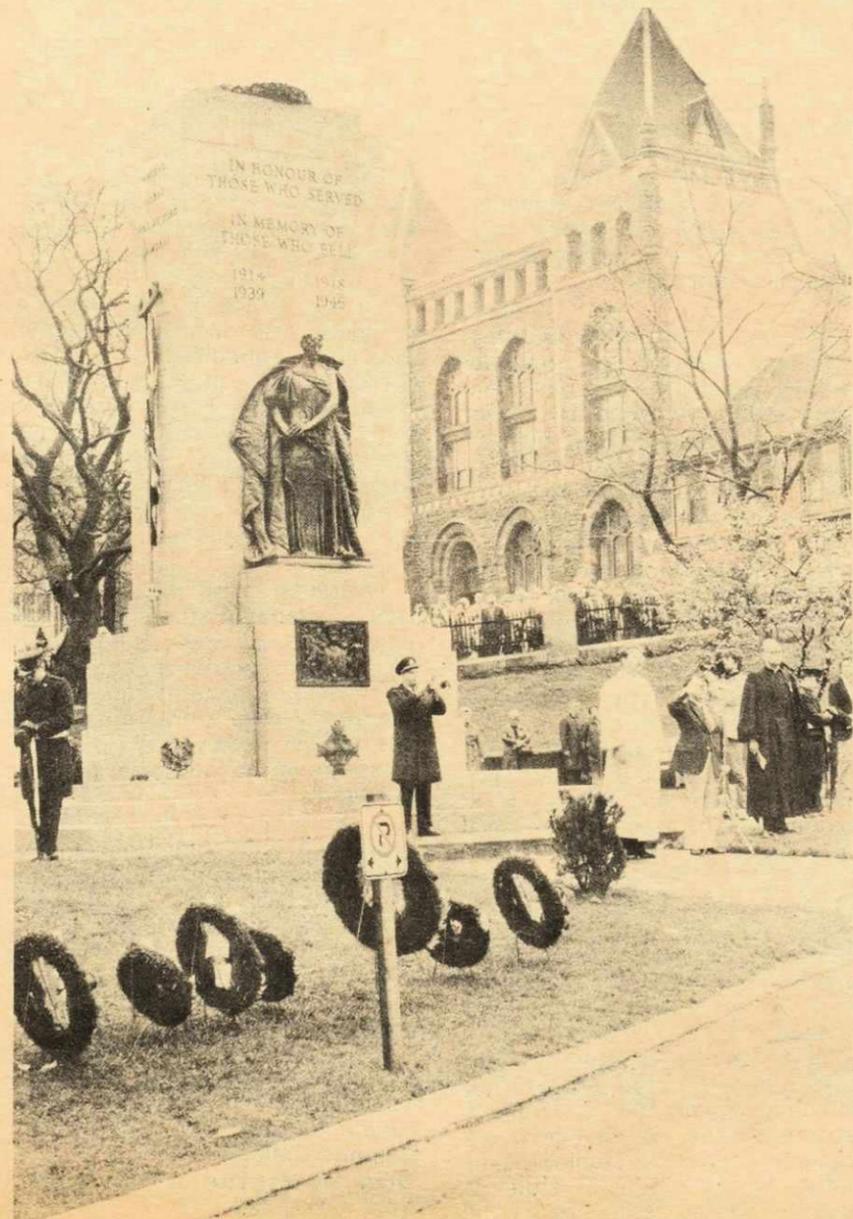
cheaper labour," citing Hawker Siddley and INCO as being two examples of corporate irresponsibility.

Both government and corporations are ignoring the basic rights of the workers, according to Reilly. "It is by now a well known fact that while food, clothing and energy prices have risen significantly over the last year, the worker's wages are frozen under the government's AIB programme." Citing figures recently released by Ottawa, Reilly said that corporate profits have increased by 17 per cent over last year while the workers' wages have been kept down and the numbers of unemployed continues to grow.

