

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dave Mazerolle



Time to sit down

The strike of 728 teachers and librarians at Dalhousie University is potentially ten days away, and the issue is, of course, causing a lot of stir on that campus and campuses across the country.

Central to the issue is the question whether the professors should have the right to strike. Most students, concerned about finishing the term in April so they can graduate on schedule or keep commitments to summer jobs, are not warming to the idea that a protracted strike could keep them in classes until June. Many students, therefore, do not feel profs should strike.

If you need to choose an enemy here, do not pick Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), the teachers' union. It should be noted that Dalhousie University has an operating deficit of 13 to 15 million dollars. For the past four years, Dal has consistently overspent. This financial mismanagement has made them liable for a penalty from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC). The penalty will be withheld from the next year's operating grant.

The Dal administration chose to start its overdue economizing by taking a "holiday" from contributing to the DFA pension fund. There have been no contributions since February '84 and there will not be any until March of '85. The DFA wants pension contributions reinstated and the money kept through the "holiday" to be an interest-free loan to be repaid over two years. The administration has promised to comply, but there is no legally binding commitment to pay. The DFA also wants to control their share of the pension plan, but the administration will not agree.

The DFA also has legitimate demands for salary. They requested a pay increase to keep up with inflation (4.9%). They are offered a little over half that (2.88%). One demand is for real salaries to increase to 1978 levels by 1988. All they are requesting is to have the same buying power they would have had ten years ago.

The faculty has acted responsibly during this labour dispute, and with the students in mind. From January 11 - 14, they set up informational pickets around campus with no disruption of classes. On January 24, the DFA will meet with its negotiating team to assess their progress. If there is no progress on contract negotiations by January 28, the DFA will initiate full strike action. It will be a shame if it comes to a strike, and horrendous for the students if the strike is a protracted one. The Dal Student Union is threatening to sue the administration if a strike results. Good for them. The nuisance value of such threats may make both sides sit down to serious conciliation and resolve the contract before the school term is disrupted.

The question here is not, "Should faculty be allowed to strike?" Every union should be allowed to strike; it is one of the rights of unions that took decades of arguing, fighting, and dying to achieve. The DFA must be allowed all avenues of action, or else what has the union movement achieved? The threat of a strike is a potent weapon. No union really wants to walk out. A strike has adverse effects on the strikers, too. The right to strike can achieve a serious attempt at conciliation. It is time for the DFA and the administration to sit down and work things out. If they have a strike looming ahead of them like a sword of Damocles, perhaps they will make a sincere attempt to keep Dal in business and its students in classes.



mugwump journal

By MIKE MACKINNON

At Monday's meeting Larry Long, Vice President Administration, read an anonymous letter demanding that Aubrey Kirkpatrick, who has just completed his term as comptroller of the Student Union, refund half of his honorarium because he resigned from CSL before his term was completed. The justification for such a demand was the following passage: "According to the Honorarium Regulations, the entire term must be completed in order for honoraria to be granted... Additionally not only is it required the term be completed, but the candidate must accomplish a job well done." However, Kirkpatrick was comptroller of the Student Union and nowhere is there a policy that the person occupying this position automatically assumes responsibility for the similar position in CSL. Kirkpatrick volunteered (emphasis on volunteered) to act as comptroller for the CSL at the February 1984 shareholder meeting. The honorarium he received was for his duties as Comptroller of the Student Union, not CSL.

In the March 24, 1980 report on honoraria it was stated, "...Present practice is for honoraria to be denied if the individual making application has not completed a full half-term. However, this should not apply to an individual who resigns prior to the end of his/her term."

Taking this information into consideration it should be concluded that Aubrey is by no means, required to refund any of his honorarium and that Hilary Earl should be paid pro rata as she did not work for approximately 4 months at the job she was appointed for. Even if she was to receive the full honorarium it should only be the \$500 as stated in the honoraria report and not the \$1000 ex-SU President John Bosnitch authorized.

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I made a vow to myself that I was going to write about something other than Student Union matters in this, my first Mugwump since last year, but there is so much that deserves comment that I couldn't resist. For example, where is last year's yearbook? Latest word is that it will be available in March. Not bad, but I'm sure if more effort had been put into the fiasco, it could have been available this coming May. This way, last year's grads could receive it, as a gift for the first anniversary of their graduation. Oh well, you can't have everything.

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Another Student Union publication has gone the route of the yearbook - I refer of course to the Student Directory, a handy thing to have around should you wish to contact a student not in the city phone book. Will we see it this year? Perhaps in March (along with the yearbook), giving us almost two (the anticipation is almost more than I can endure) months of using it.

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Unbeknownst to many of you, the Student Union received a grant from the provincial government to produce a student handbook that was to be available to all UNB students and not just the freshmen. No doubt it is a poorly kept secret that this book was not published. The work was completed except the advertising section, which the power that be decided to do last term in order that the book would be out in January. This was not done and as a result the grant and the effort put into producing the handbook were wasted. Without seeing anything concrete come out of this grant why should the government give us a grant next year? I wouldn't. Why wasn't the advertising done? Because the job was farmed out to several individuals who had little interest in the position and gave up after a week or two (some were fired). And how do I know all this? I was the one who worked on the main section of the handbook.



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