

# THE GAZETTE

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## Students and faculty face troubles at MUN

ST. JOHN'S, (CUP) — Three hundred students were turned away from introductory chemistry courses at Memorial University this fall, and crowding is panicking students and staff in many departments.

As hundreds of students compete for space in already overcrowded courses, the students' council is taking its fight for increased accessibility to financially-strapped administration and the provincial government.

Their actions will likely be too late to help students already in the cold.

At last week's council meeting, president Dan Crummell said accessibility to courses is the union's "immediate priority."

"It's a major problem on campus and it's all bad news," said Crummell.

Although registration for courses in most departments has been high, demand for spaces in

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## Dal drills Sable

By KEN FALOON

DURING SUMMER VACATION this year, Dr. Dave Scott and Dr. Ron Boyd, along with two assistants of the Dal Geology department, wound up on Sable Island.

However, they were not there to lay back in sun chairs. The department has been active drilling sub-surface cores on the untamed and hostile island, 130 miles off the Nova Scotia coast, since 1979.

The most recent project involved 30 helicopter lifts of 2,000 kilograms each, stretched over ten days due to fog and the intervention of tropical storm Anna. Vital equipment fell into the ocean due to faulty slings. With the storm approaching, the personnel of Jacques-McClelland Geosciences (a partner in the project) and Dalhousie retrieved the lost valuables at great personal risk. Anna almost washed away the project before it started, submerging the site in more than four feet of water.

Eventually these hardships were overcome and the crew began their round-the-clock schedule. Working for over a month, a high quality continuous core of 151.47 metres was obtained.

Scott says the project is a joint venture of several partners including the Centre for Marine Geology at Dal; Mobil Oil of Canada (East); the Jacques-McClelland and the Atlantic Geosciences Centres; and Logan Offshore Services. Dalhousie was the chief operator, supplying the major funding from a \$237,000 grant.

Increased offshore oil and gas exploration over the past few years has brought to light exciting geological information from below the 300m level, Scott says, but sampling the upper area is not directly related to the operation of oil rigs. He says the core produced this summer covers the last three million years of geological history in the area.

The main goal of the project

was to determine the origin of the many sub-surface channels running along the ocean floor. These channels are not visible on the sea floor, but are prominent in sub-surface profiles produced by seismic recorders. Dalhousie's core section, taken from one of these channels, is the only one of its kind from the continental shelf of North America and provides information vital to understanding the geological cycles on the edge of the continental shelf during the Ice Ages.

"Economically, the knowledge is particularly valuable in the case of accidents, such as the recent uncontrolled gas well (the Zapata Scotia), in which gas was escaping up to the 300m range," Scott says.

