

# Government loan interference ridiculous

The student loan problem which appeared critical on Monday has now been straightened out but one questions why the problem ever occurred. The government policy is totally unreasonable as far as the Gazette is concerned and the university's lack of notification regarding the change in policy cannot possibly be condoned.

One often feels that as far as the University administration is concerned students are an unnecessary evil at Dalhousie and the bungling of the change in student loan policy only helps confirm this impression. The University was informed in November that student loans were to go directly toward tuition costs and not to the individual student but they failed to notify the students at any time before the Christmas break. The notice of the change was posted outside the awards office on January 2, 1976, just in time for second term registration.

Because provincial bursaries are expected to be extremely late this year many students had planned to use the second disbursement of their Canada Student Loans for rent and food money until the bursaries arrive. Since many bursary checks will be larger than the second loan checks students planned to pay Dalhousie out of their bursaries, whenever they arrive. The "lean" put on the loan checks Monday put many students in an impossible situation. Landlords will not wait for their rent money and no grocery store is going to give a student food on credit. Nevertheless Dalhousie seemed to think students could survive very well for at least a month without any money.

This of course has all changed and students can obtain their loan checks for whatever purpose they wish but the University should be censured for arbitrarily allowing a change in loan policy to occur without informing the student body - those most affected. Further without intervention from the Students Union it is unlikely that the university would ever have bothered switching back to the old system. After all students don't really have to eat do they?

The government policy on "leans" is another thing altogether. The policy of making loans payable to the university, not to the student who is responsible for repayment seems to assume one of two things. Students are either totally dishonest and will not pay their tuition if left alone or students are totally incompetent of managing their own financial affairs and must be treated like young children. Since neither assumption has any basis in fact the government's behavior is irresponsible and incredibly autocratic.

Furthermore, rent and food costs are legitimate education costs which the government recognizes when assessing student needs. However, the policy of determining that student loan money must go immediately to the university negates the recognition of rent and food costs as part of the real cost of a student's education.

It is fairly obvious that the student loan program should be tightened up in some areas but to tighten it this way is ridiculous. Canada student loans are exactly what the term implies - loans. Students sign a contract binding them to years of

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repayment with interest. Since the student is legally responsible for repayment it is the student, not the government, who should determine how and when the money is spent. If a student wished to pay his or her rent at the beginning of January or even at the beginning of September with his or her loan then the student should be able to do so. If the student has to work part-time in order to pay his or her tuition then so be it. As long as student loans are being repaid, and with interest, the government has no need to interfere. Interference based on the assumptions which the present interference seems to be based on is outrageous.



## Letters

### Such literacy

To the Gazette,

Not am I a graduate student, not a member of the Student Council, not in employ of the Dalhousie Gazette; as none of such my views with regard to the ongoing theatrics of the power readjustments between the DAGS and the Student Union, and your reportage of some, issue from a certain impartiality.

One must strongly and necessarily agree with two of the premises of your December 4 editorial - firstly, that the DAGS Council members' demands are outrageous and, secondly, that the referendum offered sought no more than license for the DAGS Council to pursue a course of complete divorce and disengagement from the Student Union.

For as long as I have been aware of the developing struggle between the DAGS and the Student Union, I have thought the DAGS' demands outrageous: why in God's name, I thought, a \$10. rebate of the fifty dollar fee paid when what they should be demanding is a full fifty dollar refund (i.e. to not pay the bloody fee in the first place) and/or at least, an option at registration time as to whether or not one wished to contribute to, join up

with, be a member of, perpetuate the Student Union. Clearly the ten dollar rebate demand is outrageous - in that it falls far short of that which it might more properly encompass. Indeed, the DAGS' initiative might properly serve as a spearhead in achieving these options for other distinct student groups within the Dalhousie student community and thus, give needed impetus to the move to decentralization of Student Union activities.

The editorial was also quite right in perceiving that the DAGS sponsored referendum sought only a mandate for the DAGS Council to pursue policies to effect the secession of the DAGS from the Student Union. Beyond correctly perceiving the intent of the referendum, the editorial evidences abysmal ignorance in its inability to understand the rationale behind that intent: the DAGS Council sought legitimization (conferred by its membership) of its plans to withdraw from the Student Union and, clearly, such secession has been the motive throughout these proceedings, the referendum being but the desired culmination. The DAGS Council has invested months in politicization of its membership and the referendum successfully mobilized that membership in support of withdrawal from the Student Union.

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