

Money to blow

Nothing is easier than spending somebody else's money.

Even easier is forgetting that it is somebody else's money.

Your money, as a student and a citizen, is constantly abused.

Even in the far from lofty and influential position of Gateway editor, one can abuse funds provided by students. Working for the Students' Union means that we have free access to office supplies, and can bill long distance calls to the S.U. It would be easy to take all the notepads our hearts desired, or to call up some friends in Montreal — only our consciences serve to stop us.

It seems that the more money involved and the more influential the position, the harder it is to remember the money's source.

Take the SU elections as one example. They cost you an awful lot of money. And those three cute joke slates? Expensive jokes at \$1200 - \$1350 each — money the SU gave them for "campaigns" that not even the slate members expected (or wanted) to win. The Apathy slate members used much of their money on sweatshirts and baseball caps for themselves, claiming them as "campaign material".

Perhaps most irritating was the approval of \$1000 for the "No Referendum" campaign — which was not even orchestrated by a university student. It's easy to give away money like this when you don't see someone actually giving it to you out of his own pocket.

And that's only thousands of your dollars. That's nothing compared to what the federal and provincial governments spend. "Fact-finding" tours are funded by the government to send officials around the world to find out what's already in the files at home. (That's right, Ian Reid.) "Royal Commissions" are set up to discover information that, generally, isn't acted upon. (Sinclair Stevens roams free, uncharged.) And the Mulroneys manage very nicely when they go to Paris.

It seems that the farther people in power are from the source of the money they use, the easier it is to spend it frivolously. What's another million when you've spent so much already? Also, the more expensive a project is, the more important it seems to be.

Dealing with numbers in the tens and hundreds of millions is unequal enough; the total amount must become, in the mind of the spender, an abstract notion for which no one actually has to pay. It's easy to imagine a sort of blindness afflicting those people who must manage unimaginable large sums of money.

The fact that this indiscriminate spending is adding to an even more ghostly appropriation, a deficit that grows by 30 billion a year, proves its danger.

This blindness must be cured at the elementary levels, such as student government, where many politicians begin their careers. Indeed, a sense of responsibility must be inculcated into the mind of anyone whose position entails the use of money earned by others.

Elaine Ostry

The Gateway



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The Gateway welcomes letters to the Editor.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. Letters must be signed. Addresses and phone numbers are required but will not be printed.

Letters may be edited for length.

Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU information booth.

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Francophones not Nazis

The recent editorial cartoon comparing francophone Canadians to Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan was surprising to say the least in a university newspaper.

We would like to criticize it for several reasons. The first is that it is clearly ridiculous to expressly imply that a group of franco-albertan parents are the same as Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. These parents and their supporters staged a sit-in: Hitler's Nazis killed six million people and the KKK have killed and terrorized blacks and other minorities with the same ruthlessness and viciousness if not on the same scale. How in the world such a comparison can be made is beyond comprehension. Sit-ins and demonstrations, regardless of what you think of the cause behind them, are simply not the same as genocide!

This cartoon was another example of name-calling replacing reasoned debate or criticism. If you don't agree with someone, calling them a Nazi or a Fascist is a lot easier than arguing with them sensibly.

Another effect of this kind of thing is to belittle the suffering of the victims of the Nazis and of the KKK. The suffering that these groups have inflicted was simply horrendous and to compare the activities of the Nazis and the KKK to a group of non-violent demonstrators is a gross insult to the survivors and victims of the Nazi death camps and the victims of racial violence.

The whole basis of the comparison in this cartoon was that the three groups (the KKK, the Nazis, and the franco-Albertans) all want "racial purity". Now, this is true of the KKK and the Nazis, but it is a totally ridiculous accusation to make against the francophone group. The francophones of Alberta are not made up of one single "race" which they want to protect; their goal in wanting the establishment of a French school is to preserve their language and to some extent their culture. Any comparable anglophone group in Quebec would demand (and receive!) the same.

