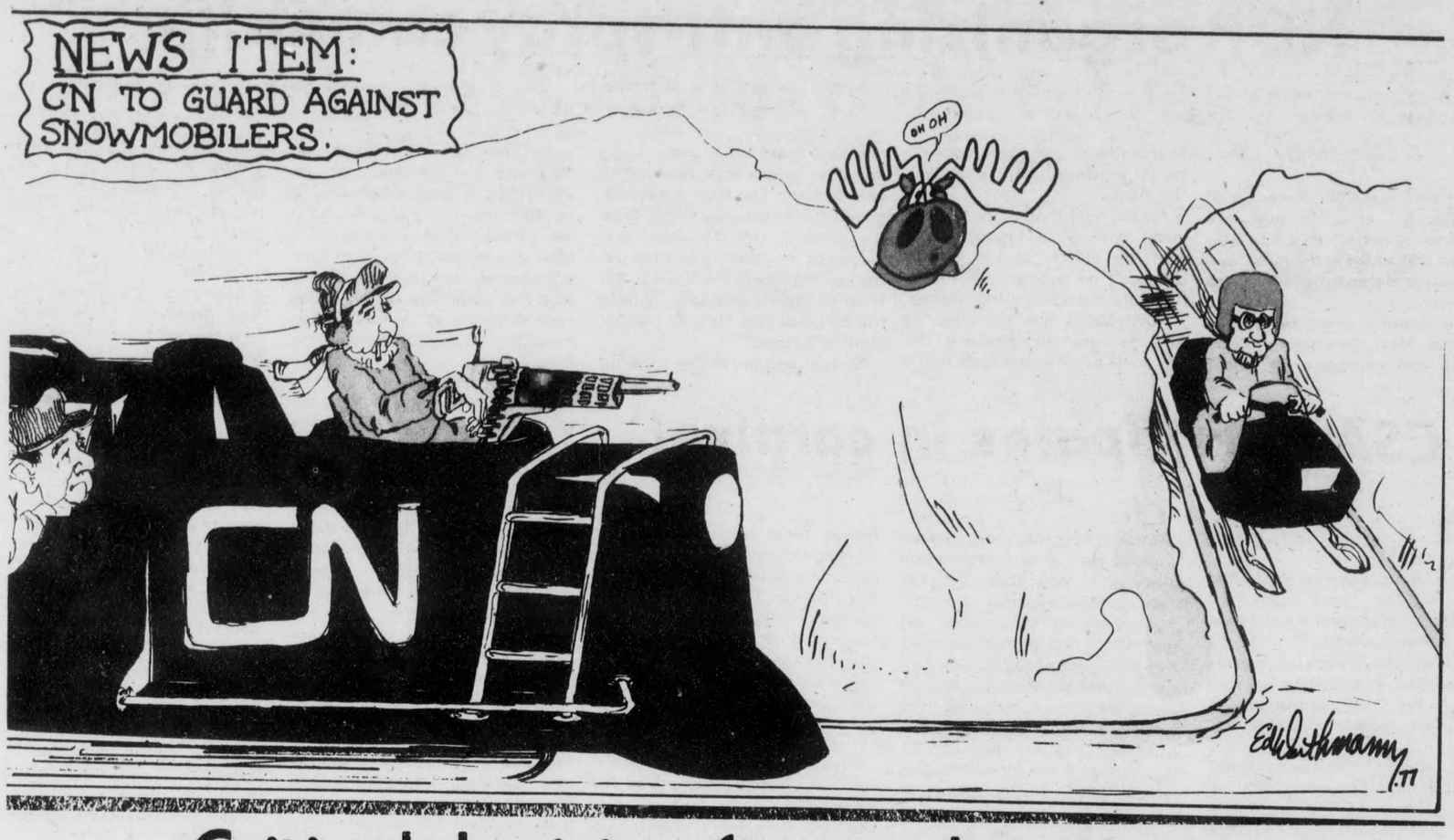

Critical decision for student union

UNB students face an important and critical decision, namely, the future of the student union.

We are at a crossroads. If the party responsible for the petition presently circulating the campus have their way, there will be a referendum on whether or not student fees should be compulsory.

First off, there are a few things people should get straight. Nobody seems to know for sure whether or not fees are compulsory. The university can set any admissions policy it wishes, and they haven't really committed themselves one way or the other. They collect our fees, but nowhere is it stated that their official policy is to enforce payment.

