

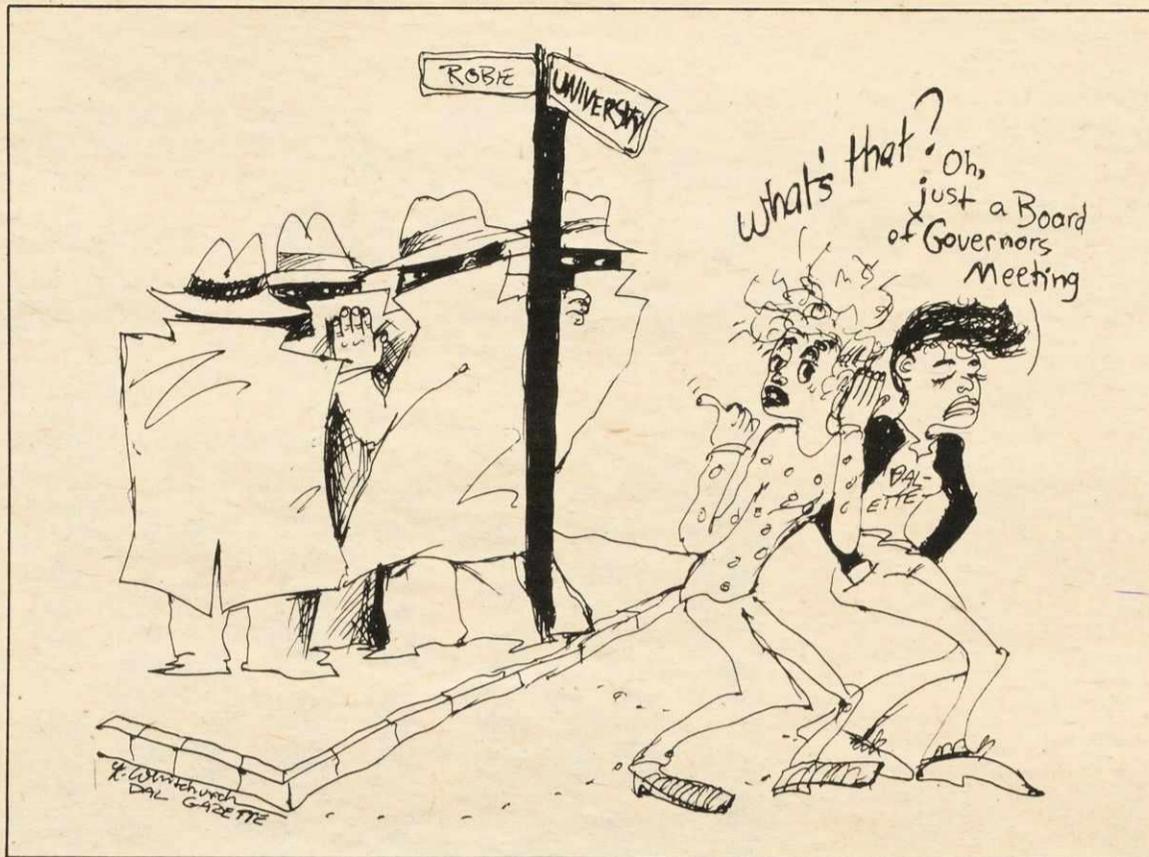
Drawing the line on censorship

It is a disturbing trend to see letters arriving in our office questioning the basic right of the press to express an opinion. In last week's paper one letter writer implies that we should be governed by some sort of CRTC-type body that would monitor our text (and perhaps revoke instituted licenses to print?).

The week before others asked what right and what qualifications we had to express opinions on the Pope's visit.

The right is a very basic one—freedom of speech and expression.

It is frightening to see people who are so proud of this supposed "free and democratic society" turning right around and implying that somehow we are exercising some privilege by making the statements we have.



Because our opinions don't necessarily fall into the mainstream political spectrum does not mean that they do not have a valid place in political debate.

Advocating silence on issues of importance is the refusal to accept a real open and democratic society.

A matter of principle

It's tough to be a student activist in New Brunswick. Several years ago students at the Université de Moncton were arrested and expelled after an occupation of their administration building over tuition fee increases. Last year the student press at St. Thomas University was put under a state of siege by their own student union because they had the guts to attack that body over their policies. This year it's the University of New Brunswick's turn, its student union having its own building seized by the administration.

Sept. 28, UNB administration president James Downey dissolved the 11-person board that administered the student union building. The board was primarily controlled by students. In its place he hand-picked six trustees to take over the building.

The reasons for the takeover are vague in nature, and give the impression that UNB moved in on a pretext rather than the emergency situation they claimed to have existed.

They claim employees had been harassed by the student union, although they are unspecific about what that means. They claim leases of tenants were in a state of flux, despite the fact a meeting had been arranged between the dissolved board and the tenants to work out their problems. They called in auditors Touche Ross to review all records and to report on the financial position of the SUB, although no instances of financial mismanagement had been previously reported.

