

Out of control

When rent controls are nullified in June, renters in Alberta will be completely at the mercy of their landlords. This is bad news for all renters in the province, but especially disheartening for low income residents such as students. All renters know what it's like to be up against a landlord who has little sympathy for the financial condition of his tenants, and the removal of rent control can only make the situation worse.

Rent control placed a ceiling on all suites that were rented before and during 1975, provided that the rent on the suites was under \$275 (one-bedroom), \$325 (two-bedroom) and \$375 (three-bedroom). A student living independently probably falls into one of these categories, and subsequently must prepare for whatever the landlord is preparing to dish out.

The rent control program was one of the few good ideas that Alberta's Tory government has produced during its almost ten years in office. Even though the program could have gone further to assist lower-income tenants, it provided at least some stability in a very risky market. Finding a reasonably priced suite is difficult at the best of times, and the rent control plan offered enough protection to make such a task possible.

Nothing could be crueller or more ill-timed than the removal of rent controls. They should be a permanent fixture in a society where more and more people are unable to afford their own homes and find themselves obligated to rent. With many Albertans spending 50 per cent of more of their monthly income on rent, increases of any sort will be almost impossible to cope with.

In a province like Alberta, where free enterprise is the unchallenged law, and the rich are its legislators, it's no surprise that the provincial government shows no reluctance in lifting the controls.

Neither is there any doubt as to who will be the benefactors and the victims of this decision. With each passing day, it becomes more and more clear which sector of society the Progressive Conservative government of this province serves.

And they certainly serve them well.

Gordon Turtle

Pete vs. students

Well, it's finally official — tuition fees will be going up 10 per cent at the U of A next year. Students will be paying more for less again, and more importantly, some potential students will be unable to attend.

This in a province where our wells runneth over and the government is working with a \$300 million surplus in operating budget as well as the Heritage Trust Fund.

This in a province where we cheerfully spend \$75 million for a birthday party.

Alberta has a woefully inadequate social services program and a shockingly deficient education funding policy.

Congratulations, Pete. We can hardly wait till the natural resources run out.

Lucinda Chodan
Alison Thomson

the Gateway

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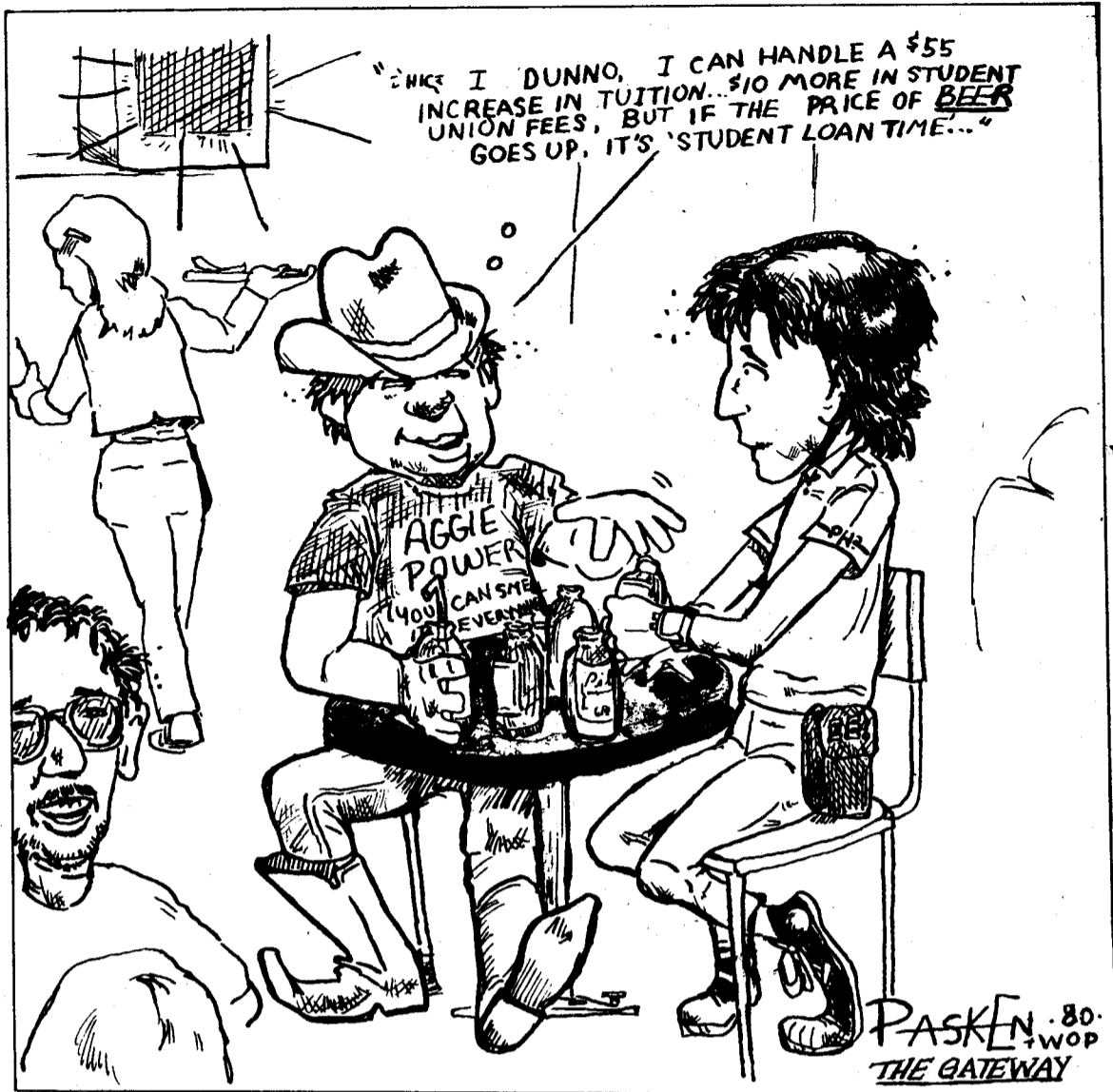
If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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Tuition fees not the issue

