

## Adequate housing a must

# Are we asking too much?

by Martin Kennedy

Dalhousie University is currently experiencing one of the worst housing problems ever. The administration, however, refuses to take action despite the fact that there is a desperate lack of adequate accommodations.

John Graham, the Director of Housing, agrees that "there is a problem in the sense that students can not find the type of accommodations they desire. It is virtually impossible for a student desiring off-campus accommodation to find a place which meets all of his demands. Students, possibly because of today's more affluent society, have raised their expectations. Cleanliness, convenience, and privacy are now becoming more important to students than in the past."

Graham also points out that the university believes it is doing its share with regard to providing students with accommodations. "The university is providing almost 1/3 of the student enrollment with beds. That is better than many other urban universities."

He also states that there is a great variety of accommodations available. He agrees, however, that there is a serious shortage of student houses and off-campus accommodations in general. Yet

this is exactly the type of accommodations that many students now prefer.

Beverley Merkely, Accommodations Officer, agrees that the housing problem is becoming desperate.

"The problem of finding suitable off-campus accommodations is the worst ever. The number of students seeking apartments has increased sharply. All that we can provide them with are lists of available accommodations and, this year, the lists are pretty cheezy."

The University is providing about 160 students with accommodations in university-owned houses located in and around the campus. These people are spread throughout 30 buildings in approximately 60 apartments. Merkeley states that the waiting list for these very limited accommodations is unbelievable and "stretches back over two years or more."

Thus, it does indeed seem that many students prefer these kinds of accommodations. Yet all of these houses are being rented to the students on a temporary basis only. The university is now considering tearing down some of these buildings to make room for a new Athletic Centre.

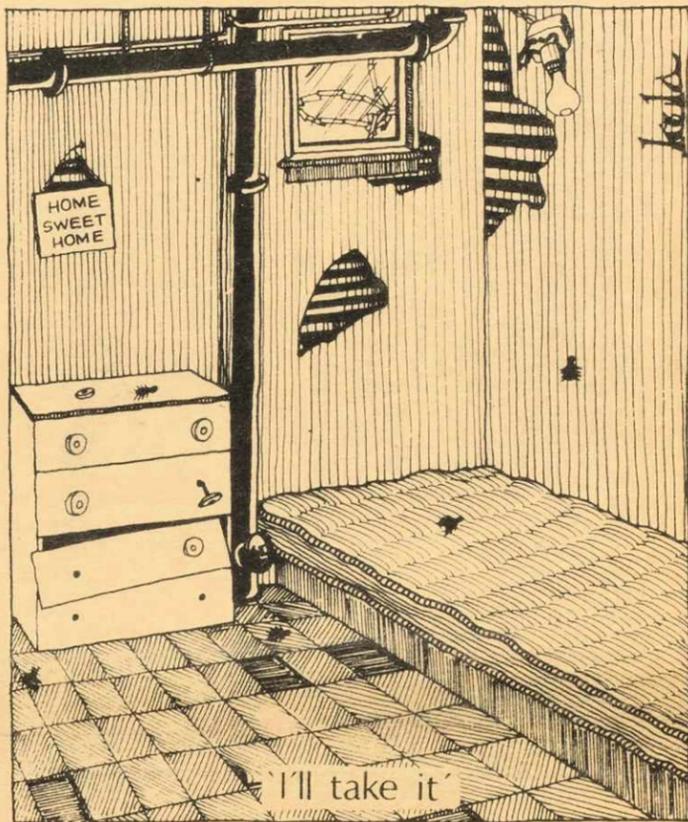
There are certain facts concerning housing that the

administration must face. The first one is that many students prefer accommodations other than the type that the university offers. (For several reasons — atmosphere, a dislike for institutions, etc.) To be sure, the residences are filled. Yet, there is practically no overflow or waiting list whatsoever for these places. In fact, as of September 27, there were still 15 empty beds in Fenwick. These are to be given out on a first-come first-served basis.

