

New Brunswick students stage mass demonstration

Approximately 800 students from five New Brunswick universities converged on the Centennial Building Thursday to demonstrate for changes in student aid.

Representatives from College St. Louise-Maillet, College Shippegan, Université de Moncton, St. Thomas University and UNB Fredericton gathered in the lobby.

Randy Hatfield, president of the UNBSJ student council, informed Jim Smith, president of UNB Fredericton student council, that the buses which they had hired to bring them to Fredericton had been cancelled without their permission. Hatfield could not name the person responsible, although the person had used Hatfield's name.

Because of an early morning snowstorm the demonstration was

views and recommendations of the students". At this point he was completely drowned out by boos and chants from assembled students. He commented "I admire your enthusiasm."

Hatfield then gave the floor to Ouellette who said he had made many trips during the past week to various universities to discuss student aid with the students, at which time he was shouted down before allowing to comment, "I am concerned with your problems and willing to meet with you". (More roars and laughter.)

In a personal interview, Ouellette said the government could only discuss three of the five demands presented by the students. Asked why this is so he said that interest rates and the amount of the student contribution from summer earnings is set down by the federal government and not the province.

Hatfield and Ouellette at this time disappeared into a conference preceded by the president and representatives of the five university student councils present.

They were to discuss the five demands which were presented to Hatfield by Giberson and at press-time there was still no word as to the outcome of the meeting except that the editor of The Brunswickan said that the government was holding fast to their position of refusing to meet the demands.

While presidents of student councils and government officials met, students occupied the lobby and chanted slogans and sang songs in opposition to the government. General opinion was that the demonstration was orderly and peaceful and even Ouellette commented "nice demonstration, well organized."

The presence of plainclothes policemen did not perturb the students and they seemed to enjoy themselves in spite of them. One officer said that he was expecting "no problem" and security measures had been taken in case of violence.

Evelyn Briggs, director of student aid, said that demands presented could not become effective in the 1975 budget but would be included in the 1976 if at all.

At press-time, the demonstration was still going on and very little more had been accomplished.



Premier Hatfield and Youth Minister Jean-Pierre Ouellette meet with student representatives to talk over proposed changes in the N.B. student aid program.

No more money says Premier

By TOM BENJAMIN
Editor-in-Chief

Premier Richard Hatfield, citing economic hardships in the province, refused on Thursday to make a commitment to improve the provincial student aid program as requested by the Atlantic Federation of Students.

Hatfield and Youth Minister Jean-Pierre Ouellette met with representatives of five New Brunswick universities in the Centennial Building, while hundreds of demonstrating students chanted anti-government slogans in the lobby.

"Our program of student aid, as the students have pointed out, has not been overly generous," said the Premier.

He did agree to present the five demands prepared by AFS to the provincial cabinet for consideration.

The demands were presented to the cabinet three months ago, said UNB representative Jim MacLean, and no changes were made.

Hatfield said he would wait for the preparation of a student aid report from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, and then raise the question with

other premiers.

But "I want to make it clear I'm not giving you a commitment," he said.

"It just seems like the runaround again," said UNB SRC president Smith.

The demands included student representation on policy-making bodies relating to student aid.

"In reality we have as much input now as we'll ever have," queried MacLean.

"Yeah, right," said Hatfield.

The government will not be able to accept the proposed changes "even in principle" said Hatfield, although "we give some consideration to some sort of body to examine student aid."

The government "could not possibly" make the requested changes retroactively, and it would be impossible to review each application as requested, said Hatfield.

"In view of the fiscal situation at the moment we can't consider the loan: bursary ratio until next year," he said.

Regarding an increase in the living allowance, Hatfield said the allowance has already been raised "and I don't think there can be any justification for increasing it any more."

He predicted severe cuts in government services next year, including hospitals and highway construction, and said the taxpayers could not be asked to finance an improved aid plan.

The proposed changes would almost double the present student aid budget. MacLean said the changes would cost about \$3 million, "about the same as the cost of constructing three miles of highway."

"This is what restraint means — we have to cut back," said Hatfield.

"The question is to balance out the amount spent on higher education with other demands on the budget," he said.

"If I could give you more money I would not hesitate to do so, but the government is not in a position to do so."

"I will see if we can get some more money... I'm not talking about three million dollars...but I'm talking about more money."

He suggested examining the entitlement for student aid to ensure those who are getting it really deserve it.

The federal-provincial student loan agreement expires in 1977, but re-negotiation of the agreement should start in May.



Evelyn Briggs, New Brunswick director of student aid.

postponed from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to allow students from Moncton and Edmunston to arrive. Following their arrival, they proceeded to parade down University Avenue and up Queen Street to the Centennial Building, where they listened to speeches from Mark Giberson, President of STU student union.

Following Giberson's speech, rally cries were heard in opposition to the appearance of Premier Hatfield and Youth Minister, J.P. Ouellette, who made brief speeches. Hatfield said "I understand your concern," (roar and more chants) "quite prepared to listen to



Youth Minister J.P. Ouellette addressed a crowd of more than 800 demonstrators massed in the lobby of the Centennial Building on Thursday.

Photo by Steve Patriquen