

Herald condemned

By LÓIS CORBETT

THE ATLANTIC PRESS Council has ruled the Halifax Herald Ltd., publishers of the *Chronicle Herald* and the *Mail Star*, used its opinion page to fortify its editorial stand against a strike by the Dalhousie Faculty Association.

The press council decided to rule in favour of only one of the seven complaints brought by the Nova Scotia Confederation of Faculty Associations. It said the *Herald's* "extraordinarily swift reaction" in publishing a release from Dalhousie President Andrew MacKay and a letter from William Hynes "attacking university professors in general and Dalhousie professors in particular" was more than mere coincidence.

The release from MacKay, called the "MacKay memorandum", was given to reporters at the administration press conference at 6:30 p.m. on January 23, the evening before the Dal faculty voted whether or not to strike.

The press council report said when the *Herald* got the MacKay memorandum, "some person, presumably the night editor of the *Herald*, concluded that it was of such importance as to merit a reorganization of the opinion page to ensure its publication on January 24th, the day on which the confirmatory vote was to occur."

While the report said it is possible that the publication of the Hynes letter and the MacKay memorandum, both published "far swifter than normal and immediately prior to a vote on the strike question," may have been accidental, but the panel "concludes otherwise."

Representatives of both NSCUFA and the Halifax *Herald* met with the press council panel, but the *Herald* did not send the night editor on duty for Jan. 23.

"He or she could have shed considerable light on this problem. The panel finds this failure disturbing and it reinforces the panel's concern that the *Herald* may have attempted to diminish public support for the position of the DFA," said the report.

The panel said the *Herald* "appears to have misused the opinion page in this case."

Dal faculty members voted 246 to 200 in favour of calling off the strike at the Jan. 24 general meeting. In an interview last year Marcia Ozier, chief negotiator for the DFA, said the *Herald* started a "relentless attack" against the union.

"Whether the *Herald* believed it was assisting the negotiations, the fact of the matter is that the Board (of Governors) side was presented over and over again, and I think that was a mistake," said Ozier.



While walking down Spring Garden Road to Province House 2500 protestors chanted and waved placards in protest of the recently released Royal Commission Report on Post-Secondary Education. Representatives from all post-secondary institutions across the city attended the march. Photo by Russ Adams, Dal Photo

"Someone (at the *Herald*) has lost complete perspective on the issue," she said.

The other NSCUFA complaints included attacks on the *Herald's* news coverage, saying it focused on the impact of a strike on students but omitted faculty views, creating a bias against the DFA, and accusations that Robbie Shaw, vice president of finances, met with officials of the *Herald* to discuss press coverage.

The press council said the *Herald's* stories focused on the impact of the strike on students, but that was not a bias against the DFA. It also said the paper's reporting of student opinion "has been quite extensive," and the failure to report on a student union press conference that gave

support to the DFA may have been a problem in timing.

Representatives of the *Herald* said Shaw met with members of the editorial staff on Jan. 11, 1986 to discuss the "pension plan question." In an April 11 letter to NSCUFA, the *Herald* denied there was any "strategy conceived or carried out with or without the Dalhousie board against the interests of the DFA."

John D'Orsay, executive director of NSCUFA and one of the organization's representatives to the press council said he is not satisfied with the ruling, "but as far as I can tell, it all stops here. The *Herald* has to meet no other requirements. We could pursue a libel suit, but we don't have any other alternatives for recourse."

D'Orsay said the press council does not offer much in a way of a settlement for NSCUFA's complaints. "The *Herald* does a lot of damage to a lot of people, but there is no equitable way to get settlement through (the press council)," he said.

He also criticized the press council's procedure, saying its refusal to allow cross-examination of witnesses to the panel was frustrating.

"It makes it damn hard to find out what's going on. If you can test the witness, what can you do," he said.

For agreeing to participate in the press council procedures, the *Herald* only has to publish a copy of the final report.

March a success

By MARY ELLEN JONES and VALERIE MATHESON

"WHAT'S OUR MISSION? can the Commission," chanted 2500 students marching to Province House last Thursday to protest the recently-released Royal Commission report on post-secondary education.

Students and faculty members from all of the post-secondary education institutions in Halifax marched through downtown Halifax, blocking lunch hour traffic and gathering supporters along the way.

Waving placards they demonstrated their disapproval of the Royal Commission on post-secondary education.

The march began outside the Dalhousie Student Union Building on University Avenue. After several warm-up chants and songs the crowd moved down the street on a 1.5 kilometre walk to Province House.

Members of the cabinet did not speak because of a scheduled meeting in Shelburne, Nova Scotia.

Paula Alexiadis, a third year Dalhousie student attending the march, said she felt the students were making an impact on the government. "Even if the government was in Shelburne, the public was listening."

Although the students did not have a chance to talk with the Minister of Education, Tom McInnis, student leaders said they did accomplish what they set out to do.

"All our goals were achieved," said Reza Rizvi, executive vice-president of the Dalhousie Student Union. "We did inform the public and most of all we informed the students. No matter how many speeches we made the march did more for our cause than any effort preceding it."

Rizvi said the single factor which made the march such a success was the large number of students and faculty members which turned out.

"Mount St. Vincent was the loudest bunch of protestors. They were the most gung-ho. I applauded them for this," said Rizvi.

Student leaders said they expected 500 people to attend the march. "This was an educated guess and what we achieved was far beyond our expectations," said Rizvi.

Catherine Blewett said the impact of the march was substantial.

"We had representatives from all the post-secondary institutions across the city. It was a show of solidarity," she said.

"I was really pleased with the crowd. They were noisy as hell and well behaved and that's all that counts."