

## Students meet with Donahoe

# Minister noncommittal but sympathetic

by Matt Adamson (CUP)

Provincial Education Minister Terrence Donahoe would not comment directly on the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's (MPHEC) funding recommendations but he did "sympathize with our points," said Mike McNeil, chairperson of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS), after two SUNS' delegates met with the education minister on Friday, January 11.

The MPHEC has recommended an 8.1 per cent increase in operating assistance for post-secondary institutions and said it expected tuition to rise comparably to the cost of living.

"We pointed out that raising tuition by the cost of living while most students' incomes are from minimum wage jobs and student loans, which are not indexed, was undesirable," McNeil said.

"We also questioned the minister on the Equalization Programmes Financing (EPF)

and he promised to give us the figures," he said.

The EPF is a federal-provincial funding arrangement under which federal monies are earmarked for health, welfare, or education, but the provinces are not constitutionally bound to allocate them to the respective area. After last year's funding increase of 5.5 per cent was announced by the provincial government, students charged the government was diverting money geared for education and then pleading a tight budget.

McNeil said the minister told SUNS the money was spent in the long run because of an additional grant in the summer.

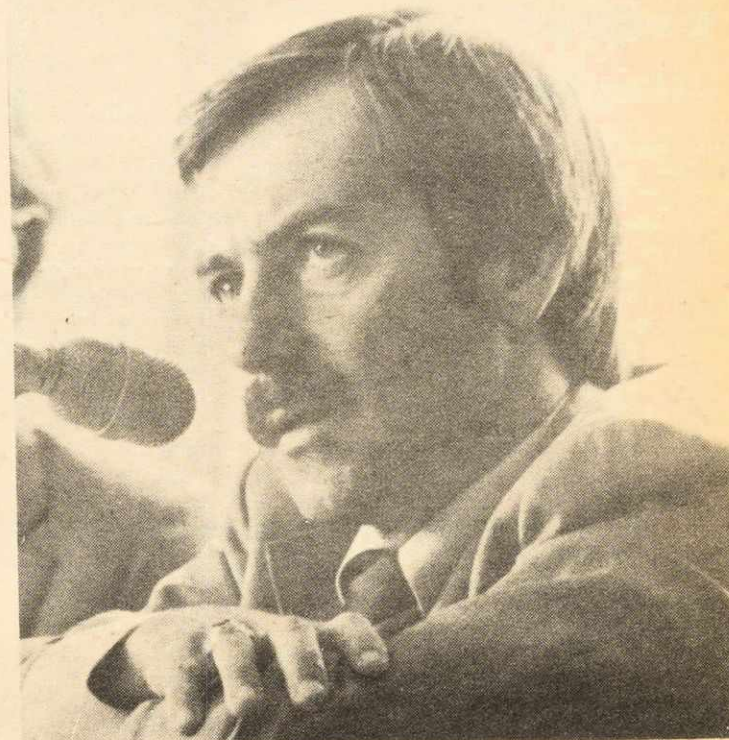
"Donahoe reaffirmed his belief that increasing the debt load for students was not the answer," McNeil said, "and told us it was too bad the election was called because the federal minister (Secretary of State David MacDonald) was starting to get interested in student aid."

Donahoe will be meeting with Premier Buchanan shortly and a decision on the provincial level of funding could be made soon, McNeil said. The decision will probably be announced at a Council of Maritime Premiers meeting within a month, he added.

Donahoe, and SUNS delegates McNeil and Cathline Patterson from St. Francis Xavier University, also discussed lowering the loan ratio and having federal money distributed by the province to complement the bursary programme.

"Maybe I'm an optimist but I'm hoping something was accomplished at the meeting," McNeil said, "but we will only know for sure when the government announces its decision."

SUNS will be meeting to discuss how to deal with the MPHEC's recommendations January 19 and 20 at King's College in Halifax.



Terry Donahoe, Minister of Education

# SUNS 'post card' campaign begins

by Margaret Sutherland

In an effort to solicit student opinion on tuition fees and government funding to Dalhousie, the SUNS (Students Union of Nova Scotia) on-campus committee has begun a post card campaign.

Each student will have access to "postcards" on which is printed a statement directed towards the Nova Scotia Minister of Education, Terry Donahoe. By signing it they will support SUNS "in their efforts to secure adequate funding for post second-

ary education." On the back, they may also write their opinions and reactions to the level of funding and on the role of SUNS itself at Dal.

