

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has once again promised new hope for the financial woes of universities. Slotted between fisheries and forestry in the Throne Speech, major new initiatives were announced for the funding of universities.

Perhaps it's only appropriate. The present group of chief executives in charge of policy-making seem to view universities and the young minds that go into it as a resource to be exploited in the same way as other natural resources.

The attempt to make universities more self-sufficient is a worthy move in itself.

Unfortunately, many things are lost and forgotten in the dust stirred up by the race for private grants and funding. Social justice is just one of those things.

There was a time in the early

sixties when education was seen as a vehicle for social change through the reduction of social inequalities in the access to higher learning. This vision of the role of education seems to have been forgotten, not only by politicians but also by university administrators and students.

Replacing this view of the role of universities, one finds an almost nostalgic harkening back to a vision of universities as they were before the 1960's: an education offered to a small intellectual and social elite, most of whom were white males. "Excellence", and "back to the basics" are the bywords for this trend, as is the increased emphasis on private sector funding for universities.

Unfortunately, social inequalities continue to exist. And it is unlikely that private business is going to lead the way in reducing

these inequalities.

A recent publication from the Secretary of State, *Accessibility to Post Secondary Education in Canada*, is a sobering indication of this.

The most recent available statistics in this report show that the ratio enrolled of women enrolled in post-secondary education in Nova Scotia has declined in relation to the number of men. No statistics were available for other social groups.

The report notes that "unfortunately it was not possible to obtain an analysis of accessibility (to post secondary education among different social groups) in the Atlantic Provinces.

Perhaps the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission doesn't consider accessibility important. Perhaps they don't care.

Crystal Ball Gazing?

To the Editor,

I am writing in response to a Letter to the Editor written by Phil Green in the September 25th edition of the Gazette.

It is my understanding that the decision referred to in his letter (the Lavigne case) is still before the courts and it is not unlikely that the Supreme Court of Canada will have a chance to rule on the issues it raises. A decision of the Ontario Supreme Court is not binding for the courts in Nova Scotia. The development of jurisprudence as a result of this decision remains to be seen.

I would like to make it clear that no comments made herein are intended to be directed to your article on Crosbie's anti-porn legislation; nor is it my intention to express any opinion on the National Citizens' Coalition or their goals. However I would like to present some facts to clarify and to correct the points made by Mr. Green regarding the Dalhousie Student Union.

Mr. Green correctly states that an increase in Student Union fees will only come about by means of a referendum. He then appears to gaze into a crystal ball to find the Student Union financing a "YES" campaign to urge students to support an increase in fees for the establishment of a Public Interest Research Group.

He then urges "fair-minded students" to "ensure that the levy

operates on an 'opting-in formula' and to insure that if the Student Union funds one side of the campaign, it funds the other."

I've been told that this letter left some students confused as to the possibility of student union fees increasing next year. To date, the Dalhousie Student Union has not been approached by any one intending to conduct a campaign to raise fees for a PIRG. The last referendum to increase fees was held in '84/'85 when students voted in favour of a \$15 increase in fees in exchange for an agreement from the University Administration to limit tuition increases to 4% over the 3 years following and to have it limited to no more than the average Consumer Price Index over the 3 years of the agreement is more complex than I have stated but I would be quite happy to provide Mr. Green or any member of the Union with a copy.

At the time of that referendum, the Dalhousie Student Union made funds available equally to the "NO" and "YES" campaign. If there is to be a referendum this year, I foresee no reason to change this policy.

It is unfortunate for the readers that Mr. Green's description of the future was not complemented by some research of the past.

Yours truly
Sean Casey
Treasurer

Dalhousie Student Union

Prez invites suggestions

To the Editor:

I am writing in reference to the editorial of last week which

claimed there was no room in the student union for politics.

One sentence in particular I would like to comment on is the following: "Our student politicians have a responsibility to students that goes beyond organizing Super SUBs and the internal workings of the organization."

I wholeheartedly agree.

