

Maritime Union of Students to be formed

"Union must be apolitical"

SACKVILLE NB (CUP) — Student Councils in the Atlantic provinces may soon form a Maritime Student Union, as disenchantment with the proposed new National Student Union grows.

New Brunswick students formed the New Brunswick Union of Students, (Union des Etudiants, Nouveau Brunswick) or UENBUS in July, and Nova Scotia Student Councils are expected to approve a similar union in the next few weeks.

Universities in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland will be asked to join a Maritime Student Union if the Nova Scotia Union develops, according to Roy Neale, University of New Brunswick (UNB) Student President.

UENBUS was set up in Fredericton, July 15 to tackle Student Aid problems in the province. According to Paul Higham, Vice-President Academic of the Mount Allison University Students Administrative Council and Chairman of the UENBUS constitution committee, there was dissatisfaction among the province's nine post-secondary institutions with student aid. Exasperation with the present system of assistance in financing higher education was especially widespread and bitter, he said.

Concern centred on the division of available money into loans and bursary grants. While the federal government makes

loans available, the provincial government is expected to provide money for bursaries and decide how much must be borrowed before a student is eligible for a bursary. In New Brunswick the amount rose from \$1000 last year to \$1400 this year and the provincial government consequently lowered the bursary allotment from \$2.4 million to \$1.1 million in its budget.

Representatives from UNB, Mount Allison, St. Thomas University, College de Bathurst, College St. Louis and the Université de Moncton attended the founding meeting, hoping to form a union to exercise considerable bargaining power with youth and welfare Minister Brenda Robertson.

Authority is decentralized to avoid a "destructive power hierarchy" that caused the downfall of similar student organizing attempts, Higham said. There is no president and each institution has two voting delegates and non-voting observers.

The Union's first objective was reached following meeting with Robertson. A three person committee obtained concessions in the provincial loan and bursary program. The mandatory loan portion of student aid is now down to \$1100 after which a \$700 bursary is provided. An additional \$300 loan is available if necessary after that. In Ontario, students are protesting a recent increase in their mandatory loan figure to \$800 from \$600.

New Brunswick has increased its bursary fund to \$2.5 million, \$100,000 more than last year, thus giving students easier access to provincial financial aid.

However, students may only receive \$2100 a year and will end up borrowing the same amount as the original provincial proposal if they require the full amount.

UENBUS is not the end but the "means" says Higham. If hopes to consolidate further and win other changes in 1974 when the federal loan plan is to be re-evaluated.

UENBUS is not a political organization, UNB Student President Neale says, but "Nobody's going to look after our problems if we don't" he said. He thinks the maritime and provincial unions are necessary to provide student-oriented services. "Once local positions are firmed up," he says, "Maritime universities and post-secondary institutions will be better able to face a conference to set up a National Student Union."

The National Student Union proposed during the summer and coming up for discussion at the national conference of Student Council representatives in November should also be "non-political" Neale said. "We're interested as long as it can do something for us" he said, suggesting the major topic should be standardized student

loans and student services. If the organization sticks to student aid or other similar subjects, "It probably would be very valuable" he added.

However, because Ontario universities seem more concerned with entertainment and Ontario-oriented problems, he is skeptical of joining the National Student Union.

Dalhousie Student Union President, Brian Smith, like Neale, was concerned the National Student Union not follow the lines of the defunct Canadian Union of Students (CUS).

"I can see it being an effective political group for lobbying powers, but it has to retain credibility" he said. "If it goes the same way as CUS (to the left politically) it won't have credibility," Smith added.

Like Neale he was also concerned with central Canadian domination of the proposed union. If the Union decides to discuss things other than Ontario issues, Dalhousie will join, Smith said. Otherwise it will stick to a maritime union.

Neither student president has heard much about the founding conference since the summer.

Meanwhile on the west coast, student aid and federal

financing are at the top of the list for the new student union, says university of British Columbia Alma Mater Society (AMS) External Affairs Officer Teri Ball.

She agreed with the maritime student leaders that the new organization will have to be apolitical, except when its academic interests require involvement with various governments. She also referred to avoiding the controversial course of CUS.

The new organization is important because it will allow "students to register their protests en masse rather than as individuals" Ball said. "When this relates to government, then its political."

"A National Student Union would also have to deal with questions of faculty tenure, course evaluation, universal accessibility and unrestricted transfer of credits from one university to another," she said.

Ball said the UBC AMS would probably join the Union this year because the Council generally is favorable to membership.

Fees won't be levied this year, she said, but next year there will likely be a 10 to 15 cent fee per student.

Kraft caught in the act

MONTREAL (CUP) — Kraft Foods Ltd., perpetrator of low prices to farmers and sub-standard goods to consumers has been caught in the act again.

The multi-national food monopoly was found guilty October 4 on a charge of false advertising in its "Explore Canada" contest. Mr. Justice Claude Valer set October 18 to hear arguments before sentencing.

The Company's sales promotion contest offered participants "15 big chances to

win" trips to any Canadian city, free use of a vehicle, \$1000 spending money and a set of luggage.

The contest was advertised in national magazines and television programs, including the now-defunct Ed Sullivan Show. Kraft is second largest television advertiser in North America.

Chief Crown Prosecutor Louis-Phillipe Landry said no contestant had "15 big chances to win" and 120,900 of the 271,000 entrants had simply wasted a postage stamp.

Prizes and weekly draws

were conducted regionally, with three prizes going to Quebec and Ontario, two to British Columbia and the Yukon Territories and one to each of the other provinces, he said.

The court was told that of the 26,898 Albertans who entered the contest, only 504 made it before the province's one prize had been awarded.

Meanwhile the national Farmers' Union Boycott of Kraft Products continues. The NFU is demanding the right to bargain collectively for prices paid to farmers by the monopoly.

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