

Gazette budget threatened

It appears that the stand taken by the GAZETTE regarding student government and elections has at least stimulated the Council to show up with a quorum and make an attempt to perform some sort of Council-like function (i.e. make a decision).

For the record, the major concern of those present seemed to be whether or not to withdraw the GAZETTE budget if we refused to co-operate by running interviews and commentaries on candidates for Council positions. A motion to this effect was actually brought on the floor, and only the reasoning of the more competent reps prevented it from becoming a fact. We were approached and asked to change our stand, and since we refused, it is possible that it will go through at another time.

That is not the question that we want to deal with at this time, though. The GAZETTE feels that its stand is justified and that it should be explained more fully than was the case in that particular editorial.

The inaction toward voting that we urge is really a form of action. By not voting, the student body can express its dissatisfaction with the way Council (under the present structure) has, is and always will operate. Surely no group of honest council members could pretend to be representative of the student body if only ten or fifteen per cent of the population votes. And if they do have the interests of the students on this campus in mind, they will have to consider the possibility of creating a committee to analyze and suggest changes for the present structure. Otherwise they will assume that they have the confidence of the Dalhousie students.

If Council is so badly ineffective that even the executive holds this opinion, then perhaps we should realize that it can never change and that alternatives are necessary.

The GAZETTE'S suggestion of an administrative board was not intended to be the only alternative, but simply a possibility that should be considered. As only a handful of Council members do anything now, why not establish them in a co-ordinating position, dealing with the representatives of the various faculties and societies? This would at least eliminate the ineffectiveness of Council actions and the foolishness of their meetings. Their job would not be to dictate policy; most decisions would be made within the faculties and societies and the co-ordinating committee would only be utilized when an extra expenditure of money was requested, or when the activities of one organization involved another.

It would probably work; after all, it's easier to find five or six dedicated people that are willing to work than trying for nearly 30.

As we stated before, student councils have always been ineffective and are considered by most reps to be nothing more than "fun". People have stated that this could be changed by simply voting for more responsible people (or running for

election yourself). We feel that this cannot work because a structure such as the Council here at Dal is inherently unwieldy — thus creating natural ineffectiveness. There will always be "Council jokers" whose only interest is grandstanding and getting into events free of charge, but even dedicated reps are bound to be snowed under by such an organization.

It's time that the students and Council faced facts: the present structure has never worked as it should and will never do so; it's time for a drastic change (one that will not come through voting); a committee to study the problem must be set up immediately. It must be remembered that it's not the fault of the people as much as the structure.

There also seems to be some doubt as to whether the GAZETTE will co-operate at all in the election. Although our position was stated in the editorial, it appears (from what was said at the meeting) that most reps neglected to read what they were talking about.

During the election period we will give free advertising space to any candidate for a Council position. To clarify: any candidate may (if they are interested in presenting their platform to the students) write a statement or whatever they choose and it will be printed just as any ad. (As is our practice with regular ads, we reserve the right to edit copy for either legal reasons or due to lack of space.) We think that this gives responsible candidates an opportunity to present their platform, even though we disagree with the present student government structure.

The very fact that Council members were ready to remove the GAZETTE budget over this issue shows they are petty enough to retaliate against what they feel to be a personal attack. Too bad they haven't realized that we think that only a few of them are worthy of ANY consideration. We were (and are) only attacking the structure that prevents those who know what they're doing from doing it, and encourages those who haven't a clue to stay that way.

By even considering removal of the GAZETTE budget over such an issue they are showing students that they don't believe in freedom of the press, especially when their smug position is challenged. The student press must be allowed to educate as well as inform and entertain; to point out what is wrong on this campus and (as much as possible) in the world, and to struggle for change with whatever tools are suitable in that situation.

By threatening us with budget removal unless we co-operate, Council is trying to ensure that the paper challenges only what they feel is permissible to attack — and certainly they do not include themselves in this category.

The GAZETTE is not always right (and never will be), but the right to introduce and maintain positions which demand serious thought by both students and administrative officials is a necessity if the paper is to be anything more than a token.

Tuition hike a rumor

During the past week reports were circulated to the effect that tuition fees would be increased by \$100.00 next year. University President Henry Hicks denied that any raise in tuition is planned. He also says there has been no discussion of fees as yet.

The Provincial Dept. of Education told the GAZETTE that university grants would be made known on Feb. 15. Apparently only after the amount is known will the university be able to study their own budgets and fees.

When the rumor of a tuition raise was first heard students became incensed at the prospect of another huge hike in fees. Dalhousie already is the most expensive university in Canada to attend.

Premier Gerald Regan and, also, we are told, Lt. Gov. Victor DeB. Oland will be at Dalhousie Feb. 10 to announce the planned construction of an Athletic Complex. This is part of an overall expansion project which has seen the construction of many new buildings — the Killam Library, the Arts Center, the Life Science Building, and the Thermal Plant, plus the acquisition of Fenwick Towers. There has also been a corresponding rise in tuition over this period.

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