Council pays out

Student Government History #37

Last week's number covered seven points about Council incompetence made in January, 1926 by Donald McInnes who was President of the Dalhousie Amateur Athletic Club at the time. On February 4 Council President A. B. Morton responded. He described the attack on Council as "grossly unfair and at variance with the facts". Going into details, he rejected Mr. McInnes' proposal that each Faculty be given a fixed number of representatives. As an alternative Mr. Morton proposed a modification of representation by population to permit a smaller Council.

Continuing the reply, President Morton disputed the allegation that the Students' Council had been a poor intermediary between the students and Senate. He was supported by letters from three managers of varsity teams and the Secretary of the D.A.A.C., all four of whom used their experience for examples. There seemed to be little doubt that the Council had done its work well in this area. The financial squeeze on all organizations was attributed mainly to the large deficit passed along by the 1924-25 Council, $500.00 of which did not appear on the books. The 1925-26 Council had decided to pay off the entire debt in one year, and that year turned out to be one with unexpectedly low football and hockey admission revenues.

Regarding financial administration A.B. Morton stated that the Board of Governors never had to act, because the Council had continued to consult regularly with its faculty and alumni advisors and it had begun to account strictly. The response summed up on this point by stating that it was "not the system, but administration of the system" that had failed. It concluded with the assertion that $7.00 was a large enough fee for any normal year, and that an increase would be unfair to the students.

GAZETTE ran an editorial which struck another blow against Donald McInnes by praising the Students' Council for its frugality and high quality. That issue of the paper included an announcement that Dalhousie would have its first year book that spring. The first Pharos was to be sold for $2.00 a copy during the graduation week activities.

The next Council meeting was on February 22, and as usual it began with the trial of students who were accused of smoking. The next item was selection of a committee to investigate financial support of the year book. To ensure that freshmen lived up to their agreement to shovel the rink, it was decided that failure to comply would result in a $1.00 fine. President Morton was happy to announce that the Board of Governors was considering the installation of equipment in the gym. McDonald Music claimed that a piano they had rented to the Council had been deliberately and wantonly damaged to the extent of $50.00. The Council heard the claim and chose immediately to compromise. The final matter at the session was the Glee Club performance would have 15 cents admission as an attempt to raise funds.

In mid-March a special meeting was called to deal with the year book. Council endorsed the enterprise, but left actual approval to the new Council which had just been elected. McDonald Music had agreed to accept $20.00 for the damage, and Council sanctioned this expenditure. The new Council met the following day, choosing Fred W. McInnes as President. He was a former Council member. Avis Marshall remained on the executive, moving from Vice-President to member of the Executive Committee. She was the leading vote-getter in the elections. Following his successful reform of the financial administration Gerald Godsoe was appointed to a second term as Secretary-Treasurer.

On April 7 Mr. Godsoe was able to report that most of the debts had been paid and that as long as the Glee Club's next show was a success the finances would remain stable. GAZETTE was given the money necessary for publication of its traditional graduation number, a sign that the Council had doubts that the year book would actually appear. Since the outgoing Council had paid the $700.00 deficit of its predecessor, it felt little guilt about creating a $150.00 debt for its successor, the 1926-27 Council.

The University of Toronto Council asked Dalhousie to attend a fall conference being held in Montreal to discuss a National Union of Students. Our Council doubted that the conference would be held, but deemed that the new President should attend if it proceeded. The GAZETTE appointments were made in the spring once again. (The 1925-26 Council continued to restore proper procedures even at its last meeting.) Typically, the final decision was motivated by desire to cut expenses. The annual D.G.D.S. performance in New Glasgow was cancelled, so the citizens there never had an opportunity to see the spring production.

One of the most interesting events of the 1926 winter was the GAZETTE's work campaign. In mid-February the newspaper launched this effort to encourage every student to put in "two weeks of hard work" so that when April came around cramming would not be the usual problem. There is no evidence that the campaign worked, or did not work, but it certainly got a lot of publicity in the paper.

The Student Government History gnome would like to wish everyone Season's Greetings, and reassure you that this series will be completed by April, 1976. And a Happy New Year, too.

Graham cracker pie

by Alison Manzer

The latest fancy of the Nova Scotia media's editorial staffs seems to be the university financing segment of the Graham Commission Report. The reasoning and recommendations of the commission are contained in volume III, chapter 64, of the report and can be obtained from the Queen's Printer. Despite this ready availability and the fact that the section is fairly short and easily read there seems to be a severe problem of lack of understanding and factual presentation. Therefore this semi-editorializing article will basically present the material as it is given in the report with relatively few personal observations.

