

# Dal students, faculty boycott classes

The majority of faculty and students at Dalhousie University in Halifax boycotted classes last Wednesday in support of 220 striking maintenance workers at the university.

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Staff Writer

Representatives from Cape Breton College, Acadia University, St. Mary's University, and about 20 different unions within Nova Scotia turned out for the day of protest during which a few tires were slashed and one car was rumored to have been overturned.

A spokesman for the Dalhousie University Gazette says that "No more than 15 percent of the students attended classes yesterday," and he said 60 percent of the faculty boycotted their classes as well. The student union stated that they were not in support of the movement and added that all the classes were scheduled as usual.

The Gazette is fully in support

of the workers and most of their staff are members of the Strike Support Committee which was formed when the strike started before Christmas.

Meanwhile, an MLA from Cape Breton is putting forth a resolution in the Legislature for the dismissal of university president Henry Hicks and vice-president (administration) Louis Vagenos for their handling of the affair.

The maintenance workers, who handle the cleaning operations for the university, originally asked for an 85 cent pay increase over a one year period. The university offered 31 cents, but the union stuck by their guns and went on strike Nov. 5. The union was then offered 85 cents over a 20 month period, which they rejected, and then upped their original request to 14 months. The union was then offered 85 cents over 24 months.

They eventually agreed to 85 cents over a 14 month period. However they are still in

disagreement over a clause in the contract which says that the university would no longer be required to post seven days notice if they wished to transfer a cleaner from one building to another on campus. The union rejects this action. The university administration explains that they want to be able to transfer workers immediately from one building to another, for example if one of the buildings flooded and more manpower was required to clean it up. A spokesman for the administration says the university feels "the union has been too rigid in its stance."

On Dec. 22, in the midst of the dispute, the university sent letters to the members of the union telling them they were fired. They brought in a private company, Modern Cleaning, to manage the cleaning operations on campus.

As a result of this, the union has taken the university before the Nova Scotia Labor Relations

board, charging "unfair labor practices".

Derek Mann, spokesman for the university administration, says that Modern was brought in as a management service only. He said part of the deal with Modern was that they offer jobs to all the members of the striking union that want them, which they did. However, CUPE did not want to negotiate with Modern and hence the current situation is before the Labor Relations Board.

Mr. Mann said that the cleaning at the university has been accomplished by about 60-70 members of the administration since the strike began, and he emphasized that these are the only ones doing the cleaning.

The situation with the students is pretty well back to normal as of Thursday morning and few signs of the strike remain. Halifax Police report no arrests and said Wednesday's demonstration went "very well".

the  
brunswickan

VOL 113 ISSUE 17 JANUARY 26, 1979/28 PA

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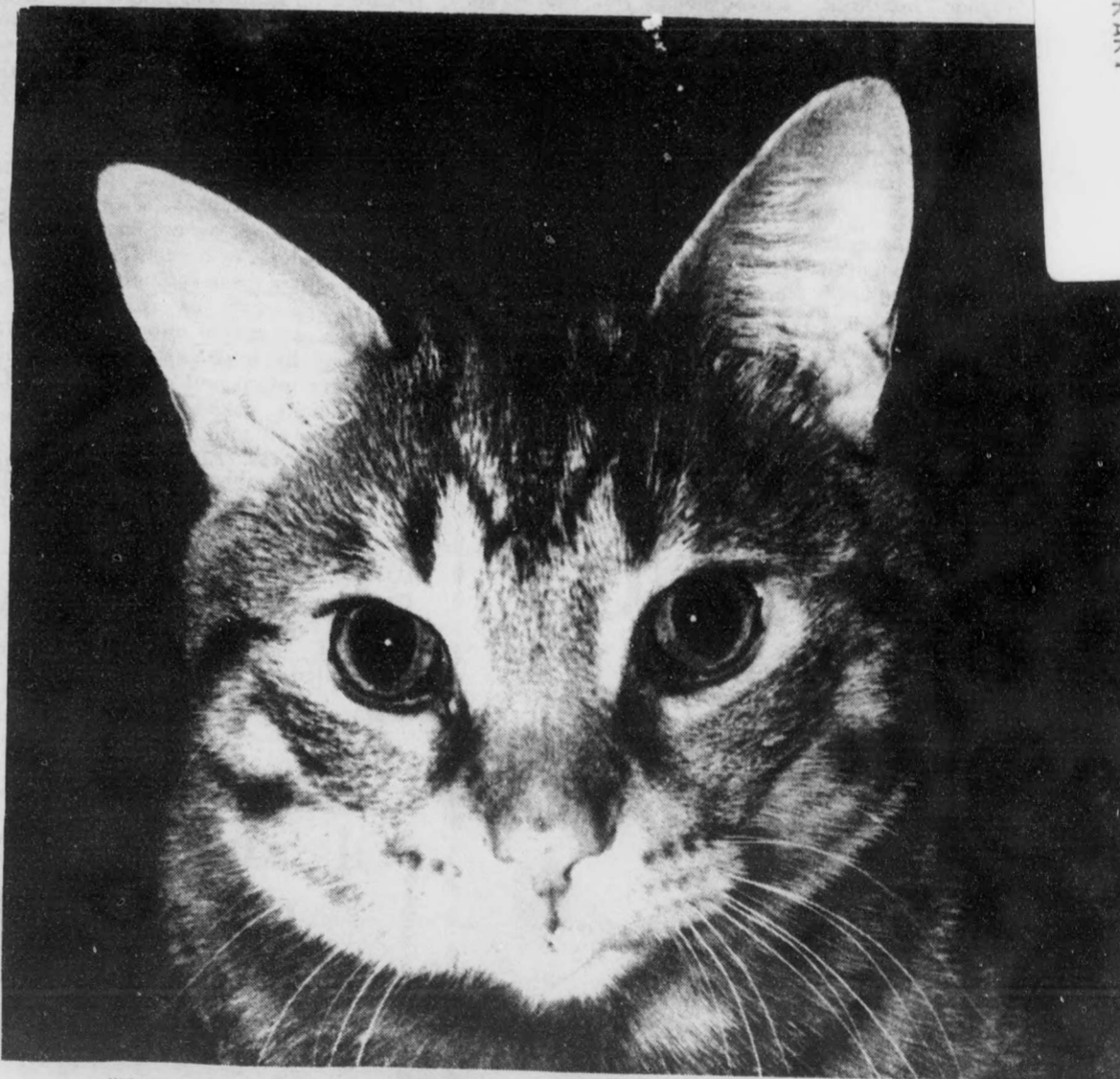
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"No more pussyfooting around" says Tigger Murphy, candidate for the presidency of the Student Union. Tigger feels his chances as good as anyone else's. His campaign speech can be read on page 5. T-I-G-Grr for President!