

Co-ordinated protest planned

ANTIGONISH (CUP)—Nova Scotia students will march on the Provincial Legislature March 21 in protest against government funding to post-secondary education, representatives to a conference of the Students Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) decided here last weekend.

SUNS is demanding an immediate freeze in tuition fees, adequate funding to universities to maintain the present quality, and long-term planning to improve the quality of education. The organization is also opposed to the government's plan to implement differential fees to foreign students.

"We knew something drastic would have to be done", said Mike Power of the Dalhousie delegation. "The march will be effective in getting the public's attention."

Delegates to the plenary were concerned about the "low priority" placed on post-secondary education by the provincial government. The Nova Scotia government recently announced a 5.5% increase in operating grants to the province's institutions.

Members of the SUNS steering committee reported on a meeting held with the province's premier,

John Buchanan, where he said no problems would evolve from the funding levels. The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, however, had recommended a 9.5% increase to the institutions as the bottom line.

Gene Long, Atlantic fieldworker for the National Union of Students (NUS), urged the plenary to take a strong stance against differential fees. He pointed out that too aggressive action by foreign students could result in the loss of their student visas.

SUNS is seeking public endorsement of their position in forms of letters and petitions. Campus com-

mittees at the various institutions are working to inform students of the issues and the planned march.

Information days and forums will complement the march in an effort to make it the largest students protest in Nova Scotia's history, the delegates decided. The protest will coincide with a NUS presentation to the federal cabinet about the future of education.

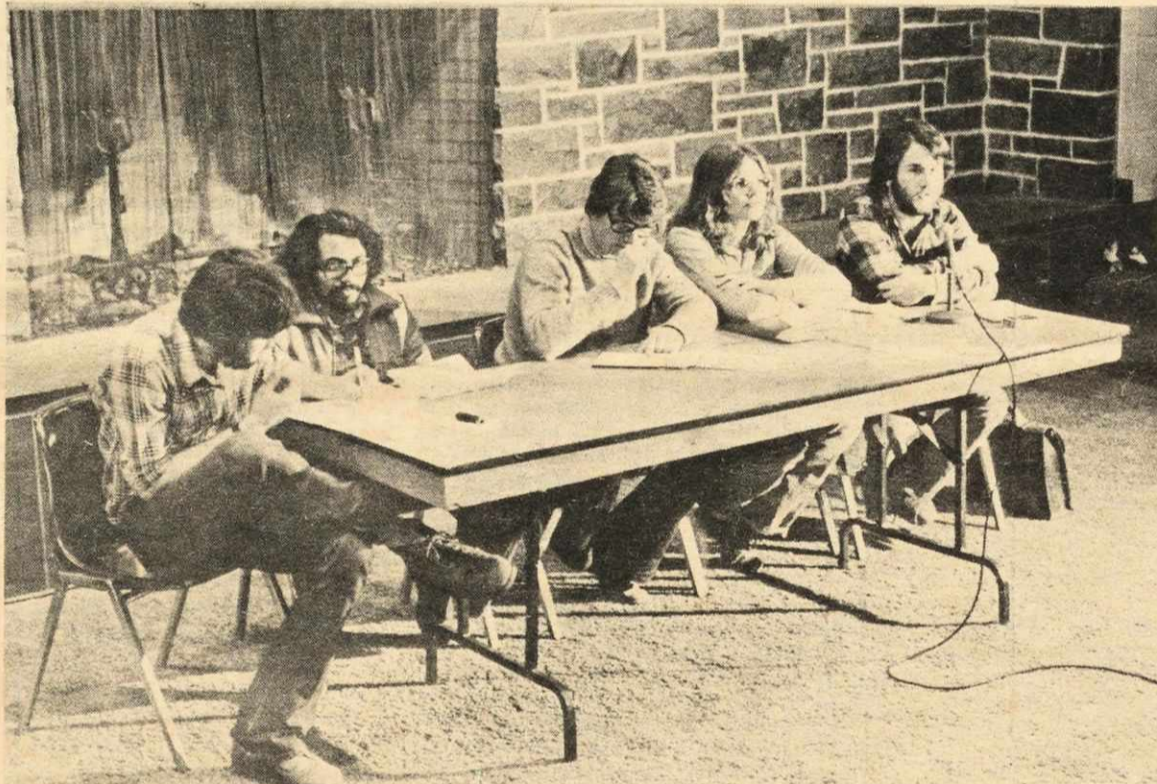
The plenary also discussed several proposed changes to the SUNS constitution but placed their emphasis on the funding issue. As one student said, "the future of higher education can no longer be left to chance."

the Dalhousie Gazette

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Student leaders outline situation during meeting on Monday

In P.E.I. and N.B.

