

# the dalhousie gazette

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## Budgetary information disclosed

FREDERICTON (CUP) -- Representatives of the Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS/FEA) have released portions of a confidential report by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC).

In the report, MPHEC expressed concern that the Regional Treasury Board will veto the MPHEC recommendation that grants maritime post-secondary institutions be increased by 12% for 1977-78.

The MPHEC report states that per-student operating grants in the Atlantic region are already the lowest in the country, and they fear that this move on the part of the RTB will only serve to lower the quality of education in the area even further. The commission is of the opinion tuition fees in the Maritimes should be frozen for the next three years. Education Minister George Mitchell had refused to inform the AFS of budgetary recommendations of the MPHEC. The Association of Atlantic Universities received these recommendations in December.



Education Minister, George Mitchell, would not disclose any information from the AAU report at the meeting with student leaders on Feb. 25. Information on the report has been leaked since that time.

In a meeting with the AFS last week, Mitchell admitted that the MPHEC wanted to make the report public, but were prevented from doing so by the Council of Maritime Premiers.

Mitchell left the Feb. 26 meeting with AFS officials early to attend the Nova Scotia Liberal convention. Deputy Education Minister Carmen Moir refused to answer questions after the minister left. He told the students to 'submit their questions in writing'.

Mitchell's reply, dated March 2, says that answers to questions about MPHEC "are not immediately available" because the Council of Maritime Premiers has not made a firm decision.

"Mitchell knows the answers to the MPHEC questions. He's known since at least December," said Brian Perkins, National Union of Students (NUS) central committee member for Nova Scotia. "We found out our meeting with Mitchell last Saturday that MPHEC was going to make the figures public but the government wouldn't let them.

Mitchell also knows the regional Treasury Boards' recommendations. He just doesn't want the public to know."

AFS questions about the budgetary recommendations of the provincial Treasury Boards were also left unanswered, as was one asking whether all the tax points transferred from the federal government would be used for post-secondary education.

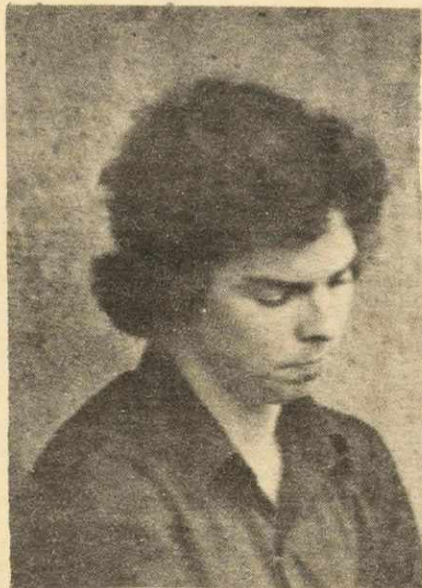
Diane Wright, the AFS representative for Mount St. Vincent University commented, "First the government makes the decision and then they allow the students to participate."

"The information in this report affects all people in the Atlantic region," said Miguel Figueroa, the Atlantic fieldworker for the National Union of Students. "The only people who would benefit from the report's secrecy are those in government who hope to save themselves from embarrassment by deliberately keeping the public uninformed."

## Elections ratified

by Jeannette Copp

The Dalhousie Student Council has voted to uphold the February 16 Council election. On Monday evening, by a recorded vote of 10-9-1 with three people absent, challenges to call a new election because of irregular procedures were defeated.



Sandy MacNeill, Chief electoral officer, at Monday's council meeting.

Student Council's failure to appoint a committee for the election, which showed a clear mandate for Sampson and Mancini, was unconstitutional. They did not select four deputy returning officers in addition to the appointment of Sandy MacNeill as Chief Returning Officer. MacNeill pointed out to student council that when he drew their negligence to their attention, council again failed in its duties to

supply him with the necessary members. MacNeill then felt that members could be chosen at his discretion.

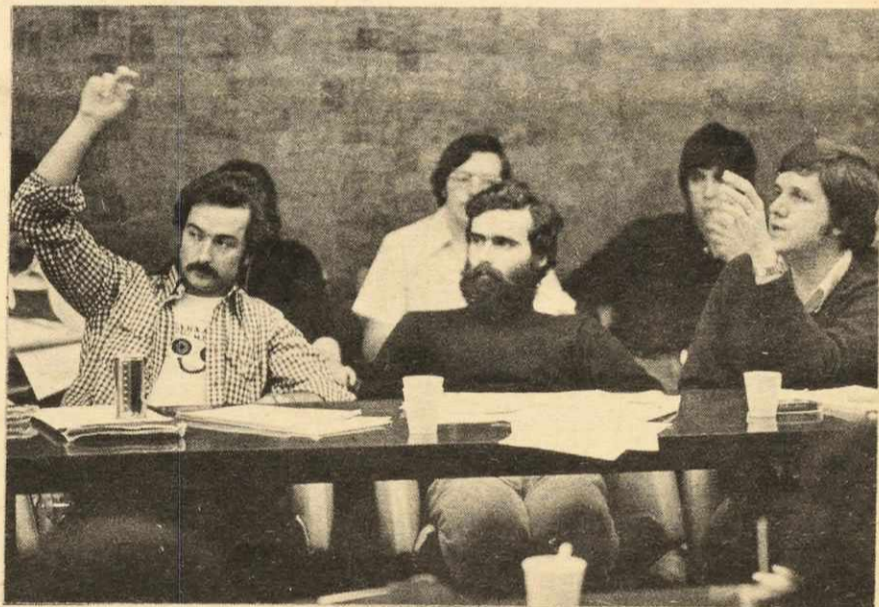
Mike Sherar, Law Rep, acting on behalf of defeated candidates Greene and Kinley, felt that the election should be declared null and void because of the "unconstitutionality of the appointment" and on the grounds of "defending the democracy of the union" and being "morally obliged to take corrective action."

However, Brian Duggan, Arts Rep, felt that the student body should not have to be subjected to another election due to council's mistake in not fully carrying out its duties.

There were many questions as to election procedure irregularities, including irresponsible management of polling booths and ballot box stuffing. One outstanding conflict in the evidence provided was that the election scrutineers said that there was a 655 vote difference between the number of ballots received and the number of names crossed off in the student directories. MacNeill claimed the difference was 345 votes.

The council, split in their decision, generally agreed that the elections were not carried out properly. However, some felt they could better spend their time discussing issues that greatly concerned the students, such as proposes tuition increases and smooth operation of student functions.

MacNeill admitted that some irregularities had occurred due to 'human error' and said, "I truly feel that council, in supporting the February 16 election, is acting in



A very long discussion took place during Monday's council meeting regarding the legitimacy of the February 16th council elections.

the best interests of the student union as a whole, and I fully support their judgement. I am pleased by the interest expressed by all

students concerned and hope that this will continue to aid the new council in the operations of the student union."

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