

Workers march--without student support

By DAVE SIMMS

A spokesperson for the Fredericton and District Labour Council said the leadership of the University of New Brunswick students' union is weak, lacking in organization and negative.

Provincial labour federation vice-president Phil Booker made the comment during a press conference after the labour council's meeting Tuesday to prepare for yesterday's Day of Protest.

As The Brunswick went to press early Thursday, activities had begun for the country-wide demonstration called by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in opposition to the federal government's wage and price controls.

Booker held UNB's student leaders responsible for the students' lack of support for the workers' protest. He said students in other parts of Canada represent one of the most militant segments of society and drew attention to the number of Universite de Moncton students who expressed

support for the Day of Protest. "Students in Moncton are as militant as students at UNB are weak," said another council spokesperson. The spokesperson said he had approached student president Jim Smith to attend the planning meeting and that Smith had said that UNB students "had

had enough of protest marches." When asked why no student had attended the meeting,

Booker said student and labor unions should work together since many of their grievances with the federal program are similar. He said students need changes in student aid legislation to compensate for rising costs of education and at the same time, workers are being hit with rising costs when their wages are held down by price controls. "Students ought to be collectively bargaining," he said.

Jim Smith made a rebuttal to Booker's comments when contacted by telephone by The Brunswick and informed of the labor official's comments.

Smith said the lack of participation was not a sign of weakness but an indication that students are "much more realistic in their approach to solving problems. He said Booker was wrong to say that students are among the most militant in Canadian society because labor would have had the same lack of response and support from

Mount Allison University or Acadia University.

Smith said student leaders have been more concerned with problems within student government. He said the leadership has been working as hard as they can to solve the problem of student aid made without the support of labor.

Smith declined to say whether he was in favor of the protest because he didn't have enough information to make such a judgement. He said he opposed the idea of a Liberal government introducing the retirement program after campaigning in opposition to the same proposal when it was put forward by the Conservative party.

Booker also criticized radio station CFNB for airing a news item that local 1390 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), which represents 7,000 government general labor and trades employees, would not participate in the protest. He said the item was volunteered by an unauthorized member of the union and that the radio station refused to air a correction issued by the

president of the local union.

Booker said he was disappointed that he had not participated in the protest. "This is what I've come to expect from Jack Ranney (the station's manager) and his boys."

A member of the news staff at CFNB, Hugh Calder, said Booker's charges were "partly true" when contacted by The Brunswick.

Calder said that he had received a phone call from a spokesperson for the division of the CUPE local which represents highway workers. The spokesperson said they would not be supporting the protest and the reporter ran the story in that effect.

Calder said CUPE had run a story that week. "Here's making that local 1390 local participate in the protest. When the phone call came from a spokesperson, Calder was decided to drop the whole issue before we became involved in a matter of internal union affairs."

Calder said he was back towards the union. "I think the coverage we've had on the CUPE is fair. I think we've done our job."

The protest was held by the council and had at least 400 people from 14 organizations and 10 unions involved in a "cross-section picketing" of 13 locations. These included the St. John's High School, all the city's local maintenance workers, Fredericton City Hall and all city unions. The workers were from several unions, the

