

## Press finds new home in government

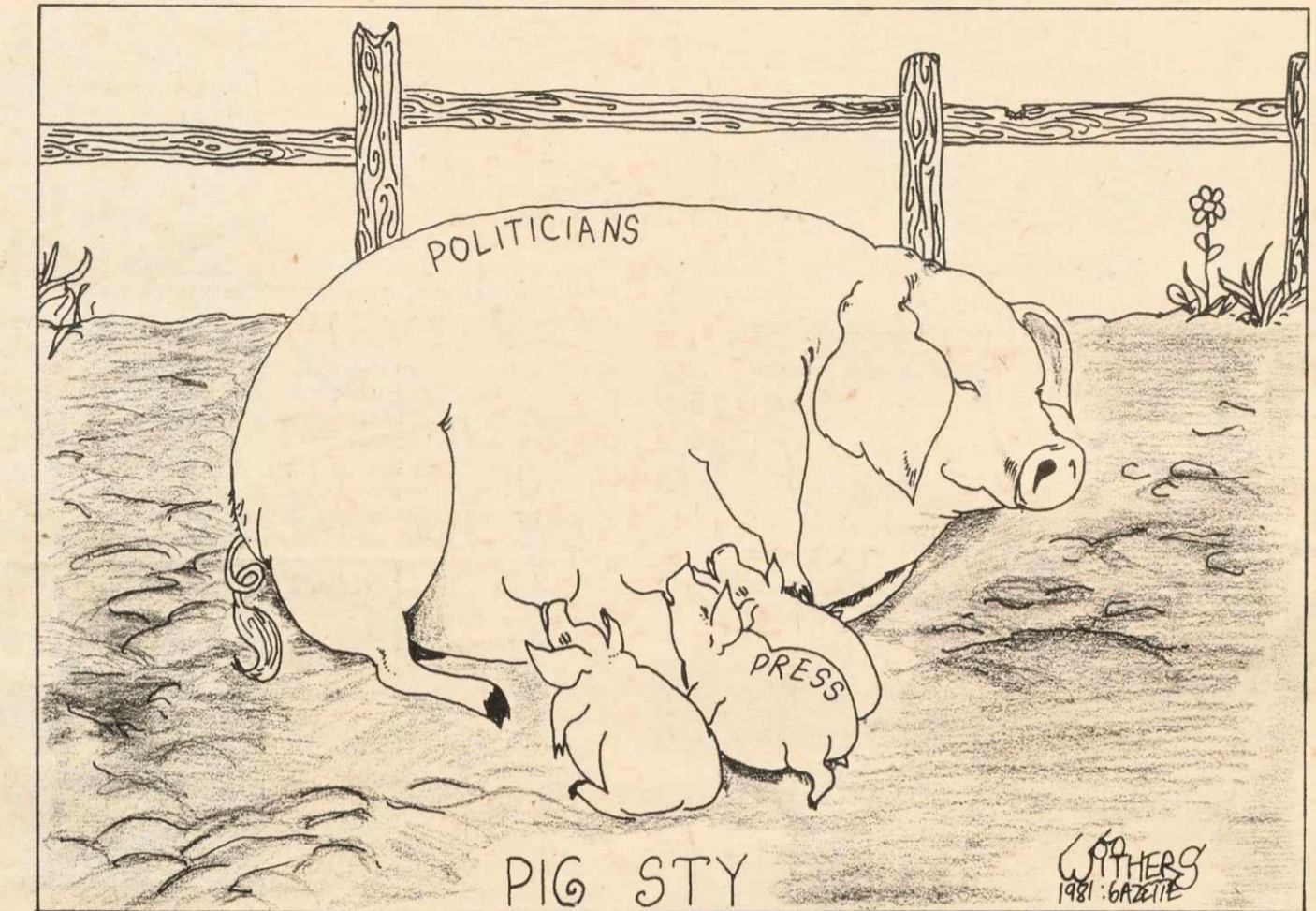
HALIFAX—A vacant building in downtown Halifax has been chosen as the location for the new Halifax Press Club. The Nova Scotia Legislature was the obvious choice as the building has fallen into disrepair and disuse in recent years. Inhabited by a few squatters, the empty halls echo with the clattering of scurrying, secretive rats.

