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Youth minister says aid budget hike not possible

By GLEN ARGAN

There are many problems with the student aid program which the provincial government must remedy, the provincial minister of youth, Jean-Pierre Ouellette, told the Brunswickan in a recent interview.

Ouellette expressed sympathy with the student from a poverty background who could be saddled with up to \$9,000 debt in attaining a university education. "We have to do something for students that are in that category," he said. However, his department is planning no immediate changes, but will in the future be looking at revising the program.

Ouellette described the New Brunswick system of loans and bursaries where last year, a student had to take out an \$1100 loan before being eligible for up to \$700 in grants, with a further possibility of another \$300 loan on top of that. This year, however, students must first claim a \$1400 loan, followed by up to \$100 of bursary and an additional \$400 of loan.

But, "Because of budget restrictions and because of the speech Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau gave on television, it will be impossible to increase the amount of the bursary this year," as was previously indicated might be the case.

He complained of abuses in the student aid system where families with incomes of \$30,000 would not finance their children's education even to the tune of \$1,000. Mr. Ouellette repeatedly emphasized that the government's duty is to aid those in need and that parents and students should show some initiative in financing their education. "The program is there to supplement and not to replace."

When questioned on the discrepancy between the age of independence for student aid programs and the provincial age of

majority, Ouellette succinctly replied that "I see no difference between students being dependent on their parents than being dependent on the government."

As well, the minister repeatedly emphasized that the student aid program is part of a larger federal scheme and that most significant changes would have to be made at the federal level.

Yet, the provinces are not

without power and Ouellette tried to show that the New Brunswick plan was more liberal in its benefits than those of some much richer provinces.

Turning to the question of student participation on governmental bodies, Ouellette expressed some support for changes in that direction. The government had already agreed to allowing two students on the Student Loan

Appeal Committee: one French-speaking and one English-speaking.

And when questioned on the controversial topic of whether students should have representation on the national Student Loans

Plenary Group, the Minister replied, "I think so." Yet he qualified this answer by adding that the issue would have to be

decided in consultation with the federal government and the other provinces.

Ouellette finally expressed his desire to see a program established that is fair for all students. But as to what this might mean

concretely, he said that at present, "I have no solution for the student loan and bursary."

