

# pushing the marshmellow

## editorial

To push the marshmellow around means to attack problems on the surface leaving their roots and ultimately their causes untouched. And marshmellow pushing is the favourite sport of most politicians, in fact of most interest groups which attempt to solve the problems of their membership. It was in this position that CUS found itself several years ago, particularly when it began to make demands upon the economic structure, such as student loans and adequate student housing. One cannot demand a larger slice of the pie without considering the adverse effects this demand will make on other sectors of the community. To do so is to play one part of the community off against another in the familiar game of power politics, in which those with the greatest resources, usually economic, come up as winners. We must make our demands, then, fully conscious of the needs of the rest of the community. It means a rigorous questioning of the social priorities of Canada.

For CUS this analysis began when it considered the relationship of the university to the society in an attempt to evolve a rational concept of the university which would be beneficial to all members of the society rather than a few. But a close look at the university shows that not only is the content, that is, research and information, derived mainly for the benefit of the corporate society, but also the structure of the university restricts accessibility to those who can afford it leaving the class distinctions in our society intact. Research in Canada is largely devoted not to the alleviation of regional economic disparity, the housing crisis, unemployment, and poverty but rather to the development of a corporate economy and military machinations.

Very little has been done in Canada to guarantee real accessibility to higher learning either financial or

socially. The only attempt to ensure that money was made available albeit in the form of burdensome loans was brought about by pressure exerted by CUS.

But the university does not carry on its activities in isolation from the society; in fact the society demands that the university provide the kinds of services that it does. Hence it is the structure of our society that we must in great measure examine, along with the presumptions that underlie its political and social priorities. This means political pronouncements about the tax structure (Carter Report) and the economic independence of our country (Watkins Report), for it is very much these issues which determine our ability to strive towards humanist goals.

Yet while there is a need to develop an overall view of the university and the society, and while this overview is beneficial not only to students but to the rest of society as well, the students' immediate needs and problems must also warrant a great deal of attention by any organization which purports to represent its interests. This doesn't mean dances or yearbooks but it does mean housing, financing, jobs, and the quality of the education that one receives at university. It means that CUS must attempt to find at least temporary solutions to these problems not greatly at odds with the social development of the rest of the society.

The present turmoil within CUS exists because of the imperfect reconciliation of these two needs; yet there are real attempts being made to fulfil the needs of the Canadian student in the context of the needs of the Canadian society. These attempts can only become a reality with the full support of the students in Canada. We urge you to give your full support to CUS on your campus in the upcoming referendum.

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OFFICE: Room 415, Dalhousie Student Union Building.

TELEPHONES: 424-2507, -2350, -2351.

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