

We still rule the track

BY JOHN CULLEN

Saturday night was a destructive one in Halifax and across the country. The highly over-rated Hurricane Hortense swaggered into town only to strip a few trees and create more work for Nova Scotia Power.

What probably had a more devastating effect on our country was the fact that Canada lost it's unofficial national sport to that realm below. Now this is not a sports story — I don't know enough about hockey to comment on how we could have won the game. But I do understand the effects it had on a lot of you.

Systematically the U.S. of A has become a controlling factor in most of our daily lives. You can see examples of this in big business, TV, transportation and music. We watch what they watch, listen to what they listen to, and finance companies they finance. However, there is a major difference between us and them. It goes like this — we lack in things such as national pride (unless it's a referendum) and they have way too much of it. We are seen as a gentle country of mild-mannered friendly types while they are seen as gun-toting freaks with an abundance of trucks (at least in Texas). But both of these views are generalizations, for I have met a few level-headed Americans and quite a few rowdy Canadians who would have liked to have marked my face with

one of their rings.

The one thing we could borrow from those south of us is some pride. As mentioned before, it usually takes a crisis of unity to pull us together, but why does that have to be? We were voted "Best Place to Live" by the UN. That's no token award like "Best Costume". And I'll bet anyone the USA didn't even make the UN's first cut. Even though we have this title, it seems that apathy still rules our psyche. Why can't we get all riled up, blare some Stompin' Tom Connors and celebrate the sole fact that we aren't like our neighbours to the south? That seems like a good enough reason for a party to me.

So here is something to take into consideration...

I try to make a conscious effort to buy Canadian products whenever I can. It's my little way to help speed up the evident decline of America. I'm not preaching boycotts, that can be left up to the International Socialists. What I'm trying to say is: be proud of what we are and what we can do. And if you need something to help tide you over until our next athletic duel with the south — remember that we still rule the track.



Keep Savage True To His Word

BY MICHAEL ALVES

In an about face last week, the Savage Government told Nova Scotians that there would be no tax on books when the blended tax takes effect in the Spring of 1997.

Savage's flip-flop on this issue is an important sign to all Canadians that if we yell loud enough, the politicians will hear and possibly act to incorporate citizen's concerns into government policy.

Whether or not the blended tax on books is scrapped is still unsure. Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin told reporters that the tax cannot be scrapped. Tax on books, like tax on cars, makes

money for the government. Exempting books from tax would take money out of the hands of the federal and provincial governments. Martin's question is, "Where would the income it creates come from?"

Who cares?!

The fact is that the Atlantic provinces enjoy a literacy rate that is 20 per cent below the national average. Low literacy levels result in the slowest pace of technological innovation, the highest unemployment and the lowest average income levels. A 15 per cent tax on books will not make learning any easier.

Canada should follow the example of other G-7 countries like

Britain, the United States and Japan. These countries have all refused to tax books. The European Economic Community is also working to abolish book taxes in member countries because of the adverse message it sends concerning the importance of reading and literacy.

Students at Dalhousie already face some of the highest tuition fees in the country. Taxing our textbooks would put a university education out of the hands of many potential Dal students.

We as students must make sure that Savage keeps his promise, and does not allow the blended tax to apply to books.

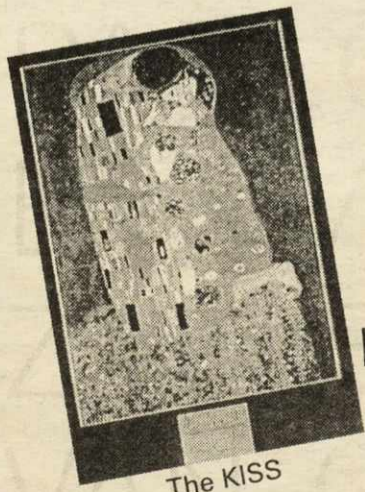
Reading is a right, not a

privilege.

With the economic competitiveness of regions tied to the level of education that their citizens obtain, the Atlantic provinces run the risk of depriving their citizens of the right to read and educate themselves.



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