

Board, Union Agree

REGINA (CUP) — The fee collection conflict at the University of Saskatchewan ended Wednesday night when the board of governors finally agreed to student demands that it continue to collect student union fees at source.

The agreement, reached between student council and board negotiators, was ratified by general meeting of students Thursday and was expected to be ratified quickly at a board meeting Thursday night.

The conflict began December 31 when the board announced it would no longer collect union fees in a fairly obvious attempt to throttle its major campus antagonist, the student newspaper, The Carillon. Ever since then, students have demanded the board recant and leave The Carillon alone and slowly built up general student support for that position. The negotiations staggered on for over six weeks as the board waited for student pressure to subside.

The negotiations themselves kept stumbling over various issues — at first the question of openness but later the major problem of The Carillon. The student negotiators were adamant throughout that The Carillon be independent of the university administration and directed solely by the students. The Carillon has repeatedly proved a major source of embarrassment to the board and the provincial government.

The agreement itself read as follows:

—The university (administration) will collect student fees from all students as determined by the student union.

—Student fees will be collected along with tuition fees each semester and only the portion held in trust by the university for the student union building will not be paid to the union not later than one month after collection.

—Each year a majority of students at a general meeting or a referendum must approve the fees before they will be collected.

—The Union agrees to provide the university with an audited financial statement within 60 days of the

end of the fiscal year.

—The agreement will be in effect for one year—after that unless either party gives notice of cancellation by March 1.

In an attempt to avoid further confrontation between the board and students, the parties agreed to set up a liaison committee to deal generally with all matters of common interest. The committee will be composed of five representatives of the board and twelve student representatives. It will meet at least twice a semester and report back to the parent bodies.

And this liaison committee will handle all disputes involving The Carillon. The Carillon, it was agreed in the negotiations, will adhere to the Code of Ethics set by the Canadian University Press. Any grievance against The Carillon with respect to performance under the code will be dealt with by the liaison committee.

The student victory at the bargaining table was a clear vindication of the student strategy to involve the mass of students and the community in the dispute. All decisions were made in large open meetings and abided with by student leaders. The Saskatchewan community was continually informed on the situation and frequently called on for support.

The administration gave up when it became apparent there would be no violent action by the students to prejudice their case and when it was obvious that the general mass of students would not support the administration in its bid to destroy the student union and The Carillon. Inflammatory speeches in the provincial legislature and by Premier Ross Thatcher did not help the administration either. This week's election — in a large turnout — of strongly pro-union student leaders convinced the board they couldn't win.

In a similar situation last year, McGill University's principal H. Locke Robertson stopped plans to discontinue fee collection for the student council when he also was confronted with a student show of solidarity against his proposal.

CAUT MEETS

OTTAWA (CUP) — The Canadian Association of University Teachers will press on with plans to censure the University of New Brunswick following CAUT president C.B. Macpherson's announcement Wednesday that the UNB board of governors' treatment of CAUT demands was "unacceptable".

CAUT threatened censure last month, warning the UNB administration it would have to meet three conditions to avoid censure. The conditions included: acceptance of CAUT arbitration into the suspension of Dr. Norman Strax, removal of a court injunction barring Strax from the campus and payment by the university of all legal fees incurred by Strax as a result of the court injunction.

UNB administration president Colin Mackay last week wrote Macpherson saying the board would only accept non-binding arbitration on some aspects of the suspension.

Mackay's letter followed a series of discussions he had with Macpherson in late February. Macpherson made it clear in his response that CAUT was committed to fight against the injunction: "I cannot emphasize too strongly that in our view an injunction is not a proper weapon for a university to invoke in a dispute between a professor and the administration," he said.

"If it is not challenged," he said, "this use of the injunction and civil suits could become a pattern for any Canadian University that wished to delay a proper adjudicative hearing, or indeed any adjudicative hearing until it was too late to be effective — too late to afford the individual any justice."

The CAUT council will meet in special session March 15 in Montreal to debate a censure. If imposed, the censure will be the second ever in the 20-year history of the organization. The first was imposed in 1968 on Simon Fraser University and withdrawn five months later in the fall.

