

Royalty Goes Elitist

What is a University? What is fair to the students? What is fair to the cost-sharing public? These are some of the questions that arise in the "Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial - Municipal Relations" commonly referred to as the "Graham Report".

To get to the substance of this article, I would like to refer to Volume 1, Section 61-65, Sub-Section 4: "Fifty per cent of total expenditures on graduate, medical, and dental studies ... and eighty per cent of the cost of all other programmes, is probably a reasonable estimate of the institutional cost that should be born by the students ... To ensure that university education is available to all who have the capacity and interest, without being restricted to an economic elite, generous student assistance should be available. In the first year of university, most of this assistance should be in the form of grants; for the first-year students, university is an experiment, which may or may not be successful, and too large a debt would discourage many who would benefit from attending."

Was that clear? We will pay **eighty per cent** of the **true** cost of our undergraduate education. At the moment we are paying less than twenty-five per cent. Can you afford to take a two thousand dollar jump in fees? Will not the very rich or the very scholastic be the only students at the university?

The reason for the increase in tuition is most unclear. The explanation that the students would finally pay for what they get, is the illogical approach of a first year Economics student. We will pay for our education, all of it, but not in a lump sum and not with such pain.

When you build a bridge, you don't ask the people that use it to pay twenty-five dollars per trip. It doesn't make sense; no one will use it, and a true debt will be incurred. The owners would charge twenty-five cents and pay for the bridge in thirty years.

The same is true with the university. While we are here, we will pay our twenty-five cents, (or the seven hundred and twenty-one dollars) and then for the rest of our lives, we will pay for our "inexpensive" education.

Why then would anyone want such a plan? The Americans have universities where tuition costs well over three-thousand dollars per year, and they are going broke. Can't we learn from others' mistakes?

In the past, universities were for the elite. If the present Graham report recommendations are used, then all students of middle class standing and lower will become extinct.

Student loans are not the answer. Borrowing three thousand dollars for a university education is bad enough, but try tripling that amount! Can the average student take that chance? What kind of adult life can you have with this debt pulling you down? How many students would borrow fifteen thousand dollars and then have to declare themselves bankrupt? Would the government prefer this?

Whether or not any of these recommendations are acted upon, is conjecture at this point. Hopefully the government of Nova Scotia will realize that these plans are impractical. This study is projected to come into effect on April 1, 1976. Those of us here at Dalhousie now could be the last middle class graduates of this university. Ridiculous isn't it?

Canada's Oldest College Newspaper

The Dalhousie GAZETTE is the weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union. The views expressed in the paper are not necessarily those of the Student Union, the university administration, the editor, or the staff. We reserve the right to edit or delete copy for space or legal reasons. Deadline date for letters to the GAZETTE and outside contributions is the Friday preceeding publications. No anonymous material will be accepted, but names may be withheld on request if there are extenuating circumstances. The Dalhousie GAZETTE is a founding member of Canadian University Press.

Co-Editors:

Susan Monaghan
Mary Pat MacKenzie
Paul Brooks

Business & Advertising Manager:

Room 334, Student Union Building
Subscription Rates: \$5.00 per year [26 issues]

This issue's staff and contributors:

Debra Bezanson
Dona Bulgin
Peter Cameron
Sheila Cameron
Tom Clahane
Peter O. Clark
Hugh Campbell
Bill Cooper
Mike Cormier
L.T. Donovan

Catherine Dyke
William Forsyth
Joel Fournier
Lynne Garland
David Grandy
Michael Greenfield
Barren Kamperman
Victor Lynch-Stauton
Kevin Moore

Ron Norman
Daniel O'Connor
Dan Robichau
John Ross
Colin Smith
Helen Spinelli
Mark Teehan
Kathy Tyler
Richard Vaillancourt