

On MPHEC

Is student representation closer?

The Atlantic Federation of Students is finally getting together. At the Nova Scotia Caucus meeting over the weekend, separate factions in the organization put aside their differences and did some real work.

Dalhousie delegates, Janet Cameron, and Marc Allain, the new caucus chairperson for the province, were instrumental in bridging the gap between opposing students at the conference.

The AFS meeting, suprisingly productive, was the first really successful gathering of these students since the spring. Members finally realized that the internal bickering was taking the organization nowhere fast. Despite some complaints of the detailed press coverage happening lately, an analytical feature on AFS (last week's Gazette) and information compiled on the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) in this week's paper, did have an effect on caucus members. These features, being compiled on a regional basis, and run by most papers in the Maritimes are helping AFS members realize the time has come for action.

AFS is working towards student representation on the MPHEC. For too long now, decisions which effect the future of education in the Maritimes have been made in secret. Both faculty and student representation is necessary on the MPHEC.

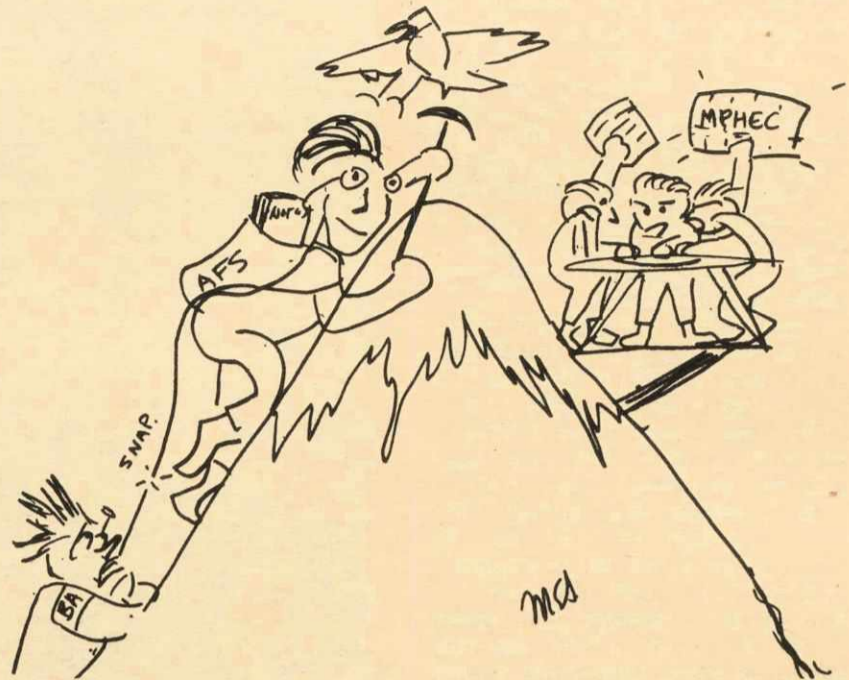
It was not until information from an MPHEC report was leaked last March that it was realized the increase in grants requested by the Maritime administration was not going to be accepted. In the report, MPHEC expressed concern that the Regional Treasury Board would veto the MPHEC recommendation that grants to Maritime post-secondary institutions be increased by 12% for 1977 - 1978.

Government secrecy to keep the public uninformed does not benefit students. Concealing information to avoid public pressure is an unfair way to treat the students in these provinces.

Senate members of the Dalhousie Student Council are going to approach the university senate with hopes of getting support for student representation. The Council of Maritime Premiers will have to support the idea before the MPHEC will honour the presence of students in their committee.

It is still a long road ahead, but with university support, as well as more good work from AFS, students will get the opportunity to have a say in the decisions which affect their future.

by Valerie Mansour



Letters

Burnham unworthy

To the Gazette:

Among those to receive honorary degrees at Dalhousie's fall convocation is L.F.S. Burnham, Prime Minister of Guyana, a small English-speaking South American country. It has been stated that Burnham will be given the award for his "outstanding public services."

It indeed would be very illuminating to see what outstanding public services the university noticed in selecting Burnham for the degree. For this review of Burnham's political "rise" beginning from 1960 is necessary.

In the early 1950's, there was one major political party in Guyana (then British Guiana) known as The People's Progressive Party, of which Burnham was the chairperson. In the mid fifties, the PPP was split into two political entities—the PPP-Jaganites (Jagan was the leader of the original party) and PPP-Burnhamites with Burnham as leader. From this, Burnham later formed the Peoples National Congress (PNC).

An election was held in August, 1961 and Jagan's faction won 20 of the 35 seats in parliament. The succeeding three years were the most turbulent thus far in Guyana's political history. After the election, senate seats were allotted to the political parties by the governor of British Guiana. Burnham refused to take his. He later verbally attacked the governor. On the opening of the legislature, Burnham and his party protested in Parliament and had to be removed bodily before the governor could enter.

A budget introduced by Jagan's government was strongly opposed by Burnham and his followers. Fires and riots followed this and a state of emergency had to be proclaimed. According to the Commonwealth Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances, "He (Burnham) began congratulating his followers on their part in the breaking of emergency regulations." The commission drew attention to the "strangely unfeeling attitude of the political leaders when passions aroused by them had been let loose on the town." The leaders referred to were Burnham and Peter D'Aguiar, leader of the United Force Party.

In reply to the Governor's request to use his influence and advise the people to resist from acts of violence, Burnham said, "We could

not help" as he would be blamed for starting the violence. During this time Guyanese were being brutally murdered everyday.

In 1963, a police raid was carried out on PNC headquarters. This turned up a great deal of arms and ammunitions, a number of documents—including assassination plots and plans for extensive military training—as well as material for bomb-making.

In 1964, the Commissioner of Police released a statement regarding enquiries conducted into over one hundred murders. "The enquiries revealed that there exists an organized Thuggery which is centrally directed." The commissioner of Police later severed an affidavit in which he spoke of "The subversive and criminal activities of a criminal gang attached to a political party known as the People's National Party. Burnham was, and still is, the leader of the PNC from that time.

Burnham took office in 1969 and the issue of independence was raised. After Britain granted Guyana independence, the country entered a period of radicalism, nepotism and grand scale corruption. The Archbishop of the West Indies and Guyana, Dr. A.J. Knight, charged "... bribery and corruption in all forms are prevalent."

Election under Burnham's government was held in December, 1968. The extent of "rigging" was unbelievable. This rigging was thoroughly exposed by the Granada Television Company (UK). In the film **Making Of A Prime Minister**, it declared that "a hanged man and his children" voted in Guyana's Election. This film, as well as another, was refused entry into Guyana.

The extent of the fraud was so great that H. Taylor of Opinion Research Centre (UK) had this comment: "I don't know what happened in Guyana, but so far as Britain is concerned, the compilation... was a totally dishonest and corrupt operation... The great majority of people listed do not exist. This... is a pretty awful and disgraceful episode." In Guyana, Peter D'Aguiar, who lived to regret his association with Burnham, bitterly said, "To call it an election is to give it a name it does not deserve, it was a seizure of power

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the dalhousie gazette

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