

Bursary first, loan later says Dalhousie

by Greg Morgan

Dal Student Council President Dick Matthews presented a Dal brief on student aid to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) Committee at a public hearing on student aid at the Holiday Inn in Halifax Tuesday. (See the page one story on the presentation of the SUNS brief.)

The paper recommends several fairly big changes and a few minor ones. It notes the transportation difficulties encountered by handicapped students and those who live outside "Metro" Halifax, and suggests extra bursary money as a remedy. A similar provision should, it says, help offset the expense of child care incurred by students with small children.

It would like the current order reversed so that impoverished or hard-pressed students could receive the bursary stage of the aid program before, rather than after, the loan stage. Government could also extend some assistance to those whom the need to work prevents from taking a full class load, even if it is nothing more than a reduction in income tax. Part-time students do not qualify for aid under any circumstances.

The government was urged to recognize 18 as the age of financial independence. Matthews believes the custom

of counting scholarships over \$500 in with the applicant's independent income has the effect of penalizing academic merit. One he has obtained his money, nothing should restrain the student from studying in the province of his choice. The paper further advises adjustments to the rules on repayment. The return of a loan would ideally begin after six months on the job. See the recommendations would see the payments set as a certain fraction of the ex-student's weekly wage.

Matthews in an interview after the presentation of the brief said he felt the committee was fairly receptive.

"There are so many people across the country looking into student aid something will have to change", said Matthews. "The only problem is that we don't know what that will be. The thing I'd most like to see changed is the increase in bursary rather than loan."

Matthews was also disappointed Provincial Education Minister Terry Donahoe did not attend any of the meetings.

"There is so much being done, he should here to listen."

Student aid at Dal is handled by the administration through the Awards Office, and does not, as a rule, concern the student union. It



Dal Photo / Grandy

MPHEC Committee on Student Aid

was the MPHEC request for submissions in June that created the interest in drafting the paper. In addition to being the first set of student aid proposals to come from the Union in several years, the paper was the only one submitted by a university student organization at the public hearing.

The Federal and Provincial governments co-operate in the Student Aid Program. Under the current arrangements, any one student receives aid in

four stages, according to how much he needs. Initially, he must borrow \$1800 from the Federal Government. If he requires more, he can get a \$1400 bursary from the province, then a \$600 provincial loan, and another \$400 provincial bursary after that. Altogether a maximum of \$4200 a year is available to a student who qualifies. The paper addresses the Ministry of Education via the MPHEC, and asks the province to assume a larger share of the

burden, preferably by giving more in outright gifts of money.

At the Federal level, the Clark government is on record as promising to establish a Student Advisory Board, with a view to improving "the administration of the Canada Student Loans Program." Since Secretary of State Dave McDonald has announced plans to set up a task force to investigate the question, it seems the Tories may well deliver.

Minister says degree not a free ride

by Tom Regan and Darrel Dexter

"University students should not regard a university degree as an automatic ticket to a job", said Ron Atkey, federal minister of Employment and Immigration at a press conference in Halifax on Monday.

Atkey said students are going to have to get used to the fact that a university degree will not guarantee them a job in the field in which they wish to work. Students will have to adjust to the job market if they want to find a job. Atkey said most students would be able to make the adjustment and they would find good financial rewards in blue collar work.

Atkey also said graduating students would not be dealt with specifically just because they were graduating students. Graduate students receive no benefits from the

time they graduate until they find a job. If no job is found no assistance is available. Atkey said graduating students should take a job outside their field if necessary. This would hold them over while they are looking for suitable employment.

Atkey said he thought graduating students were usually the most upwardly mobile group in the job sector and they can usually find a job that leads to a promising position.

On the question of youth employment, Atkey said the government's plan is to create long term jobs for young people, and that merely pumping out money with no guarantee of meaningful long term employment was not a cure for the employment problem in Canada. Atkey said the creation of a youth secretariate to assist the Depart-

ment of Manpower and Immigration would be part of an over-all strategy of youth employment.

Although he could not give concrete details, Atkey said the government program would probably move in three streams. One would channel students into training in the industrial sector, a second would see a system where industry would be given financial incentives to start long-term jobs and the third would be a national youth service corps that would operate with the notion of serving one's country. Atkey said government would use the private sector to build on regional strengths to create new jobs.

Noting that women were in the job sector to stay he said programs would be oriented towards maintaining their contribution and improving the

areas in which they participate. He said women should not be forced into menial jobs and the direction of government was to open up areas that had previously been closed to women. He said he would rather see a few women placed in higher places where their capabilities could be utilized, rather than a great deal of women employed in jobs that were not representative of their skills.

In response to questions about the boat people Atkey said the public sponsoring program had gone well and was a credit to the people of Canada. He said people protesting against the rise in immigration were really in the minority and that you were bound to run into that type of criticism when large amounts of people were allowed to enter the country. He said the

people entering the country were the merchant class, people who make excellent citizens and contribute greatly to the country.

In relation to the cancellation of the decentralization program that would have moved federal government offices in Ottawa to places regionally better suited Atkey said although he did not know about specific areas, all decisions to continue were based on the same criteria. They were, first, efficiency, if the area was actually better suited to the need of the office and second the impact on the region of cancelling the move.

The decentralization program is presently going on in the Yarmouth and Charlottetown areas but has been cancelled in Antigonish and Sydney.

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Suns Brief

the Dalhousie Student Union, said it was time some form of recognition be granted part-time students (see story page 3) and the Mount St. Vincent representative said the profiles of students were changing and the exclusion of part-time students was a serious problem.

Jane Eaton, Canadian Committee on Learning Opportunities for Women spokesperson, spoke of the need for the government to insure women's rights to education. Particular emphasis was placed on the revising of a system where a wife can not qualify for student aid if her

husband's income was too high, even if her husband refused to support her.

Keith Wornell, director of the committee, said later he was very pleased with most of the briefs and most of them showed that much thought had gone into their preparation. He said the only thing missing in many of the briefs was specific recommendations.

Wornell said the job of the committee was really twofold.

"We really have to determine the accessibility and adequacy of the program", said Wornell. "What we should do to the

program to increase accessibility is a concern, but I really think most students worry about adequacy."

Wornell said the committee would be getting together next week to look over the recommendation and that a final draft would be ready by the first of February.

Perhaps the sentiments of most of those who presented briefs could be best summed up by Mike McNeil when he told the committee, "There have been so many briefs and reports in the past. What we'd really like to see from this committee is a little action."

Michelin Bill

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Act. It appears to be a case of government manipulation by a multinational company.

Since the initial government subsidies and funding in the early '70's, Michelin Tire Ltd., has invested considerably into both Nova Scotia plants. The French multinational company could threaten to pull out and move to the United States, but what are the odds of Michelin Tire closing their two plants here, in a period of economic slow-down, at a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of their own investment? Even

considering the substantial and advanced company Michelin Tire is, there is "no possibility" that the company will close its plants in Nova Scotia, said Regan.

Michelin Tire Ltd., has been described as perhaps the most sophisticated multinational company in the world. In order to understand the degree of influence the company can impose on the government, one must investigate the work processes and conditions which appear to be so incredibly "ideal" to some workers, in both plants.