

EDITORIAL

Axworthy means business, universities beware

The federal government has made it clear it wants more authority in determining education policy, and, by the look of things, it is going to get it whether or not the constitution says education is an exclusive provincial domain.

National economic planning is the key, and the Minister of Employment has embarked on a campaign to determine education priorities for the employment trends of tomorrow's Canada. Lloyd Axworthy has announced a revamped job training program, to come before parliament in spring, that will make it feasible for the feds to direct what kind of programs are offered via selective funding.

The federal government wants to "get better value for its dollars" Axworthy said. This claim hits a strikingly familiar note: Wasn't that the argument for the recent federal funding cutbacks to post secondary education, among other things? "We're not getting our money's worth," complained the federal government, citing its increasing support for universities and colleges. The provinces are being made to feel the pinch of its power through cutbacks.

It is now becoming clear what kind of a return it is the federal government wants. Using Axworthy's proposal as a guideline, the government wants more technically skilled graduates to fuel Canada's growing high-tech and resource industries. Translating this to universities, as will be done in March when the feds restructure their financing arrangements with the provinces, there will be a push for more engineering, computing, commerce, and less of the humanities, social and natural sciences. That "liberal arts graduates won't immediately solve the skilled labour shortage Canada is currently suffering" will be their argument.

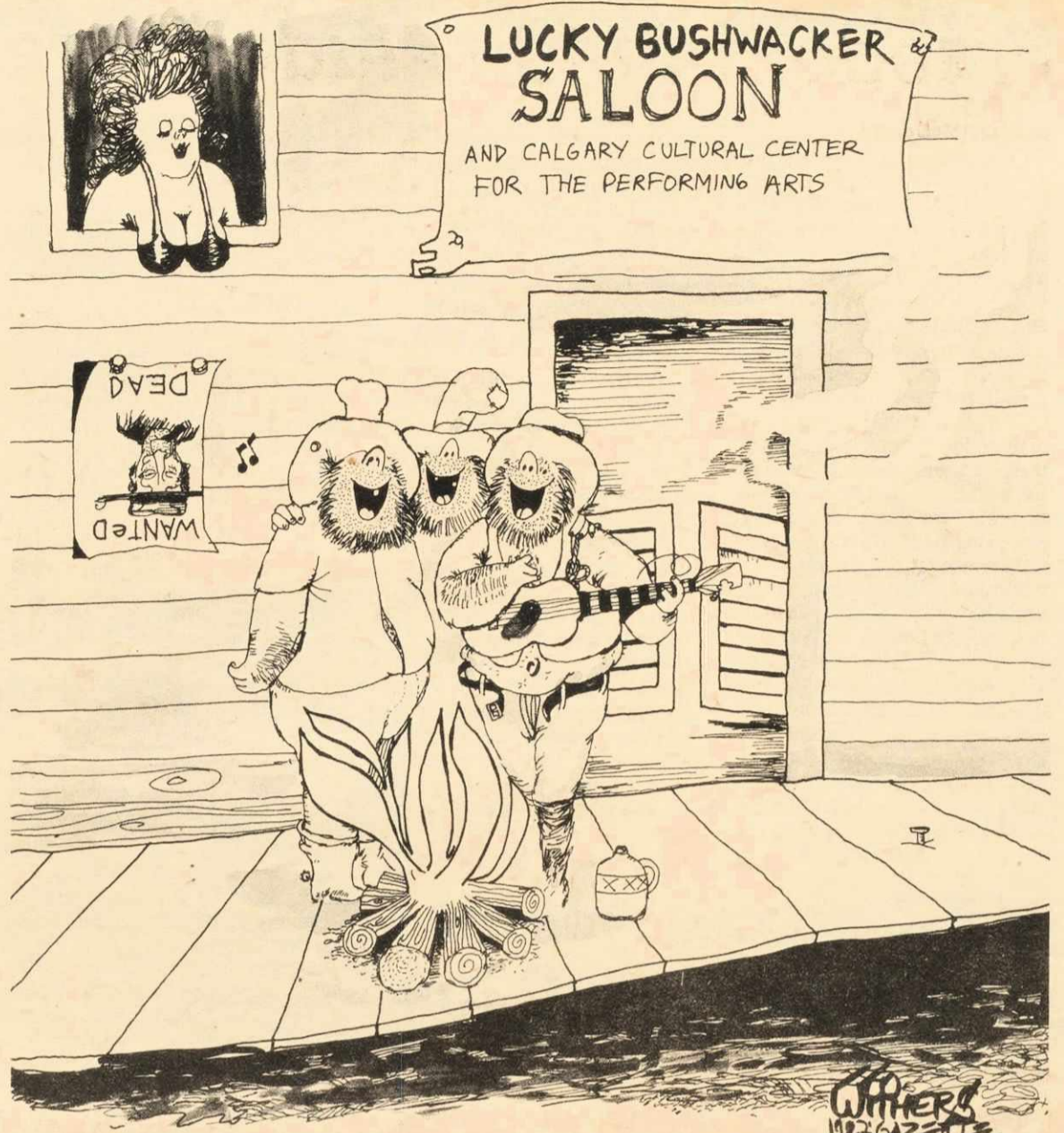
In their annual statement the Science Council of Canada called recently for more university interaction with industry. "As industry sees it, the main role of university is to turn out graduates who are capable of keeping industry running," reads the summary in the Globe and Mail. The council then proceeds to outline ways of facilitating this by coordinating research with industry, coordinating cooperative

