Decision to shut down Rexton camp by force adding new resolve, support to protest movement

Yet, after only two such meetings with the Award government, Chief Sock and members of the Elsipogtog band council were among those arrested when RCMP overran the Rexton protest camp. Protesters say the move to arrest Sock, who has been an outspoken advocate of non-violent resistance, shows the Award government’s real commitment to listening to the legitimate concerns of the people.

Also scooped up, for the second time since June, was Halifax Media Co-op reporter Miles Howe. Howe’s June arrest has been investigated and condemned by the Canadian Journalism for Free Expression. Today, many are questioning whether free expression on the issue of shale gas really exists in New Brunswick anymore.

The belief that the Award government is using the RCMP to stifle its political goals has been indirectly bolstered by its already-demonstrated commitment to ideology rather than to science. For the last two years, Premier Alward and his cabinet have pointed to a government-sponsored study as the scientific basis for their decision to develop the shale gas industry.

In September, however, that report, entitled The Path Forward, was reduced to mere “junk science” in the service of politics when it was revealed that Louis Lapierre, who was to prepare the report, did not have the scientific credentials he had claimed. Undaunted, the Award government declared it didn’t really need any data if it was fraudulant junk science anyway because it was going ahead with shale gas development anyway.

The cynicism with which the province discarded the need for an independent, scientific examination of shale gas is evident in its newly-asserted pose of seeking some sort of peaceful resolution to a violent situation. Despite the fact that the Award government is still proclaiming it wants to negotiate, but that it has no intention of changing its position.

The province’s heavy-handed action may actually be creating a bigger political headache for the beleaguered Conservatives, who face an election in 11 months. Protesters are heartened by an upswing in calls of national and international support, and report they are ramping up plans for more peaceful resistance. Far from cooling off protesters or frightening them away with a show of force, the dismantling of the Rexton camp by force appears to be generating new support to the anti-shale gas movement.

Food insecurity: is it just a neoliberal euphemism for hunger?

BY SARAH-JANE THIESSEN

Fredericton is all about food. We hear things like “they buy what’s in season,” “buy what’s in season,” and are encouraged to replace our lawns with vegetables and to grow our own food. People are honing the almost lost skills of growing and preserving to reap the bounty of a full harvest all year long. There is a growing culture of tending not only the taste of food, but also where it comes from and how it’s cooked. Some people who are really into this call themselves “foodies,” others “locavores,” but regardless of what you call it, it’s likely delicious.

This growing awareness about food is considered a step towards a more environmentally sustainable and healthy food system. Nevertheless, there is more to food than where it’s grown and how it’s prepared. There is a part of the food movement that some “foodies” and locavores applaud, but distinctly disconnected from discussions about food and sustainability, we seldom discuss one of the most pressing issues in New Brunswick today: who gets to eat this way?

Anyone who has been in a grocery store lately will likely have some idea. The local, organic foods are “fancy” foods, they are luxuries, they are expensive. Prohibitively so. Anyone who has ever been to a food bank or a community kitchen will understand what I mean. The food there has a very short shelf life. It is not perishable, so it can stay on the shelf indefinitely. But it’s not an area that the Calachan Bays of a food bank gets the opportunity to collect dust.

This is where the culture of “foodies” is dangerous. It perpetuates notions of class and social status through a hierarchicalization of food. If we think about the words of Jean Anthoines Brillat-Savarin, “tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are,” and how they have been reduced to the popular idiom “you are what you eat” we quickly see that food is a means to talk about class and culture. How we get our food, where it comes from, what it looks like, what goes on our plates is an important marker of our identity.

According to the 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCS), 36.5% of people in New Brunswick are food insecure. The rate for children in this province is 24.5%. The CCS was used in a research and policy paper by Valerie Tarasuk, Dachner Merchanth, entitled “Food Insecurity in Canada” published in 2013 by PROOF. PROOF is a program of research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity in Canada. New Brunswick ranks third on rates of food insecurity, behind Nunavut (36.5%) and narrowly below the Yukon (16.7%).

Food security is defined by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN as occurring when “all people have physical and economic... (continued on page 2)

Wolastoqiyik grandmother Alma Brooks takes part in constructing the Traditional Government Wolastoq Longhouse on Saturday, Oct. 26 along the banks of the Wolastoq River (Saint John River) in front of the N.B. Legislative Building in Fredericton. The ceremony, the sacred fire lit at Saint Mary’s was moved to to the Longhouse where indigenous people and allies gathered inside the Longhouse for closing ceremonies and listened to the words of Harry LaPorte, Wolastoq Grand Council Chief, and others addressed the people. Saint Mary’s Chief Candice Paul read a declaration signed by the chiefs calling for a moratorium on the projects that involve the clans (families) of the nation. Photo by Liane Thibeault.