At the center of the controversy

is student union president John Bosnitch. Despite being personally unpopular among many progressive groups for his centrist approach to student politics, his policies and actions at the helm of the student union have been undeniably in the students' interests—interests that have frequently clashed with those of the administration.

Included in those actions is an effort to start a student-run store in the SUB by outbidding the current campus variety store for the tenancy. Bosnitch says the space the current store occupies has long been underappraised, and the student union is more than willing to outbid the current tenants for the space. Bosnitch says what they are trying to do is no more than free enterprise.

When the administration took over the building, suspiciously enough they extended the leases of all tenants in the building, temporarily quashing the idea of a student-run store.

Clearly students are getting a raw deal at UNB. They have lost control over a building to which they contributed more than \$1 million.

We hope that student unions across the country will rise to the occasion and do what they can to stop this move. We hope that the personality of John Bosnitch will not stand in their way. A principle is a principle—regardless of who might be getting the shaft at the time.

In many ways the student movement in this country has failed to rise to the occasion when they were so badly needed. The challenge is now theirs. □



Letters

Deadline for letters to the editor is noon, Monday before publication. Letters must be typed double-spaced and be less than 300 words. Letters can be dropped at the SUB enquiry desk or brought up to *The Gazette* offices, third floor, SUB.

Spurr's facts wrong

To the Editors:

After reading Mr. Spurr's letter in the Sept. 24, 1984 issue of the *Gazette*, I felt I must write a rebuttal to try and clear up some of the many inaccuracies in it.

His comments about the Air Cadet League must be made from total ignorance as they are totally wrong. The Air Cadet League is a

youth organization for teen-agers interested in aviation. They are under no obligation to join the Canadian Forces. The Canadian Forces do provide some support.

His statements about the conversion of Canadian Forces Base Shearwater into an U. S. Air Force Base is beyond my comprehension. On what basis does he make this ridiculous statement. Not one USAF plane is permanently stationed at Shearwater. The occasional plane(s) may visit or conduct exercises there but this is provided for under agreements between the governments of Canada and the United States. The berthing facilities for American nuclear submarines are only berthed there for convenience and added safety. These visits and the visits of other NATO warships to Halifax occur on a regular basis as a result of agreements between NATO member countries. They are not a violation of Canadian sovereignty and the security of the people.

Before Mr. Spurr voices his opinion, he should get his facts straight.

Bertwin Fong

Cat stew tasteless

To the editors:

I was disappointed by the advertisement on page 20 of the Sept. 27 issue of the *Gazette* aimed at recruiting new staff members for the newspaper.

While I liked the idea behind the ad, I found the depiction of a cat being stuffed into a stew pot by a man with a knife between his teeth to be very tasteless. I expected better of you.

The idea could have been pursued in many other ways, say by showing someone eating pizza covered with mustard, ketchup, tabasco sauce, etc., which would have been a revolting image without showing cruelty to household pets.

Sincerely,
Ann Copeland

Universities are by nature elitist

To the editors:

It would be simplistic to assert that the furious reaction of the well-entrenched academics and other "authorities" of the Canadian university industry is, in itself, an argument for the accuracy of the views expressed in *The Great Brain Robbery*.

I am disturbed, however, that the impassioned attitudes and acerbic diatribes that have been aroused by Messrs. Granatstein, Bothwell and Bercuson have been focused on the quality of their analysis and **not** the value of their hypotheses.

It is of vital necessity that the fundamental question be addressed: Is the structure of our learning institutions flawed and in need of repair?

Andre Picard, in his front-page article of the *Gazette* contends (as do others) that the problem is funding—and the lack thereof. Apparently, he believes that universities today are **not** elitist institutions when, so it seems to me; they (universities) are founded on an elitist theory. Both intellectually and economically.

The co-authors of *The Great Brain Robbery* appear to be suggesting a return to a more refined elitism. Picard is drawing his own conclusions when he says the authors "wish to revive (a system that) was blatantly sexist and racist..."

That is a 'crude' form of elitism that has seen its' best days, and though Picard might assert that it is "obvious" that elitism won't solve the underfunding problems, he ignores the other problems to which "Robbery" applies elitism as the solution.

Fundamentally, I would like to say that economic elitism is and should be on its way out. I can't though: totally academic elitism is "ludicrous" (to quote Picard). But, I think Picard is wrong when he says the concept of governments supporting elitism systems is ludicrous: they have, they do and they will.

Granatstein, Bothwell and Bercuson at least recognize that universities are by nature elitist (here and everywhere else) and though their perceptions may be **specifically** inaccurate, they are in a general sense correct.

It would seem obvious, though not necessarily true, that governments will support this particular elitist system in direct proportion to the service that the structure bestows upon the society. Perhaps.

And perhaps *The Great Brain Robbery* will convince a few people that those within the university system are intent on improving the service, and ipso facto; the value of universities.

Leo R. Jacobs