

Students get tough with Party candidates

by Paul Clark

Dalhousie and King's students got tough with their prospective MPs at two recent debates for candidates in the Halifax riding held at Dalhousie Law School and King's College.

At Thursday's debate, held during Law Hour, Progressive Conservative candidate George Cooper took most of the abuse as he tried to explain how his party's position on the "privatization" of Petrocan had been "misrepresented".

When Cooper, responding to a question, tried to explain that his party had never planned to dismantle Petro-Can but actually wanted to strengthen it, a commotion began.

Jeers, whistles, groans and laughter emanated from the crowd and students made comments like "Bullshit!", or "Zing it George!"

Before Cooper could finish his answer most of the crowd began to applaud loudly and he was forced to sit down.

The tables turned on Monday night at the King's debate, sponsored by the King's School of Journalism, when the crowd hit out at Liberal candidate Gerald Regan.

There had been little opposition to Regan at the Law School debate, with the crowd laughing at his jokes about the Conservatives and the lack of strict entry standards which existed when he was admitted to Dalhousie Law School.

At King's, however, students began booping and heckling Regan right from the start.

During his opening speech when Regan began criticizing the Conservative budget for raising the price of gasoline,

students demanded to know how much a Liberal government would raise the price of gasoline.

Regan answered, "Below the Conservative price".

Cries of "How much?, How much?" rang through the crowd.

The first question during the question and answer period came back to the Liberal's energy platform, asking Regan if he had the "intestinal fortitude" to say how much the Liberals would raise the price of gasoline.

Regan again answered it would be less than the Conservative price for gasoline but said the exact figure couldn't be given until their party had discussed the issue with the provincial governments.

NDP candidate Alexa McDonough concentrated mainly on explaining NDP party policies on energy, international relations and foreign ownership at the Law School debate. On Monday night at King's, however, her opening speech consisted of an attack on both Cooper and Regan.

The campaign so far, she said, has not been a debate but a "political stage", set up by "my Liberal opponent" to exhibit his "undisputed gift of gab".

She said Cooper should be held accountable for the provincial Progressive Conservative government's passage of the Michelin Bill and said when Regan was premier of the province his government had also passed legislation dealing with Michelin.

McDonough also said she was "impressed" with how Regan had on several occasions reflected the NDP party platform, adopting NDP policies on jobs, interest rates and foreign ownership.

Marxist-Leninist candidate Charles Spurr, who did not attend the Law School debate, began his speech by criticizing the Chronicle Herald for stating in a news story that only three candidates would be at the debate.

"I'm glad to see Alexa has been called after all", he said.

He went on to pledge his party's support for the people of Afghanistan in their resistance to the invasion of their country by the Soviet Union and alleged the U.S. was hypocritical in trying to create an image as a defender of human rights and independence while supporting the Shah of Iran.

"They're only interested in things like oil reserves", he said.

He said the NDP gives the illusion it is concerned with people's welfare and greater social justice but in reality is opposed to reforms.

He said they have been responsible provincially for "trampling the rights of collective bargaining" and repressive labour legislation.

Spurr was applauded when he blamed the oil companies for "concocting" an energy shortage to increase their profits and called for an expropriation of foreign oil companies.



Energy priority

by Eleanor Austin

All governments in Canada are spending too much time talking and are not getting on with "national emergency steps" toward becoming energy self sufficient, said Gerald Regan, the federal Liberal candidate for the Halifax riding.

While speaking to Dal's Poli Soc yesterday, Regan said "We have to get on with the underdeveloped renewable sources of energy in Canada." There has been work done in Northern Quebec with hydro power being produced, he said, but at Churchill, Labrador were there is a lot of talk of tapping power, there has been no construction.

There are "great gobs" of natural reserves in Canada, Regan explained, but no oils. There should be tax incentives to enable a switch to natural reserves instead of using oil, he suggested, and gas pipelines should be built to promote self-sufficiency.

Higher gas prices do not encourage conservation and they are a penalty to people of lower incomes, he stated. Cars should be manufactured to conserve gas, speed limits reduced and more bus services should be developed, Regan said, although buses are limited because of Canada's population spread.

If the national economy were so poor or the Canadian dollar so low, then rationing should be induced, he said. There are other alternatives than increasing the price of gas unnecessarily, Regan added. "Gas will go up when oil goes up," he stated.

Regan said that with the Clark government's budget, there would be a 32 cent increase in gas by the end of the year. This money would gain revenue, he said, to help pay the mortgage plan for home owners. This new tax, he said, is contrary to Clark's stand last spring when the Conservative government said there would be no new taxes.

Regan suggested this Clark government "trend" of saying one thing before getting in

office and saying another after is a new thing and has not been a tradition with previous governments.

In responding to a question concerning the Liberals' policy of opposing 'wage and price controls' during the election and then inducing them while in office, he said, the country's circumstances changed along with those of the U.S.

Canada can live with a considerable degree of inflation, he explained, as long as the country with which it sells and buys goods remains the same. The Americans brought their inflation under control and so the Liberal government could not allow Canada to price itself out of export markets. Hence, Canada had to implement wage and price controls, he said.

The Conservative's budget put the opposition in a difficult position, Regan said. It is the chance the government has to produce a budget that the opposition do not dare vote against. The Conservative budget, however, was one that the opposition "wouldn't dare vote for," Regan said.

The federal government can afford to carry a deficit so it will not fall on the backs of the working people, Regan said. There are good resources in Canada, he added.

Another issue discussed at the talk was high interest rates. They do "incredible damage" to small businesses, and they bring about high unemployment and increase inflation, Regan said. The interest rates in Canada do not have to follow U.S. inflation, he added.

His policy is to bring interest rates down, he said, by decreasing unemployment with cooperation from labor and public and by relating wage improvements with increased productivity. Tax incentives would also be brought in to develop Canadian investments and therefore enhance greater employment, Regan said.

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by JARVIS of Halifax

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