

Students confront Mitchell

by Donna Treen

"Can we put you on record that you will make an effort to change the present Student Aid program to benefit the students?" Bernie MacDonnell, Dalhousie University student.

When pressed for a straight forward yes or no by MacDonnell, Provincial Education Minister

George Mitchell said: "All I can say is that I would be quite prepared to support it."

Mitchell met with over 125 Dalhousie students on National Student Day, Nov. 9th, to explain the position of the Provincial government on educational cutbacks. During a question period which followed a panel debate, the

subject of new bursary policies was raised.

Beginning in Sept. of 1976, students had to provide proof that they had passed 4 out of 5 courses taken. If a student did not have enough credits, he/she was not eligible for a bursary.

Dalhousie student, Allan Zdunich, argued with Mitchell about the fairness of this policy. Zdunich stated that many students could have attended summer school to receive the necessary credits if they had known about the new eligibility policy for receiving bursaries.

Don Soucy, a student at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, said that "it should be the universities and not the government who decide the academic criteria of students." Mitchell replied that "the suggestion for the new bursary policy was found reasonable and was acted upon." He also remarked that the policy was flexible: "It is up to the Dept and myself to decide if the policy will be effective, this year." He also said that he would look into this problem.

A major concern of many students was voiced by MacDonnell. He questioned Mitchell about student aid having "little effect for helping low income students" and added that "this seems no longer a prerogative in distributing student loans." "I can't say all needy students get aid," was Mitchell's reply.

Mitchell also said that the student aid program is not publicized to the extent that it should be. He feared that some high school students are not aware of student loans and that consequently they do not strive for marks suitable for university.

Although Mitchell stated that "the funds for student aid declined somewhat this year", he still feels that room is available for a number of people needing student loans and bursaries.

The minister summed up his views on student aid with the following, "I think the program has been working reasonably effectively in N.S."

The minister was part of a panel which included Dalhousie Student Union President, Gord Neal, Atlantic fieldworker for National Union of Students, Miguel Figeroa, President of the Dal Faculty Association, Dr. Puccetti, and Chairperson, University Vice-President, Andrew MacKay.

The forum was scheduled as part of National Student Day activities. Workshops and lectures were also held on campus in recognition of NSD.

National Student Day was created by an unanimous vote of delegates attending the 4th annual conference of the National Union of Students held in Winnipeg May 16, 1976.

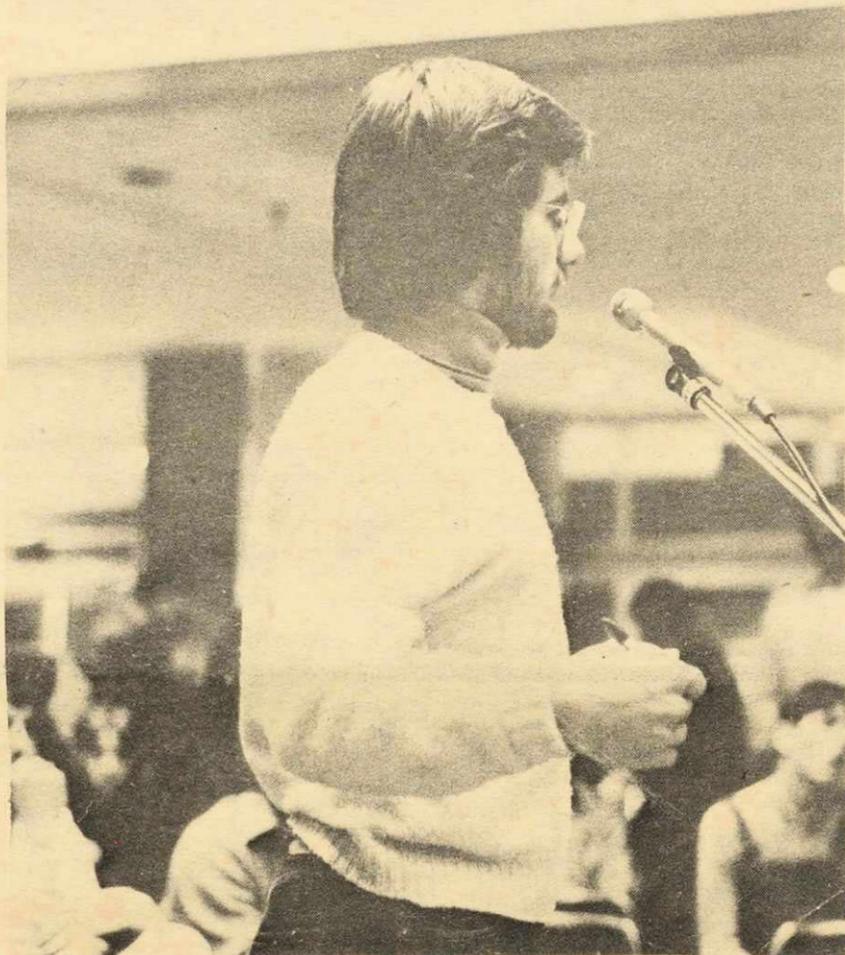
It came as a response to the growing lack of awareness of student issues in Canada both by students and society at large.

