



Bad Taste And The High Cost Of Living

This editorial is in bad taste.

We admit it—unashamedly. Varsity Guest Weekend editorials, you understand, are traditionally supposed to be pleasantly vague, obscurely cordial, tasteful in their applause of things as they are.

Yet there are times when it is plainly dishonest to speak in laudatory platitudes. There are times when it is destructive to obscure the issues for the sake of preserving "good will." There is a time for honesty, and a time for consideration of sensitive feelings. This is a time for honesty.

If you are a parent, and if you have children either studying here now, or planning to study here soon, you face a grim future.

The present trend of policy in both the Administration and in the Provincial Government indicates that within five years many of you will no longer be able to afford to send your children here to study.

The reasons for this are complex, and there is not room here to examine them completely. But we can touch upon the highlights.

As this is being written, the university's Board of Governors is considering an administration proposal to up the cost of living in university residences about 20 per cent—effective this summer.

District landlords have already announced, many of them, that they too will up their rents early in the fall—in response to the Administration proposal.

What does this mean for you parents? It will cost at least \$100 more to send your children here next fall than it cost last fall.

It could cost more. If tuition fees go up again—and they probably will—the cost-increase will be even greater.

Have you got the hard cash? We haven't.

It's pretty darned alarming. Freshmen students, the Administration says, will be "strongly encouraged" to live in the new high-cost residences starting in the fall. So even if they were capable of finding cheaper accommodations in private homes in the "university district"—which, given the Administration-encouraged cost increase off-campus too, is unlikely—they would still be facing steeper bills.

And that isn't all—not by a long shot.

A new \$4,000,000 Students' Union Building (to cost \$8,000,000 if you include the long-term financing), has been in the planning stage for some time as well. The students themselves will have to pay for it—whether they use its lavish facilities or not—out of their own Students' Union fees.

The future of all students in years *yet to come* will be heavily mortgaged by this commitment if it is undertaken. And so another increased cost.

Now when you read this, the Board of Governors may have elected to reduce or wipe out the residence fee increase. A last-minute, 700-odd-signature petition may have compelled Students' Council to back down somewhat in its headlong rush to get the project underway without the prior approval of a student referendum.

But even if all this has happened, the nagging sickness of our time, the ever-upward drive of education costs, will remain. Only the symptoms will change. And its voice will be heard again in the months and years to come, ever more loudly, ever more insistently.

So tour our lavishly-equipped campus. Note its wonders, and note its deficiencies, too. But take home with you, when you leave, two large and anxious questions in your minds.

How are education costs going to be *held down*? And as they are being held down, how are we going at the same time to broaden the opportunities of Alberta's qualified and ambitious students to get the kind of university education they so badly need and want?

Ask yourself if, for every tax dollar being spent upon this university, there is a corresponding increase in educational opportunity for this province's youth. Ask yourself if your tax dollars are going to benefit the *students*.

Ask these questions *now*—not next fall, when the axe has fallen; not next year. Then it may be too late.