

## CUP NOTES

By Aldera Chisholm

**CUP--THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS** is an allegiance of campus newspapers across Canada. Among its other services, CUP functions as a news exchange between papers. This is why the X-Press carries articles not written by UPEI students. (That and the fact that it makes us seem oh-so-much more professional.) In this weekly column, current CUP articles not carried in our paper will be summarized.

## DALHOUSIE RADIO CENSORED BY CRTS.

The Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission recently imposed sexual content restrictions on Dal's CKDU. The broadcasts in question referred to gay sexual practices, aired in support of Gay Pride Day. The decision is widely felt to be unfair because it is the result of one complaint which Ian Pringle, president of the National Campus and Community Radio Association, describes as homophobic. 26 other stations held a protest in support of CKDU by airing the controversial pieces.

## BE NICE TO THE POPE, OR YOU'LL GET SUED

The Gillette Company, maker of Liquid Paper, is pursuing legal action against two student newspapers for running a graphic that spoofed the product as "Liquid Pope". The graphic was distributed in 1993 and run by several papers. A complainant wrote Gillette and several Catholic organizations describing the graphic as "anti-Catholic propaganda", and encouraging consumers not to buy Liquid Paper. Gillette has not yet contacted any of the student media involved, but in a letter to the complainant, the company stated that they would "vigorously pursue the author and both the Fulcrum and the Canadian University Press and put an abrupt end to this offensive material."

## BROCK GETS ITS OWN BREW

Brock University in St. Catherine's has made a deal with an Ontario microbrewery to produce its own beer "Issac's Premium Light", in honour of the schools namesake, Sir Issac Brock. The beer will be sold exclusively at the campus pub. Other institutions such as Carleton University may not get their own blend because Student Union events receive sponsorship from established brands like Moosehead and Labatts. Hmmm... "Panther Pale Ale"?

## ANTI-POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GROUP RECEIVES GRANT

The Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) is headed by U of T professor John Furedy who says that organizations such as employment equity, race relations, and status of women offices have mandates that destroy academic freedom. He feels that all of these offices should be replaced with a single human rights office. The \$215,000 grant is from the Donner Canadian Foundation, a Toronto organization that funds research.

## FINANCIAL AID: \$1 Billion in unpaid student loans sounds worst than it is

By Bruce Rolston (CUP)

CANADIAN STUDENTS MAY OWE \$1 billion in defaulted student loans, but that may be more the fault of the government than the students, some student aid officials are saying.

The federal government released figures this month that said one in five recipients of Canada Student Loans fail to pay back their federal loan on time.

Because loans are guaranteed by the federal government, Ottawa is forced to pay off the bank that made the loan and assume the debt itself.

Since federal student loans began 20 years ago, students have defaulted on a total of \$1.5 billion, a third of which has so far been collected.

In recent years, the federal government has become increasingly aggressive in collecting student loans. Two years ago, it began withholding income tax refunds to defaulters. In 1992-3, the government spent \$23 million on collection, recovering nearly \$100 million in defaults.

Some federal officials, including Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy, have used these figures to justify an upcoming overhaul of the student loan system, which will give control of collection to the banks themselves.

They estimate this move will save them several million dollars in collection costs a year.

But officials at the University of Toronto and the Ontario Education Ministry say the problem doesn't lie with students who resist paying; it rests in problems with the federal student loan program itself.

Richard Jackson, an official in Ontario's own student aid program, says a significant cause of the high default rate is the reliance on private collection agencies to track down defaulters.

Ontario's government uses its own public collection agency, the Central Collection Service. That is part of the reason Ontario's loan default rate is two per cent, rather than the seven per cent Ottawa writes off, Jackson says.

"It seems to be quite clear that Central

Collection does a better job than do private collection agencies," Jackson said.

There are other reasons, Jackson says.



Ontario loan amounts have historically been smaller than federal loans, making them easier to collect. And Ontario spends more on interest relief programs for underemployed loan recipients. That relief helps avoid the need for some write offs, he says.

"We'll keep your Ontario student loan in good standing for people who are underemployed. It has a significant impact in being able to meet the full repayment obligation.

"David Sidebottom is the student aid manager at the University of Toronto. He agrees that the federal program is badly designed.

"There's a lot more the federal government could be doing to try and cut back the defaults."

Sidebottom says the federal government could provide more information, both for students considering a federal loan, and for students who are about to pay back their loan and need to know how much they owe.

"That whole area is something we aren't doing a very good job in at the moment," he said.

"Borrowers should be borrowing in an

informed way. You don't know the interest rate [on your loan]. You don't know how much the province is going to forgive."

Sidebottom says the federal government also uses a pretty inflexible repayment plan, compared to other countries. All federal loan repayments are on a 10-year repayment plan.

By contrast, in the United States, students can choose from a variety of options, and even change their option midway, Sidebottom said.

Gerry Godsoe, an official with the student assistance branch of the Human Resources Department, declined to comment on whether the reason for large loan defaults is problems with the program or students themselves.

"What's important is what the government thinks," Godsoe said.

But Godsoe also said his opinion is that the system is not as bad as the \$1 billion default figure would seem to indicate.

"I guess you could agree the system has worked. Two million students have gone through the program. The bulk of students go through and pay on time without any problem."

Rick Martin, policy advisor for the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, agrees.

The problem of student loan collection is a very minor problem that has been blown out of proportion, said Martin. "The overwhelming majority will pay off their student loan completely."

But the future of student loan collection in Canada is uncertain, says Martin. On one hand, the federal government is negotiating to hand over collection duties to banks, something that could happen as early as January.

But at the same time, Axworthy has proposed instituting an income contingent loan repayment scheme, which would collect student loans through the income tax system.

"I think he [Axworthy] doesn't really know himself where he's going at this point," Martin said.

(Source: *The Varsity*, University of Toronto)

## EDUCATION: Students unite to protest social reform

By Gavin Kerr (CUP)

LOOK OUT LLOYD AXWORTHY. Students are pushing aside their personal and political differences as they rally behind a Nov. 16 student protest on Parliament Hill.

National and provincial student organizations, as well as individual universi-

ties, associations of professors, colleges, unions and even high schools will be protesting against the human resources minister's social reform proposals.

Guy Caron, national chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), committed the group to the protest, which was originally organized by the Students' Federation of

the University of Ottawa (SFUO).

"We see it as an important step in what must be continued pressure on the government," Caron said.

SFUO president Jean-Francois Venne was also happy to have the head of the CFS support the protest. "What's important right

continued on page 6