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NSD organizer, Bernie MacDonnell puts the Education Minister on the spot.

NSD support varies

While many Atlantic region students remained untouched by National Student Day (NSD), students in the parts of the Atlantic hardest hit by recent government cutbacks took the opportunity to organize and express their concern over the quality of education they are receiving, and for accessibility of education.

Students at Memorial University of Newfoundland held their first general meeting in three years and drew six hundred students to the discussion. The Newfoundland Minister of Education Wallace House and MUN President H.O. Morgan were confronted by students with research documents on student unemployment, student aid, and the cutbacks in various university departments at Memorial. The general meeting lasted for two and one half hours and was marked by lively debate and rowdy discussion among the participants.

At the close of the meeting fifty concerned students formed an ad hoc committee to do follow up work in the issues raised by the NSD discussion. As well, they plan to organize themselves into a viable avenue for student concerns to the university administration and the provincial government.

At the College of Cape Breton, one third of the colleges six hundred students attended a noon hour general meeting where the issues of students were discussed: housing, student aid, tuition, cutbacks in financing of education that are affecting the quality of education. This group plans to present the provincial government with petitions outlining their concerns.

Elsewhere in the Atlantic region, students were pretty quiet, with low turnouts at meetings called and little discussion of student problems. Many campuses failed to organize even the most basic discussions about NSD issues and they reflected the lack of concern on the part of local student leaders for the real problems of students.

in Halifax

Despite serious efforts on the part of a few students in the Halifax area the level of participation in National Student Day was low. The highlight of the day was, apparently, the general meeting in the evening at Dalhousie with newly appointed provincial Minister of Education George Mitchell. Mitchell managed to avoid answering most questions claiming lack of experience with the

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U de M students want French

by Allan Zdunich

Universite de Moncton Secretaire General Giles Beaulieu announced last week that he would seek the support of other Maritime colleges and universities for a French Law School in Moncton.

Speaking for the student federation (FEUM), Beaulieu stated that this was in response to a report prepared for the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC/CESPM) that advised against creation of a French Law School in New Brunswick. The MPHEC/CESPM advises the governments of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island on educational policy. Instruction in English Common Law in French is not available anywhere in Canada.

In late 1975, MPHEC/CESPM commissioned Queen's University Law School, Dean D.A. Soberman to study "Legal Education in the Maritime Provinces". Soberman's report, released in August, advised

the MPHEC/CESPM that for economic reasons a French Language Law Faculty not be created in New Brunswick.

Soberman further advised that if MPHEC/CESPM decided to create a francophone law program it be formed as an extension of the Law School at UNB in Fredericton, because of a possible saving for the maritime provinces.

FEUM felt that money could be saved only if the teaching in French was short changed. Beaulieu suggested that if the course offerings were the same at each institution, it would be reasonable to expect that the costs would be the same.

In a letter to MPHEC/CESPM President Sister Catherine Wallace, Beaulieu listed eight reasons why the Federation des etudiants d'universite de Moncton (FEUM) wanted the Law School at Moncton.

Student leaders at the five Halifax post-secondary institutions have expressed interest in supporting the students at U de M.

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