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## Meet with party leaders

# N.B. university reps on student aid crusade

By SUSAN MANZER and TOM BENJAMIN

Representatives from five New Brunswick universities have described their meetings with leaders of provincial political parties on the topic of student aid as successful, although no firm commitments have been made as yet.

The meeting was a direct result of resolutions passed unanimously at a the Atlantic Area Conference of University Student Unions held here in September.

Attending the meetings were SRC president Peter Galoska and student senator Warren McKenzie of UNB; Elvy Robichaud, Universite de Moncton; Ken Johnston, Mt. Allison; Bill Teed, UNBSJ; and Brian Chisolm, STU.

The student leaders met with opposition leader Robert Higgins; J. Albert Richardson, NDP provincial leader and representatives from the Premiers office including Lawrence Garvie, Minister of Health and Lowell Murray, Deputy Minister of the Premier's office, Premier Hatfield was originally to have participated, however, due to laryngitis he was unable to attend.

The three proposals brought before the party leaders included "that increases in the cost of living and tuition fees be absorbed by a comparative increase in student bursaries and not by an increase in student loans. This is to be accomplished by altering the loan bursary ratio in this manner: Maximum \$900 loan, with the remainder of the \$2400 aid to be in the form of a bursary.

The second proposal said "that any student loan application which is in the proper office by July 15 be processed by Sept. 1 in order to allow appeal procedures to be completed before the commencement of the academic term, and further that student loan application forms be available to students by May 15.

Proposal three asked "that the loan bursary ratio in New Brunswick be brought up to Canadian standards.

In addition, they requested the support of the parties in granting independence with respect to student loans to everyone 18 years old or over; and having the interest free period of student loans extended to one year after the student leaves the post-secondary institution.

The group met with Higgins Wednesday afternoon and found him "very enthusiastic concerning the generality of the three points." He said if his party is elected November 18th he would be most interested in setting up a continuing committee of students of the provincial universities and senior government ministers. The committee, he suggested, would not be strictly limited to student aid but would also include student input on other student-related affairs.

Teed added Higgins made "no actual commitment but was very enthusiastic about the student aid problem. He was particularly interested in seeing student loans go to the people that need them."

He said Higgins would meet with his caucus

before releasing his platform. The group of student leaders is hopeful that the proposals made may be included.

A meeting was then held with Richardson who was impressed with the last two proposals and agreed to support them on a federal level. A member of the NDP national staff was also present at the meeting.

Other topics discussed with the NDP representatives were the need for upgrading the provincial education system because New Brunswick has the second lowest continuing education factor in the country.

bursary on top is, to be quite blunt, useless." The group would like to see a \$900 loan with the remainder of the \$2400 in the form of a bursary.

He said Garvie and Murray saw the reasoning behind the first proposal and were favourably disposed toward it. He also mentioned he was impressed with all the parties' attitudes, but added the PC's were most specific in terms of dollar figures.

Teed said the parties who were not in power could not be expected to make firm commitments anyway and that the impression given favourable.



Photo by James Walker

Student government leaders from five New Brunswick Universities after having met with leaders from the three provincial political parties are optimistic that their student aid proposals may go into effect. Left to Right are Bill Teed (UNBSJ), Standing, Peter Galoska (UNB), Elvy Robichaud (U de M), Ken Johnston (Mt. A), and Warren McKenzie (UNB Student Senator). Absent is Brian Chisholm (STU).

The meeting with Garvie, Murray and the group considered probably the most rewarding. Murray promised the proposals would be brought before the cabinet and the students are expecting to hear from the Premier.

The students made it clear that the bursary increases in the PC platform would not be beneficial to students unless the proposed method is adopted. At present the student aid involves an \$1100 loan disbursement followed by a \$700 bursary then by another \$300 loan.

Galoska said the most needy people are saddled with a final \$390 loan; "adding the

Party reactions will be prepared in a brief to be given at the January conference of the Atlantic Provinces would be consulting their respective provincial party leaders and notes would be compared at the meetin.

As for the five New Brunswick university representatives, their next actions will depend on the outcome of the November 18th election.

They are looking for support in the proposals since, as Galoska put it, "we are representing approximately 10,000 New Brunswick students. We do not want to use this as a club but it is something to be remembered politically."

Dean of Students

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