

# LETTERS

## Owen slams MacKay for lack of political action

Dear President MacKay:

I am writing this letter to express the concern and dissatisfaction of the Council of Students in regards to statements made by yourself during a forum on The Future of University Financing on January 26th.

Although you pointed to several areas within the university where significant funding increases were essential, you argued that the funding recommendations put forth by the MPHEC were realistic, in light of the N.S. government's current financial situation. In addition, you stated that it is a fact of life that tuition will increase at an annual rate of 10%; when the MPHEC announced its recommendations, it was with the expectation that tuition fees will increase at a rate similar to the increase in general operating assistance.

We are gravely concerned that the university administration has, to date, no official

steps to refute the Commission's recommendations. In their submission to the MPHEC, the Atlantic institutions requested a 13.2% increase in government assistance, a request which excluded any allowance for inflation. In rejecting this request, the Commission recognized the factors which led to the institutions putting it forth; the decline in institutional spending power; salary increments considerably lower than the cost of living; the differential between faculty salary levels within the region and those in other provinces; reductions in numbers of employees; reductions in course offerings; reduction in expenditures of a discretionary nature, such as equipment replacement; tuition fee increases similar to grant increases; and extraordinary increases in fuel costs. In neglecting to argue that the Commission's recommendations are insufficient, we feel that the university administra-

tion is accepting these factors as conditions to be tolerated by the administration. They are unacceptable, not only to the students of this university, but to the entire Dalhousie community. Your statements gave us no assurance that the administration will attempt to outline the university's current position to the N.S. government, in view of inadequate funding increases in previous years (7.2%, 8.8%, and 5.9% increases in operating grants in 1977, 1978, and 1979, respectively).

We are concerned that government support for N.S. institutions continues to be low by comparison with other universities (per student expenditures at the university level in N.S. in 1977-78 was \$1,483 below the Canadian average). In April 1977, the Commission reported "Further increases in the disparities between institutions in the Maritimes and the rest of Canada will undoubtedly

result in a lower quality of post-secondary education in the Maritime provinces... and a reduction in the educational opportunities for Maritime students" (MPHEC, In Process... pg. 29). In April of 1980, the Commission reported the educational level of Maritimers to be lower than the Canadian average, and that post-secondary participation rates for Maritime residents have also been lower than the national average (Planning for the Eighties, pg. 42). At the same time, the Commission has recognized the effect of under-funding: "the disappearance of programmes or the further reduction of programme quality will also result in a weakening of a specialized expertise that is available to the region at the institutions (Issues for the Eighties, June 1979, pg. 51). Adequate provincial financial increases must be made to the universities in this province,

and to Dalhousie, in order that we might increase the educational opportunities for Nova Scotia students, the participation rate in post-secondary education by Nova Scotia residents, and at least maintain the programme quality and specialized expertise that is available to the region.

The Commission has made its recommendation — 10.3% (12.7% for Dalhousie University). The provincial government will be announcing its funding increases shortly. We urge the university administration to take immediate steps to encourage the N.S. government to provide a fair and equitable increase in order to preserve the post-secondary system in Nova Scotia, and protect the future of Nova Scotia residents.

Yours sincerely,

C.G. Owen, President,  
Dalhousie Student Union

## Whale lover rejects claims of Wildman Dave

Dear Wildman,

Although you hit upon the subject matter most on people's minds, whales on campus, you took the wrong side of the situation. In categorizing yourself as "champion" of students you have made a mistake, the better word being "chumpion".

Having strolled through many University campuses, I find it extremely boring. Not here at Dal, though. I mean when you walk here, you stay alert, lest you trip over a whale. And what better way to start a conversation with the girl next to you, than to mention how lovely that whale you just passed was.

You mention the whales are attracted here by the large amount of plankton contained in the diplomas. Come on Wildman, everyone knows it is the friendly atmosphere at Dal, which attracts these whales, although I will be the first to admit that there is something "fishy" about a lot of diplomas given out. You also say that it is embarrassing to stumble over a sperm whale while out walking with your girlfriend. While I certainly see nothing here to cause you to be red-faced unless of course you were hiding the fact of your sterility. Another objection concerning your outrageous statements. Do you really think the Faculty Club can serve up whale? Have you ever eaten whale? If you answer yes to either of these questions then all I can say is that you are full of blubber.

