

Fredericton taxi fares are increased by 30 percent

By JUDY GRIEVE

Last week, taxi fares were again increased in Fredericton, this time by approximately 30 percent.

Over the past month, a series of meetings were held by the Fredericton Taxi Association, which is composed of the operators of the various taxi companies. They applied to the Fredericton City Council for an allowance for increased rates on several grounds. Among the reasons cited were recent increases in the minimum wage in New Brunswick, as well as rising fuel and operating costs.

According to Tony Cameron, of Trius Taxi, (other companies contacted refused to comment on reasons for increases in fares), the cost of mechanical labour has risen from \$3 or \$4 to \$8 per hour. He also mentioned that insurance, approximately \$1,000 - \$1,200 per car per year, has gone up over the past six months. In applying for the increase, most of the taxi firms claimed they were operating at a loss.

Cameron also explained that taxi companies generally rely on the winter season to make most of their profits. This winter, with its mild weather, and little snow, has been bad for the companies.

For these reasons, City Council has put the taxi companies on a three-month trial, lasting until May first, during which they will be able to establish their own rates. Fredericton city director John Robison feels that there are enough taxi operators to exclude the possibility of a monopoly developing.

Although Cameron said that fares may vary for long distances, local rates will be fairly uniform. Basically, fares have been increased by 30 percent, although there are several exceptions. For example, there is now a separate zone between Montgomery and Priestman Streets. Fares within downtown Fredericton itself, which were previously 65 cents, were increased to 90 cents last week. However, due to a very marked reduction in the use of taxis downtown, the fare has been once more reduced to 75 cents. Rates from the UNB campus are now \$1.00 downtown, and \$1.50 to the mall.

Should a great deal of dissatisfaction over the present system (complaints of unfair rates, or overcharging) be expressed to the City Council within the next three months, the taxi companies will probably switch to the meter system.

Robison added he sees the present trial as merely a temporary approach to the problem until the ultimate establishment of a meter system comes about.

"Probably we won't have a really good taxi system until we have meters," he said.

Among the advantages of a meter system would be the privacy of having a taxi to one's self, and the fact that the taxi driver would have to take the most direct route.

Robison does agree with Cameron, however, that the use of meters would mean an increase in the cost of using a taxi; whereas

Robison feels that the advantages of a meter system would outweigh this disadvantage. Cameron disagrees.

He explained that meters work both on time and distance. Below 12 miles per hour, the meter foes up \$6 per hour.

Cameron felt that with the amount of traffic jams caused by slow-downs at the bridge downtown, to use a taxi with a meter would cost too much. He also mentioned that one taxi company had estimated that with a meter system, four times as many taxis would be needed, and he said most taxi companies would probably not

find it worth their while to increase their fleets by that much, thus increasing the length of time customers would have to wait for a taxi.

Both Cameron and Robison agreed that the ideal solution to the problem would be to have an improved bus service in Fredericton, leaving the taxi companies free to cater to people who really wanted to use a taxi because it would be a quick and direct method of transportation.

Robison said, "If people are concerned, we would like to know." He also expressed an interest in student opinion on the situation.



Photo by Kevin McLaughlin

Once again taxi fares have taken a jump — this time a 30 per cent rise. Trius Taxi spokesman, Tony Cameron, said the increase was due to cost of mechanical labor and insurance. Most city taxi companies claim to be operating at a loss.

Fund raising program announced

By DERWIN GOWAN

"Planning for the Future" is a program that has been adopted by the university, in which they are making it known that opportunities exist for donations, said D. J. Dauphinee from the Development Office.

These include life insurance policies in which the university is

the benefactor; trust funds, annuities, bequests in wills, and so on. These can be for specified purposes or can be unrestricted.

This is a long range program which is meant to encourage people to make provisions in their wills for the university. Similar programs have been successful in other universities, said Dauphinee.

Where the money will be spent will depend on when the money becomes available, and also to the restrictions put on the donation by the donor. For the unrestricted bequests, they plan on spending it on "the area of greatest need," Dauphinee explained.

By this program, they hope to "increase the amount of money from the private sector," he said.

"Hopefully this will augment government sources," he added. Dauphinee explained that this money will help to start new

projects and "help maintain quality and standards of the university."

"As far as we're concerned, it's a pilot project," said Dauphinee, although he expects it to be continued in future years. It consists basically of a "low key" appeal, in which faculty, alumnae and friends of the university will be asked to leave money to the university.

At this time, letters have been sent to 2,600 people. They plan on sending brochures, making personal visits to prospective donors, and keeping professional estate planners informed of the university's programs. They plan on expanding the mailing list, and on having a minimum of four mailings per year.

More information and brochures on "Planning for the Future" can be obtained from the Development Office in the Neville Homestead.

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But just wait 'til Monday.

To all those students (and that one prof) who now have bank balances between 7 cents and \$1.21, due to a rash of spending for fun, frivolous Homecoming things, we'd just like to say one thing at this time: Enjoy!

Let's talk.

The First Canadian Bank
Bank of Montreal