

RCMP move anti-abortion protesters

■ **Police respond to citizen complaints about graphic nature of placards carried by demonstrators at Dieppe rally**

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About 40 anti-abortion protesters were asked late yesterday afternoon to move their quiet demonstration off a Dieppe sidewalk and on to private property, something which baffled the protest organizer.

"They moved us off a public place and on to a private one," said Rosemary Connell of the Toronto-based group Show the Truth-Canada.

Protesters, who also demonstrated in Saint John and Fredericton, said yesterday was the first time they were asked to get off a public sidewalk.

One senior citizen complained he and his counterparts were treated like second-class citizens.

The group of mostly adults — although one male teenager was seen gathering signs near the end of the protest — demonstrated from about 4:15 p.m. until 5:45 p.m. across from Champlain Place.

After they were asked by RCMP to move off the sidewalks they were left standing on the green grass at the Irving Oil property in front of the Petitcodiac River.

"Sidewalks are for walking, not for protests," said Cpl. Pat Fox of the Codiac Regional RCMP, adding sidewalks cannot be blocked by law.

Two RCMP cruisers were dispatched to the scene after one woman complained about the graphic nature of the placard signs carried by the 28 Show the Truth-Canada members and about 10 Moncton-area people who joined them.

"We didn't know what we were dealing with," Const. Zane McLure said at the scene.

The woman stopped traffic for at least 15 minutes in the heat of rush hour after she stopped her car on Champlain Street, stood on the vehicle and yelled to protesters. She told them she didn't want her chil-

dren, who were in the car, to see the placards.

Some of the protesters' signs showed pictures of babies several months old. Others depicted a live fetus at eight weeks in its mother's womb.

Still others displayed bloody pictures of what members said were aborted fetuses.

"These are the remains," Connell said, pointing to a picture which might bother the faint-of-heart and weak-of-stomach. "There's nothing pretty about abortion."

They handed out literature on white pieces of paper and some wallet-sized photos of newly-aborted fetuses. Stickers on the back of the photos listed what appeared to be a child's name and the abortion procedure used in that particular case.

One abortion is performed every five minutes in Canada, Connell said. The group's point is not to simply get media attention by standing on the side of the road. They want to let people know "the reality," she said.

Connell said Show the Truth-Canada was invited to demon-

strate in the province by New Brunswick-based anti-abortion groups and started planning their bus trip about seven months ago.

"I'm here for the babies," said Moncton resident Michel Arsenault who mentioned he has protested abortions in the past at Moncton hospitals. He joined the group for the Moncton leg of their tour.

Another Moncton man, Albert Richard, said he was able to leave work early yesterday to show his support.

"That's a life," he said, pointing down to a protest sign about three feet tall resting against his legs.

Despite being asked to move off the sidewalk Connell said she was pleased with the professionalism shown by the RCMP who listened to what she had to say and watched the group.

"We were just trying to cooperate, and at the same time voice our opinion," she said.

The mainly Christian-based group ended the hour-and-a-half protest with a short group prayer in front of their rented, renovated school bus.