

# Dalhousie Gazette

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## collège ste. anne

## education and the acadians

—or—

## how to save money and screw people

**C**hurch Point, Nova Scotia would be called a "sleepy little community of salt of the earth people" if it was described by an American tourist passing through at 60 miles an hour. This description would miss the deep Acadian pride which is the real definition of Church Point.

But that Acadian pride has been battered by many things in the last few years; the chief villain being the Nova Scotia government.

Their story is a long one and it centers on their university, College Ste. Anne.

Founded in 1802, College Ste. Anne was to be a degree granting institution with bilingual course content. The primary function of the new college was to serve the Acadian French minority of Southwestern Nova Scotia. The college served that function well considering that government help was totally inadequate.

College Ste. Anne became and still is

the cultural centre of Acadian Nova Scotia. The links between the college and the community are as firm as can be found anywhere. The town receives first consideration before any decision is made by the school.

### Move recommended

A few years ago, the Garneau Report to the government University Grants Committee recommended moving the College to Yarmouth, an area with a heavy English majority. The effects of that move would have been shattering to the identity of College Ste. Anne as an Acadian university.

And the people protested.

The students went out on strike with massive support from the community. The high schools walked out with them.

As a result of that heavy pressure the Munroe Tribunal was appointed to study the matter and make binding recommendations.

Its findings were released in December last year, to a few people. The students got their copy late in January.

The tribunal deliberated for a year and finally recommended that the college become a junior college — community college patterned after the Quebec CEGEP's which went out on strike last year.

Coincidentally, two of the members of the tribunal had been involved in setting up the Quebec system, with its secondary CEGEP structure.

The tribunal also said the College should be moved 11 miles south of Church Point to Metaghan.

### No trust

They've stopped trusting the provincial authorities in Church Point now. The Provincial Government wants to continue the British policies which led to the Acadian expulsion, although in suitably softened form.

The British offered the Acadians a choice; become English or get out. Most got out and some returned.

The government's idea now is simply not to let the Acadians be French; cut off the source of their culture; smash their institutions.

For years, the government has withheld money from College Ste. Anne. When the university faltered, the government proclaimed it a failure.

Even the tribunal report is an insult to the reality of College Ste. Anne as a cultural center. If it becomes a junior college its graduates will have to finish their education elsewhere. That creates two possible problems.

The first is money. The financial burden for Acadian students will be incredibly high. They will have to leave home to finish their education.

The second is cultural assimilation; the be-English-or-get-out-trick. By the time they get their degree Acadian students will have had a large amount of their higher education in English.

The uniqueness and life force of the Acadian community will certainly suffer.

Just whose interests are being served by the manipulations that are going on is not known. But it is certain the whole thing isn't just the fevered dream of some power-mad Anglophone.

### Familiar faces

Why were Bruce Gillis, Dalhousie students president and the president of the Acadia student union negotiating on behalf of the department of education?

At least one inquirer was told by Education Minister Gerry Doucette that he should "talk to Bruce."

Some strange things are going on and Ste. Anne students know it.

Nobody takes much interest in classes at the university anymore. They don't know what their predicament actually is, but they know it's there. The provincial government is hedging on accepting the tribunal recommendations (which are binding.)

Church Point people fear that the tribunal report has not satisfied the governmental powers-that-be. Suppose that the government doesn't want any post-secondary facilities in southwestern Nova Scotia, they ask?

They could put off accepting the report until College Ste. Anne quietly passes away from malnutrition. Then they could pass some sort of official absolution and walk away smelling like roses.

The Church Point Community is furious. The residents are demanding that the government either accept the tribunal report or show its hand.

The Acadian community realizes that the tribunal report is not what they want. But they've accepted it and they want to begin negotiations immediately so that positive action can result.

At this writing they have received no word to that effect.