

Students? What students?

The focus is on post-secondary education across Canada this week. Unfortunately, that does not seem to mean a focus on student problems. Universities are being celebrated with National Universities Week, and a three-day national forum on post-secondary education is taking place in Saskatchewan from October 25 to 28. Here on Dalhousie, there was a mini-forum on PSE last week, attended by Tom McInnis, Minister of Education in Nova Scotia, Alexa McDonough, leader of the NS New Democrats, and Vince MacLean, leader of the NS Liberals.

Some of the problems students are addressing include: a lack of funding for PSE, the difficulty of receiving student loans (and how insufficient they are, especially for part-time and mature students), comparatively high tuition in NS and low bursary allowances, and barriers to education faced by minority groups and people from rural NS.

The means for voicing these problems to government and university administration is definitely not through National Universities week, which organ-

izers call a time of celebration and not one to raise student issues.

The mini-forum at Dalhousie last week was a chance for students to listen to political positions and pose questions, but the most interesting revelation from that forum was when McInnis, Minister of Education, asked if anyone knew of a person who wanted to go to university but was financially unable. He looked sincerely shocked when an angry "yes" came from many people in the audience. He then asked for peoples' names, presumably to come to their rescue. Earlier during the forum, McInnis also said funding was "mopre of an issue than it should be." This indication of McInnis' ignorance of a major problem is a frightening and depressing one.

One suggestion to ease the funding problem is increased involvement of the private sector in the university. This is also the idea behind the theme of National Universities Week, "Investing in our Future". It's fine to talk of students as investments in the future and as active members of society, but do the "investors" choose how students are to be educated? Not all of us

want to become part of the existing private sector.

Universities should be places of learning, growth, research and change, not machines which mass-produce a workforce. The danger of the private sector overstepping their boundary is important to keep in mind if increased involvement is to ease funding problems.

These problems are discussed every year and students are now demanding action. Some of the student representatives attending the forum in Saskatchewan are positive about this, the first national forum of its kind, but are also skeptical about seeing tangible results. They are going in with their eyes and ears open.

There's certainly potential in a forum of this kind to get the wheels of change in motion. We'll have to wait and see and hope that it's more than symbolic. As for National Universities Week, there's a new tree somewhere on campus to symbolize the university's growth, and a select few are patting themselves on the back in celebration.

Ellen Reynolds



o p i n i o n

ANC group forms at Dalhousie

by Dalhousie ANC — South Africa Support Group

We hope to make a small contribution towards the liberation of South Africa from apartheid and to foster its development as a free democratic and non-racial society. This undertaking inevitably involves a deeper understanding of the nature of the struggle in that society and a more determined and consistent support and appreciation of the position of the African National Congress (ANC) in that struggle, than

what currently prevails in our academic community.

Our resolve has obviously been fuelled by the *Communiqué* adopted by the recent Commonwealth Parallel Conference on Southern Africa held in Vancouver (this *Communiqué* is available from the Secretariat). In accord with the *Communiqué* our aims are:

- To raise the consciousness of the Dalhousie community regarding the struggle in South Africa.
- To work for the official recognition of the ANC and the termination of diplomatic ties of any

sort with the racist regime in South Africa, so as to attain an all-round isolation of that inhuman system.

- To encourage the academic and cultural boycott of South Africa's racist institutions, while striving towards popularizing the people's culture, and in a practical way help to raise funds for the new struggle against Apartheid.

The ways and means of attaining our objectives will depend on our immediate situation since we are committed to democratic processes. However, it would be most idle to "squat at the fence"

and watch the South African white supremacy devour the citizens of that noble part of Africa. Accordingly, we shall as best we can attempt the following:

- To organize and author documentation on the ANC and the South African situation.
- To hold workshops and seminars, and publish information on the current situation in South Africa.
- To sponsor cultural programmes on South Africa as well as encourage cultural activities by local groups or branches of the ANC and/or other demo-

cratic and cultural groups in South Africa.

- To monitor the implementation of academic and cultural boycott as well as economic sanctions in collaboration with the ANC, AAMS and research organizations.
- To hold raffles and sales and show films, videos, and slides on the struggle.
- To work with anti-apartheid and other organizations opposed to apartheid locally, nationally and internationally.

(The next meeting is Thursday, Nov. 7th, 7 p.m., Dalhousie Student Union Building.)

Hutchinson

