

# SCM conference explores unemployment

by Janet Cameron

In an effort to achieve a better understanding of the unemployment problem, the Student Christian Movement chose as the topic for its national study conference "The Politics of Unemployment." This conference, held in Sherbrooke, N.S. from August 21-26, was attended by about 60 young people from across Canada, including not only SCM members but representatives from NUS, the Ontario Federation of Students, and the Young Communist League, as well as other interested students.

The organizers of the conference tried to get right to the roots of the problem by arranging meetings with producers. The conference was divided into four small groups: farming, forestry, fishing and industry, with fifteen people in each group. Each group went out to talk with people involved in the industry of its particular interest. The farming group visited farms in the Annapolis Valley and Lunenburg County and a food processing plant, while the forestry group visited a pulp and paper mill and talked to woodlot owners. Each group was accompanied by people knowledgeable in the area who provided background information and helped direct the questions.

Discussion ranged from the extent of corporate control in the market, and how this influenced the return independent producers received, to the number of people the industry could employ. There were

also inquiries about the effect of government involvement.

The obvious trend throughout the economy is that the market is more favourable to larger rather than smaller producers, i.e. that small producers are being squeezed out by the virtual control of the market by corporations. This is accompanied by a replacement of jobs by mechanizations and encouraged by government policy which gives

generous loans for big capital expenditures and expansion, favouring larger, "more progressive" concerns.

On the last day, each group made a presentation of what it had discovered to the rest of the conference. The conference was then broken up into small groups to try to integrate these findings. Discussion ranged around unemployment as the result of replacement of workers by machines, i.e. a move towards more capital intensive rather than labour intensive industry. It was suggested that the unemployed existed to maintain a sufficient margin between the cost of labour and the cost of the product, so that unemployment is a

necessary consequence of capitalism.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time at the end of the conference to adequately discuss the groups' findings and try to relate them to the student and general unemployment picture. The conclusions reached were oversimplified because of the lack of time and information. However, this is an indication of the complexity of this issue and the need for more work on unemployment. The SCM conference was a good start at trying to discover the cause of the problem, which is necessary before working out a long-term solution.

# Enrolment increase expected

by John McLeod

Registrars at most Halifax universities expect a slight increase in enrolments for the upcoming year.

A small increase at Dal over last year's figure of 8,900 will, no doubt, occur in the Faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce. This is because of limited enrolments in the professional faculties: law, nursing and education.

The University of King's College expects to exceed last year's record enrolment of 350. Saint Mary's University will probably remain steady at 2,500 full-time and 1,500 part-time students. One interesting side light is that the recently all-male university expects a frosh class of 2 / 3 men and 1 / 3 women.

An increase of 21% is predicted in the engineering faculty at the Nova Scotia Technical College.

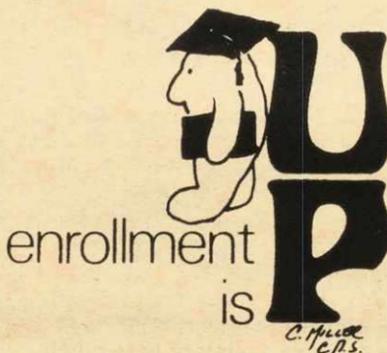
This will produce a total of 350 undergraduate and 50 graduate students. The Faculty of Architecture expects an enrolment similar to last year's 130.

All university officials contacted cautioned that predictions are mostly speculation and that actual figures will only be available when registration is over.

Fewer job prospects for graduates as well as decreased enrolment in local elementary schools indicate that in future years declining enrolments will occur. Fewer students will graduate from high school and more go into trade schools or vocational training.

Universities that are embarking on new programs, such as the University of King's College with its journalism program and Mount St. Vincent with Public Relations, can probably expect continued enrolment increases until they reach their physical capacity.

At Dalhousie, the faculty of Administrative Studies is growing as more students are attracted by the better 'job value' of the Bachelor of Commerce degree. Dalhousie is now close to its maximum possible enrolment.



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