

# Angry students say no tax on loans

by Boris Nikolovsky

Students from across Nova Scotia vented their anger about the proposed three per cent tax on Canada Student Loans at a rally marking National Student Day, last Wednesday.

Organized by the Students' Union of Nova Scotia, provincial politicians and student representatives took turns reaffirming the crisis facing students and universities.

The federal government has argued that a three per cent tax on loans will make students less likely to default on loans. John D'Orsay, executive officer of the N.S. University Faculty Associations, said at the rally, "Canada Student Loans already have the lowest default rate." The system is bad enough as it stands never mind trying to tax those students already deemed

needy. Mr. D'Orsay added, "Is that regressive or what?"

The federal government was criticized for capping programs encouraging native students to attend universities at a time when they still only make up one-fifth to one-tenth of the level of other students in our society. Mr. D'Orsay said, "and they are trying to tell you that is not a racist policy."

The criticism did not stop there. Alexa McDonough, provincial NDP leader, pointed out that the government must get those in society to start paying their fair share in taxes instead of passing the cost on to students in the form of higher tuition fees and expensive loans. The NDP leader pointed out that in 1989, Sobey's owned Atlantic Shopping Centers not only paid no taxes on \$9 million of profit, but also got a \$362,000 tax credit.

Joel Matheson, the provincial



Dal photo: Rochelle Owen

## Students rally for education at Grand Parade

Minister for Advanced Education and Job Training blamed the federal government for an inadequate student aid system and continued funding cutbacks. Matheson said that the provincial government is opposed to the three per cent tax and he will be present at a national Education Ministers meeting in the

near future to voice his concerns.

While everyone agreed that the Mulroney government is largely responsible and must act now, several speakers took issue with Matheson.

McDonough, noted that there were changes in the established funding formula going back to the

early days of the Mulroney government in which, "the N.S. Tory government led the cave-in in opposing those changes."

"Unlike the minister, we think he has to spend the buck, not pass it," said D'Orsay.

D'Orsay noted that the lamest excuse used by the provincial government is that due to the provincial deficit, the government just doesn't have the cash to fund universities. D'Orsay argues the value of university degrees the province does not have relative to other regions totals \$4 billion, almost equal to that of the provincial deficit.

With respect to student loan and bursary programs, D'Orsay said, "students demand less than bankers."

The Students' Union of N.S. and the Canadian Federation of Students are continuing their campaign against the three per cent tax and stressed their need for student support.

# Student senators don't care

by Kevin Speight

Only four of seven students on the Senate showed up at a meeting on October 12 to vote on a motion of support for next year's 25 per cent tuition fee increases. The motion passed by a margin of two votes, ten to eight.

The meeting, which was held on a Friday instead of a Monday, was attended by student representatives Av Singh, Paul Hodgson, Rod Lough, and Kevin Surette. All except Lough voted against a motion to recommend the tuition increase proposed by the Board of Governors of the University.

Lough did not vote on the motion. He said "I wasn't sure of my convictions at that time."

Absent from the meeting were senators Ian Giles and Rock Coulombe, as well as Student Council President Ralph Cochrane. Three other Senate positions were vacant at the time of the meeting.

Hodgson said student representatives were "too disinterested on a Friday afternoon to go to a Senate meeting."

If the motion had been defeated, it wouldn't have made a difference according to Hodgson.

"On their own accord, the Board of Governors said they would let the Senate take a look at it. If it hadn't been passed, the Board might have said well, we'll have another look at it, but I doubt it. It was academic."

However, Hodgson said the other representatives should have been there.

When asked if students should

be upset with their representatives, he said "I would be. You voted them in, and they're supposed to represent you."

Singh said senators can be impeached by their society, or by the DSU. Singh's position also gives

In fact, Singh hinted the timing of the meeting was suggestive. "It was a funny time to have a meeting," he said, also mentioning the fact that student senators only found out about the motion as they sat down at the meeting, and didn't have much time to read it.

Senator Alan MacLeod had resigned and his replacement had not yet been appointed.

"We were told that the vote could be deferred, but it wouldn't make a difference in the outcome", said Singh. He declined to say whether he thought these circumstances were deliberate.

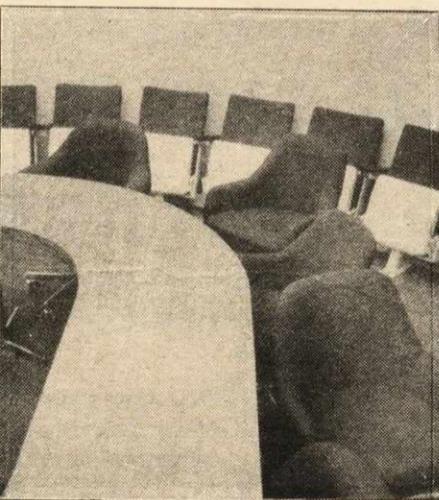
Another senator, who asked that his remark not be attributed, said "I think Friday was the most convenient time for them to get their motion passed. This has been happening all year — it's the way things are done around here."

Lough said the lack of time to consider the motion was one of the reasons he didn't vote.

Coulombe said he wasn't expecting a meeting on Friday, and didn't realize a meeting had been held until Sunday.

The Secretary of State, Robert Berard, said the meetings had all been arranged last spring, and the agenda had been sent to the Senators ahead of time.

He said he would be "very surprised" if someone had tried to ar-



Dal photo: Maria Patriquin

## Student senators practicing to be real ones

him the authority to impeach senators, and he said he is looking at this in one case.

"We haven't had much success with Ian Giles. He has missed meetings for the Senate, the DSU and his society," said Singh.

Giles said the meetings he missed were mostly at the start of the year, and he had gone home for Thanksgiving during this meeting.

Singh didn't feel impeachment was necessary with the other senators. "Ralph Cochrane had family problems...it wasn't our usual meeting day, and the mail is slow on campus," he said. Cochrane couldn't be reached for comment.

# Dal is in debt

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Following the expiry of a five-year agreement between the student council and the administration to limit fee hikes, the Board of Governors raised tuition fees 25 per cent Oct. 16, the highest increase in the university's history. Undergraduates will pay from \$300 to \$800 more next year.

The faculty association came close to its second strike in two years this fall, and the staff association is conducting a strike vote.

Advanced Education Minister Joel Matheson said his counterparts in other provinces appear to support his claim the system penalizes provinces with larger proportional student populations, such as Nova Scotia and Alberta. But the federal government is who he must convince.

"They can say 'it's a reciprocal agreement and you're just causing a down draft,'" said Matheson.

"I'm saying why don't we say 'maybe we'll just cut off 3,000 students from coming here?'" he said.

Meanwhile, Matheson is trying to cut costs through a "rationalization" program.

The 13 universities in the province have been instructed to assess all their programs and decide which ones can be discontinued or reduced. Duplication of programs "with low enrolments" is to be eliminated, and schools are to cooperate by transferring credits, pooling research and buying in bulk.

But the AAU is concerned that if government funding isn't increased considerably, enrolments may have to be capped to avoid "mediocrity."

"I don't think there's a lot of fat left in the system," said AAU interim director Anne-Marie MacKinnon.