

Coalition of students - its ours

FREDERICTON: Dissatisfaction with the Council of Maritime Premier (CMP) decision to award a 6.7 per cent increase in operating grants to New Brunswick universities instead of the recommended 11-14 per cent instigated the formation of the New Brunswick Coalition of Students this weekend.

Representatives from the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton and St. John), St. Thomas University and Mount Allison University (Sackville) met here to discuss ways of combatting the government's decision.

Representatives said this decision will probably result in further cutbacks on campuses and increased tuition.

The representatives will be looking at the importance of universities and the detrimental effects insufficient funds will have on them. Decrease in enrollment, insufficient equipment and fewer

qualified professors are some ramifications of the CMP decision according to representatives.

The group will be returning to their respective campuses to instigate a campaign to inform the students of the situation. Open forums will be held, petitions circulated and full media coverage is desired.

Several members of the coalition said they will be lobbying MLA's in their community.

UNB (F) external vice president Susan Shalala said "we need to pressure the provincial government, the administration has its hands tied". She said Premier Richard Hatfield was trying to "con" them and that the money was there but was not being spent.

Representatives expressed some doubt as to whether the quality of education would remain constant with further financial

constraint. UNB President John Anderson had said earlier in the week that the university expected to retain its quality but that they would be "forced to raise fees".

"We're desperately short of money" said Dr. Anderson who said that tuition fees were the only other source of substantial revenue other than the government grant. He said that 10 years ago, tuition fees paid 35 per cent of the total operating budget whereas this year they constitute only 14 1/2 per cent.

Nova Scotia students outlined a similar campaign on January 21. The students met at an Atlantic Federation of Students caucus in Antigonish.

AFS Secretary-Coodinator Tony Kelly said then that the quality of education is declining and that "should tuitions rise again, students will be asked to pay more for less."

The Nova Scotian campaign will



begin with a "large scale education of students" which will take the form of newsletters, leaflets and meeting with students in their residences, cafeterias and common rooms. A petition will also be circulated, as well as open forums being held with the government as well as student representatives.

AFS executive will be meeting with government officials in the education ministry and on the treasury board to plead their case and student representatives will be meeting with their administrations and Boards of Governors.

The New Brunswick Coalition of Students will be meeting again March 18 to draw up further plans.

Minister of Youth promises support to students

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

FREDERICTON: "I will fight all the way through to have a better student aid program" said Jean Pierre Ouellette, Minister of Youth to UNB Student Representative Council Executive, Jim Murray, Susan Shalala and Albert King.

The SRC executive met with the minister last week after what Miss Shalala termed "peristant efforts of the SRC to arrange a meeting over the past three and one half months." They met to discuss the present student aid program in New Brunswick and changes which could be made.

Mr. Murray, SRC president said that the recent decision by the Council of Maritime Premiers to give New Brunswick Universities 6.7 per cent increase on operating grants rather than the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission recommendation of 11-14 per cent would place many students in financial difficulties. He felt that if the CMP would not

alter its decision, students should look to the Student Aid program for further help.

Recommendations made by the three students to the Minister included increasing the maximum level of assistance and decreasing the loan portion to \$900 from \$1400, thus allowing easier accessibility to the bursary portion.

Miss Shalala said that the Minister revealed that there was a recommendation before the federal government at the present time to raise the maximum student loan to \$4000.

She said the Minister offered his "wholehearted support to the recommendations" and told the three students that he would try to "persuade his colleagues" in the provincial government that education should be high priority. According to Miss Shalala the Minister also supported lowering the student summer savings requirement as well as agreeing with the students in having the

parental contribution to education level be reconsidered.

Mr. Ouellette said "There is no way for parents here to save \$1000 to give to a child to go to university, not with our standard of living."

Another student recommendation was that repayment of student loans begin six months after securing a full time job, a recommendation supported by the Minister according to Miss Shalala.

As the Federal-Provincial

Agreement on Student Aid is up for re-negotiation as of January 1978, Mr. Ouellette told the students that their "timing was perfect".

He also advised the students to lobby other ministers.

AFS versus NBCS ?

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

The Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS) is "unsure" about what relations they will have with the newly formed New Brunswick Coalition of Students (NBCS) according to vice president external Susan Shalala.

