

# Editorial

## The brass ring in buck-passing

There are few art forms more sacred to politicians than the simple skill of buck-passing. From it develop wonderful phrases such as "striking up a Royal Commission", "referring it to Cabinet for future study", and the ever-present "That's not my department". Petty examples, to be sure. But for petty examples of buck-passing of the largest magnitude, you'd have to travel quite a few Old Home Summers down the road to find a better one than our own Provincial Government.

Under the stern watchful eye of John Buchanan, Nova Scotia has finally developed a "Big Blue Machine" truly worthy of the name. While the Buchanan Cabinet may possess its share of agreeably entertaining fellas like George Henley (Lands and Forests Minister, currently engaged on a subversive witch hunt through environmental groups), most people populating the Cabinet are team players first, last, and always. Like Education Minister Terry Donahoe, for example.

For as long as he's been in office, Donahoe has somehow managed to portray himself as the best Education Minister we can expect from the Buchanan Team. Regardless of what cutback or attack on education in the province students endured, people managed to come away from listening to Donahoe's charm honestly believing Terry was fighting cabinet battles for students tooth and nail. The only reason things got a little bleak at times were because he kept on getting outnumbered at those shoot-outs at the Cabinet Corral. That's rule number one in buck-passing - *always seem to be the underdog*.

But Mr. Donahoe has made his big step up in the business - a relaxed and graceful try for the brass ring of buck-passing. Through a simple trick of creative financing, Terry has managed to dump millions of dollars of provincial deficit into the laps of Nova Scotia universities. All he had to do was take back from the universities money which was approved for them to spend (and they had, in good faith). Et voilà...a cash saving to the Province of about five and a half million dollars.

What he left behind was one post secondary institution closed and most others facing heavy deficits for the coming year. You may not think that's too important now, but you'll most certainly feel it come springtime and tuition-setting time. President MacKay, faced with a three and a half million dollar larger deficit than he had a half a month ago, is already making noises about students paying a greater percentage of the cost of the university. With the deficit so large, the tuition hikes we'll see the Administration attempting to set will have to be something more frightening than we've ever seen before.

In his interview with two Gazette staffers this issue, Donahoe seems very much a born-again Conservative, thankful his fatherlike Premier showed him the true way to cutback. Now, it seems, Mr. Donahoe is a true believer in the cutback indeed - and the only way to see some penance from the universities is to cut the holy well off, bone dry.

Of course, the real underlying force in these times of magic disappearing funds are those people who decide our province's credit rating in New York City. Had the Government not been far outspending itself in areas outside of education, our credit rating wouldn't have stumbled this summer, and we wouldn't be saddled with these huge cutbacks/potential tuition hikes. After all, it takes a true buck-passer to realise that there's nothing more likely to please those anonymous bankers than seeing a provincial blunder passed onto a bunch of unorganized, apathetic students. That's called team playing.

## There's a wind of change at the Dalhousie Gazette

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