

EDITORIAL

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Rent controls off in August

In 1982, the Liberal government then in power in Ottawa brought about a restraint program to counter inflation. The "five-and-six" program, as it came to be called, proposed that all increases in wages, consumer prices, and rents to be reined in at no more than 5 per cent the first year and six per cent thereafter.

Most students, as tenants, enjoyed the protection that one aspect of this "inflation psychology" gave us. The Residential Rent Review Act of 1982 kept rent increases down for close to three years.

The Act, when it was first passed, contained what Deputy Justice Minister, Gordon Gregory, QC, calls a "sunset clause." The Act was designed as a temporary measure, with a life span until August 31, 1985. After that, the act will fade into the sunset, and like the gunfighter Shane, will be naught but a memory. Shane... come back, Shane...

If only the Act could come back. In Fredericton, demand for the rental accommodation meets if not exceeds demand. It is a seller's market, thus a poor one for students, whom the government euphemistically describes as "temporarily disadvantaged." We are disadvantaged when we pay \$300 per month for a one-bedroom dump two flights above a downtown restaurant. Or when said digs have no smoke or fire alarms, nor outside security doors, making the building's hallways "Heartbreak Hotel" for some of the city's more colourful vagrants.

Face this: after August 31, 1985 your landlord will be able to raise his rents unimpeded by any higher authority save the marketplace. Both Mr. Gregory and Maurice Bouchard of the Rentalsman's Office both suggest rents will never increase above what potential tenants will pay. They trust the old law of supply and demand. Mr. Gregory, for his part, asserts the government is "hopeful that discouragement to rental construction" will decrease, thus paving the way to new apartment buildings. Mr. Bouchard mentioned a rumour that 200 new units are in the planning or construction stage. If the rumour is true, how many units can you imagine will be within a student's range?

No new legislation concerning rent control is being introduced, and none may ever be. Mr. Gregory pointed out that only twice in the century has rent control been exercised outside of war time — in the late 1970's and during this Act. The government, in fact, dislikes imposing rent controls. It makes development less likely to start new building. And with inflation down to around 3½ per cent, the government would be loath to discourage additions to the tax base.

So tenants, you are on you own. The only protection left you is under Residential Tenancies Act, which provides for the Rentalsman's Office. The sun is going down on rent controls. Who knows what the new day will bring?

Provinces skimming cash from colleges

The **Montreal Gazette** of March 13, 1985 reported that some provincial governments are skimming money from federal education grants and spending it in other areas. While this is not illegal, it is reprehensible. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been diverted away from colleges and universities.

In a report by former CBC president Al Johnson, commissioned a year ago by the former Liberal government, Johnson found the worst offender is British Columbia, which will actually make a twenty-million dollar profit on the federal grants. Twenty million dollars! New Brunswick is one of the five provinces which spend less on post-secondary education than they receive in funds from Ottawa.

It all started in 1977 when legislation was passed allowing untied, block transfers of funds from the feds to the provinces. As a result, the provinces, under no obligation to spend education money on education, have short-changed us as post-secondary students. Johnson recommended in 1977 law be amended so that federal education grants are increased only at the same rate as provincial contributions. That would be a start. But there has been something akin to a crime committed against colleges and universities for eight long years. I urge everyone who has ever been a to a university or college, who has ever been subjected to poor facilities, poor research funds, or poor faculty budgets, to make your outrage known to Secretary of State Walter McLean, the minister responsible for post-secondary education. McLean is currently discussing the problem with the provinces and will soon be making recommendations to the cabinet. Who cares for the thousands of university and college students across Canada? We had better look out for ourselves, because apparently our eleted governments think they can pull a fast one.



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journal

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Editor-in-Chief



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This may be a first, but it is certainly unique for faculty members to be mad at the administration rather than students. The administration's plan reallocate office space in the Anthropology and Sociology department has met with opposition from none other than the Dean of Arts, Peter Kepros. As well, William Dalton, head of the Anthro department and the irrepressible Antro professor Charles Ackerman have registered their outrage. Speaking of outrage, how about this? A consulting firm from Toronto, after allocating nine man-weeks for a hands-on study of the situation in Fredericton, drafted their plan far from the madding crowd, as it were, from the comfy confines of their offices back in Hogtown. End Upper Canadian imperialism! Say no to absentee overlords! Go out there and get pissed off!

To do better that which has been done before. To do well that which needs to be done. These are the principles of "Space Invaders." Go to it, guys.

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The **Brunswickan** recently held elections for a new editor-in-chief, and we ratified a number of department editors. The new Editor-in-Chief will be Richard Hutchins, our erstwhile Features Editor and the man many of you know as the hunger-striker who raised just over \$10,000 for famine relief in Ethiopia. I wish Hutch all the best in his new job. I am sure his political activism and pragmatic approach will be terrific for the paper. Our new managing editor is Cal Johnston, who has a lot of good ideas for the technical aspects of the **Brunswickan**, including many attractive layout designs. The News section will be under the control of Shelley Nelson, who proved herself as an avid rookie this past year. The Sports editorship will be the province of Ken Quigley and Ernest Dunphy, and Features will be my new area. Congratulations to Dwayne MacLaughlin on beginning his second year as Business Manager, and to Kathi Davidson for becoming the first female advertising manager in recent memory. Tim MacKinnon, after years of checking out the **Brunswickan** scene, is our new Offset Editor. Welcome to your first official position, Tim.

I want to thank all of those who voted for me and those who commiserated with me on my loss. It's okay folks, really. I have great plans to concentrate more on writing articles. Change is something I've always welcomed, and a change in leadership will, in Hutch's case, lead to progress for the **Brunswickan** and student awareness.

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I'd like to end my last Mugwump by paraphrasing those two great balladeers of our times Willie Nelson and Julio Iglesias. This is sung to the tune of, you guessed it, "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." To wit:

To all the folks I've slammed before
To all those I've defamed
If you think that you've been wronged
Relax, I'll soon be gone
Go back and play your games...

Good night, and may God Bless (Red Skelton)