At the fledgling meeting of the NBCS last weekend, AFS spokesperson Lou Ann Meloche suggested chairperson of the NBCS, Shalala, be allowed to sit on the AFS executive to represent the New Brunswick faction. She guaranteed Shalala's expenses to the AFS caucus meeting this weekend in Halifax but said it would be up to the rest of "the executive as to whether Shalala continued to attend other meetings.

In a recent referendum at Mt. Allison university students voted to rejoin AFS. According to Shalala it is questionable whether the NBCS will be represented at AFS as the organization may decide to



use Mt. Allison as their New Brunswick representative.

Shalala does not feel this is adequate as Mt. Allison represents only a small faction of the university population. Universities such as University de Moncton (FESS) and community colleges among others are not being taken into consideration.

Shalala said the NBCS is more than willing to work with AFS against common problems but that they do not wish to be "an arm" of the organization.

She feels New Brunswick has a special case, as both Nova Scotia and PEI did get a greater percentage increase in operating grants from the provincial governments.

"The NBCS was formed to pressure the New Brunswick provincial government" she said.

Shalala feels that UNB has shown good will towards AFS citing a voluntary attendance of an AFS caucus recently as an example. She said the union has been attempting to keep up contact with the organization although they do not belong, and that the NBCS intends, if allowed, to do the same.

"While we don't always agree with AFS, we're willing to help them, if they don't want to return the favour, they are the isolationists not us," she said.

Shalala feels that AFS is not being realistic if they decide to ignore the group of universities represented by the NBCS.

Students oppose Unions

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

Unionization is NOT a good idea according to a student brief presented by past president Jim Murray at the labor relations hearings, Wednesday.

The Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers, the Forestry and Engineering Association and UNB Law Association had all applied to the labour relations board for certification to act as collective bargaining agents for various factions of the university. The AUNBT wished certification to act as agents for all the faculty and staff of the university as well as the library. The Faculty of Forestry and engineering wished certification to represent those professors in their faculties and the Law Association applied for certification to represent the 13 professors of law at Ludlow Hall.

The brief was the result of a few meetings of an ad hoc committee of the SRC.

Points raised in the brief included the opinion that the importance of student opinion would be lost as the superior quality of the faculty representa-

tion would negate the less organized and less well financed position of the students. The brief also stated that students interests may be ignored in the interests of harmony in labour relations.

What is termed the present informal relation between students and the faculty may give way to a formal highly structured channel of communication according to the brief.

Another point the brief raised was whether it would be valid for students to complain about incompetence or unfairness in view of union security clauses which would prevent matters from being investigated.

The brief also questioned whether unionization would mean higher salaries and fringe benefits, in which case tuition would be raised to the extent where only a few would be able to attend university.

The validity of a faculty union was questioned with respect to faculty's representation on the administration. According to the brief, with the amount of faculty

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Mt. Allison rejoins AFS

By JACK TRIFTS

In a referendum at the Mount Allison University, Wednesday, student voted to rejoin the Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS).

According to Student Administrative Council Secretary Linda Green, the SAC executive was very impressed with the turnout, which was about 40 percent. In light of the fact that this was the third election in the past few weeks the turnout was termed especially impressive by the SAC.

The final tally was 502 votes cast, 285 in favor of AFS, 213 against, and 4 spoiled ballots.

According to Roger Doncaster of Mt Allison's student newspaper "the Argosy", a lot of people on

campus see problems in AFS, but Mount A. will be an influence to change and modify the present system.

Many people see AFS as too leftist, too socialist, according to Doncaster.

Asked if he felt the move back into AFS would take much work, Doncaster said that "We (Mt. A.) have always kept up our contact even though we have not been a member."

The executive of the SAC chose not to take a stand on the issue feeling that such a stand could unfairly influence the voters. Another reason for the executive not taking a stand is that they could not agree on which side to support.

John Craighead, SAC president

was among the non-supporters of AFS.

The Campaign was referred to as short and clean by one student, AFS fieldworker Lou Anne Meloche was on campus distributing pamphlets and putting up posters. A sheet listing both pros and cons was distributed by the SAC.

The cost of rejoining will be \$1. per student, with a total cost of about \$1400. for the campus. The fee will not be payable until next fall however, since the University has already collected the current years fees. Mount A. will have voting privileges at the May meeting according to SAC secretary Linda Green.