

Tuition hikes feared

University costs rising - AAU

by Susan Johnson

The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) has recommended that the Council of Maritime Premiers provide for an average increase in university operating grants of 12.5% for 1977-78 as reported in last week's Gazette.

AAU chairperson Ronald Baker warned the three provincial governments that "any increase of less than 12.5% will force the universities to raise tuition — a move bound to create student opposition and to further disrupt university operations during the coming year."

Baker, who also serves as president of the University of Prince Edward Island, explained that "student fees in the Maritimes are the highest in the country and have been for years. Students, of course, should pay a reasonable share of the costs of their education. And there is some feeling, we recognize, that many students in universities can afford to pay more. Against this, there is the problem of those students just able to scrape together enough each year to pay for room, board and fees. And there is the bigger problem of teenagers from poor families, for whom each \$100 increase in fees in another layer on the financial / psychological barrier to university education."

In appealing to the Council of Maritime Premiers, the AAU argued that the 12.5% increase was necessary to meet "unavoidable salary and inflation increases."

About the AAU decision Baker said, "We had no choice. We have to pay our faculty and staff a fair wage within the AIB guidelines; we're very hard hit by increases in fuel, power, books, paper and supplies such as chemicals, all increasing at rates much higher than 20%."

"Most settlements (for faculty and staff wages in the Atlantic region) last year were below the AIB permitted maximum and the faculty

was hard hit in comparison with their opposite numbers in other provinces. Since faculty salary levels in this region were already the lowest in the country, the widening gap over the past few years has had a bad effect on morale." Baker said.

Further, "Some institutions could award more than 10% without contravening the guidelines and the faculty and support staff are aware of this. Not to grant the permissible catch-up increase would cause trouble." he said.

According to Baker, most universities have no income except government grants and student fees. The government grant, as a percentage of the operating budget, varies from university to university but is roughly 80% for the Maritimes as a group.

This is the first time that the AAU has made a direct or public submission to government on operating grants. Explaining the action of the AAU Baker said, "Facing serious financial difficulties even in maintaining existing programs, the AAU sees a duty to explain the universities' minimum needs directly to the governments and the public."

The provincial governments have not responded to the appeal by the AAU, however, at the last federal-provincial premiers meeting the governments agreed to restrain public funding: in effect, leaving student fees as the only remaining source of new funds.

The Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS), presently in the middle of a restructuring and refinancing program, is organizing to fight tuition increases and educational cutbacks across the Atlantic region. The organization of Atlantic students is in partial reaction to the increased co-operation and co-ordination among the various provincial governments and the region's universities.



Dal Photo / Grandy

Ronald Baker, chairperson for the Atlantic Association of Universities, speaks about the AAU's appeal to the Atlantic Premiers.

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Purchase orders found

The eighteen purchase orders "stolen" from Dalhousie Student Union last week were discovered Sunday night in the council offices.

A Gazette staff member who was typing in the office discovered the purchase orders amongst typing paper in one of the secretaries' desks.

Since in a previous search the desk was completely cleaned out, council accountant Glenna Hiscock said "someone must have returned them." She felt that someone may have stolen the purchase orders "to aggravate student union treasurer Pat Stewart."

Stewart said that it was possible that "the person who took the forms was scared to cash the forms because of the extensive publicity and therefore decided to return them." Last week's Gazette carried a front page story about the missing

purchase orders, and Stewart warned all the Student Union's regular suppliers about the loss.

Stewart assured the Gazette that purchase orders will be locked up from now on.

Akerman claims

'Danger of ten nations'

by Ian MacLean

"The real danger facing Canada today is not the emergence of the two nations as a result of separatist sentiment in Quebec, but the possibility that continuation of the developing trend toward greater provincial autonomy could result in the creation of ten nations", according to the provincial New Democratic Party leader, Jeremy Akerman.

In an address to students and faculty at the Dalhousie Law School, January 27, Akerman denounced reactions by Premier Gerald Regan and Opposition Leader John Buchanan to the election in Quebec of the Levesque government. Pressing the panic button is merely playing into the hands of the Parti Quebecois. "I believe we can easily persuade a majority of the people of Quebec to vote 'no'...to vote for a continuation within the present constitutional framework... provided that we make a national commitment to equalize opportunity across the nation."

Commenting upon the recent developments tending to strengthen the role of the provincial governments at the expense of their federal counterpart, Akerman noted that "more provincial power will be of no use to us unless we have the corresponding financial resources. If the trend is accelerated, the rich

provinces will benefit and the poor provinces cannot do anything but suffer."

The federal government has already given notice of its intention to withdraw from Medicare to the extent of reducing its cost-sharing obligations. The have-not provinces have "only two alternatives—cut the level of health care drastically or increase taxes drastically. Those areas which are rich will become richer while the poor provinces will become wretchedly, hopelessly and irretrievably poor."

Akerman stated that "while we have been underprivileged, we have unquestionably benefited" from federally instituted programs such as Medicare and the Canadian Assistance Plan. Although the federal government has not effectively utilized the "capacity to undertake national programs for the benefit of all Canadians in all provinces", that capacity remains with it and should remain there; for once it is passed on to the provinces, it will never be given back. The poorer provinces will be the losers.

In reply to a question, the N.D.P. leader stated that, "I am in favour of decentralization of decision making and policy formulation within the jurisdiction, but I am opposed to decentralization of the power itself."

UNB Wednesday

AFS/FEA

referendum

defeated

Students reject

\$1.00 fee

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