

Down the tubes

One thing seems clear about cutbacks at Dalhousie: they're real.

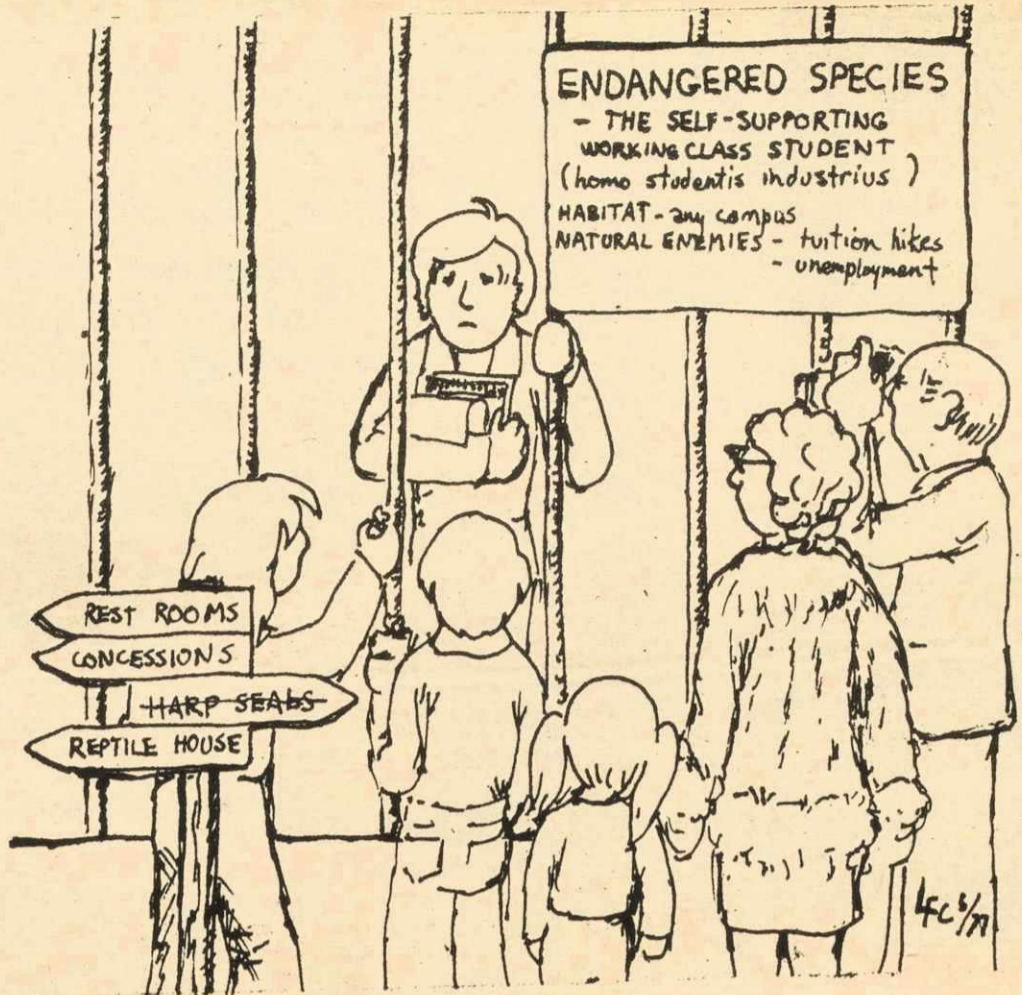
As the library cancels subscriptions and the computer centre considers telling students they will have to do their computer work after midnight, it is becoming increasingly clear the quality of education is dropping. A degree from Dalhousie is beginning to mean less and less every year.

Some people like to pretend the government's refusal to finance education at the recommended level means that nothing more than a few luxuries will go. As outlined in this issue's supplement this is not really the case—cutbacks are happening and they hurt.

As faculty who teach advanced courses leave, because of uncompetitive salaries, without being replaced, and the more expensive technical textbooks are substituted by readily available junior college manuals, the calibre of knowledge and skills decrease.

