

Student aid discussed

Student problems and the N.U.S.

by Peter Clarke

Student Aid and fiscal arrangements concerning funding of post-secondary educational institutions, were the major issues dealt with at the sixth National Union of Students conference held October 16 to 19 at Fredericton. Member institutions from across the country expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the Student Aid programs existing in their provinces, and an agreement was reached that student aid should be a priority issue for the National Union for 75 / 76.

Members voted to approve in principle and to continue work on the NUS / UNE petition on student aid. The petition will be circulated at Dalhousie within the next few weeks. The central committee and staff of NUS / UNE were directed to continue their lobbying with the Canada Student Loan Plenary Board for student representation in the decision making process and also to exert pressure on the federal government for increased Canada Council, National Research Council and Medical Research Council aid to Graduate Students. Student Aid campaigns which were being carried out on various campuses were discussed and strategies were exchanged by the member and observer institutions a motion was approved that outlined broad tactics and goals for student aid campaigns at the local and institutional level.

An important concern of the

member institutions was the financial stability at the National Union. NUS / UNE had been experiencing cash-flow problems for some time and were forced last spring to secure additional money in the form of grants and loans from the member institutions. The treasurer reported that the program had been successful and that NUS / UNE's situation was vastly improved. He recommended however that the organization sustain a financially conservative attitude for at least a year, after which time the membership and revenue would be substantially increased.

Six referendums have been conducted by non-member institutions so far this fall and five have resulted in approval of joining the National Union. The NUS / UNE staff was directed to aid local campuses in preparing and publicizing referendums dealing with NUS / UNE as it is imperative that the Union broaden its base in order to be effective on the National level. There are already 15 NUS / UNE referendums planned at different institutions for the coming year and others may be initiated.

The conference ran over four days and held seventeen workshops in a two day period. The final day of the conference was reserved for a plenary session which all delegates attended to decide on motions originating in the workshops. Dalhousie sent a four person delegation to the Fredericton conference

and was thus one of the few institutions which was able to attend and participate in all of the workshops. In addition to the workshops, caucuses were held for the Western, Central and Atlantic regions and for women and the smaller colleges. Resolutions originating out of caucus were also dealt with at the final Plenary.

The material submitted and the resolutions approved at the conference are too vast to be dealt with in a single news article, but some of the highlights are as follows. A motion was passed encouraging the establishment of employment committees at the local level to analyze statistics on student employment and to lobby for improvement on student working conditions and opportunities; also that NUS / UNE prepare a report on the effect of the Federal government's new economic policies and how they will effect the employment and financial situations of students.

A task force was established to prepare reports on student radio and comment on the effects of recent CRTC rulings regarding F.M. licences in addition the task force would be responsible for organizing a National Conference of Student Radio people to meet in the spring and deal with additional problems at that time.

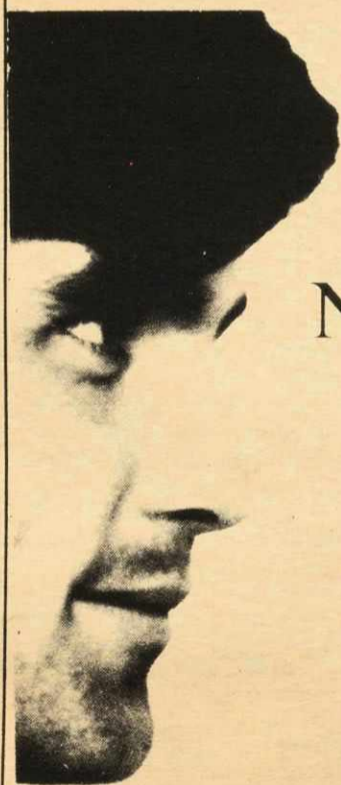

A statement was released condemning the use of free labour and demanding that full remuneration be granted for the practical or work

experience aspects of a student's curriculum, that are not solely educational. As well, a motion was passed obligating NUS / UNE to distribute information to Canadian universities concerning the unionization of teaching assistants.

Housing workshops resulted in motions encouraging the local institutions to become involved in the questions of rent boards, discrimination, and housing standards at the community level, in co-operation with community action groups. The National Union was mandated to lobby the CMHC on behalf of the member institutions for construction of housing facilities suitable for students.


In addition to this, workshops were held dealing with Fiscal Arrangements, Foreign Students, Internal Operation of Student Unions, Women, and the role of Student Organizations. These resulted in an exchange of ideas and advice on programmes and approval of policy motions at the final plenary.

A full report of the activities of Dalhousie delegates will be submitted to council within a couple of weeks at which time relevant proposals from the conference will be submitted for the approval of council. If students are interested in further details of the meeting or in participating in any of the programs mentioned they should contact the Council Office in the SUB at 424-2146.

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