

Public assistance for alternate publications urged

Canadian student journalists have called on the Royal Commission on Newspapers to propose tax breaks and lowered postage rates to assist "alternative" publications.

Member newspapers of Canadian University Press (CUP) approved the proposal contained in a six page brief, during the final plenary of their national conference in Val Morin, during the Christmas break.

The brief points to the failure of the daily press to analyze the issues and events affecting Canadians and suggests their commercial nature is the major reason for this failure.

"The raison d'etre of daily newspapers is to make money and at that they have been very successful," the submission states.

"Because of their reliance on commercial advertising for survival, the major print media in this country are unable, or unwilling, to critically evaluate our present economic system and the role that corporations play within it."

The growth of newspaper chains and the recent closure of several dailies relates to an

inherent need to grow, expand and acquire larger profits, according to the brief. "Perhaps the most effective way of maximizing newspaper profits is to own the only large circulation daily in a city or town. With a monopoly over advertising dollars, newspapers become 'money-making machines', to paraphrase Ken Thompson's late father Roy."

Results of corporate concentration listed in the brief include:

- Many people distrust the press.
- Newspapers are filling pages with stories related to advertising and complimentary to it, like travel and food sections.
- Newspaper closures raise unemployment.
- There is less call for investigative journalism.

But the brief says the recent closure of the Journal and Tribune do not represent a sudden threat to freedom of the press in Canada. "To us a freedom of the press implies that there is currently a diversity of news and opinion in the daily press. Nothing could be further from the truth."

One suggestion proposed in the brief is the establishment

of a national newspaper system, along the lines of the CBC. This system would have the resources to do investigation and analysis, without the hindrance of commercial ties.

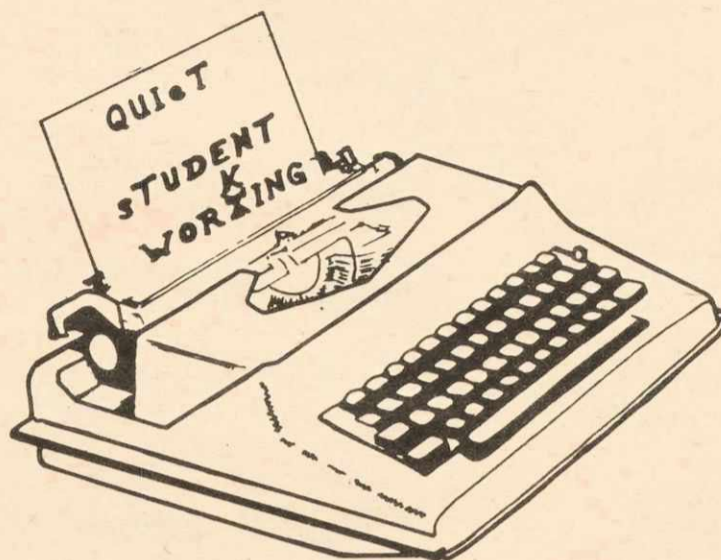
The main suggestion is sup-

whose sole aim is not to maximize profit".

Several ways the government could support these publications would be tax exemptions on production supplies, a charitable tax status which

stituted, would increase opportunities for papers which hold viewpoints different from the pro-business commercial media," according to the brief.

"Since it is not realistic to suggest that daily newspapers



port of the "alternative press". The submission defines this as, "publications which are owned and controlled in the communities they serve, which are operated and controlled democratically by the people working on them, and

would allow donations to these publications to be claimed on income tax, lowered postage rates, and some form of wage subsidy for alternative publications which hire staff.

"All of these proposals, if in-

somehow change their mode of operation, the government's only choice is to aid those publications whose first motive is not profit."

Canadian University Press is a non-profit co-operative of 62 university newspapers.

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Red Herring - Back on its feet?

by Sheila Fardy

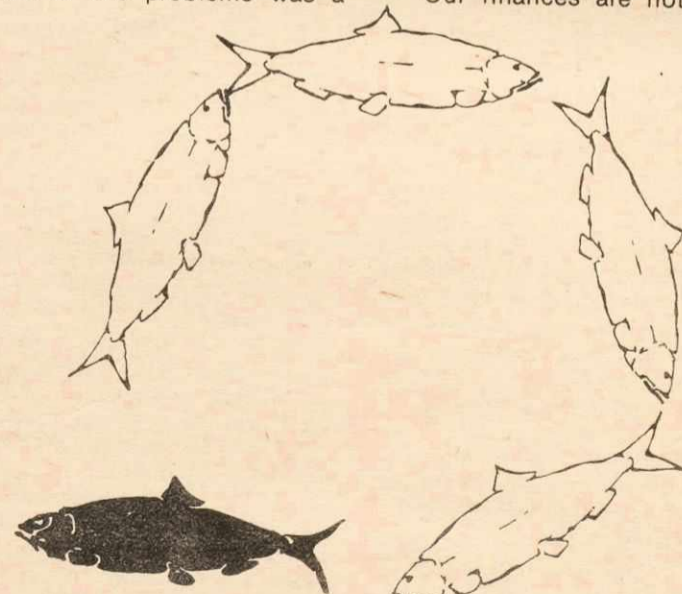
Red Herring Co-operative Books is back on its feet, for at least the next few months. "We're just taking it as it goes," says board member Cathy Crouse. "We are evaluating the situation on a three

or four month basis, which I think is good."

The bookstore, which is located at 1652 Barrington Street, was facing closure in September of last year when the Dalhousie Gazette printed an article about it. The board announced a meeting to decide whether to close the store, but enough people showed up to convince them to remain open. The non-profit store is run by volunteers, and one of the problems was a

money needed. They also sold supporting membership cards for ten dollars each, which entitles the bearer to a ten percent discount in the store. Together the donations and the discount cards raised almost one thousand dollars, and sales at Christmas helped the financial situation as well. Cathy Crouse says that when they establish the budget, they will try to set aside money for advertising.

"Our finances are not en-



lack of people to keep the store open regular hours. The month of January is taken care of so that they can maintain regular hours. Cathy Crouse says, "Business has improved since people know we'll be open when they come down."

The bookstore was also in financial trouble. They appealed to co-op members for donations through their Christmas update announcement to raise some of the

tirely safe, but they're better", says Crouse, "and we always need more people."

"University students make up a large part of our market", says Crouse. "If we knew that certain books were on course lists, we would stock them for sure."

There will be a meeting of members next week to reassess the bookstore's situation. Cathy Crouse says that there will probably be a major sale in the near future.

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