

Response to interview

What is all the bruhaha about a "new society" anyway? Ever since the Prime Minister's infamous interview on December 28 the press and business, labour and political leaders in this country have been condemning him as incompetent and worse, and some have called for his resignation. Of course the press in this country, stuck in the middle of a slow news period, have not helped by blowing the incident, if you can call it that, out of all proportion.

The whole situation is positively ludicrous. The Prime Minister is hardly going to use an interview with a couple of CTV hacks to announce an earth shattering plan for the nation. Furthermore, Canada has not had a completely free economy in living memory and neither has any other western country, so what's the big deal? In his usual manner the Prime Minister rambled on in a philosophical vein about the state of the country in that infamous interview - the demand for clarification shows how truly silly the opinion leaders in this country are.

The speech on Monday night by the P.M. merely restated what was said before and we're certain Mr. Trudeau was wondering what the hell he was doing all the time he was mouthing further truisms about the Canadian economy. Interviews conducted after the speech with Mr. Trudeau's critics did nothing to re-establish their credibility - they still came off sounding like raving fools.

It's about time the press in this country started taking their responsibilities to the Canadian public seriously. If it is a slow news time there is little point in making a tempest in a teapot simply to have something to say. Tempests about nothing confuse the public and serve absolutely no purpose. There is little or no real news analysis done by any Canadian journalist and in a case like the recent one this is painfully obvious. It should have been tactfully pointed out by the Canadian press that the criticism of the P.M.'s remarks was coming from some rather foolish headline grabbers who were obviously living in an imaginary 18th century world and not in a modern Canadian society.

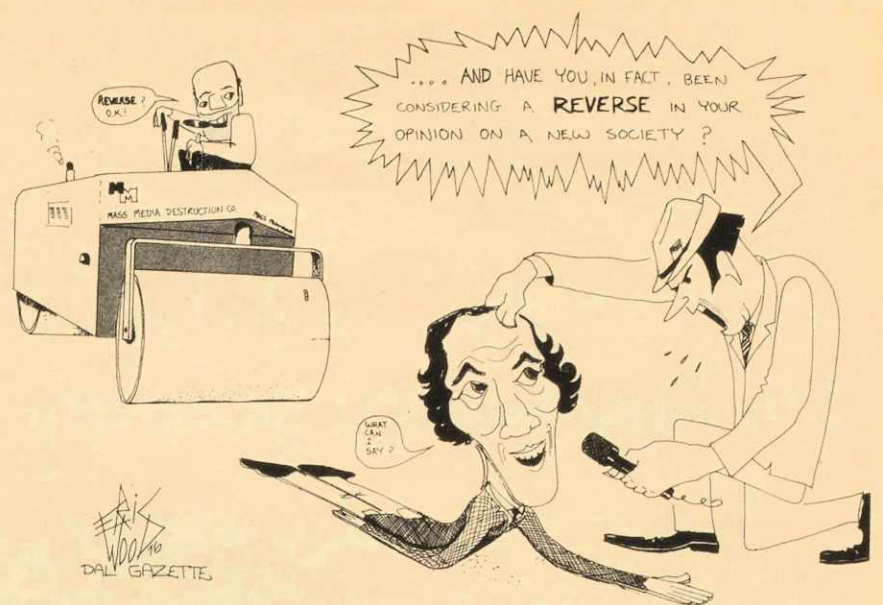
English deficiencies

Not long ago a student was heard to complain in the Gazette office about a term paper mark - hardly an unusual occurrence in the Gazette office but what made the complaint interesting was the reason behind the low mark. Apparently this particular student like many other students at Dalhousie is unable to express himself articulately or correctly in the English language.

More and more students are entering university today without a basic working knowledge of the English language. In some Canadian universities literacy tests are being administered to incoming university freshmen and remedial courses in English grammar are becoming mandatory. University is not the proper place for a student to learn to read and write - grade school is. However, until the Canadian elementary and high schools tighten up their requirements for passing specific grades the universities will have to compensate. The situation is ridiculous.

Some students enter universities from schools which have stressed knowledge of English and unfortunately these students suffer along with the rest when they enter university. The level of class discussion in English classes, for instance, is lower than it should be because the bulk of the students have little or no background in this area. An A or a term paper means less to a student who has technically structured his paper properly when he or she knows that the student sitting next to him or her got a B even though that student can't put a sentence together correctly.

The problem is becoming critical and though it may seem the problem should be solved by our school systems in actual fact universities can play a major role in rectifying the situation. Teachers are trained in universities not in grade schools. Universities must start stressing the value of written English in their B.Ed. programs to ensure that future elementary school students do aspire to a certain level of literacy. Students are literally being handicapped by the very systems established to minimize handicaps.



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Letters

Grad students urge settlement

To the Gazette;

The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students Council urges the University administration to settle the current wage dispute with the maintenance workers. It will be unfortunate for all concerned if the workers are forced to go on strike. Certainly the university has an

obligation to pay its employees a living wage.

Yours sincerely,
John Cheyne,
President,
Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students

All voting members of the Dalhousie Gazette staff are asked to attend the staff meeting on Monday, January 26 at 7:30 P.M. to elect next year's editor. Anyone who has contributed to three or more issues of the Gazette since the last election is considered a voting member of staff.