

Referendum March 15

Council approves independence

Dalhousie students will decide if the **Gazette** is to become independent in a campus-wide referendum during the March 15 student council elections. At a meeting Sunday night the Dalhousie Student Council unanimously approved in principle the **Gazette's** new constitution which would allow the paper to become a separate corporation.

Peter Greene, chairperson of the council constitution committee, told council members that it is very important that the **Gazette** become autonomous. "It is basically a philosophical question of freedom of the press. It's not a matter of **Gazette** content or the people that work there."

Gazette editor Valerie Mansour said "as a student press we have to critically assess the performance of council and this cannot always be done properly if they are our publishers. Financial control gives council editorial control. If we were independent we could deal with a publishing board whose only interest would be the publication of the paper."

Council reviewed the **Gazette's** proposed constitution and made some changes. The publications board consists of nine directors and one non-voting director. The majority of the board's members would be students—three elected at large for a one year term and one for two years. The others on the board would be a Dalhousie faculty member elected by the Faculty

Association, someone from the professional media, and a lawyer, both of whom would be selected by the board. The paper's business manager, who is the board's secretary-treasurer, would be the non-voting member.

Ken Dodd, former fieldworker for Canadian University Press who drew up the original constitution, said that with the varied perspectives on the board the paper would be responsibly run. Dodd had studied the constitutions of other independent newspapers across the country who operate similar to the **Gazette's** proposal.

Should the March 15 referendum be approved by Dalhousie students, the **Gazette** will receive a direct levy of \$5 per student, a \$1.50 increase over their present per student contribution which is given to the **Gazette** out of the council's \$51 per student levy. "We originally hoped we could operate at \$4, but after realizing that the student contribution towards our funding is actually \$3.50 and not \$3.12, we knew we would have to increase the levy to \$5," said Mansour. "Newsprint is increasing in price and, as well, we hope to buy our own typesetting equipment which will not only give us the flexibility and convenience of operating our own machines, but will be a great source of revenue for the future."

"The new situation will be great all round", said a **Gazette** staffer following the meeting. "Council

will no longer have to worry about the operations of the paper, and the **Gazette** will never have to feel the threat of editorial interference, budget slashes or actual closure. As well, we'll finally be working in a situation where each and every staffer will become aware of our

financial situation, thus becoming more knowledgeable and concerned about the financial aspects of the newspaper."

"I think an independent paper will be a better paper," said Mansour. "Students will have direct control."

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Dal Photo / Morris

Gazette and Council were in agreement Sunday night as permission was granted to allow the **Gazette to approach the Dalhousie student population with the question of independence for the newspaper.**

Students meet with Maritime premiers

EDMUNDSTON (CUP)—Protesting students from the three Maritime Provinces demanded to meet with the Council of Maritime Premiers by picketing and chanting outside the CMP conference site here Friday. The students were objecting to the low level of government funding for Atlantic post-secondary institutions and specifically the low grants being given to New Brunswick institutions.

Upon their arrival, PEI premier Alex Campbell, and Premier Gerald Regan of Nova Scotia agreed to meet with the student representatives. Richard Hatfield, Premier of New Brunswick, would not speak to the students and rushed quickly into the motel.

The three premiers caucused inside the motel, and decided to meet together with all the protesters. The CMP have refused to meet with any organizations in the past because of a long standing

policy, and no groups have ever been allowed to make a formal presentation.

Presentations were made by the Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS), the New Brunswick Coalition of Students (NBCS), and students from the Université de l'Acadie in Edmundston.

AFS spokesperson Denise Roberge asked the Premiers to explain why the grants to New Brunswick institutions were considerably lower than those for the other provinces.

"We gave the institutions a 6.7% increase and that's all we have. We treat education better than most other government departments", explained Hatfield.

AFS countered this with an accusation that the provincial governments were funneling federally allocated funds for education into other government departments. The premiers responded that they were not legally required to spend the

federal grants on education.

"To keep the graduates in the Atlantic, the government has to make investments in industries and create a job market for the grads," said Regan.

"The continuing cutbacks in the institutions are lowering the quality and value of an education, thus the governments are defeating their own purpose," pointed out Roberge.

Students from the Université de l'Acadie asked the Council to impose a tuition freeze and, as well, called for an end to the increasing collaboration between the three Maritime provinces. The Acadian students feel they are not getting fairly represented on the Maritime

Provinces Higher Education Commission because of the lack of French speaking people on the commission.

The NBCS demanded that the premiers reconsider their grants because the austerity in New Brunswick institutions had reached a crisis point. They as well called for a tuition freeze.

The protest was organized by students of the College St. Louis Naillet, a branch of the Université de Moncton. Most of the protestors were from there, as well as representatives from St. Mary's and Dalhousie Universities in Halifax, UNB—Fredericton and the University of P.E.I.

Hard pill to swallow

by Jeff Round

Legal council to the N.S. Department of Public Health has decided against reinstating Medical Services Insurance (MSI) to overseas students living in Nova Scotia on student visas, informed sources have told the **Gazette**. A spokesperson in the Premier's office has denied this, saying that Maynard MacAskill, Minister of Public Health, is going to a cabinet meeting next Thursday to discuss the matter.

When overseas students lost their medical coverage in March 1977, a number of groups, including the Dal Student Union, Association of Graduate Students, and International Students, protested the ruling. A committee was struck to look into the matter. In January the Health Services and Insurance Commission (HSIC) made a recommendation to MacAskill which Student Council President Robert Sampson said would be favourable. L.E. Rozovsky, legal council to

the ministry of Public Health, said "certain legal difficulties" in writing the report were delaying the matter, but the recommendation is "being worked on actively". He denied the government was stalling, saying it was not a "delaying tactic and the recommendation is not being ignored." Rozovsky speculated the report would be ready in a few weeks.

Rozovsky is legal council to not only the department of Public Health, but to the HSIC and MSI as well. **Gazette** sources claim that Rozovsky has gone against the recommendation of HSIC and turned in a negative decision.

The **Gazette** has been told that the government will not be overturning the decision to deny overseas students medical coverage. The only way the decision can be overturned is by a ministerial decision from MacAskill or by a collective decision by the Nova Scotia cabinet.



Angus

Dalhousie students joined representatives from the Maritimes in protesting educational cutbacks outside the site of the Council of Maritime Premiers conference in Edmundston, N.B. on Friday.