

THE CRISIS

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which King's supplies to Dal.

Academic Planning: The issue of long-range academic planning has become a controversial one in the Senate Academic Planning Committee.

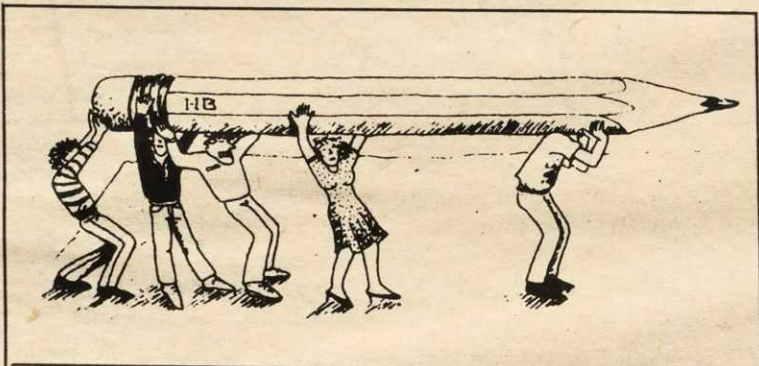
Questions of how academic planning will be done, if it will be done at all, are stirring up a good deal of controversy, especially since people throughout the university community are waking up to the need for long-term vision and goals.

Equipment: Another simmering issue is the continuing dete-

rioration of our science equipment and facilities. A recent report, written by a special committee of independent scientists, stated that the university needs close to \$500,000 worth of new equipment for the sciences to meet minimum acceptable standards. Unfortunately, the money does not seem to be forthcoming.

Geoff Martin is the student representative on the Financial Planning Committee of the Faculty Council of Arts and Sciences.

Dalhousie speaks out on post-secondary education



by Dr. Kenneth Heard

Universities in Nova Scotia (and in other provinces as well) face a critical situation. The provincial government is reluctant to increase the funding of universities in line with increasing costs of university education. If this trend continues, the universities, present and future students, and the province itself will all suffer.

With increasing pressures on laboratory space, equipment and supplies, universities are beginning to face the unpalatable choice between reducing the intake of students or jeopardizing the quality of the education they provide. It is quite possible that unless remedy is provided both these possibilities will be realized. To an extent, they are already.

It is impossible in the space of a short article to summarize the whole brief. Rather, I shall attempt to highlight two principal concerns.

(i) *Dalhousie's Concerns.*

Dalhousie is the major centre for professional education. That professional education to an important extent is built on high quality undergraduate education. If

the latter suffers, so will the former. It also depends on up-to-date equipment; if that becomes out-dated, the quality of professional education suffers. Yet Dalhousie's medical, dental and health profession schools are seriously underfunded and the quality of their training is threatened. Dalhousie is also the major graduate school in the region, but graduate students, particularly in the sciences, are undervalued in the weighting formula, and the squeeze on scientific equipment and supplies is particularly damaging to them.

It is also damaging to undergraduate science students, with both laboratory space and equipment and supplies at a premium. And Dalhousie is the major centre for undergraduate science education. It bears the major responsibility for education in the sciences, but because undergraduate students are also undervalued in the weighting formula, it has to bear an undue financial burden as well. At the same time, its library system is the major research literary in the region. If it is to serve that function as well

Dal Med briefs commission

by C. Ricketts

The Faculty of Medicine presented its brief to the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education on January 20. Dean Hatcher stressed his concern to the Commission on the quality of education, and ultimately, health care for the Maritime region, primarily due to funding constraints.

"It's a conventional wisdom that health care costs are run-

ning rampant and that the government is spending too much," said Hatcher. He said the opposite was true, that health costs in fact had remained constant as both a portion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Nova Scotia budget.

Problems with the medical school begin with a danger of losing accreditation and hence the ability for physicians to obtain licenses to practise. Dwindling library acquisitions and the profile of health care in the region are also major concerns.

Hatcher said the government was guilty of a lack of planning. A recent letter from the Honorable Gerald Sheehy to the Minister of Education recommended admissions to the medical school be

reduced from 96 to 83 for the coming academic year. "This is just a number," he said.

Hatcher also told the commission that projections which showed a lower physician/patient ratio did not take into account the future need for specialization as the population ages. "They say one physician per 550 (down from 590) is bad, but no one is saying why," he said. "Cuts should be made on the basis of need."

In a later interview Hatcher said he was pleased with the Commission's reception of the brief. "They instructed the manuscripting staff to put it to the top of the pile for reconsideration," he said. And added they had reserved the right to recall him for further questioning.

as the needs of its students and faculty its funding has to keep pace with rising book prices. This is not happening.

(ii) *Accessibility.*

These concerns affect the issue of accessibility. With the costs of trying to maintain high standards running ahead of revenues, Dalhousie has to compromise those standards or continue to raise student fees—or both. As fees rise, particularly with summer jobs hard to come by, students face increasing financial hardship. This has two corollaries. With the heavier burden of financial sacrifice, students should legitimately expect a standard of education that meets their expectations. But unless the province either increases its total university grant or the weighting system is made more equitable, that expectation will be placed at risk. The second corollary is that unless the provincial and federal governments unite to put in place a more generous system of student aid the principle that all suitably qualified students should be ensured access to higher education regardless of financial means will become a hollow mockery of reality. As society becomes more "democratic" in orientation, more insistent on equal enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms it would be a tragic irony if university education came to be the preserve of a self-perpetuating privileged class.

Dr. Kenneth Heard is a professor of the Department of Political Science and is compiler of Dalhousie's brief to the Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education.

Commission issues

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cents are now hounded by collection agencies for costs incurred while attending university. On the other hand "commerce and industry" are "urged and encouraged" to support post-secondary education via tax

incentives, and so on, while the student's share, the increased tuition, cannot be written off. In fact the added financial burden on students serves to diminish the weight of "academic criteria" in deciding who graduates from Dalhousie.



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