

## Unreasoned politics cloud the Senate debate

The Senate discussions are a fine example of confusion and desperate hot air.

Dalhousie has a crisis on its hands. It is surprised to find that the debts incurred by financing construction and expansion in the last ten years, with high interest charges making its deficit jump by millions each year.

The administration is grasping at an understanding of a complex problem, and the faculty and students are further in the dark. Thus a political battle is ensuing in Senate, with the arguments sadly lacking in reason and substance.

There is some pressure on students to support the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), whose power struggles with the administration are ongoing and who currently has issues before the grievance committee and a collective agreement for the Instructors on the negotiating table. The DFA has legitimate cause for concern and suspicion when the administration calls for a freeze on faculty appointments.

The report presented by the Senate Financial Planning Committee has the support of the administration.

Maybe the students will vote with the DFA, maybe they won't. Students are deciding what the best route is, considering their own necks will be on the line when the Board considers tuition levels a bit down the road. This is unfortunately the only criteria student reps can drum up to base their vote on.

As students become more politically mature at the national and local levels, and smug at the same time, their emphasis on strategy misses the boat. Before they develop strategy, they have

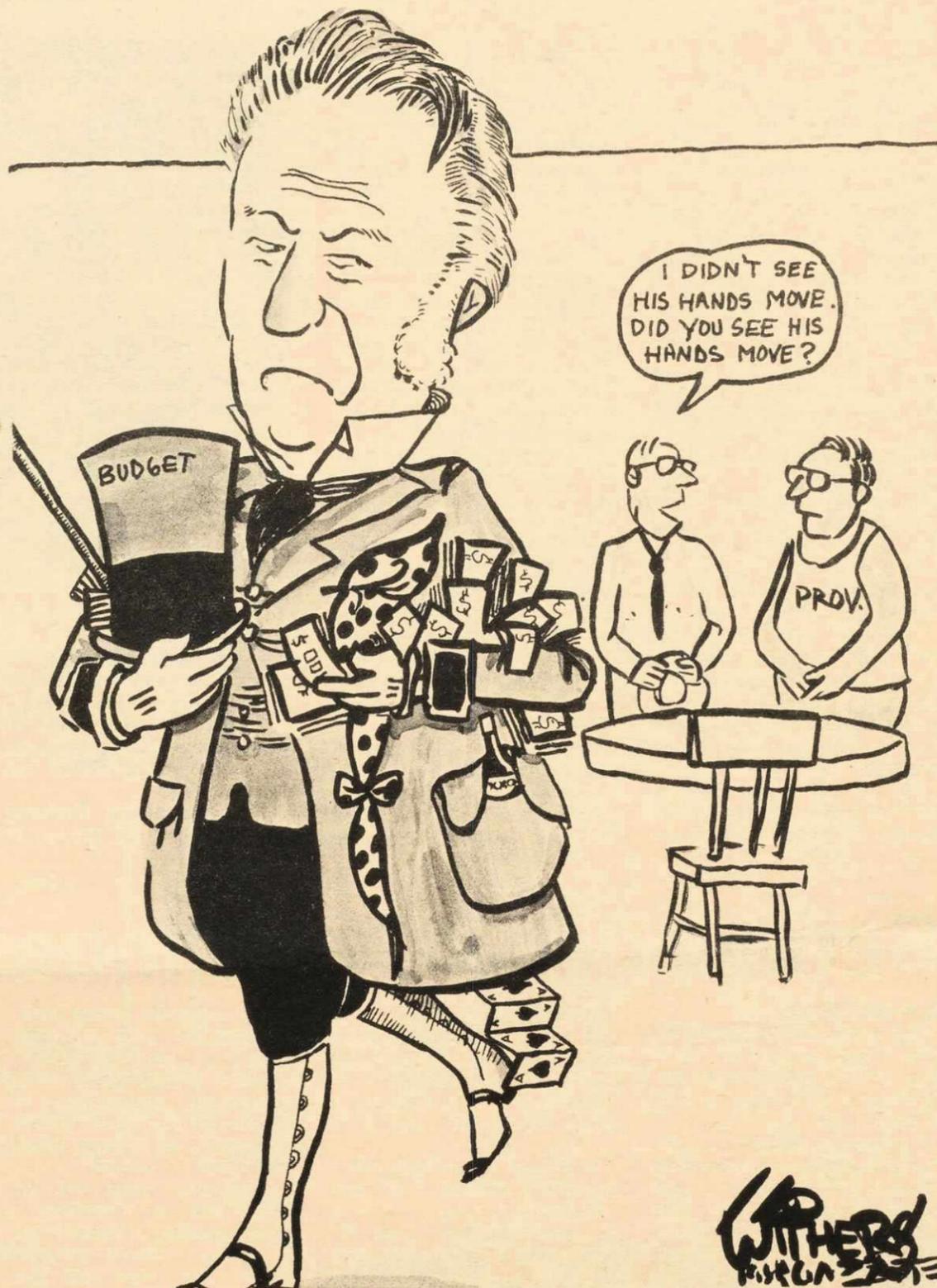
to have a policy. Reasonable tuition and accessibility isn't good enough. This is apparent in the Senate debate with the DFA's position of preserving academic quality against cutbacks. The arguments are simplistic, in light of Dalhousie's financial reality.

