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Union finally moves to strike - Jan. 28

by M. P. MacKenzie

C.U.P.E. Local 1392 voted in favour of strike action at a closed meeting on Monday night. Negotiations for a new contract were successfully completed between the union local and the University early in December but conflicts have arisen regarding the legality of the contract under the Price and Wage control guidelines.

Representatives from the university administration, the faculty, the union and the students union met to discuss the problems at an open forum on Wednesday afternoon. The forum, held in the S.U.B. lobby, clarified the situation as it presently exists and destroyed many of the myths and rumours circulating the campus.

Though the agreed to contract has not yet been signed by either side it has the full support of both sides. In fact, the dispute is not between the university and the union local but between the government bureaucracies and the two parties to the contract.

Though the Province of Nova Scotia has yet to enact legislation binding the Province to the federal legislation the government is planning to do so at the next sitting. The legislation will be retroactive to October 1975 and since the contract negotiations were only completed in December the contract would fall under the wage guidelines, at least in this aspect.

The university has agreed to a 37% increase in pay, retroactive to September 1975 for the university maintenance employees. The wage control guidelines stipulate that wages can only be increased by 12% or penalties will be enforced against both employers and employees who agree to and implement higher increases. The federal government has stated that the



There was a large turnout for the C.U.P.E. forum.

Dalhousie contract falls within Provincial jurisdiction but the Province has yet to make a clear statement of its stance. So far the government (N.S.) has merely stated that Dalhousie could be subject to penalties if they sign the C.U.P.E. contract.

If a solution to the problem cannot be reached before January 28 the union will walk out. The strike would be legal under the laws of the Province but it is not clear

whether or not other union members at Dalhousie will observe the picket lines. The Faculty Association, the Students Union and the Staff Association are leaving the decision to cross picket lines up to their individual members. No definite plans have been made by either the Students Union or the University administration for dealing with building maintenance should the strike continue for any length of time

though Vice-President MacKay did state at the open forum that scab labour would not be hired.

The Students Union Building will be kept open as long as public health standards can be maintained. The same holds true for all the other university buildings.

The Nova Scotia legislature will sit on Friday and some definite statement is expected concerning the contract problems within the next week.

Student Union and DAGS near agreement

by R. Metcalfe

Representatives of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students and members of the Student Union Society Support Committee are close to finalizing an agreement on the funding and support of major societies which is expected to be acceptable to all concerned. Union President Bruce Russell told a meeting of Student Council on Sunday January 11th that "conclusive verbal agreement" had been reached in a recent meeting with DAGS representatives. Don Sinclair (Grad Studies) assured council members that negotiations were almost complete, but until all details are finalized both parties agreed not to release details of the program. Russell went on to say that once a final agreement has been reached it would be submitted to the respective councils for approval. In answer to questions from Michael Sherar (member at

large), Russell assured council that the cost of the program would not be excessive and that the agreement involved recommendations for the funding of all major societies. Sherar also expressed concern for the cost of continuing negotiation, asking if "professional help" was being employed. Russell replied that legal counsel had not been retained by the union and the only expense incurred was the time of certain union officers.

The threat of a strike by university cleaning staff CUPE local 1392, stirred considerable debate at Sunday's meeting and two motions were approved by members. A resolution recognizing the legal right to strike and ensuring that the union would not participate in scabbing practices in the event of a strike was moved by Bruce Russell and seconded by John Hamilton (Medicine). Peter Clarke (Senate)

who had formulated the motion explained to council that the resolution was intended only to regulate the Union's conduct regarding hiring practices in the Student Union Building in the event of strike action. The motion assures that the union will not provide remuneration for any non-CUPE members for performing the functions of striking workers nor will it allow the university to do so, within the Student Union Building. Clarke went on to say that the motion did not imply any approval or disapproval of possible strike action by CUPE, and pointed out that the Student Union is a third party to the situation as the cleaning staff in the SUB are employees of the university rather than the Student Union.

A clause in the recommendation which provided for exceptions in the case of maintaining health standards and emergency situations was

the subject of some discussion. David Brown (Law) attempted an amendment to delete the health standards provision but he failed to get the approval of council. Keith Evans (Howe Hall) expressed concern that the motion would cause Dalhousie students to feel compelled not to cross picket lines. Evans was worried that his constituents might feel obligated to sleep in the snow. Brown replied that he felt sure that CUPE local 1392 did not expect Howe Hall residents to freeze to death. A motion was then proposed indicating that the Student Union was leaving such decisions up to the individual. The motion met with a tie vote (certain members claiming it to be a non-motion) but was eventually approved when Council Chairman Ron McCabe exercised his right to vote in case of a tie

Cont'd on pg. 2