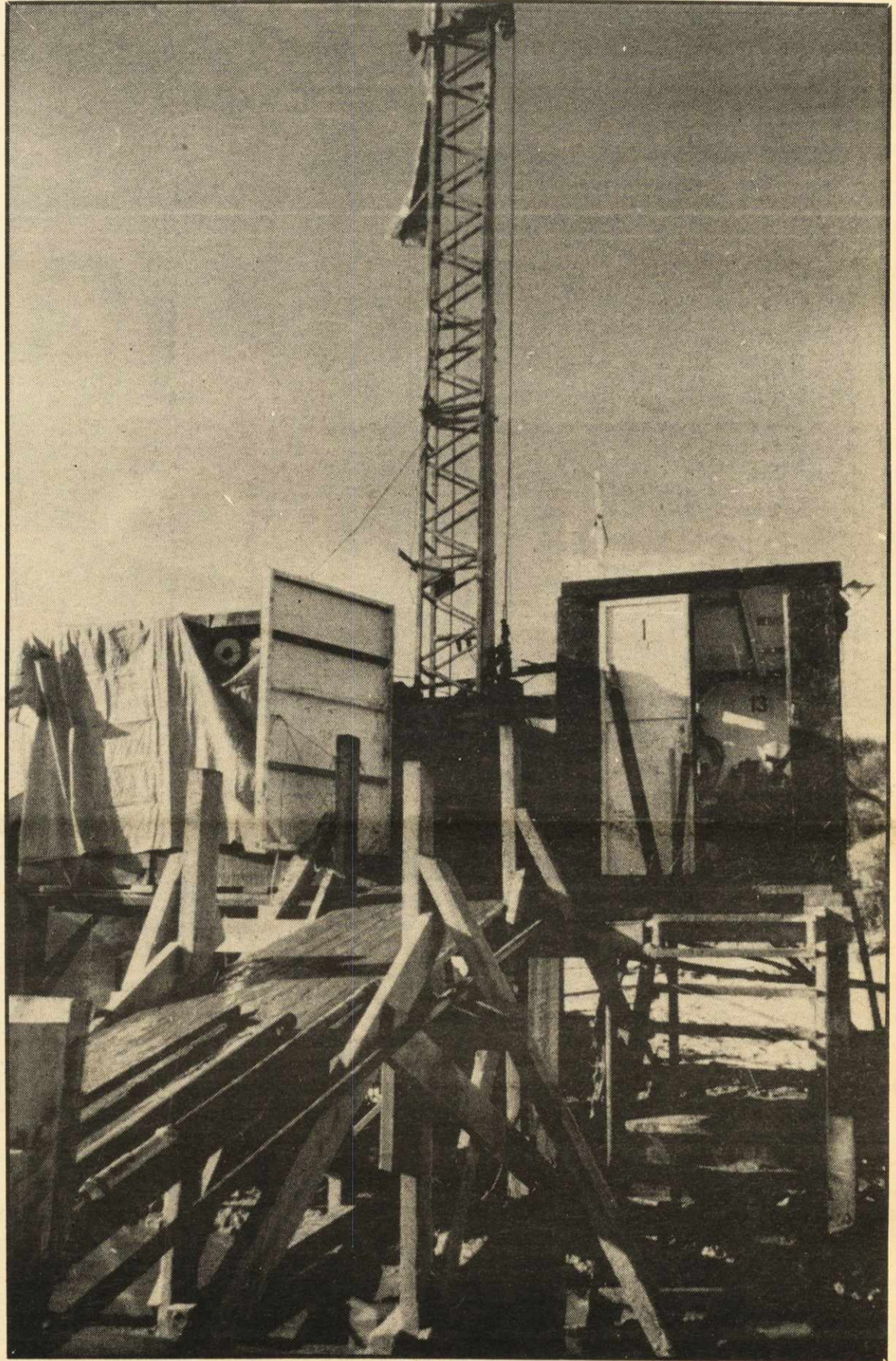
The upper 90m of the core is mainly sand. At 43m evidence of peat is found, indicating the area was once above sea level. The researchers believe this to be the lowest elevation at which such evidence has been found in North America.

A clay unit at the 50-60m level seals off the top of the buried channel. Scott says if a volatile substance, such as natural gas, was to escape into one of the many channels, it would possibly be contained by the clay.

Between 90-145m the core is solid clay. "We believe the clay represents glacial marine conditions," Scott says. "With floating ice shielding the sea floor from shallow water turbulence, thick clay deposits were formed."

At 145-151m the sediment has coarse sand layers, clay layers and even rocks up to 5 cm in size. "We speculate this represents a period when glacial ice was in contact with the ocean floor. This is the first proof that glacial ice extended out to the shelf edge," says Scott.

Scott and Boyd are excited by what they have learned so far and plan to continue their work at the next possible opportunity. "It's the major research of the century," says Boyd.



The Dal Geology department gave new meaning to the term "core program" this summer by drilling deep beneath the surface of Sable Island. Photo courtesy of Dal Geology Dept.

## General and Admiral debate

By DAVID OLIE

THE SMALL BUT GROWING group, Veterans for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament (VMND), has finally established a home base in Halifax, thanks to Dalhousie.

With funding from the federal department of Health and Welfare's "New Horizons" program, VMND has set up a resource centre and reading room in the Henson Centre on Dal campus. The

room was officially opened Sept. 26.

"New Horizons" is a program of funding for projects initiated by senior citizens.

To kick off the opening, VMND hosted a discussion, "Peace through Strength or Strength through Peace" in the Henson Centre on the night of the opening.

The discussion featured remarks by Major General Leonard Johnson and Vice-Admiral

Harry Porter. Johnson, known as Canada's "peace general," has gone on record since his retirement last year as being in favour of a complete review of Canada's military policy and a major reduction of the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers. Porter, a well-known figure in Halifax, is a former commander of Maritime Command.

Giff Gifford, head of the local

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