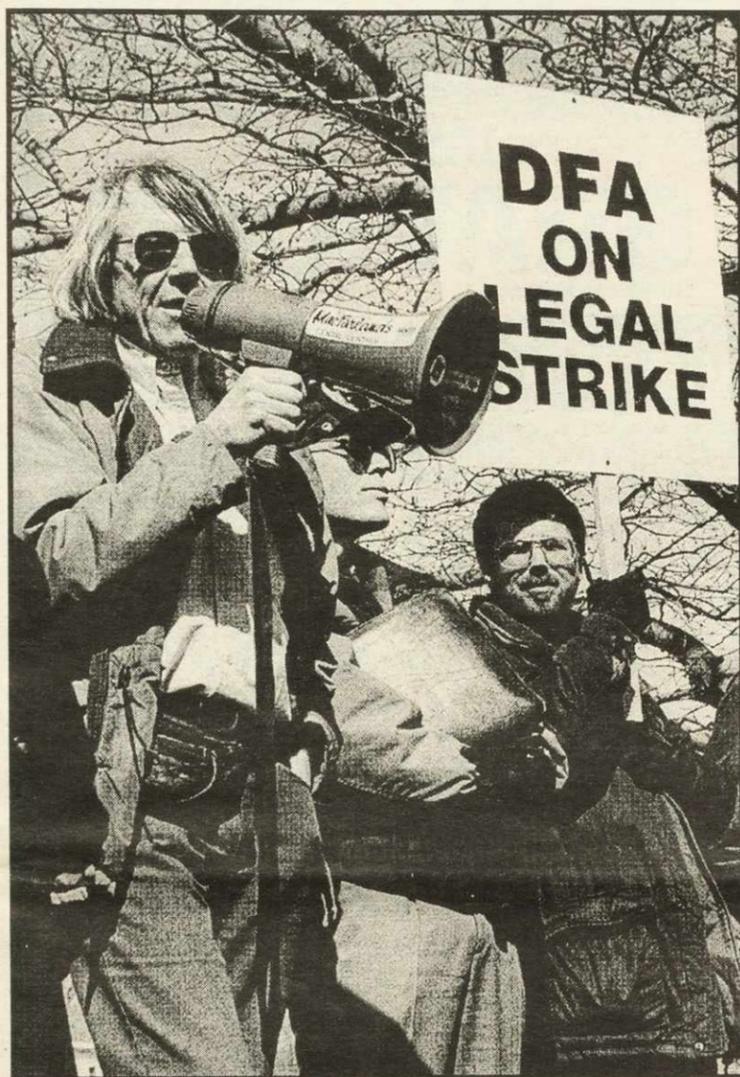


Dal profs go on strike



Chief DFA negotiator Michael Cross rallies his troops outside of the Student Union Building. For more strike information, see page 3. (Photo by Lisa Verge)

BY KAVERI GUPTA AND
SHELLEY ROBINSON

Dalhousie professors hit the picket lines on the first day they were legally allowed to strike, but nobody knows how long they'll stay out.

The strike came after a series of stops and starts in the negotiations between the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and the university's Board of Governors.

Following the breakdown of scheduled talks, the failure of provincial conciliation, a mandatory two-week waiting

period, and 24 hours of last-minute negotiations, the DFA took to the streets on Mar. 25.

More than 200 professors walked downtown from the campus and back again to protest what they say are unfair contract terms.

The DFA represents 722 members, including professors, professional librarians, and counsellors.

Counsellors are not striking as their work has been deemed an essential service.

The university has instituted a lock-out in the face of the strike. Professors are not allowed to teach classes or use any university

facilities.

Michael Cross, chief negotiator for the faculty association, says the strike may not be pleasant, but may have been necessary.

"I'm not at all sure the board believed [a strike] was going to happen," he said. "So now that they know we're serious I hope that they'll come back to the table and we can have some really serious discussions."

The issues still at the table are increased salaries and replacement of departing faculty, or complement.