training with industry, and, ultimately, giving industry a role in the administration through appointing certain academic chairs. This is the kind of direction the Science Council applauds.

The kind of university that we structure has a terrific, if not an obvious, effect on the kind of society we build. The myriad and complex value questions we are confronted with, such as abortion, language rights, Canadian independence, nuclear energy, the effects of the computer era, and foreign policy, are fundamental issues that demand a training in analysis that doesn't come from math textbooks. Churning out technical experts will not save Canada, although the simplicity of such a solution is tempting.

Without denying that Canada would be much better off economically with a strong base of technical know-how in the electronics and energy fields, the implications for universities are fundamental and cannot be left to governments that operate on short term returns.

Axworthy is going to get his 'money's worth'. So, before we find ourselves as training pools for industry, or for Canada Inc., universities had better start talking about what their value to society is, before the government makes the decision for them.



If you're "Frenchie" or "Newfie" do not tarry
In our fair western city of Cal-gary

We've got a mean hombre by the name of Klein
Who's itchin' to bust all you eastern swine

Oh to Cal-gary do not come
We don't need no crooks and bums
'Specially when they're eastern ones

Oh to Cal-gary do not come
We don't need no crooks and bums
We're happy with our home-grown ones

LETTERS

Speak up, Prez

To the Editor, the Student Union, and President MacKay,

The university has a large financial deficit. This was the overwhelming conclusion reached by the panelists in a discussion in the Green Room last Friday. How this will affect students in terms of the cost and the quality of their education is still negotiable.

Personally, I left the Green Room feeling very disappointed not only by the low turnout of students, but also by the knowledge that time is running out for the Student Union if it hopes to make a significant impact on the decision-making process. Student representatives and politicians (including myself) are unclear what position to adopt if they are forced to choose between higher tuition fees, increasing non-replacement of faculty, deteriorating library and

equipment facilities and declining ancillary services. The Student Council has yet to take up a stance beyond the general assertions that we want higher education to be "accessible," of a "high quality" and "rationally planned." We all know now that the deficit exists and must be addressed responsibly by all those involved.

Only when your student representatives on council know what you think about these various options for coping with the deficit can they honestly represent your views. If we are not prepared to talk about this and come to some conclusions we are essentially allowing the university administration to inflict upon us any kind of tuition fee increases it desires. Tell your representative before the decision is taken out of our hands.

One thing is clear. If President MacKay quietly accepts any more inadequate M.P.H.E.C. and provincial government fund-

ing announcements as reasonable and acceptable the students, faculty and support staff will bear the major cost of his silence.

Peter Rans

Hear, hear, arts students

To Art Students,

Are you aware that by being an Arts student you are automatically a member of one of the largest societies on campus? The Arts Society is an umbrella organization which helps coordinate events of each individual society under its jurisdiction. It is the financial clearing house for the money each Arts student pays to the student union for the Arts Society functioning role.

The Arts Society is gathering

momentum fast and will provide each arts student with an Arts week. The Arts Week will have events that will bring all Arts students closer together, making them a strongly knit community on campus. It will start with the registration of all Arts students (your cooperation will be necessary). Other events to be provided are film festivals, booze-ups, etc. So if you have been asking yourself who is there to look after you on the sprawling megalopolis of the Dalhousie campus, here is your answer.

The president, Kelly Spurr, and a small but dedicated Arts Society staff are at your disposal. If you have any questions or comments you can talk to someone in the Arts Society office on the fourth floor of the S.U.B. or call 424-2533. Find out if you can help and make friends.

Rob Stanley