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Student aid controversy may end in strike action

By BURT FOLKINS

University students throughout the province of New Brunswick may soon join the thousands of other Canadians on the picket line if next Monday night's meeting on student aid comes off as planned.

The proposed meeting is to get a show of support from the students of UNB and St. Thomas University on the student aid controversy.

Mark Giberson, chairperson of the New Brunswick caucus of the

Atlantic Federation of Students and president of STU said this action is being taken after all avenues of procedure were blocked by provincial government officials. Giberson said there is a need to establish "grass-roots" support from the students in this area before a general strike can be called.

The meeting on January 12 will be held in MacLaggan Hall auditorium at 7:30 p.m. and all students are invited to come and

present their views to members of the AFS and student councils of the various universities, whether they be oral or written presentations.

Representatives from the Université de Moncton, College Shippigan, St. Louis Maillet as well as the student councils of St. Thomas and UNB will be in attendance and field questions from the audience. Discussion will centre on the short-term demands that the joint councils will present to the government in the near

future.

The demands that will be presented to the government were drawn up at the November 5 meeting of the provincial AFS caucus and are what members hope to achieve on the short term basis. Members of the board feel that these demands are not beyond what the students of New Brunswick deserve because, as Giberson put it, Newfoundland which is a more economically depressed area can afford to

supply more money for student aid than the province of New Brunswick who sees fit to support such short term investments as Bricklin.

The aid program in Newfoundland is one of the better programs in Canada, said Giberson and it seems that the New Brunswick government does not consider that the education of the students is very important.

Giberson made it clear that the quarrel between the students unions and the government has no reflection on the universities as such and that they hope to draw support from university administrations. Every endeavour will be made to proceed without a student strike but if worse comes to worse the students will be asked to support whatever AFS calls.

"This is a harmful game, a game I do not necessarily want to play because it could have serious results," said Giberson.

The former chairman of AFS, Jim MacLean, was also very critical of the way the New Brunswick government has treated the student aid issue in New Brunswick as well as in Nova Scotia and PEI.

In a lengthy interview, MacLean said the AFS made substantial gains in Nova Scotia last summer. An extra 1.5 million dollars was added to the Nova Scotia student aid program, bringing the total amount to 6.1 million dollars for the year 75-76. He pointed out that this does not compare very favourably with the student aid program in New Brunswick which allowed only 2.4 million dollars to the student aid program.

Because the assessment procedure for New Brunswick is so difficult, MacLean said drastic action in the form of a student strike may be the only resort. He said there has been a consistent drop in the amount of the average loan compared to the non-proportional decline in the number of students who are getting aid, given the inflation rate of 8-12 percent.

MacLean said, the introduction of Bill 73 by the federal government will have a definite effect on the willingness of the provincial government to extend the guidelines more than 10 percent.

He added that the cancellation of the Opportunities for Youth program would result in the loss of earnings to summer students and thus increase the need for more direct student aid from the government.

The government neglected to mention even slightly student aid in the original budget which was brought down in March of 1975 but included it in the mini-budget, he said. This was not satisfactory to the needs of students.

Commenting on the lack of progress that the AFS has made in New Brunswick, MacLean said that the majority of the summer was spent in Halifax and members only tackled the New Brunswick problem in August of 1975.

Law students will receive lounge

By PETER KRAUTLE

The SRC in an executive meeting Dec. 11 invested \$3,000 toward establishing a student lounge for the Law Students Society and

Graduate Students Association.

This investment sets a precedent for the establishment of lounges by other groups on campus with the support of the SRC.

The lounge will provide a place on campus for students to sit and

relax and will be formed along the same lines as the Faculty Club. Memberships to the lounge will be limited and an application committee will choose its members from applications of students to the lounge.

SRC president Jim Smith said the investment into the lounge is financially secure. The Student Union would be the first organization to get their money back should the lounge fall through. Along with the \$3,000 from the SRC, both the LSS and GSA have pledged \$3,000 each to the venture while organizations such as the Alumni and administration will supply up to \$5,000 in money and services. The SRC plans to take a dormant role in the running of the lounge.

