The Dalhousie GAZETTE

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LETTERS

CUP Misleading?

Sir:

I would like to draw your attention to a number of errors of fact and reporting which seemed unwittingly to creep into the recent CUP despatch about the Conservative and Liberal conventions held in Ottawa several weeks ago.

The power of the press in any community, university or otherwise, frequently goes unchallenged. By strict adherence to the facts, without giving the reasons for the facts, the press is able to grossly twist and misrepresent the real meaning that one should find in newspaper articles.

As a delegate to the Conservative convention, I freely admit that the challenge issued to us by the Grits was not accepted. However, any person looking at the programme of each convention will notice one thing: that our sessions lasted from nine in the morning to ten at night. The acceptance of their challenge would have meant the total dislocation of our sessions and the cutting of something far more valuable. CUP, however, seems to have forgotten this little fact.

The troop of well-wishers coming to our convention to repeat the challenge verbally, all FIVE of them, indeed showed bad manners when they barged into our sessions particularly when they were accompanied by CBC television news!

In relation to CUP's statement Grits were barred from hearing the speech of the Prime Minister, the phrase first used by Winston Churchill could well be used here, that CUP is guilty of "terminological inexactitudes". I personally could see 26 people with Liberal convention buttons on avidly listening to Mr. Diefenbaker. This is about 14% of the entire Grit convention! It proves, moreover ,that they had nothing better to do or hear at their own meeting!

I trust that CUP will in the future govern itself more in a manner commensurate with good journalism! Sic transit gloria mundis!

Yours very truly,
Mike Steeves

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WUSC Comes Through

Sir:

My first visit to Dalhousie University on Thursday, Feb. 18, coincided with the publication of your issue dated Wednesday, Feb. 17. I was interested to read the two articles on World University Service written, respectively, by representatives of Dal-Kings WUSC Committee and the **Gazette**.

The former article cogently summarized the principles and parctical aims of WUS. The latter, whilst supporting WUS principles, stated, "it is lamentably weak in efficiency and effectiveness."

We are continually striving to improve our efficiency and effectiveness, and therefore welcome constructive criticism. However, criticism based on inaccurate facts is both unfair and unhelpful. May I comment on some of the inaccuracies in "The Gazette's" article?

1. **WUSC "entertains foreign students" at some Canadian universities.** We do not "entertain" students: many of our local WUSC committees offer scholarships to enable needy overseas students to study in Canada. Many of our overseas committees offer scholarships to Canadian students.

2. **Every university . . . pays $1.00 per student head per year . . . payable to a central office.** Some universities do levy $1.00 per student which goes to the local WUSC committee. This money is allocated by the local committee, and most of it will be used to help students on their own campus. The portion allocated, to the WUSC International Programme of Action goes direct to our headquarters in Switzerland (for international distribution) with out any interference by the Canadian WUS committee.

3. **"Must we support TWO national student organizations"?**

World University Service is neither a national organization nor is it a student organization. It is an **International** organization, consisting of students and faculty members in more than forty countries.

NFCUS has a valuable role to play in representing the interests of Canadian students both in Canada and at international student conferences: in this field it is unique. It is also one of a number of organizations which enable Canadian students to co-operate with those of other countries.

A careful inspection of the constitutions and activities of organizations such as NFCUS, WUSC, CFCCS, etc., will show that each organization has a different role to fulfill. This fact is recognized by the National Union of Students in the countries in which WUS operates, and by the International Student Conference (ISC) which has repeatedly passed resolutions in support of WUS.

In Canada we seek to avoid any overlapping of the work of WUSC and that of the national representative organizations of students and university teachers by including official representatives of NFCUS and CAUT on our National Committee.

"An organization providing "no service to student contributors other than a . . . few scattered activities, cannot be timely called useful. "Local WUSC committees should provide a service to contributors even if it is only an educational one Is WUSC "useful"? I think the thousands of refugees and impoverished students and professors who have been helped during the past 40 years would be astounded by the question.

"The organization . . . would appear to be on the way to a slow death."

At the last meeting of the National WUSC Committee three year ago, two more Canadian universities applied for admission, and it is expected that a further two will apply before the end of the session. These are also encouraging indications that our local committees will secure more contributors for our In-

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The Bill of Rights: Useless Bill of the Year

One of the strangest tasks facing Members of Parliament during the current session will be to adequately debate the recently-introduced Bill of Rights, which was first read by the Prime Minister 17 months ago.

That a Bill of Rights should be proposed at all has provoked considerable wondering comment from legal personages across the country, and very little of it is favourable. The principal argument against the Bill appears also to be the simplest: that it is (a) unnecessary; (b) powerless to bind anyone; and (c) changes nothing. The only teneble argument in favour is that it officially spells out **some** of the freedom Canadians already enjoy, and may thus become useful as a primer for judges. Fortunately, judges are already aware of the Canadian tradition of liberty.

For all intents and purposes, the present Bill of Rights is a waste of the country's time.

