

Proposed lab "tax" condemned by student union

by Heather Roseveare

The preliminary acceptance of a \$15 laboratory surcharge to science students by the Dean of Arts and Science, Donald Betts, has been condemned by the Dalhousie Student Council.

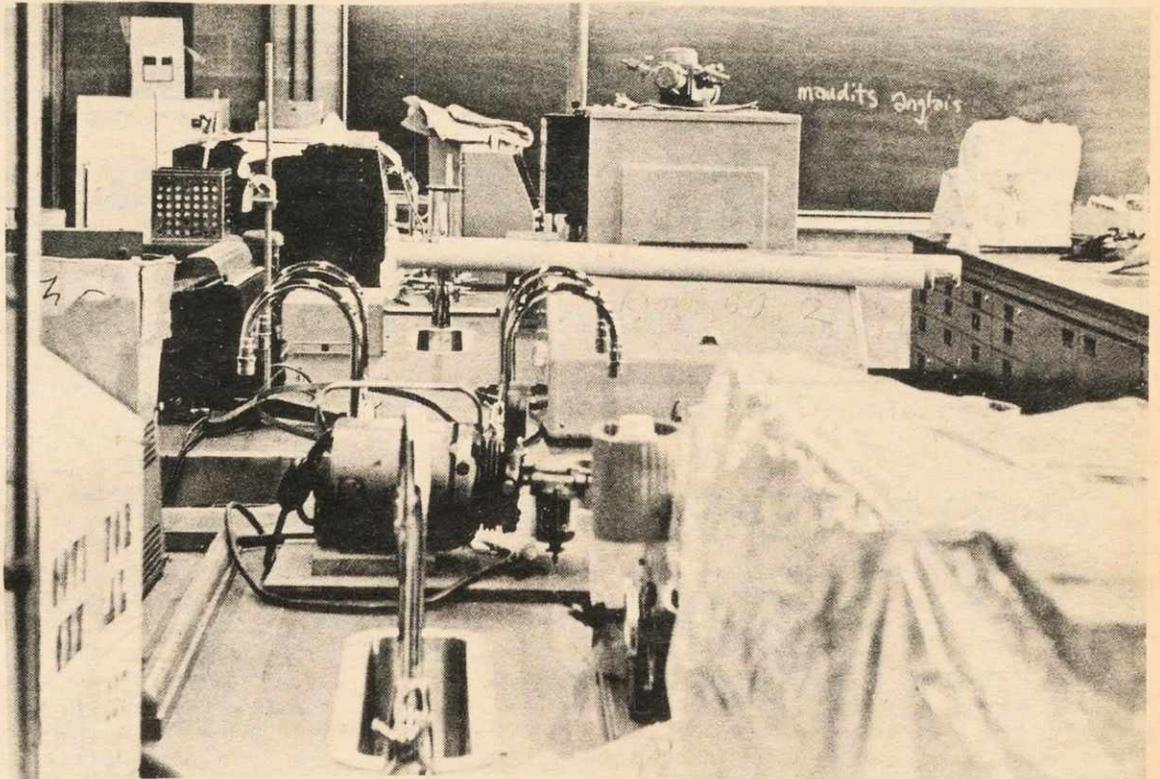
On Sunday evening council passed a motion displaying disapproval for any differential tuition fees charged to Dalhousie students, in particular, the topical lab "tax" and to fight any attempt by faculties to institute this as a means to increase their budget.

Dean Betts supports the surcharge as it is "manifestly much more expensive to educate a Science rather than an Arts student." Betts points out that individual faculty tuition fees are already differentiated. The surcharge could not be tacked onto Science tuition alone as, Arts and Science being one

faculty, students will be tempted to register in Arts but take Science courses.

Dr. Jones, chairperson of the Chemistry Department, says his department is in dire need of increased funds. While chemicals and related supplies have inflated 20-30 percent in one year, the Chemistry budget, like all faculty budgets, was only increased 4.76 percent. About 95 percent of the budget goes to salaries. "Either we cut down on labs or charge a fee," Jones admits this fee "is not a nice way" to obtain the extra money needed.