Although the services which we offer to students are very important, and an efficiently run organization is of the utmost importance, politics should definitely be a priority with any student organization. That is why this year, the DSU has taken on such projects as the following:

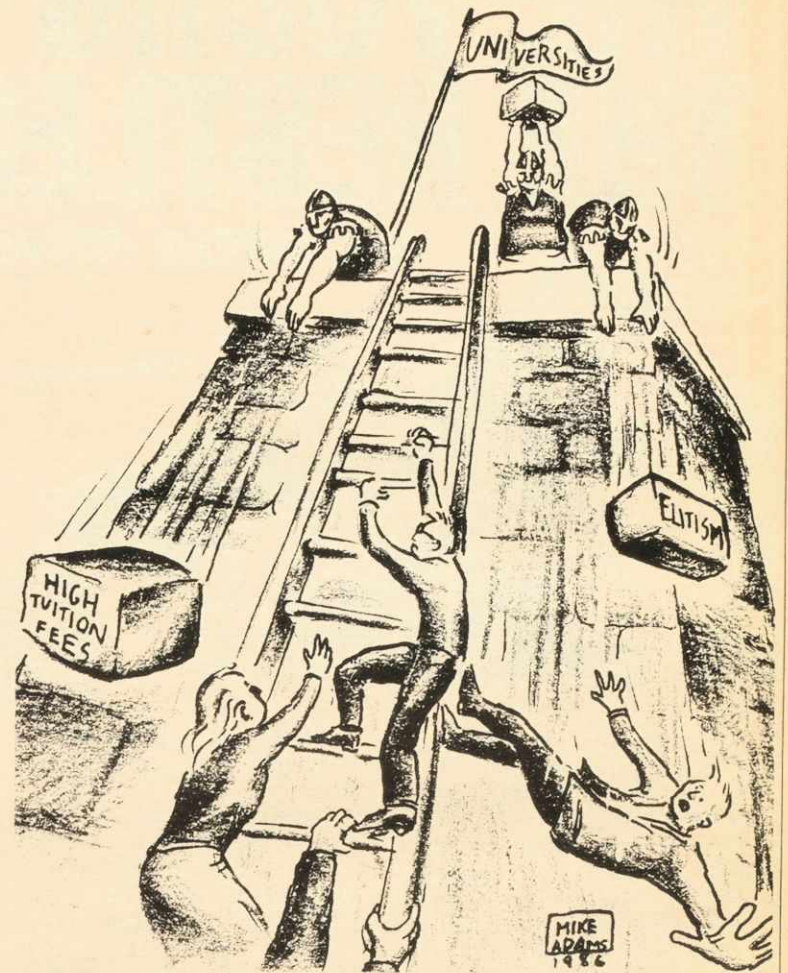
1. Establishing an ongoing lobby against the administration decision to move the withdrawal dates for two faculties from January 22 to October 6 without student consultation, as well as negotiating a two-week grace period for this year.

2. Removing all Rothman's products from the SUB and discontinuing Carling O'Keefe products for Bar Services due to their investment connections with South Africa.

3. Opening up the lines of communication between the Dalhousie Faculty Association and the DSU by establishing a committee for liaison between the two organizations.

4. Establishing a working relationship with the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students surpassing that of many years back.

5. Ensuring that students who have not received word back from the student aid department on their first loan installment



through no fault of their own are not financially penalized by the university through interest fees or reinstatement fees.

6. In cooperation with the Student Union of Nova Scotia, establishing a Student Aid Task Force which shall examine the student aid system and make recommendations on how the system can address the needs of students much more effectively.

These are a very few of the political projects which the student union has undertaken this year. I am certain that there are many other issue affecting students which we have not even begun to address. If any student at Dalhousie has a political issue they feel should be addressed by council, by all means come to see us.

Our next council meeting is this Sunday, October 5, 1 pm in the Council Chambers of the SUB.

Yours truly,
Jamie MacMullin
President
Dalhousie Student Union

Med. Students Defend Priorities

To the Editor:

The question asking why so few medical students showed up for the Terry Fox Fund Raising

Drive is absurd. There was absolutely no publicity on the Lower Campus. The comment in the Gazette (Sept. 25, page 1) is insulting.

If, however, the Gazette still does not feel that medical students consider the Terry Fox Fund a priority, it should take note that Phi Rho Sigma Medical Society organized a relay race for this purpose on Sunday Sept. 14. Both medical students and faculty were represented and we would like to thank Dean T. J. Murray, Dean Lee Kirby, Dr. Brian MacDougall, Dr. Howard Dickson and Dr. Bruce Holms for entering their faculty team.

Nalim Ahluwalia
Phi Rho Sigma
Medical Society

Wanted: Pen Pal

To the Editor:

I am an eighteen year-old arts student at the University of Saskatchewan I wish to correspond with an arts student at Dalhousie. All letters will be answered. Please address them to:
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THE GAZETTE

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Commentary should not exceed 700 words, letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request.

Advertising copy deadline is noon, Monday before publication. The Gazette offices are located on the 3rd floor SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on.

The views expressed in the Gazette are not necessarily those of the Student Union, the editor or the collective staff.

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