

# Student groups at odds over national protest

By Alexis Roman  
(CUP)

CANADA'S TWO LARGEST STUDENT organizations, the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and the Canadian Alliance of Students (CASA), are involved in a tug-of-war over the timing of a national student protest against the federal government's discussion paper on social reforms. Immediate plans for a protest were launched by the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (SFUO), which announced its intention to march on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Nov. 16. This demonstration, however, was not planned with the CFS.

"The CFS doesn't have a mandate to help the University of Ottawa because of our general meeting scheduled for November," said Louise Carriere, CFS communications coordinator. Carriere said the CFS will hold its general meeting Nov. 8 to Nov. 14, when members will decide what action to take about the federal government's discussion paper.

"Something of this magnitude takes months of careful planning," Carriere said. "January makes much more sense for a protest."

Although the CFS hasn't formally

planned it yet, Carriere said it has distributed letters and hand bills to all its members in order to inform students of how changes to education funding will affect them. The CFS also has prepared a newsletter to be released in November.

"Our primary goal is to try and get as much information to our members as possible," Carriere said.

Many universities, however, have joined SFUO and CASA in their approach to a national strike, saying that the CFS is being too passive.

"We've been working day and night," said Hal Maclean, a vice-president at Dalhousie. "We're working with CASA schools trying to mesh them all together."

Maclean listed a number of activities that students at Dalhousie are working on to help the U of O's cause, including creating student societies to lobby the federal government, working with their local MP and trying to get her to resign if she doesn't help university students, sending letters of protest to MPs, and pressuring their provincial government to

take a tough stance against the discussion paper.

When asked about the CFS's decision to wait for its general conference before planning a national protest, Maclean replied, "We've been putting in over 40 hours a week, and they're still just talking."

While the CFS is not yet organizing a national protest, it is working to get students mobilized at the local level.

"We have a great stake in this as well," said Angela Mann, Saskatchewan component chair for the CFS at the U of R. "This affects us just as much as it does someone sitting in the Owl [campus pub] right now."

Mann said she is working with CFS Saskatchewan and more than 15 volunteers from the U of R to help set up information tables on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2.

Along with the information on what the discussion paper proposes, Mann plans to distribute a draft letter outlining the CFS's position, which students can sign and mail to their MPs.

"We're in the beginning stages of eve-

rything I know how to do. If students out have any suggestions or ideas, I'd absolutely love to hear them."

When asked about SFUO's plans, Carriere said, "They're rushing into this and involving everyone about it... I think the media should know, but not two months ahead of time."

Some student representatives found common ground between the two groups.

"Getting anything done at any time is a good idea," said Lara Rooke, a vice-president at the University of New Brunswick. Rooke said the U of NB is currently working with both CFS and CASA. "The CFS has a great number of members... We'd be stupid not to use their resources."

Rooke also said that the U of NB will be launching a "No-more-smoke-and-marijuana" paper" campaign on Nov. 1. She said the campaign will support SFUO's protest, but she is not a charter member of the CFS, and she is not sure if she will be going to the protest with any plans the CFS has.

"The bottom line is to do as much as possible," she said.

## Liberals to hear view of Canadians on social reforms

Fraser Needham  
(CUP)

THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL HEAR the opinions of Canadians on its proposed changes to welfare, post-secondary education and unemployment insurance. From Nov. 1 to Dec. 16, town hall meetings, open forums and community meetings will be happening from Whitehorse, N.W.T. to Fredericton, N.B. The forums will be chaired by Liberal MP Frances Leblanc. Not all student groups are optimistic about the forums.

"What's the point?" asks Guy Caron, chair of the Canadian Federation of Students. "As far as I'm concerned, the reforms are

good as gone through." Nevertheless, Caron says the CFS will be at the forums to protest on behalf of students.

The reforms were presented as a discussion paper Oct. 5 by Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy. Among other drastic changes to Canada's social programs, the paper proposes cutting the federal government's \$2.6 billion in funding to the provinces for post-secondary education.