Smith said the lounge is a good idea and provides a place for students to go and relax and is patterned much like the fraternities that exist in other universities. There is a definite lack of lounge area on campus, Smith said, and he hopes the recent decision by the SRC executive acts as a catalyst for the formation of fraternities on campus. The Student Union president says he will consider supporting any group which requests a lounge provided the same basic agreement which the LSS and GSA is proposed.

SRC vice-president Gordon Kennedy supported the motion for he felt there is a great need on campus for more student lounges such as the Social Club. However he felt that membership to these lounges should not be restricted and that fraternities should not be formed on campus.

Controversy arose over the awarding of the money to the GSA and LSS by the Student Union. In a regular Student Union meeting of Dec. 8, council voted down a request by the GSA and LSS for a grant of \$1,000 dollars towards the building of the lounge. The LSS and GSA went back to the SRC executive and were given the \$3,000 to be invested into the lounge. At that executive meeting the Law Society stated it had worked out a way to keep students from paying SRC fees and that it would take the SRC to court over the issue should the union refuse to give the LSS and GSA the requested money. Vice-president Gordon Kennedy said he thought the Law Society was bluffing and said their statements did not influence his decision to vote for approval of the money. Kennedy stated he only realized the seriousness of the LSS statements after the meeting. The LSS had already engaged the

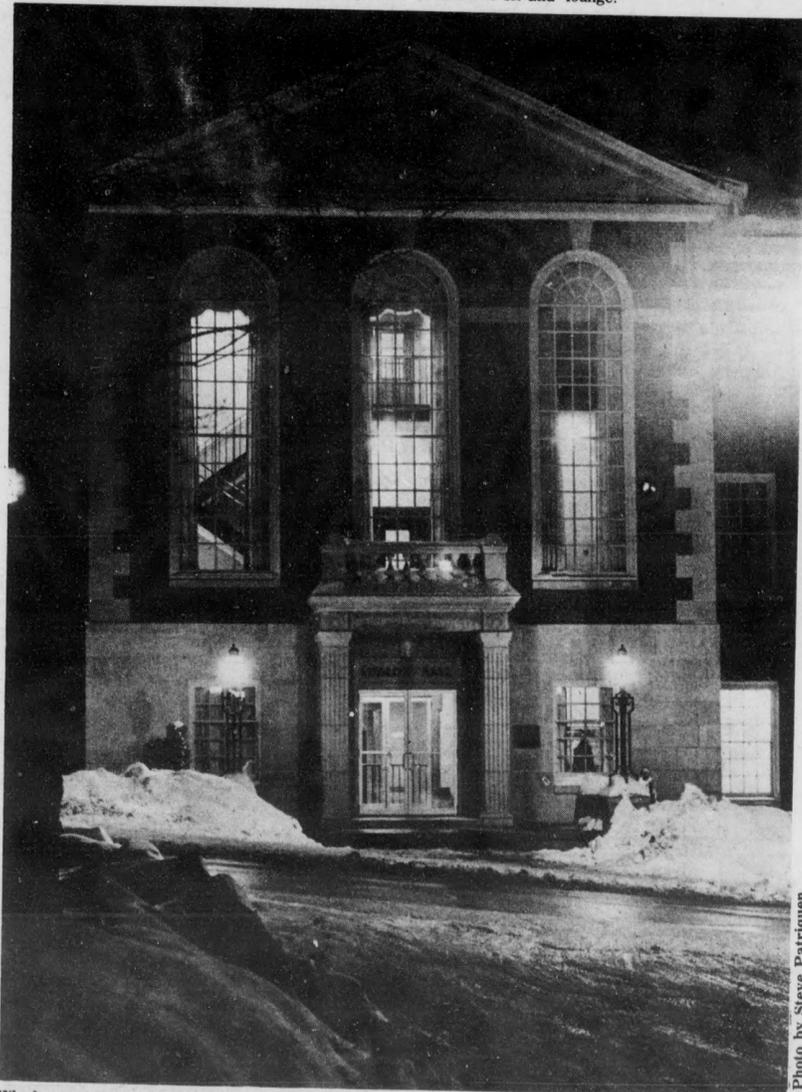


Photo by Steve Patriquen

Who knows what goes on inside a law school? Many a bizarre idea has been hatched to protect clients' interests. Law students are taught the importance of ethical practice.

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