Recommended funding approved

by Valerie Mansour
Canadian University Press

Unlike Nova Scotia, the governments of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island will grant funds to their post-secondary institutions in accordance with the recommendations of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC).

New Brunswick institutions will receive an average increase in operating grants of 8.6% while Island institutions will be granted 8.8%. The MPHEC had earlier recommended 8.75% as well as an additional 0.75% for Nova Scotia only.

The MPHEC has not yet allocated the grants among Nova Scotia institutions "pending further discussions with the Government of Nova Scotia". Nova Scotia had recently announced an in-

crease of 5.5% for the province's institutions.

B.J. Arsenault, chairperson of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia, said "obviously the New Brunswick and Island governments better recognize that funding the institutions less than the MPHEC has recommended will mean a crisis to education. The Nova Scotia government doesn't realize what 5.5% will do. They are cutting back for the sake of cutting back."

"The March 21 protest on the N.S. Legislature, combined with the effect of the other provinces' grants, will hopefully make the Nova Scotia government reconsider," Arsenault said.

Kevin Gauthier, UPEI student president, said "I feel very sorry for Nova Scotia. I'm not entirely happy with our grant but it's as good as we

expected. It will still mean a tuition increase but it shouldn't be higher than the increase in the cost of living."

"At UPEI we're trying to balance the cost with quality. We'll be making cuts that will not effect the quality of our education such as administrative cost and paper etc."

According to their statement issued Tuesday, the MPHEC is pleased with the responses of the NB and PEI governments but is "concerned with the implications of the approved increase for Nova Scotia institutions and will be discussing these concerns with the Nova Scotia government."

The other two Maritime provinces will also join Nova Scotia in implementing differential fees to enrolling foreign students. Institutions will receive from the government \$750 less per foreign student.

First cutbacks meeting held

by Alan Adams

About 75 people attending a general meeting called by the Cutbacks Committee to sound out campus feelings about possible tuition increases were told it was up to them to develop the methods to use to fight against rising post-secondary costs.

Guest speaker Joseph LaBelle from the Université de Moncton told the meeting it was time for students "to sit down and look at their problems and devise a plan of action." LaBelle said students councils were nothing but student administrators more worried about good relationships with the university administration than about student problems. He explained that a recent student protest at the Université de Moncton the organizers soon noticed after the protest started that the council was more worried about relations than issues. He said the protest started as a phony letter to the students from the University president asking them to his office to discuss tuition increases and then turned into a mass study session on the issue. "The students decided to hold the study groups to work out the

matter", said LaBelle.

National Union of Students (NUS) Atlantic fieldworker Gene Long said the funding cutbacks "are happening in every province and not just the Maritimes." Long explained that a 1976 federal-provincial funding arrangement was "to cover social services designed to meet regional disparity but there was no stipulation as to how the money was to be spent." He said that of the total \$92.2 million it costs to finance Nova Scotia's colleges and universities "the federal government turned \$85 million over to the provinces." Thus it isn't like the province weighing the total burden", added Long. He said NUS will be presenting a brief to the federal cabinet detailing the problems with the financial agreement.

Student Council President Mike Power said that at a SUNS meeting last weekend the representatives decided that "higher education, if the present government sticks to the present level of funding, is going to die in Nova Scotia." Power added that on March 21 a "funeral procession for higher education will be held at Province House."

May be wrong...

"I might be wrong but I don't think so" said John Buchanan at a private meeting with the steering committee of the Student Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) and St. Mary's Student Council representatives.

Buchanan told attending representatives that he did not feel students would mind paying more for tuition, residences, and books, in light of his government's meager 5.5% increase in funding for higher education institutions.

"The quality of education in Nova Scotia is high enough that students will pay higher fees", commented Buchanan. The numbers of foreign students will even continue their normal increase with differential fees, he added.

"We called for the meeting to inform the premier where the students stand concerning some of our basic issues; tuition fees increases, cutbacks, and residence fee increases," said Tim Harding, financial officer of the SUNS steering committee.

"We also wanted to find out if the government had any plans for higher education. Mr. Buchanan said his government was unable to do that this year but hoped they would be able to next year," said Harding.

The private meeting with Buchanan was held last Thursday night. Buchanan was at Saint Mary's to give a talk on the Constitution, sponsored by the Political Science Society.