Strax was suspended by the UNB administration in September after leading student demonstrations against the use of identification cards on campus.

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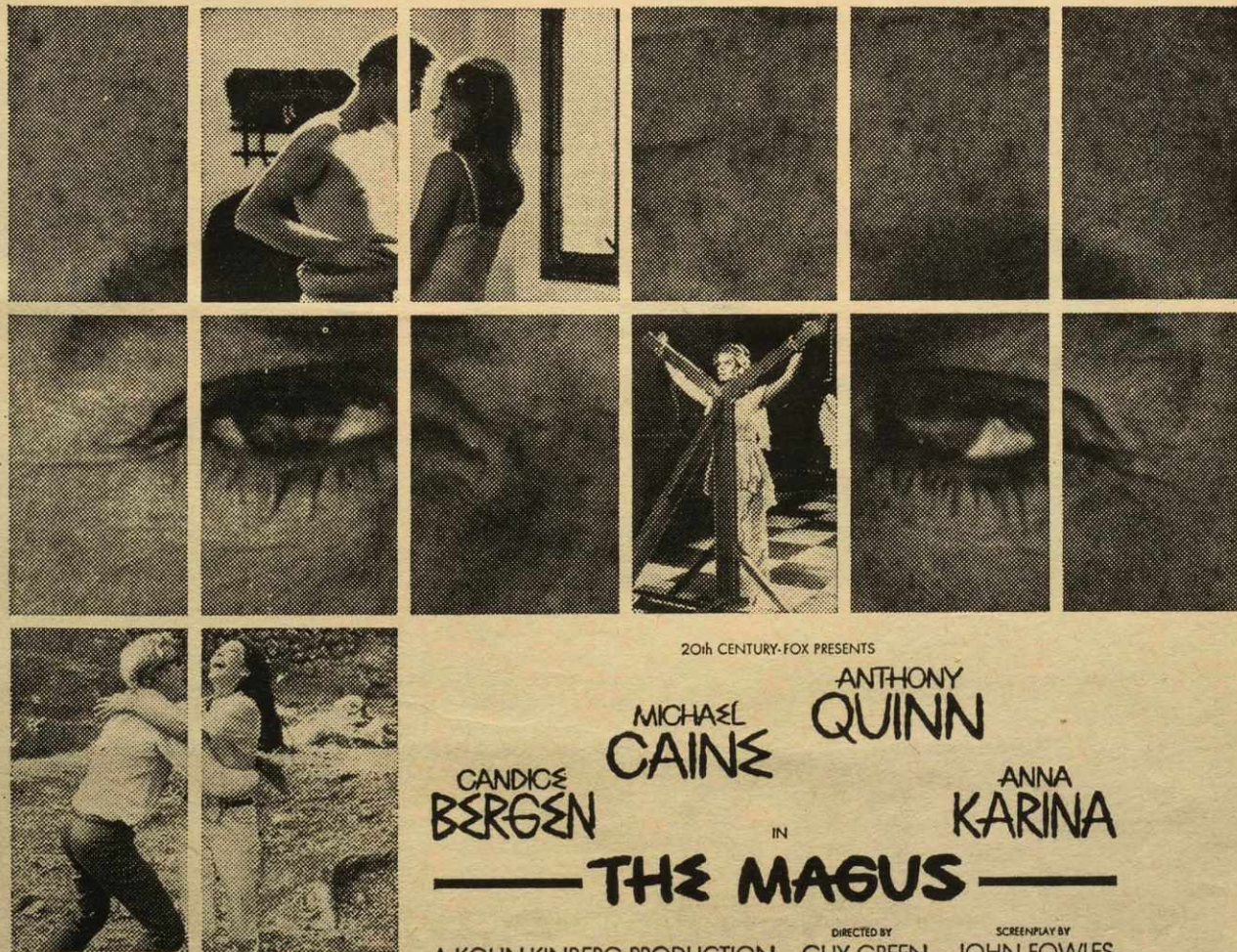
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