

Graham Report Wrap-up

by Stephen Syms

Secretary to the Graham Commission Larry Sandford, Ed Harris Commissioner and Chairman Dr. John Graham, were on hand Tuesday, March 3 to capsule the work and intentions of the Royal Commission on Education, Public Service, and Provincial Municipal Relations.

In case you haven't heard, the Commission mandate was to review, examine, and propose recommendations regarding all public services; the allocation of functions between the provincial and municipal governments; the structure and definition of municipal boundaries (the commission proposes the establishment of 11 strong municipal units, 38 towns, and 3 cities); the most appropriate organizational structure to discharge new responsibilities; the most appropriate financial structure to allow for the effective discharge of those new responsibilities; and the development of municipal units that are responsive to the needs, preferences, and wishes of the public.

The present municipal situation is premised on a framework that has its roots in the early history of the province. The time has come to fashion a new framework that is commensurate with a new and modern world said Dr.

Graham. The municipal organizations that we envisage must be "accountable, responsive, strong, and self-reliant," he added.

The Report advocates those changes that are considered necessary; "what we would like to see if we could start afresh." The structure proposed is a one-tier system of municipal government.

The report is an integrated document and, therefore must be read in many areas before one can derive an understanding of any part in entirety. Those that criticize the report must appreciate this fact, cautioned Harris.

Queried on the urban/rural municipal concept, Dr. Graham explained that the idea is to promote a municipal unit to which all people could relate. People may live in an urban setting but often their activities take them into other outlying areas. For example, recreation. And, it is not unusual for people to live in one area and work in another. Consequently, people only have effective vote power in the area in which they live even though their activities cover a much wider area. The report favors, then, a more urban/rural setting; a setting whereby an individual can exert an influence over an area in which he/she lives, works, and plays. The

concept is necessary, furthered Graham, if municipal units are to have the proper planning environment; the proper geographic jurisdiction to facilitate the planning function.

On the topic of education, Dr. D. Dyke approached the commission saying that the report is changing for the sake of 'something' but wasn't at all clear what it was. The commission replied that proposals are advanced in the report "where there is evidence there would be an improvement." For example, it is not all that evident that teacher training presently is organized and expedited in the most effective fashion. That is one reason why the report recommends a central training institution at Dalhousie University. The commission is only "looking for a balance, an effective structure", said Graham. "It appears to us that the larger scale would produce a greater benefit than the present structure."

Now that the report is

compiled and completed, a member of the audience was somewhat dubious regarding the implementation scheme. Ed Harris emphasized that target dates should be set for the attainment of the reports or recommendations. "A piecemeal approach to implementations would be extremely disruptive." Certainly, the report should be phased in such a way so as to minimize the disruptions that implementation would normally invite. However, at this point, it is up to the politicians.

On balance, The Graham Commission series was expedited in a professional manner and, indeed, Don MacLean, IPA, is to be congratulated for his efforts in this regard. Substantively, impression was left that many of the 'professionals' invited to speak at the series of meetings did not really know what they were talking about. Some focused their criticisms on largely picyune non-issue matters. For some reason,

many people seemed inclined to project upon the potential negative consequences of a particular proposal rather than considering the potential benefits or without seriously confronting a fundamental question: "What is so good about the situation the way it stands?" Perhaps it is an inherent part of human nature, the Achilles-heel of our constitution. On one particular occasion it was apparent to this writer that the paranoid resistance to change had its root in "self-interest". People near the top cannot help but interpose themselves with the issue when significant change is involved.

A better perspective was achieved when questions and criticisms from professionals and laymen alike were fielded by the commission personnel. It became evident very quickly which were the legitimate concerns and which concerns had ulterior motives. It was refreshing to have some of the air cleared.

The New Executive

by Mary Pat MacKenzie

The new Council met for the second time on Sunday March 16 to make the Executive appointments. The appointments were: Treasurer - Mark Crossman, Academic Affairs Secretary - Phil Hicks, Communications Secretary - Sue Johnson. The appointment of Community Affairs Secretary and Members-at-Large were tabled until the next meeting because the Recruitment Committee was unable to complete all the interviews.

Bruce Russell opened the meeting with two announcements: first, the Student Handbook will again be done by Gazette but at a much lower cost than last year. In conjunction with the Handbook an agreement was reached between Gazette and Dan O'Connor to complete the series of Student Government History. Russell's second announcement was that the constitution had been received from the Board of Management for the new Grad Students social facility.

The report on Winter Carnival was on the agenda but because of duplicating problems the report was unavailable. This was tabled until the March 31 meeting.

The appointment of the Treasurer was the only Executive position which aroused much debate. Peter Greene (Grad Studies) questioned Barry Ward on the qualifications required for the position. The only other applicant beside Mark Crossman was Joe Rosa. Both Crossman and Rosa were questioned by Council on their qualifications for Treasurer. The Recruitment Committee explained that both were well qualified but Crossman came out on the top in

about 75% of the needed capabilities.

Bruce Russell made a presentation to the outgoing Treasurer on behalf of the Council. Ward, in a highly untypical fashion, was left speechless by Council's expression of gratitude. Russell outlined Barry Ward's contributions to the Union over the past year to much applause from those present.

After turning the Treasurer's chair over to Crossman Barry Ward gave a brief summary of the new procedures for Council Privileges. The Committee report was accepted by Council.

The outgoing President's Report was presented to Council and O'Connor was questioned on some aspects of it. Russell asked O'Connor to elaborate slightly on his recommendations for the Arts and Science Societies, with particular reference to his recommendation that non-council students be appointed to the Executives. O'Connor explained that Council members have a great deal to do already without taking on the responsibilities of establishing the new defunct societies.

When questioned on the progress of the Residence Committee over the past year Mr. O'Connor suggested that students read the supplement on Housing in the March 5 issue of the Gazette. The How Hall rep pointed out that of 110 positions available in Howe Hall for Sept. '76 over 600 applications have already been received. O'Connor added that to the best of his knowledge all the Sherriff Hall places have been filled though the major portion of applications have not even been received yet.

The report was accepted, as were the Community

Affairs' and Treasurer's Reports.

Warren Meek presented his report on the past election to Council. David Brown (Law) questioned Mr. Meek on the mistakes made by Gazette in the Election Extra and suggested that the Chief Returning Officer be responsible for overseeing layout in the future. Several of the Council members object vehemently to this suggestion and both Warren Meek and the Gazette editor explained the impossibility of this proposal to Mr. Brown.

In response to criticisms of campaign spending Mr. Russell invited Council members to join an *ad hoc* committee on campaign policies. He said that other candidates in the past election had expressed an interest in such a committee and any interested students would be welcome to make suggestions.

In response to a question by Mr. Greene, Warren Meek suggested that one of the reasons for the low voter turnout was the lack of real issues in the campaign platforms. Meek's report was accepted by Council.

The last motion brought up at the meeting was considered too hot to handle at the moment and was tabled. The motion was for the Student Union to support in principle the national liberation of the people of Cambodia. Chris Nielsen, a member of the Dalhousie Student Movement, gave a short explanation of the issues involved but Council decided it needed more information on the issue.

The meeting adjourned after Russell announced that there would be a meeting on March 31.

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