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Across Canada: Alberta: Colodny's cold welcome

Published: Monday, May 18, 1987, 8:33 am | Author: Interim Staff

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Nikki Colodny received a cold welcome in Edmonton on April 11, when she addressed a public forum sponsored by the Abortion Caucus of the Alberta Status of Women and other feminist groups. Colodny was in Edmonton attempting to set up an illegal abortuary along the lines of the Toronto clinics.

Since extra billing was banned in Alberta in November 1986, many doctors are refusing to kill the unborn for the \$87.45 fee set by the Alberta Health Insurance Plan. Colodny held a press conference in which she admitted that the proposed clinic would be illegal. However, the local abortion activists are prepared to flout the law.

At a press conference called by pro-life forces before the Colodny conference, Campaign Life Alberta president Ann Beardshall stated that the pro-lifers in Alberta are confident that Attorney-General Jim Horsman would close down an illegal clinic and lay charges against the abortionists. Campaign Life and other Alberta pro-life groups are prepared to constantly picket any clinic that opens.

At the evening public forum, held in the Education Building at the University of Alberta, around 200 people showed up. Unfortunately for the organizers, most of them were pro-life activists. There were about 125 pro-lifers inside, with another 20 picketing outside the building. The audience listened in comparative silence to the speakers, who included Lynn Lathrop of the Ontario Coalition on Abortion Clinics and Nikki Colodny. Not until question period did things get a little noisy.

Question period

The organizers would accept written questions only, and when it became obvious that the questions were being edited, the pro-lifers decided to should their questions from the floor. One approved question read out was, "How many women's live have you saved by abortion, Dr. Colodny?" "How many babies' lives have you save" came a question from the floor. Pro-lifers booed whenever Colodny was applauded by the pro-abortion faction. Several times pro-lifers stood and chanted slogans such as "Let them live" and "Choose Life." The pro-abortion "bouncers" ran backwards and forwards threatening that they would have to ask pro-lifers to leave if they were not silent. They were told, "Go ahead, ask!" The president of Campaign Life Alberta was asked twice to leave. She declined. Campus Security was sent for. One Security arrived, looking very nervous. They assigned him to protect Colodny. At 9 p.m. the organizers realized that meeting and adjourned it, without passing a collection basked as they had planned. Colodny and Lathrop were hustled out through a back door.

The pro-lifers who attended were exuberant, but peaceful. There was no violence and no bad language.

On Sunday, Colodny and the pro-abortionists held a workshop on how to open an illegal clinic. Pro-lifers were banned from this event at which only 20 participants were present.

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