

## Report means more costs for students

By Samantha Brennan  
of Canadian University Press

**HALIFAX (CUP)** — After 33 months of hearings and study the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education has concluded that the solution to the province's 12 post-secondary institutions' problems is to give the government more control and make students pay more.

The commission, chaired by Truro businessman Rod McLennan, recommends tuition fees double over that five-year period, provincial loans replace bursaries, and a council be established to administer Nova Scotia's universities.

Nova Scotia's student leaders had plenty of time to speculate about what the commission would recommend and develop a strategy for dealing with the report. The commission had originally planned to submit the report well before its scheduled release in February, 1985. When it missed that deadline, the government promised that by October 18, the university community would see its contents. Now student politicians have all read the report and say everything they dreaded is contained in it.

Catherine Blewett, Dalhousie student council president, says the report's recommendations threaten accessibility in a province that already has the highest tuition fees in the country, and the autonomy of Nova Scotia's universities and colleges.

Of the commission's 115 recommendations, the most important calls for a Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education. The council would control universities' finances, co-ordinate their programmes and act as an advisory body to the ministry of education. If implemented, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, which now co-ordinates most of these functions on a regional basis, would be reduced to a clearing house for data on education in the region.

While the MPHEC has consistently called for an increase in provincial funding for education and small increases in tuition fees, Nova Scotia's provincial government has consistently ignored its recommendations.

Blewett says there'll be few disputes between the government and the proposed council. She says with the council composed solely of government trustees, it will say exactly what the government wants to hear.

Barney Savage, deputy chair of the Students Union of Nova Scotia, says the commission recommended establishing the Nova Scotia council in order to "streamline and rationalize, in other words get rid of, programmes at Nova Scotia's universities."

This same council would also determine criteria for loans under the proposed Educational Opportunity Fund, which the commission is recommending

replace the provincial bursary programme. Students can now receive grants of up to \$1700 from the provincial government after they borrow \$2500 from the federal student aid programme. With the new system Nova Scotian students would be eligible for loans only, to be repaid after graduation.

Savage says the abolition of bursaries combined with the recommended increase in fees would deter many young people from going to university.

"Faced with a \$20,000 debt load on graduation, less students will want to go to university," he said.

The report also concludes "attendance at university is not a social necessity" and says students and society should strike a partnership with each paying fifty per cent of education costs.

This partnership will mean a large increase in tuition fees for students in Nova Scotia. The current average tuition fee is \$1464 or 17.5 per cent of the cost of education. An increase to 50 per cent of the instructional cost would mean doubling tuition fees, which the commission recommends be implemented over five years.

The commission also recommends foreign students pay 100 per cent of their costs and that out-of-province students have their share paid by their provincial government.

The philosophy that students pay the real cost of their education also means higher fees for students in expensive programmes like computer science.

The report isn't entirely negative. It does recommend increased programmes for part-time students and more extension programmes for the community. However, Blewett is even skeptical about this.

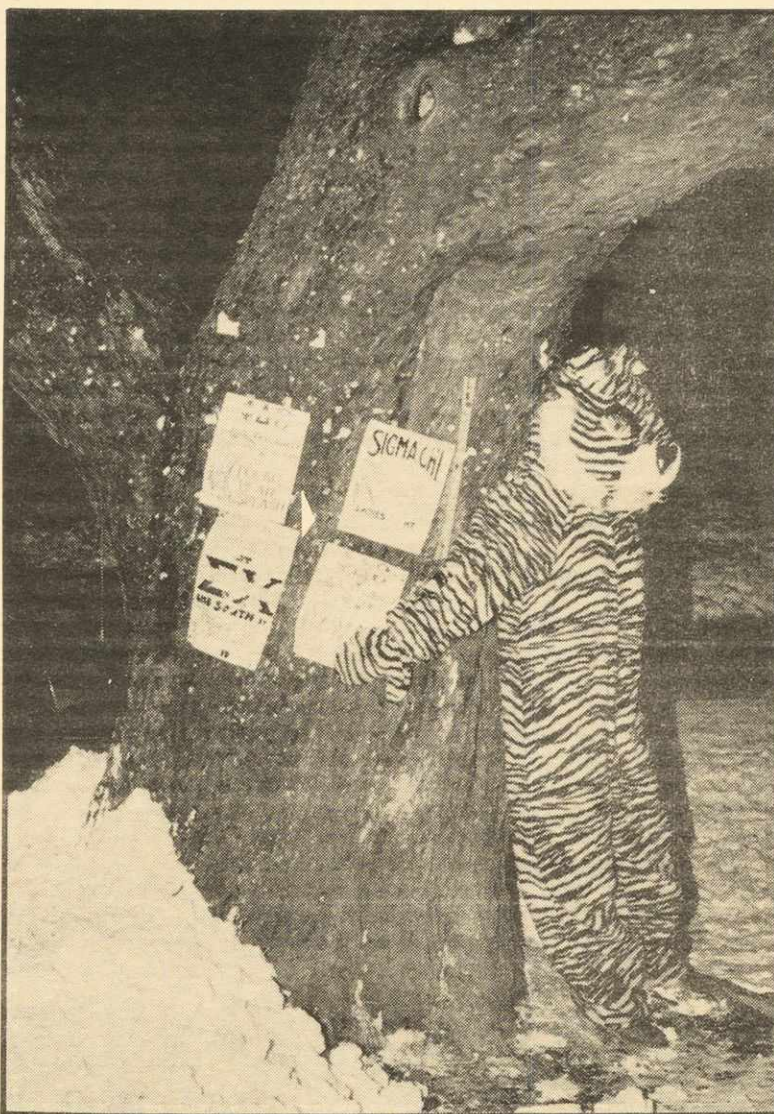
"I know I'm being cynical," she said. "But I can't help but think they recommended it because they know there will be less people able to afford to go full-time."