Carleton economics professor Frances Woolley, who will be speaking at the Ottawa forum, says the proposed transfer cut to post-

secondary education poses many potential problems.

"This is an inter-generational equity issue," says Woolley. "The generation born in the 1970s is facing record levels of unemployment and lower real wages. This policy [review] could worsen the income distribution gap between young and old."

Woolley adds: "Will students be able to repay the debt loads that will be forced upon them under this program?"

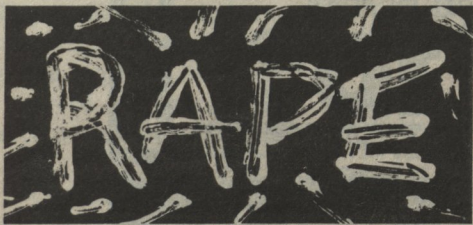
Caroline Krebs, one of the health centre's forum organizers, says the social policy

review has left many unanswered questions. "The purpose of the forums is to increase awareness on the implications of social policy review. Not enough public discussion has occurred so far and we hope we can achieve this through the forums," Krebs says.

Nigel Chippindale, a member of the social security task team with the Human Resources Ministry, says a report on the forum is expected to be presented in time for February's budget.

## Extreme drunkenness as a defense for rape

Shira Katz  
(CUP)



CONCORDIA'S WOMEN CENTRE HAS launched a petition against a recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling citing extreme drunkenness as a defence for rape. The petition will be sent to federal Justice Minister Allan Rock. Program co-ordinator Emily Paradis says the petition is very important as an educational and empowerment tool.

"I don't have a lot of faith in the legal system to rectify the situation of violence against women on its own," Paradis said. "The petition might make a difference most importantly as

an educational tool, so that men and women will start talking about what role misogyny and alcohol play in their lives. The petition is also very empowering because it allows people to take a stance on this issue."

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that 72-year-old Henri Daviault could use extreme drunkenness as a defence for rape. Daviault is accused of raping a 65-year-old woman after consuming seven or eight beers and 40 ounces of brandy. A Quebec Superior Court found him not guilty, but a new trial in the Quebec Court of Appeals later found him guilty. It held that extreme intoxication—equal to insanity—cannot be used as a defence for sexual assault. However, when Daviault appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, it ordered a new trial based on the ruling that extreme intoxication can be used as a defence for sexual assault, with the burden of proof resting with the accused.

Justice Minister Allan Rock has promised to study the implications of the judgment. He plans to release a paper discussing how to stiffen penalties for criminal intoxication.

Estel Gravel, Crown Prosecutor responsible for the Montreal court house sexual assault case team, feels the ruling won't pose a problem. "I don't see a big problem because it's very limited, very restrained. We're talking about an extreme drunkenness, equivalent to automatism or mental alienation. To use this defence, the witness will have to prove that it was extreme drunkenness with an expert," Gravel said. "It won't be possible for most people to use this defence because it's necessary to prove that you aren't there in your mind."

Despite claims to the rarity of extreme drunkenness, women's groups are more worried about the social implications of the decision. "The decision implies an excuse for sexual assault. It

matters very little how the court interprets the decision if men think it gives them a licence for sexual assault," Paradis said.

Michelle Seguin, co-ordinator at the Centre for the Status of Women at Concordia, insists rape is indefensible. "It's not a disease, it's a deliberate choice. Intoxicated or not, a person is responsible for their actions," she said.

According to Gravel, a person might be drunk to know his or her intention. "To commit a crime we have to do something knowing it's bad. Sometimes we are unable to prove the intention. In a crime it's necessary to prove the actus reus, the intention," Gravel said. The ruling will be applied to other crimes as well, she added. "If it's murder, for example, he will be fined for sexual assault, not murder, and it's the same thing for sexual assault. It will only be used as a defence for extreme drunkenness."