

# Tempest in a HUB-cap over Tenants' Association

by Jens Andersen

Responding to recent criticism of non-performance, members of the HUB Tenants' Association executive have come out fighting.

Not only do they offer explanations and defences of their conduct, they level criticism in return at last year's HTA and the University administration.

The most important issues are: negotiating for a reasonable rent increase this year, ensuring an equitable rent structure in relation to other residences, and obtaining financial statements for HUB residential units, says Vidar Gudmondsson, HTA Chairman.

Despite repeated HTA requests, Housing and Food Services and Associate Vice-President of Facilities and Services A.M. Rennie have declined to give the HTA anything but 1982-83 budget projections for the residential portion of HUB and combined commercial and residential financial

statements, saying this should be sufficient. But Gudmondsson insists that all other residence associations receive statements for the residence alone.

"Even the Lister residence and laundry budgets are kept separate," he says. "Financial statements for our residential unit alone must be made accessible to us."

Gudmondsson says he has verified with the Comptroller that such records exist, and has written yet another letter requesting them.

Luma Ousta, last year's HTA Vice-President External, criticized this year's executive for apparently having done nothing about rents as yet (lack of any sort of information about HTA activities this academic year is another complaint).

In Luma's year, rent proposals from Housing and Food Services had been seen to the HTA in December.

Gudmondsson explains that a lack of financial statements and the fact that Housing and Food Services turned down a December meeting, prevented figures from being brought forward until January 25.

"We feel that Housing and Food Services is doing this just to give us a shorter time to negotiate," says Gudmondsson, adding, "of course we can't prove this..."

Gudmondsson also points out that last year's HTA executive approved a proposed 15% increase in HUB rents at a meeting of the General Faculties Council Housing and Food Services Committee Feb. 9, 1982. This, despite the fact that HUB revenues were subsidizing other residences. Eventually a rent increase of eight to twelve per cent was approved by the Board of Governors.

Replying to this criticism Louma said a large increase was justified as long as the constant

dollar cost of the subsidization didn't rise, because General Faculties Council's break-even policy made fighting subsidization futile, and a large utility hike last year made it necessary.

Other criticisms of this year's HTA executive include:

- Inaccessibility amounting to secretiveness. Gudmondsson maintains that the present two office hours a week is enough and that slipping memos under the HTA office door, as they have recommended, is preferable to having tenants phone the eight HTA representatives.

In the face of criticism by Brian Dawkins, however, two phone numbers have been posted at the office, and Gudmondsson concedes that their hours may have to be increased if the HTA is left in charge of tenants' storage facilities. The HTA feels storage should be the University's responsibility.

Louma points out that at

present tenants are advised by H&FS to bring rent concerns to Pratap Sahay, an HTA member who sits on a rent committee, but his phone number is not advertised (although it is in the student directory).

- Storage. Louma says storage availability for tenants is not advertised, that the two small spaces operated by the HTA are virtually empty, and that access to them is poor. Gudmondsson replies that operating storage once was the duty of HUB management, but they have abdicated that role and H&FS should take over. H&FS has apparently refused.

