

EDITORIAL

\$20,000 Cut on SUB Expansion Project

by Kwame Dawes

At the end of last year, I expressed a hope that the newly elected Student Union Executive would carefully study the objectives laid out by the previous year's Executive and from them formulate a plan for the 1990-1991 year. Central to this suggestion was the importance of continuity. As I recall, one of the ambitious plans of the Carson administration was the pursuing of the SUB expansion. That Council actually went as far as to include in their proposed budget for the following year, a sum of some twenty thousand dollars for a feasibility study on the issue. Significantly, this year's budget indicates that the present student government regards the allocation as useless. No money has been put aside for more study on the issue and from all indications, the money allocated for that feasibility study was never used in a productive and satisfactory manner - at least according to Greg Lutes, Vice President Finance. When questioned about the reason for this change in the budget, Lutes stated that "nothing really happened with it this year" and, further, that he felt that the question of a SUB expansion was not something that should rely on the student's money. According to him, "The SUB expansion will have to happen through the province and the university."

Lutes, who is now President, has impressed me this year with his conscientious attitude towards student money and his conviction that students need not be tasked unnecessarily by the Union. It would seem to me that his view of the expansion question in this instance reflects his feeling that the twenty thousand dollars of the Student fee allocated last year was totally unreasonable. Lutes may have a point there, but one wonders whether he is naive in assuming that either the University or the province will have any interest at all in leading the way towards a SUB expansion.

If the statements made by President Robin Armstrong about the question are anything to go by, (See *Brunswickan* Exclusive Interview Issue #18, Feb. 8th) it would seem that the University will be less likely to act without some serious initiative taken by the Student Council. Perhaps when the building becomes impossible to maintain at its present size and when its absolute inadequacy as a student centre has reached embarrassing levels, somebody may act. If the administration does act without the initiative of the Student Union, it is very likely that the already firm hold that it has on the running of the building will grow even tighter. Students will have less to say about what happens in the space. The implications for space allocation, tenders, and the mercantilistic aspect of the building as a result of this should not be underestimated.

To my mind, the drop from twenty thousand dollars to zero is too drastic. There are some fundamental questions that students need to have answered if they are to properly handle the question: Can we afford to be involved in a SUB expansion initiative? To get these answers, some money will have to be spent. Secondly, the Bourque administration has a responsibility to the students to let them know what, if anything, was done with last year's allocation of twenty thousand dollars. We are still not certain that anything substantial was done with these funds. The two points listed above are related. As I understood it then, the study was proposed as a means of granting the students a fair chance at addressing the question of a SUB expansion for themselves. These questions should be answered.

I would seriously suggest that Council reevaluate the decision not to allocate funds for the issue if only because it indicates a dismissal of a mandate placed on the current executive by the Carson regime. The SUB is too small for the number of students at this university today but there is some debate as to whether an expansion is what is needed or whether another building needs to be added; one that perhaps deals with the students who are located on the opposite end of campus. Perhaps a preliminary survey of the people who use the SUB and their response to the question of the expansion may be a useful start.

Voter Turnout Falls

Based on initial estimates, it appears as if the voter turnout for this year's elections has dropped somewhat since last year. An estimated 20% of students voted this year in comparison to last year's estimate of 23%. I have been informed that while there have been more impressive years (the Bosnitch years saw voter turnouts reaching as high as 30%), there have also been years in which the voter turnout was as low as 13%. Greater dialogue on the elections could lead to greater voter participation and *The Brunswickan* could, and should have taken more of an initiative in seeing this happen. Student interest in elections has a great deal to do with the extent to which the platforms of the various candidates are debated effectively in a medium that is accessible to students. As it stands, *The Brunswickan* is the ideal place for such debate. In this regard, I think we may have failed the students somewhat and expect to correct that situation in the future.

In the meantime, it is important that we congratulate those who won positions on Council this year and commend all who chose to run for office and lost. They have shown a tremendous amount of school spirit which should not be taken for granted. The new office-holders have a great responsibility before them for next year and I wish them all the best.

Offensive Cartoon

In last week's issue of the paper, we ran a cartoon that by any estimates was highly offensive. This cartoon was aimed at the gay community. While I grow weary of having to publish retractions after the fact, and while I am tempted to go to great lengths in explaining how material like this does end up being published in a paper that is reputedly against the publication of such literature, I will refrain from doing so and simply, but sincerely, state that we regret any offence that said article caused and assure you that the error was inadvertent.

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by Dave Smith

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