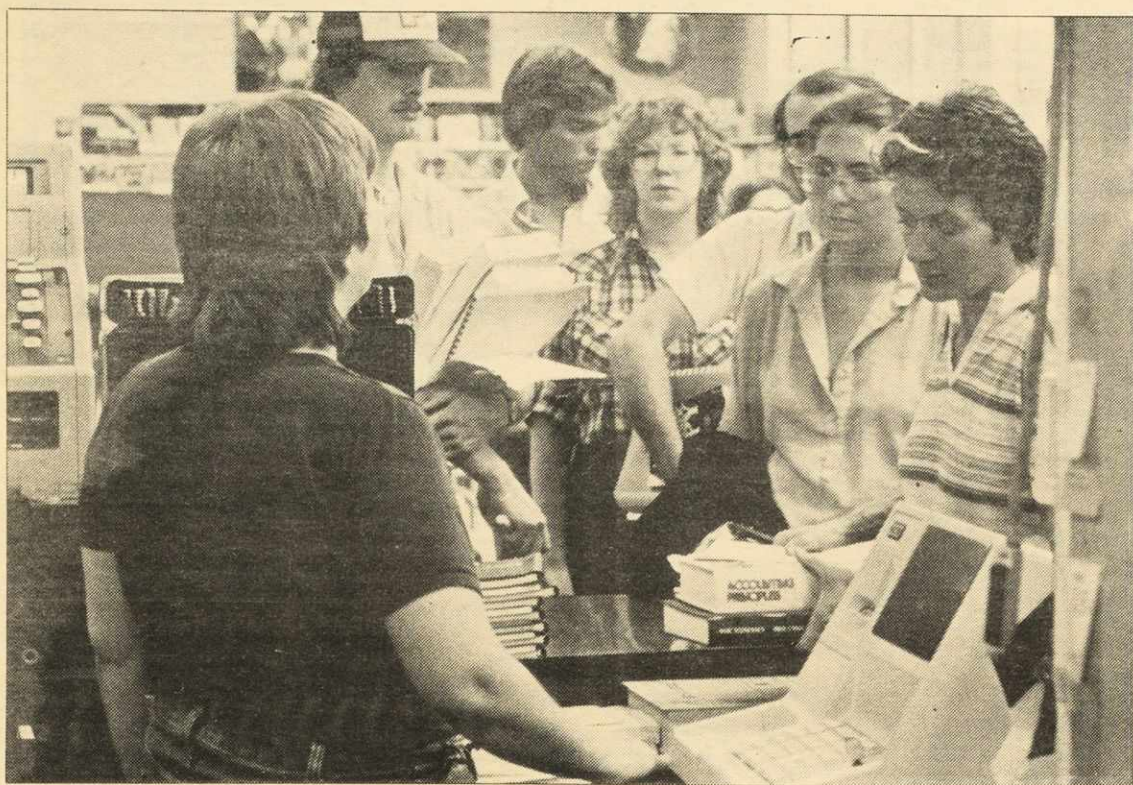


Dal students to escape retaliatory tax



Students cashing in on retaliatory tax free goods. (File photo)

By Lois Corbett

PAYING FOR BOOKS AT the first of the school year is frightening enough, but Dalhousie students will not have to dole out even more for American texts this year despite a new federal tax put on books and periodicals published in the United States.

University bookstore director Robert Bagg says students can escape the 10 per cent tax on made-in-the-U.S. books if the texts they buy are designated required reading by their professors.

On June 6, Finance Minister Michael Wilson imposed the new tax on American books, periodicals, computer components and other items in retaliation for the 35 per cent U.S. duty on Canadian shakes and shingles. The action includes re-imposing duties of up to 10 per cent on certain U.S. publications, which have been duty-free since 1979. Wilson says books for educational institutions and libraries as well as religious literature will continue to be duty-free and Bagg says he will apply "a broad definition" of educational material to keep from passing any increase on to students.