In the last 10 years the university

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NDP stuns Liberals

BY ANDREW SIMPSON AND
JOHN CULLEN

Nova Scotia's political beast has just grown a third leg, and being a Member of the Legislative Assembly may now be one of the most interesting jobs in the province.

In Tuesday's provincial election the Liberal and New Democratic Parties matched each other by winning 19 seats each in the province's 52-seat legislature. The Progressive Conservatives won the remaining 14 seats.

It was the first ever tie between two parties in Nova Scotia's

political history, and the first minority government since 1970.

"Something happened on the way to the Liberal coronation — it's called democracy," shouted NDP leader Robert Chisholm to a jubilant crowd at the Lord Nelson Hotel in Halifax on Tuesday night. Previously the NDP's best showing had been four seats.

"The NDP is here to stay in a big way," continued Chisholm. "It's time to get government working for everyday people in Nova Scotia."

John Hamm's Tories placed third, but hold the balance of power. During a speech to campaign workers at his headquarters in New Glasgow, Hamm said he was pleased with the outcome.

"If you go back three months ago, it was said our party was disintegrating...we certainly have a lot more power in our position now than as [the opposition party]."

Having lost 19 seats, including four cabinet ministers, Liberal leader Russell MacLellan's night was less joyous.

"We lost some very good people. We're going to have to work within the party and build it [back] up," he said to a sombre crowd at his Cape Breton headquarters. But he is not throwing in the towel.

"The worst thing is to get queasy about what we're doing."

Despite the tie, law dictates that the incumbent Liberals be given the

first opportunity to form government. Should they receive a vote of non-confidence within the next six months, the NDP would be given a chance to form government. A non-confidence vote after that period would result in another election.

A further peculiarity of the election results is that the popular vote mirrors the distribution of seats in the legislature. The Liberals earned 35.3 per cent of the popular vote, the NDP won 34.7 per cent, and the Tories took 29.7 per cent.

"This is one of those rare occasions in our system of government where the seat totals of the parties accurately reflect people's choices, people's perceptions and people's wishes," said Jim Bickerton, professor of political science at Saint Francis Xavier University in Antigonish.

"This is a clearer expression of the people's will than we usually get in our system of government."

MacLellan has made it clear that a coalition government is not an option. And both Hamm and Chisholm have pledged to work together with the government to best serve Nova Scotians.

But professor Bickerton says that old political habits may be difficult to break.

"[They] have to change their behaviour. They're not used to co-

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Dal part-timers sign deal

BY PAUL MANSFIELD

Contract negotiations between Dalhousie and professors may still be up in the air, but an agreement has been reached between the Dalhousie administration and its part-time instructors and teachings assistants.

The new contract was approved by 97 per cent of the members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 3912 who voted on Mar. 19 to accept the deal.

Although the turn-out was relatively low, Mike Earle, secretary-treasurer for CUPE 3912,

is happy an agreement has been reached.

"We certainly didn't get everything we wanted, nor are our pay levels brought up to comparable figures with rates paid elsewhere in Canada, but we have made a good beginning," Earle said.

The biggest accomplishment in the eyes of the union is the collective agreement achieved at all three universities — Dalhousie, Saint Mary's and Mount Saint Vincent.

"The establishment of the union with collective agreements at our

three bargaining units is itself a very big victory, achieved after [three] years of hard work," Earle said.

The next step for the union is to wait for the agreement to be ratified by Dalhousie's Board of Governors. The time and date of this is unknown by either side.

All three universities' contracts end on Aug. 31, 2000.

The ratification of its first collective agreement in sight, the next challenge facing union members is the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) strike that began Wednesday, Mar. 25.

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The Gazette still has two phat issues left. Should the strike continue, you can pick us up on campus (SUB, library, Dalplex) and off campus (everywhere).

WHETHER IT'S BIG OR SMALL, WE'VE GOT YOUR ASS COVERED.