But students and faculty cannot make a stronger case because they don't have the advantage of financial figures. They don't know what to think. It's a random shot in the dark; another game of politics where you take a position opposing the administration, out of suspicion or on principle, and hope the final decision will turn out to be satisfactory or lean a bit more your way.

The students' position is obvious in Senate: they have nothing to say. One would naturally assume that our student representatives are furiously interviewing faculty, administrators, financial experts and magicians.

The administration has all the pull, as we know, with the Board of Governor's decision being final. But if the Senate discussions are an attempt to involve the whole university in Dalhousie's most fundamental decisions, students should jump at the chance to show their concern in research and well thought out positions. Let's be political with some well-founded politics.

Are the faculty and students' hands effectively tied when it comes to providing their own answers and stands on university policy? If so, the political say they may have in the Senate and on the Board of Governors is nothing but cute. The backrooms of the Arts and Administration Building are



not much more in the light, but there the decisions will be made anyhow, unless the administration's opposition can present some tangible suggestions.

If one is going to play politics, one needs to develop an independent policy. Student Union President John Logan appears to be taking a good lead in

researching the issue. The administration has its clairvoyants. The student reps should also be asking questions and appear to be more than Senate mannequins.

## LETTERS

### To the Editor:

Our first reaction to the comments placed after the **Rusty & Dave** column of last week was one of frustration. The week before, two of our letters failed to make it to print, as they did not quite come within the standards that someone seems to have created for the **Gazette**. Without telling us, you took one of those questions, removed our names, and placed it in the sports section. This past week, after much discussion, you printed one of these "sexist" letters.

Although you did print the letter (leaving out the last paragraph without mentioning it to the reader) you offered an opinion, which we respect. But after this opinion came a "typesetter's note". At this moment we are checking the **Gazette's** history

files to see if this is a precedent!!!! You may have made history last week!!!! The comments you placed in this note initially inspired violence, but we calmed down and are now writing this letter.

Perhaps it is time that the **Gazette** came into touch with reality. What is the **Gazette**, anyway? It is a student newspaper you are working on. The views, attitudes, and feelings of the student body should be more important than your personal opinions. When we first came to you with our idea of writing the column, we felt the paper was too serious and needed some humour. We have tried to put humour into the **Gazette**, and from the reactions we receive we feel that we have been fairly successful. It makes us feel good when someone

comes up and says they laughed. This was our intent, and it still is.

These past two weeks have left some doubt in our minds as to how much you really want a bit of comic relief. It seems that the **Gazette** has taken our column completely out of context. As far as we, and most students, are concerned, the column is one of total nonsense. A harmless letter taking a satirical view of Mount Saint Vincent should be taken lightly, as we are sure it was by most readers. It only becomes harmful when taken seriously. So far we have not received a single negative comment, apart from yours. Society has come to a point where it is able to laugh at such things as the "sexual revolution" and realize both its serious and humorous sides. If the **Gazette**

can take our nonsensical letter so seriously, then the next thing we know you will be sneaking into the men's urinals at the Dalplex to see if we were serious about Participation.

The episodes in the past two weeks have come close to dictatorship. You are forgetting about freedom of the press. We thought about quitting this column, but felt that this would be the easy way out, as we feel that we and the **Gazette** have something to offer each other. Nothing would have been solved. We have fun writing our column and we hope that others have fun reading it.

We would like to conclude by saying that it is too bad that when we write now, we must think twice and contain our words because we may be offending people. It is doubly

sad when one considers the light in which the column is written.

Yours sincerely (for the first and, hopefully, the last time),  
Rusty James  
David Wile

**Editor's reply:** The decision to print any article in **The Gazette**, in an edited or unedited version, is one shared by the collective staff of the newspaper. We reserve the right to edit copy for grammar, brevity, or offensiveness to any individual or group in the community. We also reserve the right to not print anything we consider in opposition to the basic human values on which this newspaper is based.

WITHERS  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT