

# Unionization Possible ?

by Danièle Gauvin

Local efforts to unionize bank employees are part of a nationwide program which already includes over forty certified bank branches, according to volunteer organizer Julie McMahon. "Workers in the financial services are very concerned about job security, promotions, rates of pay, hours of work and all the other issues which have led blue-collar workers to unionize," she said.

Prior to 1977, bank employees had to seek certification on a national scale, with the majority of a bank's total employees in favor of the move. Since then the Canadian Labor Relations Board has ruled in favor of certification by local branches. Several unions have provided a special Bank Workers Organizing Committee with funds and regional staffpersons through the offices of the CLC.

Women are especially affected by the present unregulated working conditions in the banks," McMahon said. Promotions and seniority are key concerns for these women. A feature in the *Toronto Sun* revealed that one woman who had worked in her bank for 14 years returned after a 3 month leave to find that she had been demoted and her salary reduced by over

\$2,000 despite her senior status. "Many women find that in-house promotions are almost nonexistent; outside workers, usually men, are brought in and trained by the tellers, usually women, and then quickly sent to higher levels after that initial training," McMahon said.

Although 112,000 of Canada's 150,000 bank employees are women, fewer than 2% of them are in managerial positions and 90% earn less than \$10,000 a year, according to figures from a *Financial Post* survey.

In Nova Scotia two branches of the Royal Bank, one in Pictou and the other in Stellarton, have been recently certified. The Pictou branch has already signed a contract while the Stellarton branch is still negotiating for its own.

Wages for bank tellers in Nova Scotia can start at about \$6,700 in the Halifax-Dartmouth area and go as low as \$6,400 in the rest of the province. The *Financial Post* survey also revealed that the 9 leading chartered banks in Canada made \$4,257 profit per employee in 1976. "It's not that the banks can't afford to pay their employees decent wages. The Bank of Montreal's profits were up 170% last year and the overall profit margin for all the banks was up

20.6%," she said.

The banks themselves are not encouraging the unionization, McMahon said. According to the *Ottawa Sunday Post*, bank managers have received carefully worded instruction booklets which contain the right (safe but negative) answers to employee's questions about unions. That story includes quotes from the Toronto Dominion Bank's 'Bank Notes' which offer helpful advice about unions for their employees. "The advice stresses the negative aspects of joining unions but that is not illegal," the article said.

"Management pressure creates a lot of stress for the employees, especially in small branches where everyone lives on top of each other," McMahon said. Johanna Ostervelt, regional representative for the CLC, is trying to help all bank employees who are interested in finding out more about unions without fear of questioning on reprisals by employers. Any questions or problems can be addressed to: The Union of Bank Employees, P.O. Box 3051, Halifax South Postal Station, B3J 3G6, 423-5976. "Students who know interested bank employees are urged to tell them about us," McMahon said.

# Senate committee ignores violence

by Nigel Allen

University Senate Discipline Committee chairperson Peter Darby says the committee doesn't have the authority to deal with the Nov. 23 incident in which two Dalhousie Gazette staff members were injured.

In a letter to Dalhousie senate secretary Arnold Tingley on Jan. 10, Darby said the committee can only deal with academic offenses. He added that he felt the matter "can only be dealt with by the police authorities and, possibly, by the executive of the Student Union Building." Darby is a Dalhousie law professor.

In a subsequent letter to the Gazette, Tingley said he agreed with Darby's opinion that the Nov. 23 incident was outside the committee's jurisdiction.

The Gazette disagrees. In a reply sent this week to Tingley and Darby, the Gazette cited a report by the committee, approved by the university Senate in 1969, which recognizes "physical abuse of another person in the university community" as grounds for university disciplinary action.

Under the provisions of the 1969 report, Dalhousie student council was supposed to establish a Student Discipline Committee to deal with non-academic offenses committed by students, such as vandalism and violence against

people. Since student council has not appointed such a committee for a number of years, the Gazette's reply argues, the matter should be dealt with by the Senate's committee.

Student union vice-president Cathy McLean said Tuesday that the Senate Discipline Committee should investigate the incident. She rejected the idea of student council establishing a special committee to hear the matter, because there are no council members "without a view one way or another." McLean served on the Senate Discipline Committee last year.

On Sunday, student council debated whether to ask the Senate's committee to act, but tabled the motion.

In the Nov. 23 incident, 10 to 15 men attempted to steal a number of copies of the Gazette in order to deface them with a rubber stamp saying "Engineers Ball—Gazette Sucks". In the process, a number of Gazette staffers were hurt, and one, Gail Picco, received a concussion and couldn't see properly for two weeks.

David Bolivar, Dalhousie Engineering Society president and one of the participants in the assault, resigned from the SUB Operations Committee before Sunday's council meeting. Earlier, notice had been given of a motion to remove Bolivar from that committee.

# CUP briefs

## New Student Aid Plan ?

OTTAWA(CUP)—The federal government may be replacing the current Canada Student Loans Plan.

At a Jan. 5 meeting, CSLP officials informed representatives of the National Union of Students (NUS) that the federal government would be surveying students, teachers, administrators, parents and the general public on attitudes toward the present student aid system.

Information from all the surveys will be compiled by May, CSLP officials said, and any changes, including the creation of a new plan, would likely be prepared for the 1981-82 academic year.

## Student Leaders Support Strike

OTTAWA (CUP)—As support staff at Ontario's 22 community colleges took a strike vote, student leaders at four of the colleges decided to write Ontario colleges and universities minister Bette Stephenson, urging her to accept the bargaining position of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

The 4,200 members of OPSEU voted Jan. 11 on their negotiators' unanimous recommendation of strike action. In dispute is wage increases with the union asking for a 10 per cent increase after Jan. 1 and the government offering six per cent.

## Acadia Faculty Contract

WOLFVILLE (CUP)—The Acadia University Faculty Association agreed overwhelmingly Jan. 9 to accept a new two-year contract. The faculty, who had been without a contract since last June, was requesting a one-year contract with a nine percent increase in salaries.

## Ont. tuition up 5.7%

OTTAWA (CUP)—The Ontario government announced Jan. 5 that university students will pay five per cent (or about \$35 for a full-time student) more next year, while college students must pay 5.7 per cent more (or \$10 per term).

At the same time, government grants to universities and colleges will only increase about five per cent next year. In November, the annual inflation rate was 8.8 per cent.

This will mean universities will have to cut 250 to 380 staff next year, as well as reducing library and other services, according to a recent report by the Ontario Council on University Affairs (OCUA).

# THE BIG BENEFIT

## for CUPE 1392

A concert with

**Buddy and the Boys  
Bonny Leclair  
Bob Loblaw  
Ronny Maceachern  
Kenzie MacNeil**

**Wednesday, January 31 at 8 pm  
QEH Auditorium  
tickets \$4.00**

**Advanced sales at Sam's on Barrington St.,  
Red Herring Books, and the Grad House.  
Tickets also available at the door**