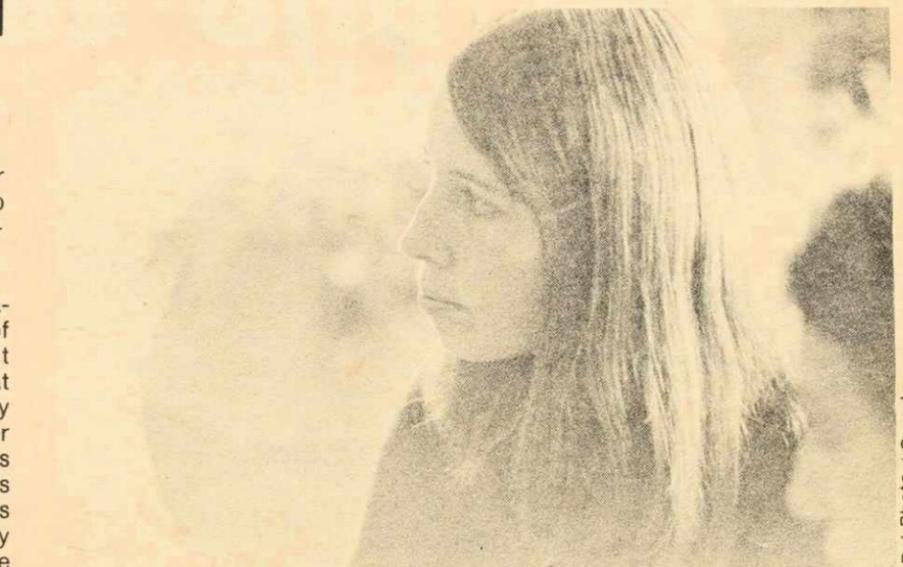
Reilly said that at this time there exists almost no job security in the Maritimes. "There is a huge back-up force of unemployed, and the worker can be laid off or have his wages cut at the discretion of the employer."

The Metro has called out for "drastic" action on the part of both governments and corporations to rectify the present economic situation. Reilly said that while workers who have jobs have some sort of protection through their unions, the unemployed have no means of voicing their position.

The purpose of the Coalition is to "educate and agitate" by public pressure. "Unemployment is not socially acceptable, and those who are unemployed believe that the economy will go back to what it was ten years ago. People must realize that those who are unemployed are not lazy or unable to hold a job; the



Remembrance Day at the Halifax Cenotaph



Dal Photo / Grandy

Sharon Reilly of the Nova Scotia Coalition for the Unemployed spoke with the *Gazette* about the organization's disgust with Trudeau's refusal to meet with them when he was in Halifax last week.

simple fact of the matter is that there are no jobs. It is the basic right of everyone to have a job," Reilly said.

The Metro Coalition draws its members from the Halifax-Dart-

mouth area. It is a coalition of several groups and associations, including the National Union of Students, The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour and the Nova Scotia Women's Action Committee.

## Unemployed organize

ST. JOHN'S (CUP)—A group of students at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador have formed a politically non-affiliated campus group to educate and organize students to the reality of graduate unemployment.

Rock Trask, spokesperson for the student alliance, says students at Memorial are not facing the reality of the province's employment situation. "Most students think there will be jobs waiting for them when they graduate," he said, emphasizing the majority will face unemployment.

The organization's first major task will be a comprehensive survey of student unemployment at MUN in conjunction with the university student affairs department. Trask hopes the survey results will give students a clear indication of where they stand in relation to the job

market.

The alliance also hopes to develop policies and solutions to Newfoundland's chronic unemployment problem through cooperation and research with all sectors of the university community.

Trask feels the formulation of alternate policy and solutions will raise awareness and stimulate ideas. He said the group will seek advice and consider the feasibility of real solutions to the problem.

Trask says the alliance does not want to isolate employment problems facing students from the mass of the unemployed. "The student alliance is part of a general movement of workers and students attempting to improve employment opportunities for the entire population," he said.

## Les Anglais menacé !

by Scott Vaughan and Jeff Round

A group of English speaking Canadians have formed an alliance in order to protect jobs which they feel are unfairly going to bilingual people.

"It is becoming more and more apparent that the federal and provincial civil services and even the private industrial sector, under pressure from the government, are forcing personnel to become bilingual in areas which are overwhelmingly unilingual," said Robin Reid, President of the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC). The Alliance, a non-political organization, has a national membership of over 300 persons.

Reid, who feels that the Trudeau government has overstepped the BNA act, said that they "have misconceived ideas about the language policy" as it now stands under Trudeau's Two Official Languages Act.

"Quebec rejects bilingualism, so why should the rest of Canada be subject to it?" Reid contended. "We live in a country that is overwhelmingly English, and yet are required to speak the language of a minority in order to get a job."

Reid feels that the decision on

whether Canada is a bilingual country should be determined by a vote. "The will of the majority should determine whether Canada be bilingual or not." In a situation like New Brunswick, which has a 40% French population, the will of the majority would determine the status of the official language(s), according to Reid.

Reid does not believe that the language policy was a conspiracy by the federal government, but at the same time he feels that the present federal policy concerning language was an infringement on the rights of the majority of Canadians.

"I would hate to see the country break up, but at the same time I don't see why the majority should be subject to accommodate a minority."

"The decision by the Nova Scotia government to make available French language education is a waste of money, since only 5 per cent of the population is French speaking. Reid however was in favour of the continuation of English language education in Quebec, "if it is feasible."

Reid said that the federal government has attempted to create the continued on page 6