We have been told not to have high hopes when we hit the job market. Our parents have been told to lower their expectations for their standard of living. Now we are supposed to accept a watered down education and the fact we will probably have to go in debt to get it.

In our technical world marked by a new era of social, political, and economic problems, it is now more clear than ever, a good education is a necessity.



Letters

Bureaucracy a mess,

To the Gazette:

Financing an education often involves overcoming a number of obstacles. One of the largest of these, and most frustrating in the overcoming, is the bureaucracy of the N.S. Department of Education Student Aid office.

In the past I was fortunate enough to be able to finance an entire BSc. without the aid of government funds. Now, however, I am a 3rd year student of engineering, at N.S.T.C., and circumstances have forced me to apply, for the first time, for a Nova Scotia government bursary.

The procedure seems simple enough: One must merely fill in a pair of forms, take one of these to the appropriate person at one's school to be signed and stamped, collect together appropriate proofs of financial status (letters or T-4 forms from employers, etc.), place all in a large brown envelope, and mail to 5614 Fenwick Street, Halifax. Within weeks your school or institution will receive a cheque for the amount the government deems that it can afford to invest in your future.

In my case the forms were duly filled out and mailed in early January. After several weeks I was prompted to make enquiries by telephone. I soon discovered, however, that thousands of other worried students had the same idea, so the line was busy for hours at a stretch, and if one was persevering enough to get through, one was immediately put on "hold". Over the

next month, however, I did manage to get through on several occasions and was assured, each time, that my bursary application was being processed and that I would receive my money "within a week or so", "soon", or "shortly". I later discovered that, on not one of these occasions, was my file actually consulted: Instead, the predictions had been made from an estimated position of my application in the stack, based on the magnitude of my student aid number (which you are required to supply before any conversation is possible). It was not until 2 March that I discovered that, in fact, my bursary application was **not** being processed. The forms had, it seems, been lost in the mail, or so the woman, to whom I spoke, surmised after a brief search of the office did not locate them.

As of this writing I find myself in a very tight spot, financially. On the assurances of the functionary at student aid I, in turn, assured the manager of my bank that a government cheque for \$750 would be deposited, shortly. Now I find I am heavily overdrawn, my rent is due, and there is no prospect of my receiving that government cheque until my forms (filled out for the 2nd time) are processed in "several weeks" time. Despite all this, I would probably accept fate quietly, were it not for two curious coincidences: The first is simply the coincidence that **both** my forms were lost: The forms were mailed separately, one by myself, and one by N.S.T.C. The second coincidence occurred while I was standing at a desk describing my plight to an unsympathetic civil servant: A student, who had just entered, overheard a portion of my recital and exclaimed "they did it to you too!" and produced his two forms which he had filled out for the 2nd time, after being told his originals were lost "in the mail".

I just wonder how many

such forms are lost, and just where all those lost forms go.
Sincerely, Geoffrey Park
Student aid file no. 7944

Kipawo

kicks

back

To the Gazette,

In reply to Cheryl Downton's shallow review of the Kipawo production, "The Fantasticks".

No rape is not funny and I think you missed the whole point! I have seen this show performed about 100 times. I have heard line by line emphasized in rehearsals. Yes I am a member of the company and proud to be one. This has allowed me the pleasure of searching this play for meaning and upon each viewing has provided me with more food for thought. Therefore I do not think it could ever outlive its usefulness. I hope you may get the chance to see it again to truly appreciate at least some of the great philosophical messages.

To get back to your main complaint—"The Rape Song" (which incidentally I don't think this cast can be blamed for since that is the way it is written). The playwright is agreeing that life is not a bowl of cherries, but he is saying that we must live with pain. The key phrases happen to come near the end of the play from your highly praised El Gallo (who by the way sang the distasteful song), as he returns to the role of the Narrator. The Narrator's function of course—to point out the message. He says:

"Who knows the secret of the reaping of the grain or why Spring is born of Winter's laboring pain or why we must all die a bit, before we may live again."

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the Dalhousie Gazette

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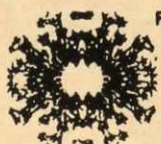
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