

THE GAZETTE

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Language may mean loans

by Toby Sanger

A recent ruling over differences in wording between English and French student loan regulations may now make financial assistance available to thousands of students who have been rejected because they defaulted on previous student loans.

The ruling by the federal department of justice reinterpreted the wording in the English version of the student loan regulations so students who have made a "reasonable effort" to repay their loans during the past 12 months are now eligible for further assistance.

Wording in the English version, which contradicted the French version, stipulated that students must make efforts to repay their loans over a period of 12 months, indicating that it would take a year before they could reapply. Under federal law, if there is a dispute over different versions of the same regulations, the version with the wider interpretation holds.

Jocelyne Mandeville, head of the programs division for the Canada Student Loans office in Ottawa, says this new ruling will "affect very few students."

However, a number of students at Dalhousie who appealed rejections of their applications for loans were granted loans as a result of the ruling.

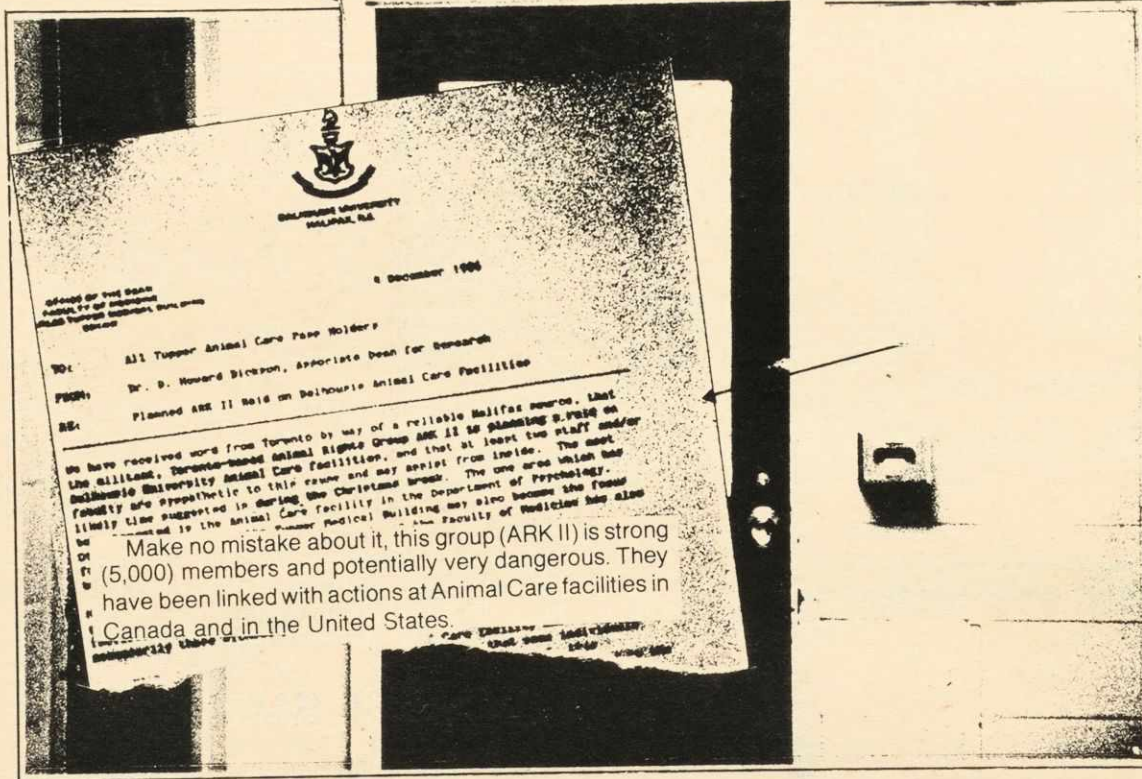
Because the Secretary of State, which administers the student loan program, has not yet clarified what it interprets as "a reasonable effort to repay," officials are reluctant to comment on the ruling.

A Dalhousie student who had not made any repayments on her loan but had applied for interest-free status and appealed a rejection of her application for another loan found that her appeal was upheld under the new interpretation.

Mandeville says she is now working to make the department's policy more clear-cut over this interpretation, but says a student must have made contact with either the bank or the government over their defaulted loans in order for the government to consider this as "reasonable effort."

In 1984/85, the government made payments to banks for 20,595 people who had defaulted on their student loans. In that year, 312,852 Canada Student Loans were provided to students.

Mandeville says her department has new projects planned, including an information kit, to help counsel students on repaying their student loans. The average Canada Student Loan debt-load, not including amounts owed to provinces, now stands at over \$6,000 per student.



This notice, posted in the basement of the Tupper Building, warns "sympathetic staff" and others of the consequences of a planned raid by an animal rights group on Dalhousie. Photo by Geoff Stone

Ark II misses the boat

by Geoff Stone

A rumoured Christmas-holiday attack on Dalhousie's animal care unit by animal-rights activists never materialized. Now the university administration is trying to keep the issue as quiet as possible.

Animal care unit staff were not willing to comment to the Gazette, but Dalhousie spokesperson Bob Fournier said Dalhousie was prepared for an attack. "We assume it's real, and take action," he said.

"But it didn't happen and we're pleased."

One of the precautions the administration took was sending a memo around the university, warning of the possibility of a raid to either the Tupper building unit or the facilities in the Psychology department.

The memo further warned of a few staffers in the animal care unit who were "sympathetic to the cause" of the animal rights group. Fournier did not see the warning as a threat to any Dalhousie staff, saying, "It's a well-known fact that the university has some people who have leanings in that direction."

A member of the Animal

Defense League of Ottawa said they had heard reports that a protest might take place, but they had not heard whether one had taken place or not.

Fournier said he is sympathetic with the feelings of members of animal rights groups, but said, "The university can be threatened by people who take the law into their own hands."

GEAC terminal crash

By GEOFF STONE

The future supplier of the NOVANET interactive computer system for the five Halifax university libraries is in financial straits, but the university librarian says this won't threaten Dalhousie's plans for computerization.

GEAC, of Markham Ontario, has agreed to put a large part of their operation in receivership while the corporation deals with a \$20 million debt.

University librarian William Birdsall says even if the company eventually goes under, Dalhousie's plans are unlikely to be

endangered because some other company will probably take over GEAC's system.

Birdsall says poor management and banking practices have brought the company problems rather than poor product development. The GEAC system is presently used by a number of major libraries worldwide and Birdsall sees no real possibility of the system becoming obsolete. "We think it is a good system... one way or another the (GEAC) library system will continue."

But should the company fold,

the search for a computer for NOVANET might have to begin again. "The main loss would simply be the time spent (searching)" says Birdsall.

Files can be easily switched over to other computers through the UTLAS program used on the GEAC computer.

The law library is presently leasing a GEAC computer to file 50,000 law titles, and Leslie Foster of the law library says although he sees no problems with the system or GEAC's ability to survive, "of course we're watching it closely".

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