It has been a long time since the last spring sitting of the Legislature. So long, in fact, that rumors in the political under-underworld said a band of Halifax reporters have moved in with their brethren politicians. Now that the House will soon be in session it is high time the Government was taken to task over some sticky questions involving their running of Nova Scotian affairs.

Premier Buchanan's long-awaited calling of the Legislature should be of interest to all Nova Scotians, as the Tory government must be called to account for its conduct during the last year. The Government's dubious actions or non-actions with regard to the Digby School Bus Strike, Portland Estates Ltd., and its tendency to rule through secret task forces should be questioned. These problems and many others have been successfully ignored by Buchanan and his Ministers. Government secrecy is nothing new and this Buchanan government is not unlike previous governments in its unwillingness to answer questions which might reflect poorly on its record. Buchanan's predecessor, Gerald Regan, was notorious for conducting government deals and evading responsibility if the venture collapsed. Remember Mercator.

If Buchanan is continuing the tradition of tight-lipped secrecy, then he is aided by a lethargic Halifax press and opposition parties that have shown neither the desire nor the ability to ask tough questions of the government.

The Halifax Press has been remiss in its duty to watch and report with verve the goings-on in government. The CBC and ATV have become as mundane and as complacent as the Herald in their coverage of the Buchanan government. Something is



wrong. The Press Gallery acts as a dutiful stenographer, faithfully taking down what the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives say without checking up on what is being said. We have nothing about the parties flip-flopping on issues. What about the Liberals demanding that House committees meet between sessions on controversial matters when they were in power? What about Buchanan now calling for federal control over fisheries quotas as a curb on provincial power when, freshly elected, he wanted provincial control of fishery quotas? Liberal and Tory flip-flops such as these have not been reported. The only thing the press does with consistency is attend the Press Club bar.

And what of the NDP? They have said little between sessions and it ap-

pears they will continue this policy into the upcoming session.

It remains to be seen whether the Buchanan government will be tested during the next session. The Liberals and the NDP have shown little courage in their criticisms of Buchanan's handling of government. Witness Jeremy Akerman, hungry for a government job, silent during the Rollie Thornhill affair. Witness Vince Maclean shut up by his caucus over the same issue—the strong but silenced man. Maybe it is unnatural for

politicians to be honest, they are verbal gymnasts. But when the press goes along with them, there is bound to be trouble. Part of the troubles we are experiencing now—declining government accountability and opposition timidness—are due to the press slackness when covering events like the Legislature.

The upcoming session will prove interesting if only to determine whether the Government, the Opposition and the press will succeed or fail in carrying out their respective duties.

### VOICES VOICES VOICES

It is a greater crime to kill an ant than a man, because man is born again at death, while the ant dies forever—

**General Martinez, former President of El Salvador who in 1932 found it necessary to kill 30,000 peasants who rebelled against him.**

We're ready to kill to keep our automobiles running. We're ready to kill to keep up our materialistic, wasteful economy. . . I am sick and tired of 18-year olds being coerced into bearing the burden of the failure of politicians to face the tough domestic choices needed to end our dependency on foreign oil.

**U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield on draft registration**

The crucial argument put forward by student politicians and others concerned about the level of government support centre on the question of accessibility. It is argued that with continually high increases in the tuition fees, it restricts people from lower income backgrounds from coming to university. And with meagre increases in OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program), the gap widens even further.

**The Gazette, the student newspaper at the University of Western Ontario**

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter."

**Thomas Jefferson**

## the Dalhousie Gazette

The Dalhousie Gazette, Canada's oldest college newspaper, is the weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union members, and is a founding member of Canadian University Press.

The views expressed in the Dalhousie Gazette are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editor, or the collective staff. We reserve the right to edit material for reasons of space, legality, grammar or good taste.

The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64-character line and double spaced.

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