

... Yawn ... another referendum

by Tom Baker

Monday's forum concerning the NUS referendum provoked little interest on campus. Less than 35 students came out to hear Pierre Oullette, the President of NUS and members of the Students' Union debate the question. Some people attributed limited publicity and short notice, not lack of interest, to the poor turnout. Debate centered on how best U of A students could defend their right to a decent education and all which that entails.

Oullette opened the brief 40 minute meeting by outlining the historical continuity that NUS represents; from the National Federation of University Students, founded 50 years ago, through to Canadian Union of students.

"The struggle of students to defend their rights is a long one. Where common objectives exist there must be a common solution and this is where NUS enters the picture. NUS strives to satisfy material and social needs of students," he said.

While listing the priorities of NUS - discrimination against women, student unemployment, housing and student aid, Oullette concentrated on the latter. He detailed:

"The federal government report on education of 1972 proposed the concept that students should pay for their own education (that presently would be approximately \$3000.00 per year for tuition alone). Following these recommendations the Alberta government has announced its 11% ceiling on education spending - this means larger classes and tuition fee increases two to

three times the present level."

He concluded his remarks by saying that the success of projects NUS is carrying depends on U of A student support.

In answer to these remarks, Rick Cooper described how he felt \$1.00 a year per student from this campus to NUS was not a good investment.

"NUS is not a charity - we want to be sure this money helps students here not just in Newfoundland."

Cooper stated that all the aims of NUS dealing with research and communication can be carried out better by local student unions. And with respect to lobbying he remarked:

"Lobbying for students' interests must take place where the power is and that is the provincial government." Cooper and his co-thinker Peter Drabble claimed that housing, education, sexist discrimination and other issues are local or provincial affairs and at the most only a provincial student organization like the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) is required. The two speakers opposing NUS affiliation summarized their views:

"Problems of U of A students can only be solved in Alberta," they said. "Impossible rewards of joining NUS doesn't justify the \$20,000.00 cost."

These ideas received wide attack during the question period and from the Students Union rep. Brian Mason. Mason referred to the Fiscal Arrangements Act to show that indeed the federal government does supply 50% of educational funds and much of the money for housing.



For the affirmative: Pierre Oullette, NUS national president (above). Below, only minutes later, a bemused audience is presented the negatives of NUS, by Peter Drabble. As panel outnumbered spectators, and moderator Kevin Gillese was impartial (?) it's safe to say the outcome of yesterday's, NUS forum was a draw.

He explained, "The provincial governments have more responsibilities than they do money. Since almost all the problems students face are common across the country, a national lobbying force like the NUS is required."

Mason claimed it was false to counterpose FAS to NUS since "both are necessary and one can't be built well without the other." He concluded his comments by saying, "Even if the \$1.00 spent on NUS only postpones tuition fee increases for one year, it is well worthwhile."

Coordinators of the

meeting closed the discussion period after only four questions, leaving *Gateway* editor, Greg Neiman, standing mouth agape at one of the floor microphones.

The discussion period centered mostly on "who has the power" - the provincial or federal governments; and on how best students can act to defend their interests.

Oullette, in answer to a question, stated, "Students of course suffer from the economic recession like everyone else, but currently an unfair portion of the burden is on the backs of students and other low income groups."

In answer to an attack on

NUS's almost exclusive of lobbying as the means to win victories for students, he said (referring to the 100,000 strong demonstrations and walkouts that won qualitative gains for students in Quebec). "Alberta and Ontario are not Quebec - the government there withheld monies allocated for student aid. If this occurs anywhere, students will be knocking down the doors of the government."

He indicated that at this time problems were of so serious as to require this type of action.

The overall tone of the meeting was pro-NUS.

NUS victory uncertain at U of C

CALGARY (CUP) - The results of the referendum held at the University of Calgary September 26 for membership in the National Union of Students (NUS) are in, but no one seems to know whether the referendum has passed or failed.

Only 12 per cent of the 10,000 eligible students voted in the referendum, with 56.3 per cent voting in favour of membership in the national union.

The problem is that it has been previously believed by student council members that a 66 per cent majority is required to pass any referendum involving fee increase.

The referendum failed to achieve the required 66 per cent, but now members of council have learned that their constitution makes no reference to that requirement.

Presumably, if the council decided to accept the results of the referendum, it could request that the Board of Governors increase student fees by \$1.00, and Calgary would become a NUS member.

Just what decision the council will make will not be known until the council meets later this week.

The September 26 referendum was the second NUS membership bid attempted at

Calgary within the the past year. The first, held last spring, attracted 35 per cent of the students, with 63 per cent voting in favour. It was declared "unsuccessful" because it lacked the 66 per cent majority.

NUS campus committee secretary Noel Jantzie cited the low-turnout, the placement of the polls, and the unfamiliarity of first-year student with the

work of NUS as reasons for the reduced support at the poll this time.

"We pamphleted the residences and had support there," Jantzie said, "but we didn't cover the engineers."

He also feels the high proportion of first-year students effected the outcome. "They don't have the experience to know what NUS offers them,

and they haven't really found out yet what happens to students in post-secondary institutions in Canada."

Jantzie pointed out that the NUS student aid petition is doing well, with over a thousand signatures so far. "We have more signatures on the petition than the number of people who voted for NUS in the referendum."

No practicum this year

present budget year to finance the relief time for teachers.

The agreement to again implement the practicum program refers only to those programs offered previous to this year, or non-extended practicum.

The extended practicum was to have become a requirement for certification by 1977. The Minister of Education has assured the university that the target date for the inclusion of the practicum will be delayed for at least one year.

Education students who are registered in the extended practicum for this year will have their programs altered by dropping some course work in student teaching and adding some courses in other areas.

A release issued by the Edmonton Public School local of the Alberta Teachers' Association on Friday informs teachers that they may once again serve as co-operating teachers in education practicum programs.

This move came about after the ATA received assurances from the Faculty of Education that, for the present, the faculty would not attempt to implement the extended practicum program. The faculty has also suspended planning activities for the extended practicum during the remainder of 1975/76.

This appears to be the only way in which the dispute could be resolved, as a recent Cabinet decision established not funds would be made available in the

NAIT rejects FAS

EDMONTON (CUP) - The student association at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) has rejected plans to join the recently proposed Federation of Alberta Students.

At a meeting September 24, the general student council voted to remain a member of the already established Alberta Presidents Committee made up of colleges and technical schools in Alberta.

The council felt Alberta's three universities would control policy making in the proposed FAS, thereby excluding the technical schools from the decision making.

FAS, originally proposed by the U of A in July of this year met in August to discuss the purposes of the union. At that time the universities felt they had the college and technical school support.

NAIT council said they would remain outside the FAS organisation even if they were the only technical school in Alberta to do so. They said they would not mind being the "black sheep in the family."