

Visa students lose MSI coverage

As of March 1977 overseas students living in Nova Scotia on student visas are no longer receiving MSI coverage.

Last spring a Committee on Eligibility of MSI decided to 'clarify' the existing definition of a 'resident' of Nova Scotia as stated in the regulations under the Health Services and Insurance Act. "Action resulting from this decision has left nearly 200 overseas students without proper medical coverage," according to Mahmood Alam of the Dalhousie International Students Association.

Under present regulations a resident is defined to be "... a person who is legally entitled to remain in Canada, who makes his home and is ordinarily present in Nova Scotia, but does not include a tourist, a transient or a visitor to Nova Scotia." In a letter of June 2, 1977 to Alam, D.H. Waller, executive secretary of the eligibility committee, wrote that "The committee interprets this regulation (defining resident) to mean that



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Mamood Alam of the Dalhousie International Students Association is very disgusted with the government's ruling that MSI will no longer be available to international students in the province.

only persons coming to Nova Scotia who intend to make this province their permanent place of residence are eligible for MSI and Hospital Insurance benefits."

The International Students Association (ISA) and the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) protested this decision. The committee pointed out that the only criterion for eligibility under MSI is the establishment of residence in Nova Scotia. A report issued jointly by ISA and DAGS disputes the committee's claim that a person holding a student visa is not a resident under the regulations as stipulated. According to the report "a holder of a student visa does fall within the intended definition of a resident. A student studying at a university in Nova Scotia clearly makes his home and is ordinarily present here. The foreign student in Nova Scotia normally spends a period of from two to four years in the province. This is scarcely a temporary establishment in Nova Scotia."

According to the report the definition of a resident as interpreted by the committee seems 'incorrectly restrictive' in the case of international students. Overseas student co-ordinator, Harvey McKinnon, points out, "the regulation makes no reference to the intent of a person to make Nova Scotia his permanent residence." Similarly, in the case of a Canadian from another province or an immigrant moving to Nova Scotia, intention to remain permanently is not required in order for MSI coverage to be available. Canadian students studying abroad normally receive medical care in the country of their stay under the medical plan provided by that country.

"The situation is that overseas students are paying taxes, and thereby helping to subsidize such concerns as MSI, yet are not receiving all the benefits from these interests," notes Alam. "It seems only fair that overseas students get MSI or else not have to pay health taxes." At present ISA and DAGS are considering legal action against the committee to determine whether the committee has authority to interpret and decide such matters and, more importantly, whether this interpretation is valid.

Mitchell, AFS discuss Student aid

by Don Soucy

In a Halifax meeting with representatives of the Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS) last week, Nova Scotia's Education Minister George Mitchell said he would support the request that the National Union of Students make a presentation concerning student aid to the Council of Ministers of Education (CME). CME meetings usually include Education Ministers from the ten provinces. The provinces have been conducting secret negotiations through the CME with the federal government in a long drawn out attempt to revamp the Canada Student Loans Plan (CSLP).

The British North America Act gives the provinces jurisdiction over education. However, since the federal governments foot the bill for the CSLP, they also have some say. To get around the BNA act, the feds must get all ten provinces to agree on the criteria for receiving a Canada student loan. Once this is achieved, the provinces are only allowed to make the criteria stricter, not easier.

"Students from across Canada have worked and met and have arrived at a consensus on many student aid issues but it appears that our government officials have a harder time at such a task," said College Cape Breton's Rick Doucette. Doucette is Nova Scotia's representative on the national student aid committee which was established at the NUS conference in Charlottetown last May.

"The governments realized way back in 1974 that the CSLP needed a major overhaul, yet we still haven't seen anything except a hodge-podge of patchwork changes," Doucette said.

"Now they are secretly going to begin a new round of talks on student aid. Well, I say that three years of back room scheming with no results is long enough. It is high time that these talks be opened to students and the public. It is obvious that expediency has not been served by secrecy."

AFS also expressed their concern over a tax waiver which many provinces have been forcing students to sign before receiving student aid. Though this practice

has not yet begun in Nova Scotia, it was learned that students in P.E.I. and New Brunswick were being asked to pick up their tax records and submit them along with their student aid applications. Students have complained that they are unable to ensure that the confidentiality of this information will not be abused.

An executive assistant to Mitchell told the students he felt it to be unlikely that Nova Scotia would incorporate such a waiver into the student aid process.

