

Henry charged

by Stephen Jones

Dr. Henry Morgentaler announced that he had performed seven abortions at his McCully Street clinic at a press conference last Thursday night at the Halifax Sheraton.

Morgentaler was charged by Halifax police after a complaint was filed by local anti-abortionists following Morgentaler's press conference admission.

Morgentaler defied a law passed last June under the Medical Services Act by the provincial government which prevents the establishment of free-standing abortion clinics. Morgentaler said he is anxious to challenge this provincial law, which he thinks is "oppressive". Morgentaler calls the law "one of the

most flawed pieces of legislation I have ever seen", and says the government, in trying to outlaw his Halifax clinic, is "intent on preventing women from seeking help".

Morgentaler said the provincial legislation is invalid because of the 1988 Supreme Court of Canada ruling which found the country's old abortion law, which restricted the procedure to hospitals, unconstitutional.

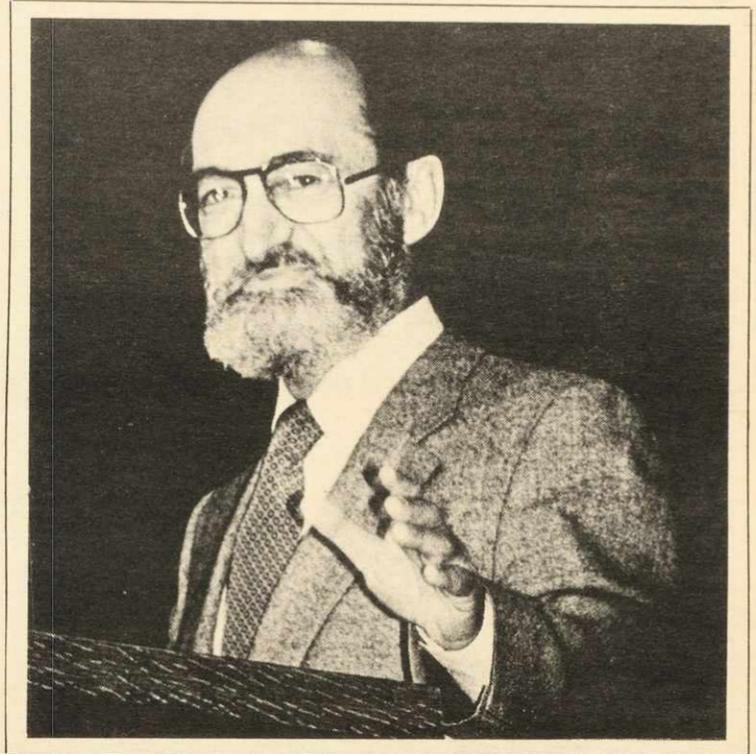
All seven abortions were performed on Thursday. Four of Morgentaler's patients were from New Brunswick, two were from Nova Scotia, and one was from Newfoundland. Morgentaler said one of the Nova Scotians was a rape victim who could not obtain an abortion elsewhere in the province. After travelling to Halifax, the woman from New-

foundland could not afford to pay the \$250 fee for her abortion, and was not charged for the procedure.

Morgentaler said approximately 50 abortions would be performed every week at the Halifax clinic, and he would be at the clinic once or twice weekly. He will assist in the medical procedure by a local doctor, whom he did not name.

Morgentaler said abortions would be performed at the clinic up until the 14th week of pregnancy, and the most advanced pregnancy aborted Thursday was 12 weeks.

Morgentaler will appear in Halifax Provincial Court on Wednesday, and faces a \$10,000-a-day fine for performing abortions at the clinic.



Flawed legislation! Tell it like it is Henry

DSU decides

No decision a good decision

by Miriam Korn

The Dalhousie Student Union voted to "object to consider" at the upcoming Canadian Federation of Students conference when the issue of revising the CFS abortion policy is addressed.

After a lengthy debate at the DSU council meeting held on Sunday, October 29, the council voted for "objection to consideration" to be the DSU delegates' position. In other words, they will propose that the CFS should not vote on the issue. If this motion is not accepted by the CFS, then when roll call comes for a vote, the Dal members will not be present.

At the conference, delegates will be asked to vote on a motion

to replace the old policy entitling women to "access to a full range of options" with a more strongly pro-choice policy stipulating the woman's "right to access to a safe medical abortion" which should be "paid for by medicare."

Tom Digby, vice president of external affairs, who brought the matter to council, said he "pushed for an abstention on a decision" since he felt there had not been enough "sustained debate on the abortion issue on campus in recent years" to establish a stance that represented the Dal students' views. "On campus, abortion remains a foggy issue."

Andrew Campbell, education representative, introduced the "object to consider" motion option to avoid spoiling a ballot

with an abstention which he says, in the CFS, is the equivalent of opposing the motion. He felt the DSU should not be voting on this "very complex" issue, since it has "no mandate for the issue" and thus has "no moral right to make the decision."

The Board of Governors representative, Lara Morris, supported the motion for a stronger pro-choice policy. She felt that this would be "an opportunity for the DSU to take a stand on the women students' right to choose."

In fact, in the 1987 conference, the DSU supported the original CFS abortion policy which was more strongly pro-choice than the present one. Campbell contends, however, that "the way the

DSU voted before on CFS policy should not entail that precedent was set."

The problem of whether the abortion issue should be discussed by the CFS or DSU was a central point of debate. Charlene Ashe, arts representative and a mature student at Dal, felt "abortion is a bandwagon issue" and that it did "not have a high priority to the CFS" compared to other matters such as funding. Campbell agreed, stating that "the student union has no business in the morals of the student body."

Morris, on the other hand, felt that it is important to students and "should be addressed," for "the right to choose becomes an issue when a female student becomes pregnant and must make a decision."

According to the director of Health Services, Dr. Rosemary Gill, a student that comes to her office with an unwanted pregnancy will be "presented with all options." This includes "abortion as an option, just as adoption is an option and having a baby is an option." Thus she believes that abortion is definitely a "student issue," since it "certainly affects students' lives."

At the council meeting, it was announced that one of Morgentaler's first patients was a Dalhousie student. Dr. Gill, however, said "there is quite free access to abortion even without the Morgentaler clinic."

The original CFS policy was "watered down to a quasi-pro-choice stance" to keep schools such as Saint Francis Xavier from pulling out of the CFS, says DSU academic vice president Kim Vance.

Digby cited the divisiveness created by the issue as another reason to abstain from making a decision. "The division takes away from the more essential matters of the CFS."

Morris thinks the policy need not create such division since a school has the right to "state that it does not support a CFS policy" but "still recognize the importance of CFS as an organization."

A memo from Digby, sent to all councillors before the meeting on Sunday, said the Student Union of Nova Scotia "has traditionally avoided" the issue because "even talking about it interferes with our working relationship with other schools."

Campbell also cited a "financial reason" for not voting. He says that "in order for the DSU to remain free [to provide funding to everyone] it should not have a policy," he says that in this way, the DSU can justify funding both the young NDP, which is predominantly pro-choice, and the Newman Society, which is predominantly anti-abortion.

Digby saw this as "completely erroneous," since the "DSU will

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