After being at Dal for nearly two years now, I have become quite close to these not so

fine-feathered friends of ours, and so what if they are dead, so are a lot of professors here.

And regardless of all this, you pay one thousand dollars to go

here, and if you cannot even have the green room cleaned and kept open for that, how do you expect them to get rid of the strewn carcasses?

I suggest you change your

opinion Wildman Dave, just stop complaining and go out and have a whale of a time like the rest of us. And always remember to be proud that

you are attending the only university in Canada with whales on campus.

Sincerely yours,  
Whale Lover Rusty

## More on abortion

Letter to the Editor:

I should like to respond to Heather Herington's letter of last week which dealt with my Commentary of the previous week on the issue of abortion.

First, Ms. Herington states that my Commentary was a dismissal of the local Abortion Information Referral Service. In fact, I in no way intended to dismiss the AIRS. Far from it. I recognize that AIRS receives a good deal of exposure on the Dalhousie campus, both in the student media and in informal circles. Many students are aware of the existence of AIRS; however, quite a few do not know exactly what the Service stands for. The purpose of my Commentary, then, was to reveal, and not to dismiss.

Second, Ms. Herington makes reference to the Birthright organization in a rather disparaging manner. The very manifest criticism contained in her letter is that Birthright unconditionally rejects abortion, even in cases when the mother's health is in danger. But what is so objectionable about Birthright's position? For its advocacy is simply that one human life should not take precedence of another. Surely, no one can question this statement.

Third, Ms. Herington is

very concerned that to bring an unwanted child into the world is to invite visitations of hardship on both the child and the family. I share these concerns. However, in recent years numerous social-service agencies—both public and private—have been created to succour difficult home situations. But in any event, I cannot be convinced that any sort of economic consideration should ever in any respect be decisive in a young mother's decision to end her child's life.

Fourth, Ms. Herington posits that pro-life advocates do not concern themselves with methods to change the numbers of unwanted pregnancies. This is most unfair—and very untrue. One method which the pro-life movement strongly advances is **responsibility**. Much unnecessary suffering in the world today could be avoided if we all availed ourselves of this rare commodity. Another method, one which has received widespread recognition and approbation, is the natural family planning technique for married couples.

Fifth, Ms. Herington states in justification of her position that it is a woman's right to choose. To choose what, I ask? To take a human life? That's very odd, because

I've heard it said on several occasions that pro-life proponents should not impose their personal choices on others. Are pro-abortionists allowed to impose their choices on the unborn child? Obviously, there is a double standard operative here.

Finally, I certainly recognize that there are occasions when a woman's pregnancy might genuinely not have been desired; tragic and painful instances of rape immediately come to mind. But does the fact that a pregnancy was not desired deprive the child of his rights? In making a point on this issue, a friend of mine asked a rhetorical question: "Do we have the right to ask for help?" Hmm. Now that's something to think about. Because when it comes right down to it, all the unborn child is asking for is some help: a bit of shelter and a little nourishment. Not too much to ask at all.

Del Atwood

Dear Editor,

I was shocked and angered by Del Atwood's attack on abortion rights in the February 5 issue. While the Abortion Information and Referral Service is providing women with the information they need to make educated decisions, Atwood would prefer for outsiders to interfere with this personal decision-making process to lobby against one

of the choices available: that of abortion. Atwood makes a specious comparison between this and purely medical decisions. The decision whether to bear a child is not the same as whether to operate on a tumour; it is not one which any expert is qualified to make on one's behalf. It falls in the category of personal life choices and has implications for one's career, economic status and relationships as well as one's health. Atwood is quicker to accord a fetus "his" rights than to accord to adult women, who are surely "sentient and fully responsive human persons", the right to determine the course of their own lives and to control their own bodies. It is interesting to note that, while Atwood thinks that a newly conceived fetus is a person, Canadian law denied that status to women until 1929.

The right to choose abortion is no more or less a right than the right to safe, effective, cheap, accessible birth control, to universal free daycare, to job protection and paid leave for pregnant women, to equal pay for work of equal value, to the freedom to choose one's sexual orientation. Without all these rights, women cannot be said to be truly free, either to bear or not to bear children.

Robin Metcalfe