3,600 have already been printed up for use and passed out at Howe Hall and Sheriff Hall. The cards will be passed out in classes as well for return at the end of the period.

Collecting boxes are being made available at the residence cafeterias, as well as at the cafeteria of the Student Union Building. Completed cards may also be left at the SUB inquiries desk.

SUNS, along with the Association of Atlantic Universities, is backing a recent proposal by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) to the government recommending an increase of at least 8.1% in funding to Maritime universities. This would keep tuition increases at a level near the rate of inflation without cutting back on university services.

However, Mr. Donahoe is free to ignore the proposal, as he did last year, granting funds 4% below the MPHEC recommendation. After this, strong protest was made by both students and faculty to

the government, including a march on Province House.

"According to Jeff Champion, chairman of the SUNS on-campus committee at Dal, this loud outcry eventually led to some concessions by the minister.

"But," he said, "the real time to influence the government is while the increases are being decided. If, this year, we can seriously lobby before it makes the announcements, it could make a significant difference for the better."

Dalhousie is one of the first of the SUNS member universities to start the postcard campaign, with the rest of the universities conducting similar ones within the very near future. Gauging by general student reaction so far, Champion is optimistic about the outcome of the campaign.

"The DFA (Dalhousie Faculty Association) has indicated that they are in favour of this style of action," he says, "and we hope that once more students are aware that there is an organization really concerned with their problems, they will also act favourably and let us know what they want."

Once SUNS has all the completed cards, they plan to present them to the Minister of Education as an accurate representation of general Nova Scotia opinion.

"We have to impress upon the students and government that the high rate of tuition increases can't continue," said Champion. "It's more than just an inconvenience. The high costs will soon make university inaccessible to many students."

The next SUNS plenary is to be held at King's College this Saturday and Sunday. Any interested students are welcome to attend and take part in the discussions.

Hon. T. Donahoe  
Nova Scotia Minister of Education

Dalhousie University now has one of the highest tuitions in Canada. Any increase in tuition fees will add to the disparity between the cost of education in Nova Scotia and that of other regions of the country, and decrease the number of students able to afford education in this province. Therefore, I support the Students Union of Nova Scotia and the Dalhousie Student Union in their efforts to secure adequate funding for post-secondary education.

X

You have your own opinions on your education. We would like to hear them. Please use back space for that purpose. Return to Enquiry Desk, SUB lobby.

Copy of post card to be circulated at Dal

## New program creates jobs

by Paul Clark

A \$110 million youth-employment program intended to create 70,000 summer jobs was announced by Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey last week. In addition Atkey announced \$1 million would be spent on a "hire a student" campaign and \$9 million on Student Employment Centres.

The youth employment program contains an increase in direct job creation funding from \$94.9 million to \$96.9 million and according to Atkey will provide 2,000 more summer jobs for people between 15 and 24 years of age.

Atkey planned to establish a "Youth Employment Secretariat", to coordinate the youth-employment program, a Private Employment Program, to give employers up to \$80 a week in tax credits for hiring youths and a \$70 million "National Youth Service Program", to employ youth in

volunteer organizations. These proposals failed to be implemented when the government was defeated last December.

Dick Matthews, president of Dalhousie's Student Union, said considering the government's short term in office he didn't know what other kind of summer employment program they could have advanced.

He said, however, he was confused as to whether the program applied just to students or to all youth.

He also pointed out that whereas last year employees under the summer job program would have received the federal minimum wage of \$3.50, this summer they will receive provincial minimum wages which are lower.

"There are more jobs, but students who get them aren't going to be paid as much," he said.

Matthews said he was pleased the government put

more money into the program, however.

"The wage levels of the jobs are going to decrease sharply," said Morna Ballantyne, executive secretary of NUS. "In the past Federal government contributions started at the highest minimum wage in the country, but under this plan students will receive the minimum wage of the province."

Students in Newfoundland, for example, will now be paid less for their summer jobs than students in other provinces.

"By doing this he (Atkey) is eliminating the vast majority of students from participating in the program because they will no longer be able to afford to take these jobs," said Ballantyne. "With rising inflation and increases in tuition fees, these wages will not be enough to get them through the academic year," she added.