

# Is student housing serious?

By PETER KRAUTLE



If anybody ever thought that this year's housing situation was in a sorry state, then don't hold your breath for improvements in the 1976-77 school year.

With an additional 250 to 300 education students and significant increases expected in the number to forestry and overseas students, UNB may face a most serious housing situation this fall.

The preliminary report on housing prepared by the Dean's Advisory Committee on Student Housing was finished in January of this year and it contained 15 factors in which the committee formed its recommendations. These factors were a basis of concern for the committee and they are as follows:

— Since 1972 the availability of sufficient and adequate student housing in the Fredericton area has been decreasing. In September 1975 we experienced our first real difficulties e.g. emergency dormitories, 300 female and 400 male students still on our residence waiting lists at registration time, excessive lineups at the accommodations office, and marked decline in the list of adequate off-campus accommodations.

The exact number of students who were unable to get into Residence or find suitable alternative housing and left UNB for home or other universities is uncertain but significant. The Dean of Women can account for at least 20 women alone in September 1975.

— The number of student complaints registered this past term about sub-standard, overcrowded, and in some cases appalling conditions (rat, lice and insect infested apartments, rooms without windows, twelve students to one bathroom), landlord "rip offs", discrimination, high prices, very limited choices, etc. together with the number of students currently looking for better lodging through the accommodations office in January 1976 is a clear indication that sufficient, good, reasonable priced housing within walking distance of the university is just not able to meet existing student needs.

— The new hospital will be hiring 500-600 new staff members over the next two year period according to the hospital administration for a total implement of 1150 employees. Two-thirds will likely be married. All will obviously be competing with students for adequate apartment and other accommodations in the greater Fredericton area. Based on past experience the full-time employed twelve month tenant is much more desirable to landlords than students who want eight month leases or permission to sub-let in the summers.

— With an additional 250-300 education students, and significant increases in the number of forestry and overseas students expected in 1976, additional housing for at least 400 students will be needed.

a. The general increase in overseas students is 30 per year.

b. The K.T.T.C. contract will result in an additional 40-48 students by September 1977.

c. Although the number of C.I.D.A. students is constant, there is a definite possibility of receiving additional scholarship students from Venezuela and Iran.

d. Most overseas students are encouraged to live in residence during their first year at UNB. Residence is a condition of the scholarship for all overseas scholarship students.

e. Overseas students occupy 100 of the 750 beds in the Men's Residences. This is a very high percentage and means that many New Brunswick students cannot be accommodated. The assigning of additional beds to accommodate an expanding overseas student program should not be undertaken at the expense of New Brunswick and Canadian students.

— Up to September 1973 the Accommodations Office was able to provide students with a good variety of available housing. The number of listings has dropped from 1285 in 1971-2 to 971 in 1975-6.

— A decreasing number of landlords are willing to rent to students and only do so when no one else is available. The number of landlords has dropped from 424 in 1971-2 to 324 in 1975-6.

— Appeals for housing to the public through TV, radio and newspaper brings a decreasing number of responses each year.

— Married students are experiencing increasing difficulties in obtaining apartments because of high rates and 8 month tenancy requirements.

— Although apartment growth is on the increase in the City, rents are much too high for students and are not available to single students.

— We continue to experience difficulty in finding off-campus accommodation for Native Indian and Overseas students.

— Many students whose homes are on the outskirts or outside the City would prefer to live on or near the University in order to take an active part in campus life, but are forced to commute because adequate accommodation is not available.

— Students, particularly freshmen, are not prepared or able to adapt or adjust to the conservative attitudes and rigid house rules imposed by many landlords i.e. no visitors, no smoking, untidiness.

— Many students today wish to live common-law, a status which is recognized by the Government but is not acceptable to most Fredericton landlords. This has encouraged students to lie in order to obtain housing. Frequently when this arrangement is discovered, they are ordered to vacate. The result usually is less desirable and often inadequate accommodation.

— All students seeking accommodation make every effort to locate as close to the campus as possible to save daily commuting time and expense, and to prevent this frustration of unreliable or unavailable public transport. The latter frequently means missed 8:30 a.m. classes and no way home after evening activity and library study.

Most students state that they will choose less adequate, over-crowded or inconvenient accommodation which is within walking distance of the University than more attractive quarters on the opposite side of the river.

— A preliminary and rather limited analysis of the results of the November 1975 student housing questionnaire produced the following information:

a. 2342 of a maximum of 6182 students replied, representing a 34.8 percent return.

b. 83.8 percent of our UNB-STU students live at or adjacent to the Campus. (i.e. south side of river between Smythe St., the Trans-Canada Highway and the river)

c. 6.8 percent live on the North side of the river.

d. 5.7 percent live in the Skyline - Southwood Park area.

e. 62.3 percent would prefer to rent an apartment or share the cost of renting a house.

28 percent would prefer to live in residence. 8 percent was accommodation in a private house.

f. 62 percent would like to rent in a high-rise apartment like McGee House.

g. When asked what type of residence they thought UNB should build -

37.5 percent wanted some form of residence with single bedrooms.

11.5 percent wanted double bedrooms.

18.2 percent asked for a residence with housekeeping facilities.

31.7 percent wanted the university to provide student apartments: furnished - 24 percent, unfurnished - 7.8 percent.

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