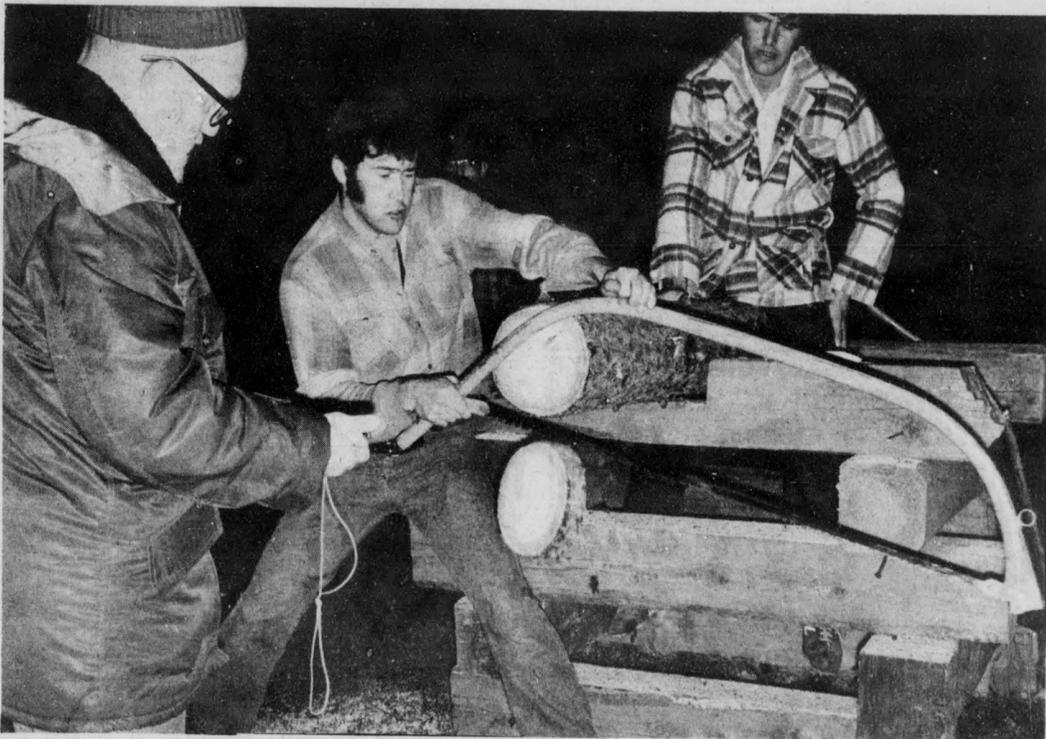


Photo by Lorne McIntosh

Forestry week winds up this Saturday with the International Woodsmen's Competition. The Faculty night events, Wednesday night, saw Foresters like Jason Herron above compete vigorously for the title "Bull-of-the-Woods". The winner will be announced Friday night at the Bushmen's Ball.

Union membership approved by 33-vote margin

By PAT POTTER

University of New Brunswick students voted in favor of National Union of Students membership in Wednesday's referendum election.

Thirty-five percent of the student population voted and the issue was decided by a 33 vote margin, 935 to 902.

Asked for a statement immediately after receiving the results Dan O'Connor said, "The students of UNB have won the first of many victories today. The result and size of the turnout shows that students at UNB can and will work for themselves, with the backing of students in the rest of Canada."

"The rest of this work starts tomorrow, with a strong UNB-NUS committee being formed, the fees for this year spent largely on information for UNB, direct

contact with our staff and Ottawa lobby.

"Over seventy people paid for the costs of the pro-NUS campaign.

"One person does deserve special thanks; Jim MacLean. As chairman of the Atlantic Federation of Students, he has proven to be one of the outstanding Atlantic student leaders in the past 10 years. I can only hope that people here and on other campuses realize the value of his contribution.

"Again my appreciation to the UNB students for making fools of the cynics and criers of apathy; and my conviction that this referendum was the first step towards an aware and active student body on this campus."

Jim MacLean made his statement as follows:

"From my position as chairman of the AFS, I am exceedingly

pleased with the result of the NUS referendum. The same ideology that supports AFS supports NUS

hence, I feel that this referendum is a vote of confidence in both organizations. If the vote had gone

High turnout recorded

A good voter turnout marked this year's fall election, although only three seats were contested.

Brian Forbes was elected to the board of governors, defeating David Kent by a vote of 1380 to 269 with 69 spoiled ballots.

Eric Semple was elected engineering representative, receiving 152 votes, while Lawrence "Pete" Joudrey received 139. Twelve ballots were spoiled.

The two representatives at large are Ursula Wawer with 787 votes

and Ron Ward with 605 votes. Steve Fox received 576 votes, and there were 87 spoiled ballots.

All other positions were uncontested, or were filled by acclamation.

Gordon Kennedy will take the position of vice president by acclamation.

A total of 1,884 students voted in the election, about 300 more than voted in the presidential election in February.

the other way, I would have questioned the role of the AFS on campus. Fortunately I need not ask that question.

"I would like to thank all those who worked for NUS on this campus. Particularly Clair Levesque, Carolyn MacKay, Dan O'Connor, Miguel Figaro, Bob Buckingham, Tony Webb, Bill Gould and all others who realized the significance of this decision.

NUS is really US and the results of the students decision tonight will be realized both in Ottawa and Fredericton student problems must be fought on a national level. UNB students tonight understood that, and that realization will result in solution for our problems."

Now that we have accepted NUS, should they system fail, it will take another majority referendum vote to leave NUS.