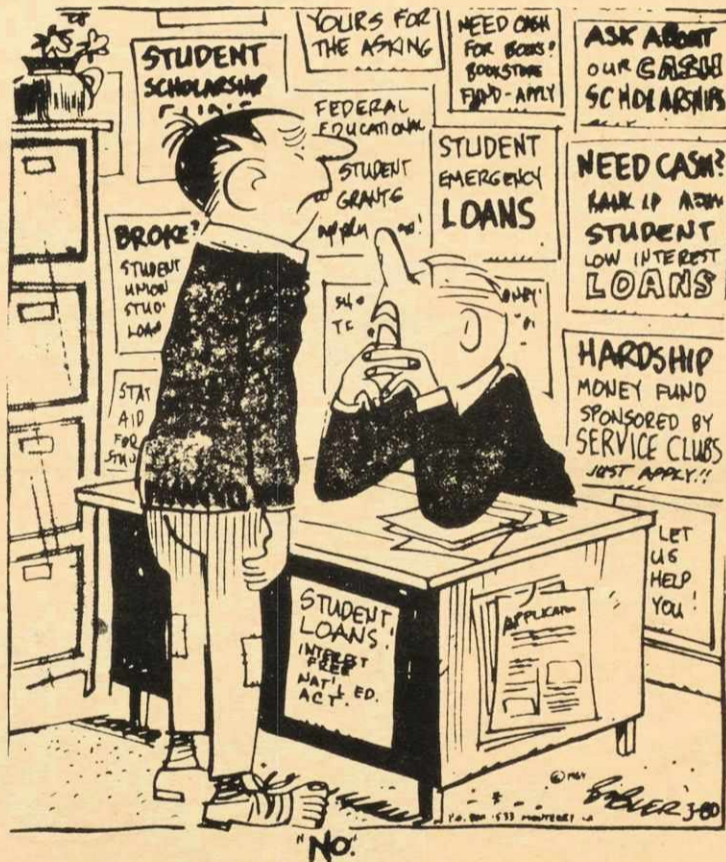
The students also criticized the "closed door" negotiations taking place last year to regionalize student aid. They cited the fact that the regional planning body for higher education in the three Maritime provinces, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), submitted secret proposals to the provincial governments. Students and the public remain unaware of what was proposed or on what the provinces agreed or disagreed. It is known that Newfoundland, not officially part of the MPHEC, agreed to take part in discussions and possible implementation of a regional student aid scheme.

dent aid scheme.

Mitchell promised to submit any new MPHEC student aid proposals to the Nova Scotia student aid advisory committee. This committee

has two students which are selected by AFS.

Another student meeting with Mitchell is planned for early November.



AFS/NUS form Action Committee

by LouAnne Meloche

A Halifax AFS / NUS Committee was formed on Sunday. Students from five of the city's post secondary institutions met at Dalhousie to lay the groundwork for what they termed an "action-oriented" committee.

"There is a lot of important work that needs to be done in the coming year," said Janet Cameron, a rep on the Dal student council. "Our main aim is to coordinate and share this work on the Halifax campuses. We hope to provide joint campaign materials and strategies. Some of these will probably be useful to other students throughout the region and the rest of Canada."

The first meeting concentrated largely on the unemployment issue. Plans were made to tie in with the National Union of Students (NUS)

present country-wide campaign. There will be distribution of the NUS leaflet and poster. Students will also be asked to mail postcards to Prime Minister Trudeau. The cards, also prepared by NUS, outline students' concern over the worsening unemployment situation and the increasingly inadequate student aid program.

"Although we don't expect the cards alone to produce action," said Cameron, "if a few thousand are mailed from the city, the next time we speak, the government will know the students are behind us."

The past summer has seen a lot of student activity around unemployment. NUS joined forces with the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour to form a "Coalition of Concern for the Unemployed," (see last week's *Gazette*). Now that

students are back it is expected that the Coalition's actions will be stepped up. The AFS / NUS Committee is planning on co-ordinating their work on the national campaign with that of the Halifax Coalition.

"What we need now on the Committee are more students ready to take positive action on all the issues affecting us as students," said Sandy Rubinfeld, an Art College rep at the meeting. "There are already more than enough people sitting around drawing up pious, well-worded motions of support. What we're looking for are people who will get things done."

The Halifax AFS / NUS Committee has set its next meeting for Sunday at 5 P.M. in the *Gazette* offices. Cameron encouraged all interested students to attend.