

# Tough get going; the rest go to Student Help

**by the staff of Student Help**  
How do the "tough" get going? All of us suffer from lack of motivation at times and this month always sees an increase in calls to our office from students concerned about their inability to get going. We thought an article addressing motivational problems, their factors and some general tips on how to beat them might be timely.

The all-important question is - surprise, surprise - not how, but why. There is an almost infinite variety of reasons for individual *laissez-faire*; we agree they break down into three main areas, namely distraction, apathy, and anxiety.

Distractions are alternative demands on time and/or

thoughts. They can be positive (e.g. extracurricular involvements, a busy social life) or negative (e.g. problems with relationships, finances, home life).

Apathy, on the other hand, deals not with the allocation of energies elsewhere, but with the absence of any energy at all. It can be rooted in depression or other deep-seated issues, but it is also a normal result of ordinary old exhaustion - and we all get apathetic periodically!

As for anxiety! Everyone has what is called an "optimal level" of anxiety, which means that up to a certain point it is a factor which enhances performance. Past the optimal level, too much anxiety inhibits it.

Obviously, some self-examination is called for here. Where do you fit in? Did last week's hectic schedule or crisis keep you from your books? Did you avoid other things you usually have an interest in doing, simply letting time pass? Did you find yourself inexplicably upset over assignments you were unable to start or finish?

So much of this article is given over to the "why" of lack of motivation because we find pinpointing the roots is not only the first but the most important step to overcoming the problem. If you're still with us, you obviously want to beat the bugbear - congratulations!

You don't have to do it alone. Call on whoever you feel comfortable talking to about the problem - family, friends, profs, Student Counselling Services and Student Help are all potential listeners.

Distracted? Draw a time chart, look at where your time goes. If you've over-extended yourself, pare back where you can, tell your friends you're struggling and don't waste too much time on casual acquaintances. If you're trying to cope with an upset which might take some time resolving itself, we can't recommend strongly enough that talking to somebody does help. Make a study schedule and resist the temptation to cheat on it.

If you think your problem stems from apathy, and you don't

think exhaustion is causing it, maybe some soul-searching is called for. Is coming to University something you chose for yourself? If the pressure to enrol came from anywhere except within, examine the importance of being here to you. Do you have a career-goal for which University equips you? What are your alternatives?

Anxiety only becomes a barrier to studying when you experience too much of it. If you do, re-examine the standards you've set yourself. Could you accept a lesser grade? Look at your record. Do you usually pass your courses? In many cases the answer to both questions is "yes", and any means of relieving what is an irrational fear is to be recommended. If you genuinely feel you have to struggle to meet minimum grade requirements, remind yourself that extreme anxiety will hinder your efforts and consider some self-help programs. One we recommend is the Study Skills course at Student Counselling Services.

Hopefully this article has helped you look at yourself and some of the reasons behind lack of motivation. If you can't see yourself depicted here, or if what you see looks overwhelming, please call us, drop in to our office in Rm. 250 SUB, 432-4266 or appeal to any other support system at your disposal. If you feel ready to begin, the following tips might help:

—Assess how and where you study best:

Alone or in company? At home or in a study hall? Immediately after classes, after a short break, or after a couple of hours off? In short spells with breaks or in long concentrated blocks?

—Set up a study schedule.  
—Establish a familiar study environment.

—A "warm-up" period is necessary for any activity; once warmed up, stay with it long enough to take advantage of your "plateau"!

—Fresh air is a marvellous refresher. Get some exercise; if you don't have an outdoorsy spirit, walk around the block, blow the cobwebs away, and get back down to it.

—When you think you've had enough - better yet, just before you reach "fed up" - try changing subjects.

—Turn off the T.V. and the radio - no one studies better with them on!

—Remind yourself that a course you may hate is a step closer to finishing; whether you finish may hinge on that course!

—Most important of all is goal setting. Review and affirm your long-term goals; establish short-term ones (e.g. a night off when you've finished so much, a movie when you hand in your essay, etc.) and follow through on the rewards you promise yourself.

## Dam the bison: Slave on

**by Ken Lenz**

The Slave River Hydroelectric Project is in the news again.

Alberta Government Director in charge of Planning and Development, Carl Primus spoke about the project at a meeting of the Energy Study Group and the Environment Protection Study Group last Friday.

"The proposed plant would provide 2500 jobs over a period of 7-8 years, providing about 2,000 megawatts of electricity when completed," stated Primus.

However, there are some problems with the project. The project may endanger the whooping crane which migrates annually to the United States from Canada.

But Primus does not feel this is a problem. "Although there will be power lines constructed the cranes already fly all the way to the

southern United States."

In addition, 15-40% of the bison's range will be flooded as well.

But, Primus again feels this is no problem and states, "Sure that may be a problem but the bison don't use all of their grazing range even now."

The feasibility study completed last October indicated that the major utility companies would have an interest in developing the project providing there are no serious environmental problems.

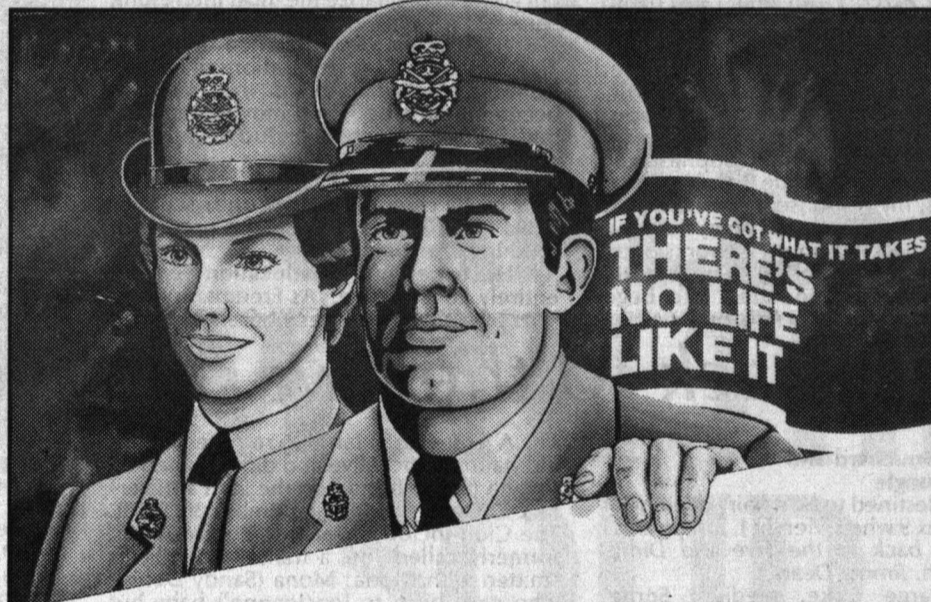
Presently there is a 40 million dollar inquiry investigating the potentially damaging environmental effects the dam will have on the surrounding areas which include Alberta, British Columbia, NWT and Saskatchewan. The report is due in late 1994.

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