

Cup briefs

Minister says 'that's crap'

TORONTO (CUP)—"It has always been my belief that the primary responsibility for the funding of post-secondary education lies with the students themselves and with their parents—and if you're serious about post-secondary education, you're going to make some sacrifices, I'd hope."

That's how Ontario Colleges and Universities Minister Bette Stephenson described her philosophy of student aid at a press conference Feb. 2.

Responding to criticism that, under the present student aid scheme students are forced to live with their parents and travel long distances to get to school, Stephenson said, "Look, fellas, don't give me crap about long rides on the TTC. When I attended university, it was an hour and fifteen minutes to downtown from Willowdale, and that was on the Tooner-ville Trolley."

When it was pointed out that many students are unable to read or study on public transit, the minister retorted, "Ah that's crap. Look, if students want to get a university education they know they'll have to make sacrifices in order to get it I'd hope, unless all of today's students suffer from cases of vertigo."

Marijuana may be decriminalized

OTTAWA (CUP)—It may only be a few more months until the penalties for possession of marijuana are removed.

Representatives of all three major parties said Feb. 7 they would be willing to give speedy passage to a bill proposed by Justice Minister Marc Lalonde to decriminalize marijuana.

The bill, promised for several years, is expected to be similar to one passed by the Senate a few years ago which died on the order paper before the Commons had a chance to study it. That bill would have brought marijuana and hashish under the Food and Drug Act from the Narcotics Control Act, abolishing jail sentences and criminal records for those convicted of simple possession.

Ontario strike ends

TORONTO (CUP)—The two-week strike by support staff at Ontario's 22 community colleges has ended. In a ratification vote Feb. 5, workers voted 70.4 per cent in favor of ending the eighth support staff strike at Canadian universities or colleges this year.

According to union Public Relations Officer Peter Slee, the package value of the settlement was just over eight per cent. The union had previously demanded an 8.5 per cent increase, while the Council of Regents, the governing body of the colleges, had offered a 7 3/4 per cent increase.

The union accepted the new contract after the council conceded a \$6,000 increase in life insurance coverage, two extra sick leave days a year, and a 15 cent an hour increase for the lower categories of support staff workers.

Campus work, no demos

OTTAWA (CUP)—Unsure of the amount of militancy on campuses, student leaders across Canada have decided to take a cautious approach in organizing students against rising fees and cutbacks this spring.

At a meeting Feb. 1-5, representatives from all provincial student organizations and the National Union of Students (NUS) decided to first consolidate anti-cutbacks work on campus before moving towards any more militant action.

No national mass action is planned, although several provincial organizations may conduct individual actions. Instead, the representatives agreed that a planned NUS brief to the federal government would be the national focus for the campaign.

Good-by golden age

OTTAWA (CUP)—Top university officials warned the senate's committee on retirement policy two weeks ago that Canadian schools and universities are facing problems because of the growing number of aging faculty members.

The officials urged as much flexibility as possible be taken on the matter of retirement age so some teachers can be given early retirement in order to make way for new blood, while older, wiser and more productive professors can remain at work.

Declining enrolment in the education system, combined with the glut of teachers hired during the baby boom of the 60s, is leaving the universities in a very difficult situation. Loyd Barber, President of University of Regina said if no early retirement policies are instituted, "for the next 15 years there is no way of bringing in new blood," he added.

Multi-faceted protest

MONCTON (CUP)—Everything's confused, little is certain, but the protest is continuing.

That's how Student Federation vice-president Joseph Labelle described the current state of the student protest against tuition increases and inadequate student aid at L'Université de Moncton.

On February 6, students were forced out of the university's Phys Ed building, which they had taken over the previous day. The university's vice-rector threatened to cancel a national conference of nursing students scheduled for that weekend if the students didn't leave by 3 p.m.

This threat "threw terror into the crowd," Labelle said, and the building was evacuated.

No further occupations have apparently occurred, although protest organizers did stay overnight that night in the Administration Building. Students in departments that had been closed down were expected to return to classes February 9.

A student spokesperson said students in each department were holding study sessions February 8 on student aid problems and tuition increases.