Before Mr. Turtle writes any more of his vitriolic articles attacking student apathy, laying fault "squarely and utterly with students of this university," he might do well to consider how his own actions measure up against his implied standard of non-apathy. I suspect my concern for the less fortunate students who may be denied access to a university education as a result of fee hikes is almost as great as his, but I think it inappropriate, if not hypocritical to suggest that students are somehow shirking their responsibilities by not actively opposing inflation-prompted fee hikes. The simple fact of the matter is that in an era of 12 and 14 percent inflation in the cost of staple food items, similar or greater jumps in the price of housing, ten percent increments in the cost of education make it an increasingly good bargain. For those who will be cut out of that bargain as a result of this inflation, it seems a more direct course of action in alleviating their burdens is necessary. I suspect that the number of students who will be absolutely unable to attend university as a result of a fifty or sixty dollar increase is rather small, so to help them seems to me a trivial problem, requiring only some careful, innovative action.

Perhaps Mr. Turtle, rather than attempting to oppose fee hikes, you should personally take on some responsibility for your fellow students and begin advocating solutions directed towards those who suffer most from hikes. Perhaps in your capacity as an 'influential journalist,' you might consider advocating some form of a Students' Union assistance fund, to help those students most adversely hurt by fee hikes. Perhaps you could push for a reorganization of fee allotments, that is, allow students who are able to afford their fees to specify that some of their currently obligatory fees be directed to such a fund, rather than the Students' Union, or the

Athletic Board. I, for one, would be the first to direct that the fees now collected from me for the UAB be sent to a fund for financially strapped students. The UAB has done absolutely nothing for me in the three years I've been here, so if I can get no enjoyment from my money, at least let me direct that it be placed where someone else can.

Try it, Mr. Turtle. Rather than railing against 'apathetic' students, and against the realities

of double digit inflation, try proposing some concrete ways to help those who would be hurt by the excesses of that inflation. Rather than mouthing off about the injustices created by fee hikes, which are probably inevitable, try getting some programs started by students to help their fellows in trouble. Try solving the problem actively, rather than complaining that no one cares. Care enough to try.

D.A. McWhinnie
Arts IV

Students not at fault

It was with amazement that I read Gordon Turtle's editorial of March 6. Mr. Turtle lays the blame "squarely and utterly" on the students for their non-attendance at last Wednesday's tuition forum. This is despite the admission of a forum organizer in the same issue that "no one knew about it." How Mr. Turtle can reach the conclusion that students are at fault for not attending an event that they didn't even know about is far beyond me.

One has to wonder at Mr. Turtle's intermittent denunciations of the students of this campus. While it is true that students at the U of A are somewhat more conservative than at other Canadian campuses, they are certainly not worthy of the vitriol thrown at them by *The Gateway*.

Has Mr. Turtle forgotten the five thousand who marched when the last tuition increase was imposed? Have they changed so much in two years? Or is something else missing?

It is undoubtedly true that upper income people are over represented at this university. The complete web of tuition fees, student loans (debt) and summer unemployment ensures it.

However, many people here are hurt by government actions. And even those whose parents can afford more should not be automatically dismissed as selfish. We need their support too.

Editorials such as these only serve to offend people and prevent any critical thinking about government policies. Mr. Turtle should concentrate on enlightening us instead of denouncing us.

Brian Mason
Science

Not a sheep

I take exception to Mr. Turtle's editorial comment in the March 6 edition of *The Gateway*. I do not consider myself a "thoughtless sheep" and would like to defend myself in that regard.

No, I did not attend the forum. I was at Rutherford Library researching an assignment. You see, Mr. Turtle, I have four major assignments due this month, three mid-terms next week and, to top it off, a part-time job two nights a week and Saturday (so that I can afford to pay the high costs of obtaining an education). What is more, I don't think my case is an exception, but rather the norm.

Don't call me "apathetic" and "selfish," for no one is more aware of the financial difficulties of being a University student, than the student himself.

In conclusion, I'm tired of hearing about this mass of unconcerned and "thoughtless" students. Call it, rather, a question of priorities.

Alan Stutchburg
Arts III