Nova Scotia's student leaders complained about the commission from its beginning. The government appointed an actress and wife of a prominent Tory, a dairy company executive, and a losing Tory candidate, but refused to appoint any students, faculty members or university administrators.

"If they exclude three people biased in favour of education, they should exclude three people biased in favour of business," said Peter Kavanagh, the then SUNS executive officer.

Blewett says she hopes the government won't touch any of the report's recommendations, but because they paid \$500,000 to produce it, she admits that's unlikely.

"Tom McInnis (the education minister) says his first priority is setting up the council on education in Nova Scotia. That's the beginning of the end," said Blewett.



One endangered species to another: I'll protect you from those mean poster putter-uppers.

## SUNS plans protest

By MARY ELLEN JONES

THE STUDENTS UNION OF Nova Scotia will march in protest of the provincial government's Royal Commission Report on post-secondary education.

The motion to march came from an emergency conference held by SUNS this past weekend at St. Mary's University.

"A protest march is the number one plan to lobby the government and it is going to happen whenever is appropriate, preferably before the speech from the throne," said Kamleh Nicola, campaign co-ordinator of SUNS. The march has been tentatively scheduled for February 13.

Besides the march, SUNS is planning a lobby week for the last week of January. They will lobby ministers of the government about the commission's report.

SUNS is also organizing letter and telephone campaigns. "There will be an emphasis on decentralization of the campaign to university campuses," said Nicola.

Each campus will organize its own information session about the Royal Commission's report.

Tuition fee hikes were the central issue for students. SUNS critically opposed the report's recommendations on differential fees for foreign students and for academic programs and the elimination of the bursary system.

"The recommendations were so harsh on students that if the government accepts half or a

modified form of them we are still going to be in trouble," said James LeBlanc, chair of SUNS. The conference was a policy planning conference for SUNS.

Student representatives disagreed on the report's recommendations for entrance exams and a core curriculum for universities, some saying there was a need for a well-rounded background to further university studies.

The core curriculum is part of the commission's definition of a liberal education, which it sees as essential for university study.

Some students said putting the burden of providing a core curriculum on the universities takes away responsibility for high schools to provide it.

Students also disagreed with the proposed elimination of the bursary system and the payback of loans contingent upon income when the student is finished university, said Barney Savage, deputy chair of SUNS.

## Frat

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They'll get pop and other non-alcoholic drinks free," said Lothian.

If a person is very drunk "we'll turn him or her away at the bar. We've done it in the past," said Lothian. "If they're driving we'll take away the car keys."

Overall, the fraternity is quite enthusiastic about the campaign.

"We've had a great response from people so far," said Lothian.

The frat received encourage-

## Education for all

By CHERYL TIBBETTS

NOVA SCOTIA LIBERAL leadership candidate Jim Cowan spoke on the importance of education at the Weldon Law Building last Thursday.

Cowan said better education should be a priority in Nova Scotia. "The education of our people is the most important project of all," he said. "It is the cornerstone of our future."

"The basis of liberalism is the equality of the individual. Today's students do not have equal access to education, and economic barriers must be broken down."

Cowan spoke of providing necessary funds to all universities. He said a Liberal government could assist each institution in doing what it does best. "This means no further financial cuts can be made," he said. Nova Scotia's financial assistance to students is the lowest in Canada.

Cowan said there is no need to close universities. There are advantages and economic spinoffs to having a number of universities around the province. "Taking Acadia out of Wolfville or St. F.X. out of Antigonish would leave those areas devastated," he said.

"There is still room for rationalization. Universities could engage in more sharing of library and computer resources," Cowan said. He also said there is a need for more technical and vocational schools around the province.

## Divestment

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meeting as 600 students kept up chants and cheers outside the building.

The University of Toronto governing council passed a motion in December to divest its holdings in Canadian companies and banks which fail to adhere to Canadian government guidelines on corporate conduct in South Africa or which fail to report on their adherence.

Both York and Queen's University in Ontario are currently considering total divestment policies.

The Dal BOG joins the Dalhousie Faculty Association, Senate and Student Union in agreeing to divest from its holdings in corporations that invest in South Africa.

ment from the Premier's Task Force Against Drunk Driving.

"They gave us a bunch of buttons and windshield scrapers," said Lothian. "And Dick James, the secretary to the Task Force, sent copies of the posters to Ottawa to be distributed to universities across Canada to serve as a role model for other groups."

Lothian expects the campaign to have some effect.

"There'll be more of an effect than if it wasn't done."