James Sykes, Dalhousie's Director of Planning and Development, reports that "we are not working on anything actively with regard to housing." The plans for "Paradise Lands" (an apartment building for students) were "shelved indefinitely" upon the acquisition of Fenwick. However, Fenwick has not solved the housing problem.

Reasonable-priced apartments, housekeeping rooms, bedsitting rooms, etc. are badly needed. Married students, particularly, are finding it tough to find a decent place to live. Thus, even if the plans for Paradise Lands were reactivated, the problem would still remain. What this university needs least of all is another Fenwick.

The whole problem is essentially one of priorities. The



—from the Ubysey, UBC

same university that argues it is economically unfeasible to provide more houses for students near the campus also wastes vast sums of money on structures such as the Life Sciences Centre. In fact, as noted previously, the University is destroying those places which many students want most.

The administration must also open its eyes with regard to the housing situation that exists in Halifax generally. Dalhousie is not located in just any urban community. Halifax has possessed a housing problem for a long time.

This university can not remain blind to the plight of the poor who must live in slum areas. Both students and the poor regrettably find themselves in competition for places that aren't worth fighting for in the first place.

The quality of the places

available for students who prefer off-campus accommodations leaves much to be desired. Many students are forced to pay outrageously high prices and yet receive miserable living conditions in exchange.

Many steps could be taken to alleviate the problem. Rental control boards could be established. Supervisors could be appointed to inspect places offered to students and determine whether or not they meet accepted living standards. There are many things that the students could do for themselves. Yet, it is also about time that the University administration woke up and took some action.

Perhaps students are indeed getting a bit more selective about how they want to live. Well, it's about time.

## Drug stores raided

Three large-scale drug raids were carried out last week against two local drug stores and a doctor said to be prescribing dangerous drugs, according to a member of the New Morning Collective.

The member said the raids, executed by the Collective and Needleworks, a drug rehabilitation centre, were designed to underline the conviction that Lawton's drugs (Gottingen and Cunard Streets), Balcom-Chittick (Gottingen and Young) and Dr. Clinton Browne, have knowingly been prescribing potentially harmful drugs in large quantities to patients.

According to the member, files in Dr. Browne's office on Gottingen Street were smashed in attempt to find lists of people to whom "he was dealing." The list, apparently known to raiders, was "missing."

According to the source, about \$750 worth of damage was

caused at the Lawton's store and more than \$1000 at the Balcom-Chittick store. All the raids were carried out during the day on September 27 and 28, he said.

Two people are said to have been arrested and charged, though there is no confirmation from Halifax Police. One was charged with attempted robbery. The second was charged with malicious mischief in connection with the Balcom-Chittick raid.

According to the member, "legal drugs are the major problem at this time. Therefore we have moved against the most blatant drugs and drug killers."

New Morning has been conducting a quiet campaign against "death drugs" since last January. They have been talking with doctors, druggists and people in the community. The situation, says the member, "became totally unacceptable.

Therefore we had to move. There will be further actions, concentrating on education, and using the trial as a focal point with the emphasis that the situation has to clear up or we'll move again."

Before the actions took place, there was acceptance of the fact that there would very likely be arrests. The member said, "We're not going to deny that we did these actions. We just want to put forward why we did it."

The member says they are going to concentrate their efforts against the system of production and distribution of these drugs. He says that it is not only a youth problem but that all ages in all economic classes are affected.

He also stated that the major manufacturer of these drugs is Lily Manufacturing Company of the United States and that a boycott is already underway there.

There has been a fair amount of response to our request for complaints about housing conditions in the September 22 edition of the GAZETTE. All information concerning the present housing situation is now being compiled.

In spite of the official position i.e. "There is no housing crisis," the response to our request demonstrates the opposite.

This week a petition will be circulated. The purpose of

this will be to show the dissatisfaction of students with the situation and demand that action be taken to improve the situation. There will also be room for individual complaints. This petition will be presented to various people in authority around Halifax.

Your continued support is necessary. There are plans for definite action in the near future. Watch — Look — Listen!