Does Dean Betts fear a precedent will be set at Dalhousie if the Science departments gain approval for the laboratory surcharge as suggested? "No," says Betts, "it's not my responsibility how other faculties are run."



Students may be paying to use lab facilities next year

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MackKay settles into \$419,000 white elephant

by Pat Martin

University President Andrew MacKay and his wife seem to be settling nicely into the newly renovated home at 1640 Oxford Street. The big white house, which in recent months may have taken on the form of a big white elephant, has been the centre of controversy.

Release of cost figures for the house in late December, (a whopping \$419,000) sparked angry comments, particularly by the Dalhousie Staff and Dalhousie Faculty Associations. New contracts signed this year saw both organizations walk away from the bargaining table with much smaller pieces of pie than had been expected.

Smaller settlements were justified by the existence of Dal's operating deficit which topped \$5 million last year. The issue at hand is not whether the president deserves a good house, but rather, why at this time of economic restraint at Dalhousie, should renovations be carried out at such cost.

A portion of the costs will be covered by the grants the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission allotted to Dalhousie for capital expenditures, and the rest will come out of bank loans, said Vice President of Finance, Robbie Shaw.

After a thorough examination of the house by the contractors, a figure of \$180,000 was approved. The cost overruns were due to several unforeseen problems such as significantly greater plumbing and wiring requirements than were originally expected. Also, unforeseen

was the replacement of much of the detailed front facade, which alone cost in the tens of thousands of dollars.

The basement provided a problem of its own. Original plans to clear out the basement had to be scrapped when a stream was discovered flowing

under the house. This was corrected and now the water gurgles through pipes under the new basement floor.

At the bottom line the university is stuck with one beautifully restored home and a bill for \$419,000.

The university has considered

other options for financing the house. One would be to simply find other suitable accommodations for the president and put

the house up for sale. Shaw said that if after a year's use the house was not fulfilling a useful function it would then be sold.

A third possibility is to subdivide part of the 2.7 acres accompanying the house into seven or eight plots to be sold for approximately \$70,000 a piece. Such a proposition would

generate more than sufficient funds to pay for the house.

Moral issues of science research: a question of responsibility

by Heather Roseveare

Moral and social issues involved in scientific research were at the centre of a forum, entitled "Scientific Knowledge - Boon or Threat?", held last Friday at the Weldon Law Building.

Participants included Dr. Stanley Wainwright, professor of biochemistry, Dr. David Braybrooke, professor of philosophy and political science, Dr. Grant Hammond, a law professor, and Karen Knop, a senior mathematician student, all from Dalhousie.

Dr. Robert Chambers, chairperson of the biochemistry department, moderated the debate, while the summation of the forum was undertaken by Dr. Leo Yaffe, a professor of chemistry at McGill University. (Yaffe had delivered the Walter Chute memorial lecture the preceding evening.)

The application of scientific knowledge can change a society, said Wainwright, citing computers and the atom bomb

as examples. However, he added that "One cannot envisage how knowledge will be used." When Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity, it probably did not cross his mind that this technology would later be used to kill people via the electric chair.

Negative results of technology are vast, including pollution, misuse of natural resources, and a build-up of fear of nuclear technology. Wainwright said methods of attacking this problem are unfortunately limited to either ignoring the issue or destroying the existing fruits of technology. "The option of banning research as a means of stopping scientific study simply will not work."

Braybrooke believes the political system is to blame for the poor dissemination of scientific technology. The application of science is often the decision of a political unit, yet the blame for any misuse of technology is directed at the scientist.

To solve this problem, Braybrooke suggested the use of a "knowledge bank" in which all scientific knowledge would be deposited. This knowledge could then be extracted and applied by the politician so that the blame of unwise or untimely

use of scientific knowledge would be shifted from scientist to politician.

Braybrooke also suggested four ways to counter the responsibility usually dumped on scientists for socially-

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