The dynamics of human relations dictate that it is the language of the majority that will prevail. In Alberta the language of the majority is obviously English. A French school for francophone students would be designed to help prevent these same students from losing their language. At the Faculte Saint Jean we appreciate the difficulty of maintaining a francophone atmos-

phere in our institution in the middle of a totally anglophone milieu.

Our point is though, that whether you agree with the francophone parents or not, the cartoon used to attack them was totally inappropriate and indeed smacks of racism. If such a thing were published by a university newspaper in Quebec attacking an anglophone group, the outcry would be enormous. It seems though, that francophones are still fair game in Alberta.

Sylvain Benoit, Myrielle Loubert, Bernadette Noel, Carmen Vincent, Larry Lynch, Patrick Mullen
 L'Association des universitaires de la Faculte Saint Jean

Connors off base

Re: Quebec too powerful (Gateway, March 17)

Russ Connors is typical of Albertans who, while unashamedly displaying their total cluelessness about Quebec, trot out some half-baked, demi-factual information about the place and call for the rest of us to put the boot in on these blood-sucking French bastards.

In his list of "facinatin' Fas Dat Ervie Albertin' Shud Know" Connors states that Quebec's provincial legislature being called the "National Assembly" indicates that the province sees itself as independent from the rest of Canada. Apart from displaying the ability to spout non-sequiturs at will, Connors shows the inability to hold in his tiny-whiney little mind the idea that "National Assembly" is an historic name and that the word "national" has an entirely different meaning in French. The use of the word "national" does not in any way indicate that the Quebecois see themselves as a separate nation. Hey, Russ did you know that Ontario calls their legislature the "Provincial Parliament". Holy shit, do they think they're a republic too?

Connors points out that Quebec administers their own pension and income tax system as evidence of, I think — for Connors' point is greatly obscured by his own robust and relentless baffle-gab — Quebec's perception of separatism. But Russ, unfortunately, has never heard of section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which gives provinces the undivided power to collect direct taxes. Say Connors, is the full exercise of constitutional power a failure to accept the full responsibilities of confederation?

Connors goes on to say that Quebec got the most federal job creation money in 1986. He adds in parentheses that this money was provided "at the taxpayer's expense." Wow Connors, who do you think we thought provided the money — the job creation fairy? In any case, the fact remains that Quebec is Canada's second largest province in terms of population with the highest number of unemployed persons in absolute terms. Are you opposed to money going to the place with the most jobless, or just to people who speak a different language than you?

Finally, Connors points out that three Quebec judges sit on the Supreme Court, as required by The Constitution. So what? They have one third of the population, roughly, why not give them three judges? Connors goes on to say that "the rest of Canada gets to fight over the other six." This, I'm sorry to say, is pure bullshit. Didn't you know that three judges from Ontario also continually sit on the court by constitutional convention? This means, just to help you with the arithmetic Russ, that the remaining provinces must fight it out for three places on the court.

D. A. Isenegger

Other minorities count too

Re: "French legitimate" (Gateway, Mar. 17)

Mr. Ladous seems to have a more than slightly inflated ego — or perhaps more aptly put — an inflated sense of French nationality. I am not denying that the French should be recognized as a distinct community, but merely that their rights should not be given priority over those of non-French ethnicity (as Mr. Ladous' letter seems to imply). Whether or not the French were fundamental in the "creation of the city of Edmonton" is irrelevant to the issue at hand — ie: equality. The French should not be awarded elevated status on the basis of ancestral contributions to Canada. If they are given any status whatsoever — it should be equal to that given to any other ethnic group, regardless of what their ancestors did or did not do. Ethnic communities, as a whole, deserve equal status — in terms of government recognition. Although I can understand Mr. Ladous' rage, this does not necessitate a downgrading of those of us 'ethnics' unfortunate enough to be amongst the ranks of the underprivileged non-French.

Asma Hassan