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Faculty stage picket over contract demands

by Cathy McDonald

The Dalhousie Faculty Association staged a ceremonious pageant last Friday in front of the Arts Centre, but it wasn't to glorify the fall convocation.

Forty faculty donned graduation robes and placards to show their frustration with the pace of contract negotiations, charging that they are victims of the university's financial mismanagement.

"There's no action at the bargaining table," said Jim Manus, organizer of the protest. "We're extremely frustrated... we're hoping to show the administration and the board of governors that we're serious (about the outstanding contract issues)."

In a flyer given to parents and friends entering the Arts Centre, the DFA accused the university administration of mismanaging public funds, claiming that money exists to give faculty a larger salary increase than the offered 10 per cent. The DFA is asking for 12 per cent.

The battle between the DFA and the administration is over six outstanding issues. As well as salary, the DFA wants union security under the 'RAND' formula, promotion of the hiring of women faculty, inclusion of student counsellors and instructors in the bargaining unit.

In the wake of President Andrew Mackay's declaration of a "state of financial constraint", the faculty union is not satisfied the situation is as dire as it's made out to be.

The union offers a possible reason for the President's severe action, to pressure the DFA into accepting the offered 10 per cent increase in salary. "It could be construed as a means of beating off our salary increases" said chief negotiator for the union, Pat Kerans.

Pickers repeatedly cited the costly renovations to President MacKay's house last fall, as proof of the university's lack of concern for the well-being of its employees and the quality of education, over its interest in property.

In an interview with the Chronicle-Herald, MacKay said the \$430,000 renovations to his house were necessary to prevent it from "going to pot." One irate union member felt the expense was frivolous. "What good is the President's Jacuzzi doing to students?" asked Tom Flemming, a librarian in Health Sciences.

While salary increases are prominent in their minds, union security is "the most important" issue, according to Kerans.

An allowance for faculty members to put money into a scholarship fund instead of pay-

ing union dues, is no longer acceptable to the DFA. The "conscientious objection" clause was a compromise in deference to "the old guard" who didn't want to support the new union when it was formed in 1978. But there's no reason why incoming faculty should have this option, according to the union.

"we negotiate for them, we see that they are treated fairly," said DFA President Om Komra. The DFA wants the university to accept the RAND formula, whereby any new faculty must pay union dues. However, administration negotiator David Cameron wants to ensure that faculty retain that option in an institution that "ought to respect individual judgements."

In a memo from Cameron, distributed throughout the university, he concedes the offered 10 per cent is "unhappily less than awarded in many other universities, but it does exceed the rate of increase in revenue available to the University." The university is facing a nearly \$2 million deficit for this year.

About one half of faculty attending the graduation ceremonies wore yellow DFA buttons, symbolizing their solidarity in the protest.

The pacing along the Univer-



Dal Faculty Association members protested what they call financial "mismanagement" by the Administration last Friday.

sity and Seymour St. sides of the Arts Centre did not obstruct people attending the graduation. When asked what they thought of the protest, a few people smiled

and said it was rather "silly".

"It was like this two years ago when I graduated," said one young man. "It's funny seeing your profs marching back and

forth. There's more of them now."

When the faculty complains were outlined to one woman, she said "more women faculty. I'm for that."

Feds to cut education funding

OTTAWA (CUP) — It's in recession/depression times like these that the government reveals its sacred cows.

Education funding isn't one of them.

This message became clear during a painful round of meetings between federal officials involved in setting educational policy and staff of the Canadian Federation of Students October 15th.

CFS executive officer Diane Flaherty said she and other CFS staff became worried about federal plans for education funding a week earlier when finance minister Marc Lalonde announced plans to finance a \$2 billion job creation program by cutting existing programs.

When the CFS staff met with secretary of state Serge Joyal and Trudeau's principal secretary, Tom Axworthy, they feared the government would make educational spending targets for these cuts.

Their fears were completely justified.

Both Axworthy and Joyal emphasized that no decision has been made. But they said it is likely the federal government will make major cuts in two key education areas: student aid and transfer

payments to the provinces.

The long hoped-for federal bursary program will almost certainly be cancelled. This is an especially bitter blow to the CFS, which for years has been lobbying hard for such a program.

The federal government now funds about \$200 million for student aid annually, but this is strictly for loans under the Canada Student Loan Program. Gerald Regan, who was Secretary of State until September, enthusiastically supported channelling another \$230 million into the program to create a federal bursary scheme.

Flaherty said the new scheme would have eliminated the old ceiling on student aid and extended it for part-time students for the first time. The government was about to introduce legislation this fall, and the scheme was so developed a computer had already been purchased to process applications for the 1983-84 academic year.

Now, according to Flaherty, Joyal told the CFS: "Quite frankly, if we can maintain the present amount of money in the (student aid) program, that will be heroic."

Axworthy confirmed the new bursary program stands only a slim chance of being introduced.

"They'll probably say they are postponing the program because they can't afford it now, rather than cancelling it," said Flaherty. "But if they postpone it for a year, the possibility of the economic crisis having resolved itself by then is practically nil."

She suspects if the bursary program isn't introduced now, it may die.

Flaherty said the cabinet is debating which programs are politically acceptable to cut. Trudeau has said that, for now, universal social programs like welfare and family allowances will remain untouched, but education is another story.

Joyal told the CFS that the cabinet is considering major cuts in transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education. He said they may decide to return to the old system of matching provincial education grants dollar for dollar, "while recognizing regional differences."

The matching grants system was replaced in 1977 by Established Program Financing (EPF), a complex system of cash and tax points transfers. Through EPF, the federal government helps finance advanced

education and health care, though both come under provincial jurisdiction.

The provinces were not required to maintain the 32 per cent share of EPF money spent on post-secondary education that existed in 1977. They were not required to spend EPF money on education or health care at all.

The federal government claims the provinces had abused this system by spending money intended for education on health care or even highways. They claim the federal share of education funding has risen to 60 per cent, and say this is too high.

Flaherty said Axworthy told the CFS "We have been taken to the cleaners by the provinces for too long and we're not going to let them get away with it any longer."

He said Ontario and Alberta are in for tough times when negotiations begin to replace EPF, which expires in March. As for British Columbia, "Well, that is a little different," he reportedly said.

Negotiations begin in November and Axworthy expects an announcement will be made by December. The only certainty is that if anyone wins these negotiations, it will not be the students.