The basic premise which the report centers around is that the taxpayer should not be obliged to pay the instructional costs of a university education. The students would be expected to pay the full instructional costs with the government picking up the 50-20% remaining research costs. Some quasi-economic and social reasoning centering on the income of the university educated and the eventual cash flow from the non-university to the university graduate is the basis for promoting the recommendation. The final point being that it seems unreasonable for the general taxpayer to support the university education since the eventual cash flow is the non-university type paying his money to the university graduate. This reasoning seems superficially attractive and when cloaked in the sociological consideration of the gradual destruction of the class system it would almost seem to be solidly based. However, the incredible lack of data concerning the cash flow makes the whole thing somewhat of an exercise in social mumbo-jumbo rather than a concrete base for a far reaching economic recommendation.

What this will mean in dollars and cents terms to the individual student comprises the rather large, and this time more substantial, section on student financial assistance. Basically what is recommended is that over a five year period student tuition fees are raised to include increased expenditures and to pay the full teaching costs, so that each discipline will have individual fee structures. The report once again suffers from deficient data here in that the cost studies for the particular programs are inadequate. Essentially what happened was they based projected fee increases on the hopelessly outdated 1971 data, which is not just outdated but is inadequate. The general fee increase would be approximately 150% raising the average tuition to $1100. This would vary with the program with the arts and commerce programs likely lower and the graduate and professional much higher. Following are some representative projections: law $1750, medicine $6000, dentistry $4600 and graduate studies $2300.

If this recommendation is implemented there are several major points requiring consideration. The main problem would be of course be the problem of extending student aid and the recommendation for this is that loans be increased and bursaries cut out of the student loan program. Currently government financial assistance consists of a federal government loan and a provincial supplement, which in most provinces is in the form of a bursary. The federal portion has a maximum of $1400 per year with a total allowable amount of $7000 per student, this is interest free while the student is attending university and for six months after. Then the loan must be repaid in 10 years at the rate of interest equal to the government's cost of borrowing, with the government taking the financial responsibility for any defaults. There is now approximately a 7% default rate with 3.52 for legitimate reasons and the other 3.5% because the student has moved without leaving a new address.

The extended student aid recommendation is based on eliminating the provincial bursary and making the entire assistance a repayable loan. This essentially means the student going through on loans is going to be hit with two major increases as the tuition is raised due to less government funding of the university itself and also by the loss of the bursary portion. The report does not include figures on the maximum allowable loans or on what these increases are going to mean to the average student but a rough calculation of student costs including residence (the cost of living will drive this up) but allowing for the student to earn $1200 per year himself/herself, the debt load after only a four year average program would be approximately $8000. The debt load for the professional student or graduate student would be astronomical, for example a medical student would owe approximately $34,000. The commission recommends a system of grants for the poorer student supposedly to keep their debt loan at the same amount as the average student. The major problem with this is that the commission appears to be saying that the average student is the middle class student and assumes parental support for these students. This is a fallacy in the current inflation spiral where the middle income wage earner can no longer support children through university and so the recommendation will mean either that the grant system must be stretched almost to the point of the current bursaries or the middle class student will be graduating with an intolerable debt load. It will mean that only the very poor will receive large grants or the wealthy will have a reasonable opportunity to finance for such major purchases as homes since the others will be overburdened with educational costs.

The loan is recommended to be totally repayable, repayments contingent on job success is rejected on the outdated concept that a higher education will bring greater monetary rewards which is an erroneous notion particularly for the bachelor degree students. The loan would be interest free while attending uiversity and for five years after, with the interest rate to be set at ¼ of 1% above the cost of borrowing to the province. It is recommended that a means test be used to determine the maximum allowable loan. These would be supplemented by a grants system whereby grants would be given to the poorer students as determined by the means test and to all first year students. Where there appears to be a shortage of graduates in a particular area the commission recommends a system of direct loans such that the loan is pardoned to varying extents depending on the number of years the person practices in the provinces.

The problem of an enrolment decline is somewhat glossed over using the justification that there's a glut of university graduates on the market now. The estimated decline maximum was given as 30% of the graduates. A proposal of increased career counselling in the high schools in order to stream students more effectively is given as the solution to the problem. This whole rationalization is based

Cont'd on pge. 7