

As the world burns . . .

The tuition increase - was it really necessary? (Part I)

by Ken MacDougall

By now, almost everyone should have paid their first installment of tuition, that is, barring delays in student loans, receiving cash from father, and - oh, yes - if you're not participating in the Graduate Student-organized fee boycott.

For the purposes of those students who did not attend Dal last year, fees in the Faculties of Arts & Science and Graduate Studies went up this year; for grads, the jump was \$65, while undergrads have to shell out an additional \$41. This is on top of the \$10 hike in Student Union fees.

With Dal students, the fee hike is a particularly bitter pill to swallow. For the last three years we have been known as the most expensive university to attend in Canada. The new hike only entrenches this dubious honour. To add insult to injury, a report carried in the August 7th **Globe & Mail** claims that all provinces in Canada, save Nova Scotia, froze university tuition in order to "protect students from inflation."

HIKE WAS A "SURPRISE" DECISION

The decision to raise fees was made by the Board of Governors after students had gone home for the summer. The item was not even on the agenda for the May meeting, but was introduced after the regular business had been dispatched. Not surprisingly, the issue caught many members unprepared, including, it has been reported, some members of the Board's Budget Committee.

Graduate students, who are the only students who remain on campus the year round, began organizing resistance to the fee increase. A committee was struck in late July, headed by PoliSci students Paul Evans, Marni Mitchell and Bob Flute (last year's Dal Association of Graduate Students president), and current DAGS president John Shane. After receiving wholehearted endorsement for their cause from the Council of Graduate Students, a strategy was mapped out. The fee boycott was adopted as the formal method of protest. Bulletins were prepared, and fliers sent to potential Dal students to gauge student reaction to the proposed action.

BOYCOTT ENCOUNTERS INTERNAL RESISTANCE

Boycotts, by the very nature of Dalhousie campus, are doomed to failure - unless, of course, there is almost universal agreement by students on the point of contention. It is a cynical note as to the state of activism on this campus that, even in the heady years of student unrest, which culminated in the occupation of Dr. Hicks' office in the spring of 1970, Dalhousie "radicals" chose a time to occupy Dr. Hicks' office when he was not even on campus.

This is not to say that students do not have a heightened level of political consciousness. Students at Dalhousie, however, are usually their own worst enemy when planning a concerted attack against the university's administrators. In the case of the fee boycott plans, more energy, it seems, was expended on conflict of personalities than was invested in organizing an effective protest. Witness the following points:

a) Although the Student Union provided DAGS with some money to carry out their student canvass, it was no secret that the Union executive was lukewarm towards the idea of leading a fee boycott (which, as student leaders, they would have been obliged to do). Ann Smiley, Union Vice President, openly expressed reservation with the course of action. She, in turn, was accused (not publically) of being a reactionary.

b) Rumours began flying to the effect that Russell knew of the fee increases well in advance, and did little to publicize the fact. This rumor began when it was learned that the submission which Russell and Graham jointly presented to the Board of Governors was dated April 9th, just days after classes ended.

What type of protest could have been organized at this time is questionable. Most of the campus media were not functioning, and students were concerning themselves with papers and examinations. The only point to be made in this argument's favour is that protracted summer publicity like the student aid protest, might have forced the administration to back down on their stand.

THE REAL ISSUES IGNORED

Missing from this particular trade-off of personalities was the voice of moderation and compromise. For the Executive's part, it should be conceded that their open skepticism as to the workability of a fee boycott was justified. As it turned out, they accurately gauged the feelings of the rank-and-file membership of the Union. Most flyers that were returned held written comments opposing the boycott, either because it was an extreme measure or because it centered protest on the wrong villain in the affair. Many students held, the Liberal government of Gerald Regan, responsible for their plight, not the university.

For DAGS part, the Executive should have been held partly responsible for the lack of student protest against the tuition hike. Russell, in an initial letter of concern to Dr. Hicks, questioned the need for the university to hike fees at this time. Dr. Hicks merely pointed to the Union's own hike in fees of about 25%. Russell then backed off.

Ignored by Russell was the fact that this was the first time in 13 years that the Union had raised its fees. In the last 4 years alone, Dalhousie tuition has risen by 30%. Going back as far as 1962 would probably show an increase approaching 70% or greater.

Dr. Hicks, then, had nothing to talk about, and Russell should never have been cowed by Hicks' tactics.

If students wanted to blame both DAGS and the Union simultaneously for their less-than-enthusiastic onslaught of the administration, they could merely point to the fact that neither body has yet to come forward with a critique of the university's budget. It may be that Dr. Hicks and company can well justify any and all expenditures incurred by this university. If this were to happen, who could we then blame for our fee dilemma? Well, we don't have to look very far - just to the corner of Hollis & George Streets.

Next: Regan's anti-intellectualism - the case for a re-evaluation of post-secondary educational spending.

Cont'd from page 4

program this summer. In actual fact the list is long and to go through it in detail would undoubtedly prove tedious to Council members forced to sit through long, tedious meetings every second Sunday.

Certainly the mention of our work was flattering to the three of us but it would perhaps have been more appropriate to omit our names from a Council report. Further there is no question in my mind, nor I think in the minds of any of the other members of the ad hoc committee on Student Aid, that we could have accomplished anything without the tremendous assistance of many non-students.

The N.D.P. members of the Provincial Legislature offered us their time, office facilities on occasion, research data and help in the House of Assembly. Without their help early in the campaign

against the Student Aid Program our efforts would probably have fallen flat.

John Buchanan, Jeremy Akerman and Mayor Morris all made public statements supporting our position and the effect of these statements on the government cannot be underestimated. The local media was most cooperative in publishing our press releases and providing us with air time.

There were many others who in one way or another assisted in the campaign for better Student Aid. Unfortunately the government did not respond with a program worth the efforts that went into changing the previous one. Certainly the Student Union Executive deserves a vote of thanks for their work and I only hope that they continue their efforts to improve the presently inadequate Provincial Aid Program.

Sincerely,
Mary Pat MacKenzie

To The Gazette,

In response to your article entitled "New Year with Howe Hall (Sept. 18)" written by high and mighty Dave D. Chadee, it was true, at least the first part of the column about frosh week not being as exciting perhaps as previous years but it was quite a bit better than made obvious by a fellow who leaned against a wall at a dance all night and then calls it "just another dance, nothing fantastic, but some people make mountains out of molehills"

He also goes on about the beach party saying "the Sheriff Hall girls still went down to the beach and eventually had the party." What happened was, as would happen before any event where bad weather was probable, rumours spread, but they in no way stopped the party which included just as many Howe Hall residents and packed the four buses ordered and everything went

on as scheduled.

The bit that was thrown in about false advertisement. It was a frosh dance, frosh got in first and upper classmen allowed to fill up the remainder at \$1.25 a head to the building capacity (the SUB has this limit too, Mr. Chadee) and I can remember more than once where a couple of people have been turned away. Lastly, I would like to say that before you go making statements like "This Orientation Program was not geared to orientate the Frosh to University but rather good times for the people who ran the show"; you go to a few events instead of sitting on your butt with your finger up your - - - trying to think of what to criticize, or fill up space.

Bill Johns, Howe Hall
P.S. I had nothing to do with the organizing of events here, I just participated.


Gazette needs staff

DAL SPORT PARACHUTE CLUB
LET US SHOW YOU OUR WORLD
PICK UP AN APPLICATION FORM
AT THE RACK BESIDE THE SUB ENQUIRY DESK

5384 THE INGLIS St.

SUBMARINE

THE SUBMARINE



425-7618

5384 INGLIS ST.