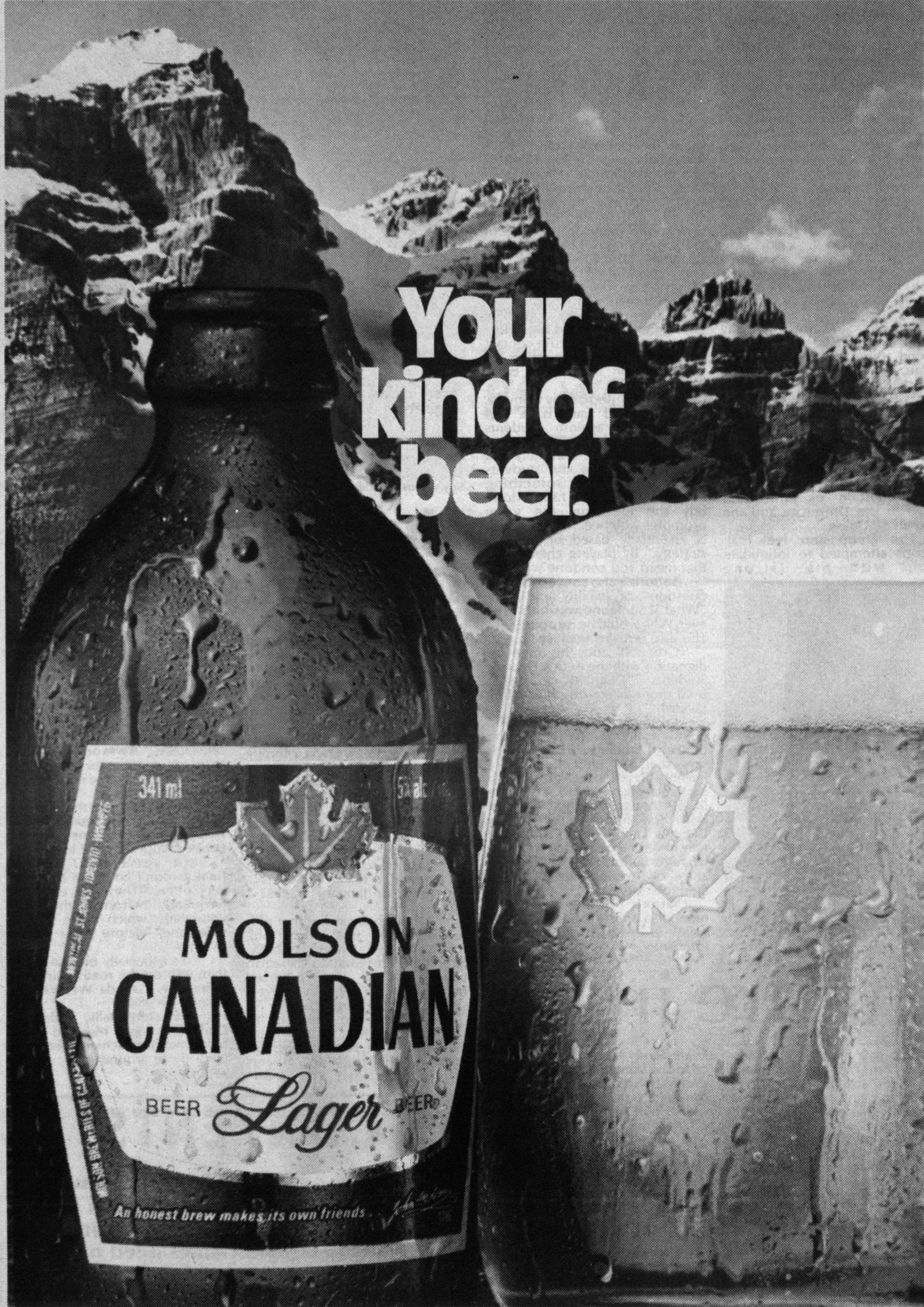
- HTA budget. Last year's HTA ran the storage rooms to earn revenues, and later attempted unsuccessfully to pass a \$15 per tenant Association fee. This year's HTA runs storage free, but attempted a 1.5% levy of tenants' security deposits to obtain funds. H&FS, who would have collected the money, protested that collection would have been too costly. A \$500 lump sum, indexed to HUB rents, was substituted.

Louma and Dawkins complain that no budget was published as to how the \$500 would be spent, though the money was received in November. Gudmondsson counters that since the \$500 has been collected contrary to the constitution (which mandates the 1.5% levy), a constitutional amendment must first be made.

A general meeting for this purpose, and for passing the budget, has been set for tonight at 7:30 pm in the HUB Rocking Chair Lounge.

Gudmondsson added that a tentative budget had been sent to the University's Council on Student Services (COSS). Another was posted yesterday at the HTA office.

- Re-incorporation. Louma complained that when forming the HTA this year, the executive re-incorporated and took last year's HTA cash, but refused to pay their bills. Gudmondsson says this was done on legal advice since the previous HTA failed for two years to file financial statements, thus prompting the Alberta Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to strike them from their Register of Companies. The only way the old HTA could have been reformed was to provide audited financial statements for these two years.



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