

Students march

# 1600 join budget protest

by Valerie Mansour

Friday's protest march on the Nova Scotia Legislature drew the support of approximately 1600 people who displayed their disapproval of the government decision to reduce post-secondary education funding.

The marchers from across the province including students, faculty, and maintenance workers, gathered at the Dal SUB and proceeded to Province House carrying placards, chanting, and singing.

The Atlantic Association of Universities (AAU) had requested, through the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Council (MPHEC), a 12.5% increase in university funding. The MPHEC then recommended an 11.5% increase to the government. As well, they asked that tuition costs be frozen for three years, but if that did not happen, they requested that tuition not be increased any more than 4%. The Council of Maritime Premiers has rejected their recommendations and has decided to suggest an increase in funding of 7% for 1977-78.

Premier Gerald Regan told the crowd that "we are living in a difficult time and students must carry a portion of the increased costs." He promised to do everything in his power to stop an unreasonable increase. Regan stated that he was not prepared to "take money away from hospitals or social services", but he was reluctant to discuss other recipients of government funding such as large corporations.

Opposition leader John Buchan told the protesters that he would "introduce a resolution to call on the government to insure no more than a minimal increase in tuition."

NDP leader Jeremy Akerman received an unenthusiastic response when he declined to support students demands. He stated that he would not consent to more public money being handed to universities until "better priorities are shown by university administrations."

Support was expressed for the student requests by Roland Pucetti on behalf of the Nova Scotia Faculty Association, and by Gerry Jollimore President of the Nova Scotia Labour Council. "We're all in this together," Jollimore suggested, "you're all the children of workers."

March organizers were pleased with the turnout. AFS/FEA secretary coordinator Don Soucy was impressed with the students who did not fall for the government's comments. "They tried to con students and be emotional, but the students saw through that to the real issue. An increase in tuition fees means poor students will be pushed out."

At a meeting on Thursday Regan had told students that he did not have faith in the MPHEC recommendations. "They have only been



Dal Photo/Grandy

Friday's protest against education cutbacks was a success attracting 1600 students from across Nova Scotia.

## the dalhousie gazette

31 March 1977

Number 26

Volume 109

## Budget presented

The provincial government's grant for funding post-secondary institutions will be 6.8 percent, according to the estimates presented in the House Tuesday by Finance Minister Peter Nicholson. The figure is below the expected 7% that the Council of Maritime Premiers had recommended to the government.

Don Soucy, secretary co-ordinator of the Atlantic Federation of Students, said that "since the budget estimates were probably printed before the large display of public concern which has arisen in the past few weeks, there is still a possibility of the grant being raised."

Sydney Wile, secretary of the Nova Scotia Treasury Board, was asked if the grant could be changed in debate. His reply was that "due to the recent protest march the premier is extremely concerned about the tuition aspect and is doing some thinking on it."

Soucy said, "I hope they're thinking pretty hard. Students across the province are going to be

watching for what the government decides, and those students have shown that they are ready to organize in an effort to make the government more responsive to the public."

The N.S. government has budgeted 10 per cent less for student aid in 1977-78 than for 1976-1977.

Education Minister George Mitchell said Wednesday that the \$4.74 million figure, down from \$5.2 million for this academic year, was only an estimate.

There is "no way any students will suffer" because of the decrease, Mitchell claimed. "Whatever the demand is (for student aid), that's what's spent."

Deputy Auditor General O.P. Cormier said Wednesday that "we don't ever express an opinion" on whether a government department has budgeted enough for a given program. He added that he had seen the government's estimates for the first time Wednesday morning.

## SUB bank to close

by Harvey MacKinnon

The Bank of Montreal branch located in the Student Union Building will close down on May 31.

According to informed sources the bank is leaving because "it is losing money and B of M officials want to consolidate the branches which are in the south end of Halifax."

A bank employee told the *Gazette* that all accounts will be moved to the Carleton and Queen street branches. Employees will be distributed throughout the various

branches in the city.

The Bank has an 11-year lease on the space in the Student Union Building but sub bank manager Phil Cann would make no comment to the *Gazette* regarding the soon to be vacated space. The University receives approximately \$35,000 annually from the Bank of Montreal for the space.

The Student Union receives no money from the bank according to building manager John Graham, "the only thing we lose is the service to members of the Dalhousie community".

### Inside This Week

Protest photo feature

Nova Scotians insulted

### Coming Next Week

Strike news

Book reviews