The new tax is expected to raise millions of dollars for the federal government from the \$360 million worth of American books Canadians buy each year. The university bookstore orders about 50 per cent of its texts from the U.S. Bagg says most of these "just aren't available in Canada."

"(The new tax) is a dumb move."

It's not going to affect the American book publishing industry, at all. And more importantly, we can't afford to produce the books they send here, so we would buy them anyway," he says. Most of the American textbooks sold at the Dalhousie bookstore are for the large, lower level courses, says Bagg. Avoiding the new tax becomes sticky when novels and other fiction are used by faculty in their classes, especially literature courses, says Bagg. But if professors require certain books for their courses, fiction or non-fiction, he says the bookstore can "get away with not charging the tax."

Bagg is worried that some books may be double-priced, since he will have to add the tax to the cost of books found in the trade section at the front of the store, and not charge the tax if it is also part of the textbook section, but he says he'll cross that bridge later.

The Dalhousie bookstore is participating in a mail campaign protesting the new tax, sponsored by the Canadian Booksellers Association. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has already received 125,000 postcards and 1,000 letters asking him to drop the tax. The Periodical Distributors of Canada say tariffs are "unwarranted and foolish," and the New Democratic culture critic Lynn McDonald has called the tariff a "tax on reading that is unfair to all Canadians."

Bagg says the 10 per cent tax will be applied to dictionaries published in the States but reference books will be exempt from the tariff.

Differential fees counter to foreign policy

By Kathy Kennedy

CANADA IS "CLOSING THE doors on foreign students", says James Fox, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at the Canadian Bureau for International Education. Canada has suffered declining enrolment rates for foreign students despite rising rates in countries such as France and the U.S. The declining rates have been attributed to differential fees, an ad hoc approach adopted during the last five years by all provinces except Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to deal with rising educational costs and government funding cutbacks.

International student enrolment in Canada declined from 33,000 in 1984 to 30,000 in 1985. CBIE figures for 1985 showed that the decreases were most significant in provinces with differential fees. Ontario registered decreases of 14 per cent, New Brunswick 12 per cent, Quebec 7.5 per cent, Prince Edward Island 21 per cent, while Nova Scotia did not register any significant change. Foreign student enrolment increased by 29 per cent in Manitoba and 17 per cent in Saskatchewan over this period. This year Fox expects further declines over all.

International students in Nova Scotia were upset about the \$1800 fee imposed on top of tuition fees says Majid Addo, President of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students. Different policies in different provinces made the Canadian educational system seem confusing. "It was an arbitrary figure", and no attempts were made to justify how it was arrived at, says Addo.

Fox says the declining trend

may change as a result of recommendations made in a joint Senate and House of Commons report titled *Independence and Internationalism*, released in June 1986. The report recognised international students as an integral part of Canada's foreign policy for the first time. "We believe that foreign students constitute an important asset for Canada that has not been sufficiently recognised in terms of improving trade opportunities, increasing cultural contacts and more generally for foreign policy", states the report.

Dalhousie's international student enrolment declined from 773 in 1983/84 to 727 in 1984/85 and is expected to decline further this year says Karanja Njoroge, International Student Advisor at Dalhousie.

The largest number of international students at Dal in 1984/85 came from Hong Kong (178) and Malaysia (114), with significant representation from the U.S. (62), Singapore (49) and the U.K. (24). The largest number of students from developing countries were from China (33) and India (27). Njoroge feels that representation from developing countries could be increased if Dalhousie offered programs more specific to their needs and provided better support services for them while they were here.

Dr. Andrew Mackay, past President at Dal, recommended in the senate report that a uniform national policy regarding foreign students and fees be adopted jointly by federal and provincial governments to replace an "inappropriate and confusing array of policies". Mackay says the report's recommendations are being discussed at External Affairs and the Secretary of State

level, but no steps have been taken to start discussions with provincial university leaders. Mackay sees this happening in the future, but not in time for next year's international students.



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