Nearly 600 of the U de M's 2,400 students were not attending classes, Labelle said, including almost all students in Social Sciences.

"No one knows" what further direction the protest will take, he said. "The only thing certain is that the campus is chaotic. The whole university machine has been upset radically, drastically."

The entire student strategy committee was replaced February 7 after its members collapsed under the vice-rector's "blackmail", he said. The replacements were new people "starting from ground zero again".

He expected the situation would be allowed to return to normal, with only a few incidents occurring to keep the campus "moving and upset". The next big push would come after the March break, he predicted.

Possible guerrilla tactics in the interim could include blocking off the Administration Building, he said. "You could do it with only 30 people."

One of the protestors' main objectives will be moving forward the next meeting of the university's Board of Governors, at which tuition increases will be discussed. The meeting is now scheduled for April, Labelle said, and the students hope to push it forward to "precipitate some action" and force the Board not to raise fees.

To do that, however, may require "more radical methods" than have been used so far, he said.

The protest, which started January 30, has already included a boycott of classes, a march through downtown Moncton, and the sit-in. Its objectives include stopping tuition increases (expected to be 15 per cent or nearly \$100) and rent increases, improving student aid, and removing recent cuts in unemployment insurance that effectively cut most students off UI.

The protest has not yet achieved any concrete concessions, Labelle said. However, the university administration has said it was "sympathetic with our demands", he said, although it did not agree with the "illegal occupation of buildings."

The New Brunswick government hasn't responded to the requests for improvements in the student aid system, he said. "No one's responded to anything. I'm sure they're worried, though, because there's an election coming very soon."

He said he did not expect any immediate removal of the UI cuts, but said the protest had inspired a favorable editorial in the local daily on the effects of the cuts on students.

However, a local tenants' association now being formed with the aid of students is "going very well," he said. The students are trying to work with the association to stop yearly rent increases of \$50-75 imposed by the city's Landlords Association.

Senate rejects extra week

by Alan Adams

Dalhousie students will not have an extra week of classes next year the Dalhousie Senate decided on Monday. In reconsidering their position Senate faced both faculty resentment and a 2000-signature petition in protest of lengthening the term.

Student Senator Norman Epstein said the petition "was quite effective" in having Senate reconsider and added "the strength of our arguments was equally convincing." (Epstein argued that by lengthening the term students who normally work over the Christmas holidays would be deprived of a valuable source of income and also students

living a considerable distance from Halifax might experience troubles with travelling arrangements.)

Originally the Senate had planned to have classes end on December 13, 1979 with the examination schedule continuing until December 22. It was thought that the extra week could be added on at the beginning of classes but this idea was considered unworkable for 1979-80. A Senate Committee has been formed to look into the possibilities of an extra week in the future.

Senate secretary Arnold Tingley refused to comment on the matter.

Quit Nestle quick

Several Halifax organizations are boycotting Nestle food products for promoting the use of its infant formula in place of breast feeding in developing countries.

The Sisters of Charity, OXFAM, 10 Days for World Development and other groups who met Feb. 6 will urge their members to stop buying Nestle products and to write letters of protest to the company's Canadian headquarters in Toronto. They will also contact another 50 Halifax area organizations about participating in the boycott, according to Nadeine McNamara of 10 Days for World Development.

The boycott was first organized in 1977 in the United States by the Infant Formula Action Coalition to publicize the dangers posed by the use of infant formula in developing nations.

Mothers who have been persuaded to buy the expensive formula of

ten dilute it with water to make it last a week or longer. Because of the lack of clean water or proper sterilizing facilities, infant deaths due to infection and malnutrition have risen significantly, according to Eleanor MacLean of OXFAM.

Other companies selling formula have responded to pressure from INFAC and other groups, MacLean said, but Nestle has been the most resistant. She said boycott groups have bought shares in other companies which allowed them to speak at shareholders meetings, something not possible with Nestle.

"You can buy shares in most other companies, but Nestle's shares are unobtainable," she said.

Nestle sells a third of the world's infant formula, she added.

McNamara said the boycott coalition has no plans for a public information campaign at the present.