

Mitchell says -

Fee increases can't be justified

by Mark King
Atlantic Region CUP

It appears most Nova Scotia institutions will not be able to justify a tuition increase next year representatives of the Atlantic Federation of Students said following Monday's meeting with Nova Scotia Education minister George Mitchell.

Mitchell told the representatives he has spoken with three university presidents who have indicated fees will not rise at their institutions next year. He declined to name the institutions.

Mitchell revealed the funding increases for each institution and noted most Nova Scotia universities and colleges will receive more than seven per cent. He said the institutions that received more than 12 per cent "should be able to get by quite well", and not have to increase tuition.

The minister toned down an earlier government statement that said the government will take "vigorous action" to hold down fee increases saying it was probably a poor choice of words. Instead, he said, the government will try to "pressure and persuade" administrators into not increasing tuition.



Meanwhile AFS declared Mitchell's "vigorous action" will not amount to much more than talk. Federation representatives said the minister was not willing to say what persuasion means in dollars and cents.

AFS lamented the minister's refusal to address the question of the effect cutbacks are having on the quality of post-secondary education and his passing the blame for decreased funding onto the

federal government and for the "recent economic downturn".

Mitchell pointed out the New Brunswick institutions will feel the pinch more next year since they have historically received more than the Nova Scotia or PEI institutions. Next year the New Brunswick government will not apply an equalization arrangement being applied in the other two provinces.

He said the government will not consider tying a fee freeze to special grants to the institutions for non-space capital and renovation costs. The administrations, he said, would prefer to increase fees.

University expenditures should be properly made for the benefit of students, the minister said, but added it was difficult for govern-

ment to monitor such expenditures without being accused of academic interference.

Mitchell did say he has discussed the question of student representation on the MPHEC, and indicated that out of three appointments to be made by the Nova Scotia Government in the near future one could be a student.

Operating grant increases for the region's institutions vary from institution to institution. At Dal the increase will be the recommended 7.7 per cent, at St. Mary's 11 per cent, UPEI 7.7 per cent, 9.5 per cent at St. Francis Xavier, and 12.1 and 12.3 per cent at Acadia and Mount St. Vincent respectively. All New Brunswick institutions can expect 6.7 per cent increases.

Faculty votes today on unionization

by Marc Allain

The Dalhousie faculty association (DFA) will be voting later today on whether to seek certification as the official bargaining unit for the university's teaching staff.

The decision to vote on unionization was taken following the Administration's rejection of three DFA demands. According to DFA representative Michael Cross, negotiations between the Faculty Association and the Administration broke down after a meeting on January 12, when the association's demands for recognition as the sole bargaining agent for faculty, full disclosure of financial information and binding arbitration on all negotiations between the two bodies, were rejected by the Administration.

At the January meeting the administration's representative Vice-President Andrew MacKay promised the University's official position on the demands would be sent to the faculty association. As time went by and no word was received from the Administration, the DFA decided to set up a meeting for a unionization vote.

The DFA received the university's official position on the demands last February 10 when Dr. Phillip Welch, president of the association, was given a letter reiterating the original rejection. An hour after receiving the letter however, Welch was contacted by MacKay and asked to disregard the statement. MacKay said the University was willing to reconsider its position and wanted to meet with the association on Monday to discuss the situation.

The DSA executive received the Administration's revised position a little more than an hour before the Monday night meeting, a move that Cross said was typical of Dal's bargaining methods. During the apparently bitter encounter that ensued the Administration conceded to binding arbitration for salaries but remained intransigent on the other two points.

The DSA however had requested binding arbitration on all negotiable

matters such as tenure and other fringe benefits. According to Cross those are the areas where arbitrary decisions are taken and therefore where protection is needed most.

The decision to seek certification as a union has been prompted largely by the Administration's negotiating tactics to date, as faculty reps have accused the Administration of irresponsibility and contempt in their dealings with faculty.

"It's not appropriate to have people treated with such contempt nor to have to deal constantly with arbitrary government" Cross said. "The process of negotiations to date clearly demonstrates the administration doesn't bargain in good faith", he added.

MacKay told the *Gazette* he could "hardly agree that that was the case", although he admitted there may have been "particular instances when the university has not responded quickly or reasonably and perhaps even unfairly" in negotiations.

Asked to comment on a list of grievances which Welch made concerning the Administration's handling of negotiations over reduced tuition for faculty dependents, MacKay said it was a more a question of an individual "jumping on his favorite hobby horse" than anything else.

In a straw vote taken earlier within different departments a clear majority of faculty voted in favor of unionization. Faculty members in favor of certification claim the university's sudden decision to concede to binding arbitration was an attempt to influence the undecided members.

If the vote on unionization is successful organizers have three months to get 40% of the association's membership to sign cards requesting certification. A formal request will then be made to the provincial labour relations board and following a vote in favor of certification by at least 60% of those eligible, the certification process is complete.

\$350,000 for Dalplex?

by Marc Allain

After members of the Dalhousie student council executive were approached by representatives of the Dal Alumni Association for a formal student contribution to Dalplex, the student council struck a committee to investigate whether such contributions were desirable.

Although the committee has yet to meet, Robert Sampson, Dal student council president, and a member of the committee, has informed the *Gazette* of an alternative to increasing student union fees that would still allow over \$350,000 in student funds to go towards the Dalplex project. The proposal would involve renegotiation of the Student Union's mortgage payments on the SUB.

The mortgage, which will be liquidated in 1983, would be extended for five years, a move which would delay the Student Union assuming a portion of the operating costs for the building, according to Sampson.

Under the present agreement, which was signed in 1967, the university as owner of the building assumes full responsibility for its operating costs. The student union, on the other hand, pays for such internal operations as salaries of SUB staff and the regular mortgage payments. Once the mortgage has been paid Sampson expects the administration will want to renegotiate the agreement in order to offset their rising operating expenditures.

According to SUB general manager, John Graham, the Administration has incurred substantial in-

creases in expenditures over the last few years because it is responsible for areas that are uncontrollable in terms of rising costs. He singled out heating and lighting as two most salient expenditures.

The proposal as elaborated by Sampson and Graham would involve renegotiating the terms of the mortgage immediately in order to extend payments for an extra five years at their present level. With payments now set roughly at \$70,000 a year the Student Union would contribute at least \$350,000 to Dalplex as well as an equal amount in mortgage payments.

The advantage to the Student Union of such an arrangement, according to Graham, is that it would not have to pay any of the operating costs until 1988.

Graham and Sampson both said they were only assuming that the Administration would want the students to contribute to the SUB's operating costs after the expiration of the present agreement. Neither has approached the University with the proposal.

Graham admitted however that the \$350,000 broken up over 10 years would probably not go to Dalplex but would instead give the University a source of capital revenue that it could use as it saw fit. He did say however that it would have an unquestionably positive psychological effect on potential donors to have students contributing so generously to the Dalplex fund.



As part of Nutrition Week in Nova Scotia, the Dalhousie Nursing Society held a display booth in the SUB lobby with information concerning the body's nutritional requirements. In conjunction with the blood donor clinic held here this week, special emphasis was placed on those requirements following a blood donation.