

Students fodder for universities

Earlier this fall a national conference of university information officers was held in Halifax and student aid was a subject discussed by the delegates. One of the more interesting aspects of the student aid seminar was the discussion of university scholarships.

Dean Davies of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design pointed out that scholarships had actually outlived their usefulness in these days of government aid to universities and students, and further that scholarships were in fact elitist. The Gazette supports this contention for basically the same reasons given by Mr. Davies.

A brief glance at Dalhousie's booklet on financial aid and scholarships will show that in fact scholarships are elitist. They almost without exception (there are a few exceptions) are awarded for scholastic and leadership abilities. The question of student need does not even come up. Economically disadvantaged students are considered for scholarships provided that they have maintained a high academic average either in high school or university. However, surveys have already shown us that most economically deprived students do not do as well academically as their wealthier peers.

Economic deprivation involves far more than lack of finances. Culturally these students are also disadvantaged. Learning may not be stressed in the home in the same way it is in a home where the parents are university graduates with good jobs. University is often not considered a priority so the disadvantaged student is not likely to do as well in school - at least not well enough to qualify for an academic scholarship in university.

Dean Davies also pointed out that universities have entered a sort of scholarship race similar to the arms race to attract the best students to their hallowed halls. This means that in many cases a well qualified student who can afford to attend any university is paid to attend the university he/she would have attended in the first place. This is just plain waste of financial resources. Further when one university raises its scholarships to attract the best students other universities are forced to raise their scholarship funds to compete in the "get the best student game."

Students are being bought by the universities to raise the prestige of the universities. They become mere fodder for the public relations department of the university they attend. And again it should be remembered that these are not the students who necessarily need the funding to go to university.

When the government is the real backbone of financial support for all Canadian universities it hardly seems just that universities are competing with each other to provide their particular services to the most advantaged members of our society. It would be far better if the funding provided for academic merit was put in a fund to help supplement the limited financial aid available to

students who have difficulties financing their education. In other words, scholarships should be used to help the needy if they are to have any relevance.

Certainly the universities have a right to stipulate that the needy students are not wasting their time in university - that is, we are not suggesting that needy students flunking out of university be given support. But students who show real financial need as well as real interest in obtaining an education should be the scholarship recipients, not the academic cream of the crop who can afford university anyway.

The original idea behind scholarships was to provide some kind of assistance to students who might not be able to afford a university education. Since the government has attempted through student aid programs to do just this scholarships have become funding pools for universities to buy brains. This is unfair to all students and represents an elitist attitude our universities can ill afford.

Canada's Oldest College Newspaper

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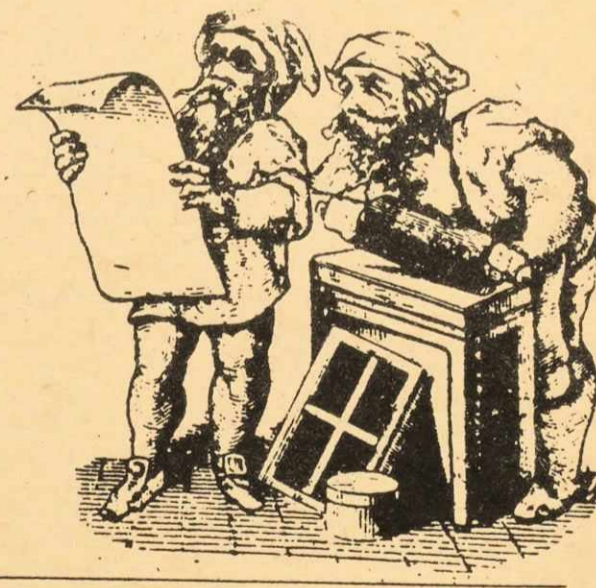
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Letters

Joe Sensitive

To the Gazette:

OUTRAGE !!!! Last week a self styled "JOE SENSITIVE" demonstrated his complete lack of taste by putting down what could probably be the best movie to hit the silver screen this year; THE WIND AND THE LION. I ask you' JOE WHY?????

Granted it is drenched in that horror of horrors, U.S. IMPERIALISM (!!!), but it is a good movie even a great movie. It's entertaining, action packed, laced with tolerable humour and best of all it has a plot !!! Yes, a real honest-to-goodness plot !!! In the days of ROLLERBALLS, TIDAL WAVES and DEATH RACES 2000'S, a movie like "THE WIND" is a

welcome relief. It was the first time in a year that I did not feel cheated out of my \$3. If you want to play movie critic find more deserving victims.

Use your "talent" in a more constructive manner! Warn us about turkeys like TIDAL WAVE (A SANI-FLUSH PRODUCTION), sharpen your teeth on ROLLERBALL and it's ilk but give credit where credit is due (!) or keep your flying fingers and befuddled thoughts in your pockets.

The Guzzling Gourmet

Editor's Note

Well, it's one of those weeks - we've received a letter condemning one of our movie reviews - whew! Is nothing sacred? What next? a letter
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