

Students aware and concerned

Last week's demonstration at Province House proved that not only hockey can generate student spirit. It also proved that students are aware and concerned about the problems facing them in pursuing their education.

Premier Buchanan's hollow oratory about his commitment to education was rejected as a substitute to government action. His government's "commitment" to monitor tuition increases and to "gear-up" a so far non-existent summer employment program and the student aid plan are nebulous enough to justify inaction a few months from now.

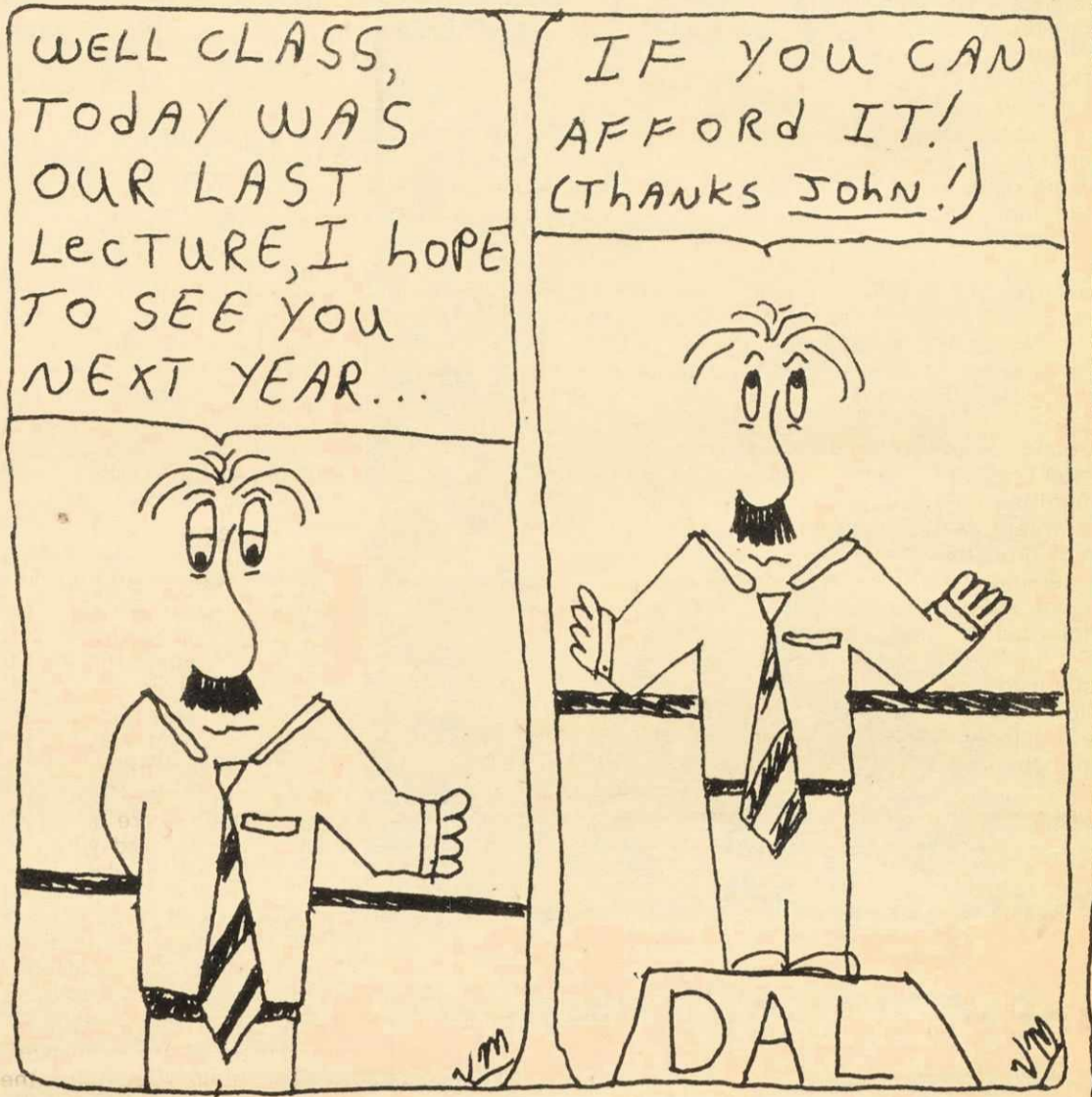
Buchanan's paternalistic comments at the demonstration, his refusal to answer a question about the federal government funding, and the local media's misleading coverage are three examples of how much work students still have to do to make a case for an accessible, quality education.

The public (to a limited extent) and the government have seen the ground swell of student concern to higher fees and lower quality. Now it's up to student leaders and representatives to follow through these concerns at the bureaucratic level. Boards of Governors will be meeting over the next few months to set tuition for next year. Student reps should be prepared to take a hard line—articulating the case for freezing the fees at present levels and speaking out against rising residence fees.

Student council leaders, out of the television lights and meetings with ministers, could drop back to their usual state of inactivity if not prodded. Council is the primary mechanism to formulate a student position and bring it to Board and Senate finance committees. Council structure is the students resource in gathering and presenting the information to support the call for no more cutbacks.

When the government announced its 5.5 per cent increase Henry Hicks said Dalhousie would have an announcement on tuition by the end of March (while students were still on campus). We haven't heard anything except the Board of Governors' finance committee has been meeting regularly and the full board meeting has been pushed back until after exams.

That Hicks (a liberal Senator) would want to make political mileage out of an unpopular PC announcement is predictable. But students should realize that the administration, while worried about the quality they are offering, are still going to look to students to pick up the tab.



the Dalhousie Gazette

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The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64-character line and double spaced.

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