Realistically speaking, could the university be expected to enforce payment if the students overwhelmingly voted against payment? We think not.

This means that the student union would have to conduct a membership drive every fall, attracting as many members as they could. They then would have to try and conduct a budgetary process in this atmosphere of uncertainty.

We will have to ask ourselves what the consequences of such a situation would be.

First would be the question of membership. How many members could we attract with the limited resources available to the student union? Estimates run from everywhere from less than a thousand to over 3,000.

They all agree we would be a whole lot less.

A union of under 1,000 would be a joke, and you would have to be a fool to be one of those 1,000.

Such a union, could provide its members with basically no services. Good-bye Brunswickan, CHSR, Up The Hill, student handbook, student directory, student ID, faculty societies, Orientation, Winter Carnival, and a number of other things.

However, according to the students' union act of incorporation, the union would still be the official student voice. Section 2(c) states, "The objectives of the Union are to act as the official organization of the students of the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick."

In such a situation, we would be left with the petty, backstabbing politics we have now with none of the present advantages. Members would be left with that much, that is.

The union would still exist since it is the official student voice. The administration would be in a position to treat the official representatives of the students with bemused contempt, and we won't even mention the provincial government.

Now, let's look at the brighter side. Let's suppose we could keep up a relatively stable membership of around 3,000.

In such a situation, the union could probably survive after fashion in the economic sense, but our political position would be undermined to such an extent that our pious resolutions could safely be ignored.

In terms of services, the union would have to operate like some kind of police state to make ends meet. Due to uncertain revenue, we would have an extremely difficult time to convince any bank manager to lend us working capital, especially over the summer.

Show your ID card to get your rather thin Brunswickan at the student union office, or, if you lived in residence, maybe 10 per house. People who lived in large apartment buildings might have to share as well.

CHSR serves such a small part of the campus that we might as well close it down. We'd have a two price system for the yearbook, moderately high for members and extremely high for non-members.

Try about a dollar apiece for the student handbook and directory, if you're a member, that is. The same goes for your ID.

Winter Carnival would have to return revenue, of course, along with Orientation (which it did this year, as a matter of fact), if we could raise enough working capital to stage the events in the first place. Of course, members would have first stab at all tickets sales to the rather piddling-sized carnival.

We are not trying to scare students off from making what they think to be a proper decision. We are only telling you what it would be like.

Like an outspoken person in favour of voluntary fees says elsewhere in the paper this week, the people who remained members of the union would be real keeners, but what could they accomplish?

The keeners can only get things done if they have support from the whole student body, morally and financially.

If less than 1,000 students are willing to support the union, we would probably better off without it. However, this could only be through legislation from the provincial government. Until this happens, the union is still the "official organization" of UNBF students, support or no.

The other situation, with about 3,000 members, would leave us with a union that could survive, but members would find things not nearly as nice and easy going as they are now. Non-members would, no-doubt, reap a lot of incidental benefits free of charge.

Such a situation, with the student body divided, would probably be the worst possible situation.

We wouldn't dream of telling the students which way to vote. We will just tell the situation that way it is.

Murra

At a special meeting on this past Monday petition from the stud was brought to the floor on. The petition involved that read as follows:

"WHEREAS not all studen from membership in th Union and whereas should have the fre choosing Union member RESOLVED THAT, ab beyond $15.00 towards mortgage, payment of th be made optional to all Hildebrand:Beru defeated January

Following a discu Council at Monday nigh ing, the motion being ered was voted down. tally was 1 for 19 agai abstentions.

The rationale beh decision of the elected s presentatives and the involved serious conside the direct effect and implications that such

And in

Dear Editors:

The SRC, now compose of newly elected students night resoundingly defe motion to make paymen fees optional (beyond th towards the SUB m Unfortunately a glaring was involved with the chairman of the Coun McEvoy, allowed a vot taken while names were the speakers' list. Such a list must be completed vote may be taken unless is made to cut off debate on the motion. No such was made. This mea although several opponen motion were able to sp persons in favour, myse ed, were allowed to dis issue. After the vote w the chairman then persons in favour of the speak to it. Obviously a lit have to wonder if perso lead Mr. McEvoy to al perform this illegal proc

Lookou

Beware! I would like to a thought to all socializers If you should be out in t Club, or where-ever, be people that come onto yo petition. Now, you can r you please, but beware continuous persuasion, a believe that one "no" to t do. Under the influence of as most know, one has a to do undersired things. L something that doesn't m sense, even to the unsen

Now that this colle names have been brough