



mugwump journal

BY MIKE MACKINNON

Elections are nearly upon us once again. Last year we had a record turnout (nearly 40 per cent). Despite Dalton Camp's belief that apathy is not necessarily bad and students have the right to express their satisfaction through apathy, elections are not the time to apathetic. All of us are directly affected by election results and therefore should vote. If you are dissatisfied with the way things were run this previous year, the elections provide you the opportunity to express that dissatisfaction. Like wise, if you were satisfied, the opportunity is there to express satisfaction. On November 9, vote, because there is no room for apathy in student elections.

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While on the topics of election, I would like to take this opportunity to say good-bye publicly to Brenda Paul and thank her for work as News Editor. Brenda has decided to run for Vice-President and we all wish her luck.

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Entertainment. A rare commodity last year but something we are getting plenty of this year. A great number of bands have been playing in the SUB this last month, some well known and others fairly new on the music scene, but all providing excellent entertainment. John and CSL should be congratulated for ending the drought.

There is one problem though. Why aren't students coming out? It was disappointing to see how poorly attended the Minglewood/Kinetic Ideals pub was. If you want this entertainment to continue, I suggest you start attending some of these pubs. They won't continue if the lack of turnout continues.

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I realize not all students can get their hands on a typewriter, so it is understandable that submissions are not typed. However, it requires very little effort to make your hand writing legible (try printing) by double spacing and writing on one side of the paper. In future, illegible submissions, including letters to the editor, will be refused because out typesetter does not need the headache (or the editors) of trying to decipher a page of hyroglyphics. Please print and double space your submissions.

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I was recently told some students prefer not to pay the \$40 SRC fees because all they get is a Student ID, something they don't need. How wrong can you be? The SRC fees pay for many services and clubs provided by the Student Union. Without the fees there would be no Brunswickan or CHSR. There would be none of the many clubs or organizations that now exist. Without the fees we would have no yearbook or directory. Think about it. Don't you at some time use one of these services? If not then you have a right to complain about the fees, but I seriously doubt if there is a single person who fits into this category.

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The following paragraph was omitted from Toks Akpata's letter to the editor entitled "Wrestler...".
"I was not almost smothered. Nobody asked me if I minded being pinned or not, so keep your dirty thoughts to yourself." This omission was not intentional and was an error in typesetting.

editorial

8-THE BRUNSWICKAN October 28, 1983

Literacy a university concern

This year the arts faculty has introduced compulsory courses for its freshmen, Arts 1000 and English 1000. Also, this year STU has dropped its English 100 equivalent, Writing 100, from being compulsory. According to Professor Ploude, to draw a connection between the fate of Writing 100 and the future of English 1000 is unfair. He says that the two courses are different in two primary ways - first, that the STU course was compulsory for all students and taught by faculty members for different disciplines, whereas English 1000 is compulsory for only Arts Students and is taught by only the English department which has dedicated itself to improving the reading and writing skills of all students it comes in contact with. And secondly, UNB's course is dedicated to smaller classes.

There is an obvious need for the course, as many students arrive at UNB illiterate, and some even leave illiterate, however, there is still the question of making course compulsory in what should be the freest of all faculties. It is maintained, however, that the two compulsory courses in a student's first year do not add much more restrictions than already existed in the faculty. And that those who do take it will be glad that they did if not already then at sometime during their academic career.

By adding this course, and by making all applicants write an English language competency test, the High Schools should recognize what is necessary in their curriculum, namely the English language writing and reading should be taught in High School, and not at university. These skills should be taken for granted in any high school graduate. If they were then the universities would be able to concentrate on more academic subjects, giving themselves the freedom deserved.

These courses are on a three year trial, and should be continued on into the foreseeable future, but should not become a cornerstone for the programme. Pressure, through entrance examinations primarily, but through any other influences the universities can exert on high schools, should be kept up. This way, high schools will recognize their deficiency and take steps to give priority to reading and writing. Once they have done so, then English 1000 can be dropped.

English 1000 should be kept as a temporary measure against present illiteracy problems, and kept temporary for however long it may take.

Economy over society?

The news media have not been giving due weight to the protests in British Columbia aimed at the restraint programme of Bill Bennett's Social Credits. This is because of the media's support of the rightist wing and its hope that the swing will spread across Canada; but they don't want to publish with appropriate significance the actions of the opposing forces of the Socreds because they don't want to claim the voting public.

The Socreds have aimed their majority government at balancing the budget and at restraining of ending expensive social programmes. When the session began in June, Bennett placed + + bills in front of the house. As of now, he has passed all but eight. The goals of four of the remaining bills are: restricting collective bargaining of government employees, eliminating rent controls, restructuring BC Medicare to allow for extra-billing by physicians, and replacing the human rights commission and human rights branch with an appointed five member council. The bills already passed have left many social groups who are quite unequipped to survive without aid completely on their own resources.

To guarantee their success, the Socreds have shown their willingness to use strong arm techniques; witness the physical removing of opposition NDP leader David Barrett from the Chamber, and banning his return for the rest of the session, and the endless weeks of all night sittings in the Legislature to get as much accomplished as quickly as possible, before any real public opposition can be organized. The game is being played very rough in B.C.

Bill Bennett recently recognized that he was coming close to alienating the support of the political centre which won him the election, and he adjourned the Legislature indefinitely for a cooling off period. The public outcry has become strong enough to make him ease off on his blinkered economic approach to government. The protests prove that the issue is larger than just repairing an ill economy.

But what about this blind goal? Responsible government, a balanced budget, and an economy whose strength is the private sector are good goals. the are worth striving for. An why are they worthy goals? They are worthy because with a strong economy there will be full employment, and everybody will have enough money to live decent lives. But the restraint programme, the method, by which the Socreds are trying to achieve their goal, increases unemployment and unjustly injures those segments of society in need of public aid. But, does this make sense? Is the stoic approach necessary? Should we think about the economy first, or people first?

Similar programmes have been implemented in England and America. They have not been without success, but their success has come at considerable cost. Resulting from Thatcher's programmes in England, hordes of disillusioned unemployed punks are fighting in the streets. And America is watching pieces of its society shrivel and die from exposure to the elements, namely the handicapped, the young, and the old. With this cost in human suffering, the economies have seemingly been turned about.

Is this what we want? Do we want to subordinate people to the economy? Have we not created the economy to serve our own ends?

If the Social Credit is successful in British Columbia, then Canada will see a real swing toward the right. If they are unsuccessful, then a leftward swing will result. Either way, future Canadian politics are in the experimental stages in B.C., and the questions posed in this editorial should be given grave consideration.

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