



New Brunswickers to Harper: Save our Science!



About 600 people formed a large human SOS to denounce the Harper government's cuts to science. The drastic cuts to the federal budget of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will effectively close the St. Andrews Biological Station Library and eliminate the Contaminants and Toxicology program. A number of scientist jobs will be eliminated. "The slashing of government science alongside the gutting of the Fisheries Act has drastic implications for both our ability to legally defend sensitive aquatic ecosystems as well as monitor and assess the impact of climate change, industrial activities and other expected threats. Such a significant turn out to our rally demonstrates that the people of St. Andrews and beyond will not sit idly by while the current government destroys environmental protections and capacity in Canada," said Matthew Abbott, Fundy Baykeeper. Photo by John Gardner and Timothy Foulkes.

Why a red square?



Over 200 university students in Fredericton rallied for accessible post-secondary education in March 2011. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

By STUDENTS FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY

The red square is the symbol of the Quebec student movement. It is a visual pun from the popular saying "being squarely in the red."

What exactly is going on in Quebec?

Quebec's Liberal Charest government recently proposed plans to increase tuition by 75% over five years. Quebec students pay on average \$2,500 in tuition fees per year and this increase would up that average to over \$4,000. The average student debt in Quebec is \$13,000.

Students are fighting the proposed tuition increase by a variety of means including mass demonstrations, student strikes and economic disruption. The backbone of the Quebec student movement's success is the unlimited general strike. In April, there were 183 student unions and 169,836 students on unlimited general strike.

In response to student demonstrations, Charest's government passed Law 78 which, apart from other assaults on democracy, made demonstrations of over 50 people illegal unless the demo and route are pre-approved. On May 22, the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history occurred when over 400,000 marched in the streets of Montreal in support of the student struggle and in defiance of this new law.

This is not the first time Quebec students have employed these tactics. For example, in 2005, the same Liberal Charest government was forced to overturn a planned \$103 million in cuts to a needs based bursary program.

What does this have to do with us in New Brunswick?

Here in New Brunswick, post-secondary students pay the second highest tuition in Canada; the average debt of a NB student upon completing their undergraduate degree is \$34,000, and the average full-time tuition in NB is \$5,800 annually. New Brunswick's Timely Completion Benefit forgives student loan in excess of \$26,000 only if the degree is completed in a 'timely' manner, which is not always possible. Moreover, this benefit normalizes student debt and sends the message that students are still expected to shoulder a debt of tens of thousands of dollars. High tuition and dependence on loans rather than grants or bursaries is just one example of how, in the post 1970s age of neoliberalism and austerity, the cost of social services has been... *(continued on page 2)*

PotashCorp claims to help nature provide, while Penobsquis residents deal with sink holes and loss of well water

By TRACY GLYNN

Penobsquis/Fredericton - Beth Norrad is from Sussex and she knows it. She knows what it is like to live in Sussex, the dairy capital of New Brunswick, and how different it is from living in Sussex's neighbouring community of Penobsquis. The quiet valley used to blend in with Sussex, but today that is no longer the case. Gas well pads that have been fracked, pipelines, towers of PotashCorp's mining operations, bright orange subsidence monuments and multiple warning signs of what is below the ground now dot the farmers' fields of Penobsquis.

Norrad's first word was pony. "When I was a baby, Dad would stop by the side of the road any time we were going to Moncton so that I could see, touch and smell the MacLeod's horses. Penobsquis was my wonderland as a child," recalls Norrad.

Today, another memory of Penobsquis haunts Norrad. The sights, sounds and smells of mining, gas flaring, grouting stations and truck traffic weigh heavily on her. Once it was gentle horses that brought Norrad and the MacLeod family together; now it is a harsh battle for justice for a long list of impacts they say are caused by potash mining, including the loss of 60 water wells, plunging property values, the sinking of land that is damaging their homes, dust, noise and light pollution, and stress.

After spending most of her life with horses and teaching children how to ride them in Toronto, Norrad returned to New Brunswick in 2003 to take care of her ailing mother and to heal from a painful back injury. She didn't know that her plan for healing would turn into what she calls a living hell.

Norrad and her sister bought a bungalow in Penobsquis in 2007 when her mother died. The house had been without water for three years but Norrad was reassured multiple times by a government official that the water would be flowing again through the taps of the house in no more than six weeks. Six weeks came and went and there was still no running water. There was no running water in the house for the next two and a half years.

"My sister and I took every cent we had and paid cash for the house, trusting we would be getting all but the usual down payment back when the mortgage was in place six weeks later. But no bank will give a mortgage on a house with no water," says Norrad. The sisters soon discovered that the government had been promising the return of running water to several Penobsquis homes for years. "We were devastated when we realized that we had been deceived by our own government," remarks Norrad.

The company that stands accused of drying up Norrad and her neighbours' well water is PotashCorp, a Saskatchewan-based multinational corporation that made a record \$3.5 billion cash from its operations last year. PotashCorp calls itself an integrated fertilizer company that is "Helping Nature Provide" and claims that it is part of the global food solution. ... *(continued on page 2)*

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