

# Three parties debate on the Mount

By GARY RICHARDS

Mount Saint Vincent Picaro

Candidates from the province's 3 political parties met at Mount St. Vincent University on Oct. 16 and were asked the question: "What do you feel is the most important issue concerning youth today in Nova Scotia?"

Speaking before local media and some three hundred students and faculty, Joel Matheson, Minister of Mines and Energy, says today's youth were most concerned with immediate and long-term job creation.

After speaking briefly of his various connections with the Mount, Matheson spoke at length of the record and future aims of the Buchanan Conservatives. He outlined the objectives stated in the government's white paper on technology and industry and stressed the need to meet "the challenge of change."

Training and retraining programs, the Minister said, would be effective weapons against unemployment but required cooperation between government and industry. His government would force members of industry to participate if no such offer was forthcoming, he said.



Dr. John Godfrey, liberal candidate and last-minute substitution for Sandy Cameron, focussed more on global and environmental issues rather than student issues.

## Community activist trying to unseat social service minister

By ELIZABETH DONOVAN

Dalhousie Gazette

In a cramped room, a child is carefully stamping envelopes while his mother is making phone calls to residents in the Halifax-Needham riding. Two other women are on the phone, adding to the busy picture. Some locals drop by looking for a few errands to run.

On one wall, colorful children's crayon artwork decorates the office, and on another, among Alexa McDonough posters, a bold blue bumper sticker carries the message, "Keep Politics Clean: Elect Women."

This is Maureen MacDonald's headquarters, NDP candidate for the Halifax-Needham riding.

Just a few blocks down from MacDonald's headquarters is her opposition, Social Service Minister Edmund Morris.

MacDonald says her experiences at Dalhousie Legal Aid have given her ample ammunition to defeat Morris.

MacDonald's experience as a community worker and advocate for lower-income groups has governed her decision to run for MLA in the Social Service Minister riding.

"Being an MLA in the legislature, you have the potential to have press coverage, to raise the kinds of issues that affect lower-income groups," says MacDonald.

So too, the issues in MacDonald's campaign are formed in response to her constituency's needs.

MacDonald says women's response has been overwhelming.

"Women's time has come. They finally decided they have had enough of putting the well-being of

the community into the hands of male politicians who have not taken care of their interests.

"Many women see themselves as good managers. They know how to stretch a dollar and do that in a caring way," she said.

MacDonald says women are working collectively to change those areas that are adversely affecting them.

"Right now, single mothers are working to improve laws surrounding child support. Currently the onus is always on the women to scrape and scrounge and see that her maintenance comes in," she says.

"This is something that could be corrected quickly but it is not a priority for male politicians," says MacDonald.

The housing crisis is another source of frustration for MacDonald.

"People are desperate—people crying out for housing are dropping into this office. They have specific housing problems for which there are no quick fixed solutions," she says.

MacDonald thinks the provincial government has left the creation of housing in the hands of the private market.

"Private developers are not going to create affordable housing for low- to middle-income people."

She believes the government has failed to initiate existing housing programs.

"The Nova Scotia Housing Commission has 14 programs; only four of them function."

Other areas that illustrate the desperate situation in Halifax is the inadequate public housing.

According to City of Halifax housing authorities, the greatest



Joel Matheson, Minister of Mines and Energy, says the focus of the Buchanan Conservatives is training and retraining programs.

At the ministerial level, Matheson announced the formation of two new divisions each for the departments of Labour and Education, whose sole responsibility will be towards the youth of N.S.

Another agency, the Youth Initiatives Office, will cater to career needs and counselling. It will also coordinate existing federal programs for the greatest possible benefit to the province's young people. The Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Program proves no- and low-interest short-term loans to individuals under 25 years old who are planning to start their own businesses.

In backing up his claims of the Buchanan government's commit-



Alexa McDonough, leader of the provincial NDP, was the only leader from the three parties that took the time to attend the debate at the Mount.

ment to youth employment, Matheson quoted the Conference Board of Canada as saying, "N.S. has the best record of job creation programs in Canada." He says the report for 1984/85 will be equally glowing.

"Education is the key to individual advancement," Matheson said. He says the aim of the Buchanan government in the area of education will be to produce the best educated generation in Nova Scotian history. The minister cited last year's 800 million dollar investment in education as proof of the government's priority support of this field.

Lashing out at critics of his government's education efforts, Matheson said, "Those who don't face the problem of raising money seem to have no problem at all raising demands for money."

While Matheson only touched briefly on the Conservatives' efforts towards the advancement of women's rights, Alexa McDonough, leader of the provincial NDPs, concentrated her speech almost entirely on this issue. She blasted the Buchanan government's efforts in this area as being "tepid tokenism." The NDP leader revealed her party's new position paper on women's rights.

Among the demands outlined in the platform: equal pay for work of equal value, affirmative action, improved benefits for part-time workers (a group largely made up of women), increased child care and social services funding, and better accessibility to education.

McDonough, admitting the inevitability of the NDP's continued status as an opposition party, says she is more concerned with raising issues than laying out any full-scale electoral platform. The Halifax-Chebucto MLA says the "systematic discrimination" against women has kept them exploited and under-employed in comparison to other groups in the labour force.

The final speaker, Dr. John Godfrey, says his experience with youth, as the President of Kings University, gives him a different outlook on education issues. In what he jokingly described as a "possible act of heresy," Godfrey said jobs were not the first or even second most important issue concerning youth today. The nuclear threat and the quality of our environment are the most preoccupying issues for Nova Scotia's young people, he said. In a glib and urbane manner that made him the clear favorite of the audience, the Liberal candidate managed to look confident and informed despite his last-minute substitution for Liberal leader Sandy Cameron.

Godfrey says he is concerned about the instability of the global political climate, the accelerating nuclear arms race and Canada's role in the world nuclear theatre. Specifically, he says he is opposed to cruise missile testing within Canadian borders.

After driving home his anti-nuke stand, the would-be MLA moved on to somewhat more provincial concerns. The largest part of Godfrey's speech revolved around the problems facing Nova Scotia's environment and the need to maintain and improve our quality of life. Confirming his support for job creation, he warned against allowing this priority to cloud our judgement as to what kind of jobs we want created. A profusion of dangerous and menial vocations is clearly not in the province's long-term interest, said Godfrey. □