Have the rights of Canadians become so abrogated that they must be codified and declared? Are Canadians, and Canadian courts, **unaware** of their rights? Are there not legal safeguards against infringements already implanted everywhere in the law? What does freedom **mean** in Canada?

Those are questions which the Bill of Rights, in its grandeur, will purport to answer for all time: and politicians and legal men alike consider the effort little short of ridiculous.

The Bill would set forth our legal liberties, yet Canadian legal history is studded with safeguards for basic human freedooms, and the constitution of Canada guarantees those rights as well—both by provision in the BNA Act and by the tradition of English law. The British North America Act of 1867, in its preamble, stated that the constitution of Great Britain would be its model; this instantly incorporated into Canadian law a centuries-old tradition of civil liberties and the rule of law, a rule superior to everything except the legislation of Parliament itself. But in many ways the Rule even binds Parliament, for the Act contemplated a Parliament working under the influence of **public** opinion and discussion, of open criticism and defence, of full and free analysis and examination of government dealings, of the duties of Members of Parliament to their electors, and the duty of the electors themselves to elect responsible representatives.

The BNA Act went further than that. Provisions throughout the Act guarantee specific civil liberties of many kinds—minority rights, electoral rights, the length of time Parliament may sit, among others. But it is in its abstention from any attempt to **list** the rights of Canadians that makes the BNA Act a powerful agency for freedom: its very generality envisions an **atmosphere** of liberty.

Courts have made great advances in creating and preserving legal rights since 1867; and the Rule of Law has stood over parliamentary illiberalities for nearly a century. Judges have unqualified power to interpret Parliament's legislation, and judges have been extremely careful to preserve the rights of individuals — for whom the law exists — against the power of government. Secondly, courts have their own power to rule whether legislation is **intra vires**—whether Parliament in a given law is exceeding its authority: if the answer is yes, courts can declare the law void. Since courts exist **above** political emotion, which is necessary to allow them unprejudiced and critical examination of the law, this is one of their most important functions. They cannot **change** the law, but they can remove it from the books.

Mr. Fulton, in his speech on the Bill, was careful to say that it would not restrict the sovereignty of parliament. In other words, federal laws may circumvent it any time after it is passed; Parliament cannot bind itself. The Bill, if it were in fact needed, would only have a binding influence if incorporated as part of the constitution; as a simple, repealable statute—its present status—it is completely without teeth.

Mr. Fulton also admitted that the proposed Bill would not affect provincial law. Yet legislation dealing with "property and civil rights" is in the provincial field, and thus provinces which have seriously interfered with human rights in the past will be as free to do so in the future.

The Bill would, of course, be applicable only in peace time. Parliament reserves the right to take unto itself unlimited powers in wartime, as witness the War Measures Act of the Second World War and the consequent squelching of minority and other rights in the national cause.

And what about the government official, whose power, apparently, is considerably feared by the Bill's backers? He too is bound by law, a notion that grew up with England's constitution; his duties and privileges are prescribed by statute, and beyond this he is powerless. Any citizen may sue an official in the common courts if that official has damaged him in exceeding his authority. Not even the Prime Minister is above the law.

In short, the Bill of Rights creates no new enforcement of present rights, applies no sanctions, does not purport to investigate violations; it changes government and the law not a whit; it is, in effect, a pious, vaccuus conversation piece.

The country would well to move on to solving its problems.

Contributed Article

A SAD INCIDENT

The administration and students of Dalhousie owe an apology:
To whom?

To His Excellency, the Ambassador of the United Arab Republic, for the rude and discourteous way in which both treated this man, a full-ranking ambassador to Canada, on Tuesday, February 16.

The ambassador was unfortunate enough, first of all, to have his talk to the students of Dalhousie placed second to a student forum on the proposed S.U.B. In his talk he was treated with less respect than was shown for the two law students campaigning so vigorously for the S.U.B., indeed, he was openly treated with complete contempt by many of the students.

Who is to blame for this sad incident?

It cannot be placed squarely on anyone's shoulders but it is suggested that had the administration had the courtesy to send their representative to the meeting, His Excellency would not have had to adjust his glasses and straighten his clothes after nearly having been swept out the door of Room 21 by the tide of students scrambling for the exit.

His Excellency, (the proper form of address for a full ambassador, incidentally) undaunted, gave a half-hour talk in which he outlined in a very moderate and well-documented speech, the position of his country vis-à-vis the State of Israel. Following this, he permitted questions from the floor and must have been stunned by the hostile and insulting tirades (not questions) which assailed him from many of the questioners. He was harangued, told off and called a liar in so many words. Never once was he addressed by his proper title (which is excusable) nor was he accorded the privilege of "sir" by most (which is inexcusable).

This man had, previous to his debut on the campus, spoken at Mount Allison and Acadia and was later received at Saint Mary's. At all these universities he was given very good receptions by students and administrations alike. At the latter university, he remarked adversely on the reception at Dalhousie. He mentioned privately that he was grossly insulted with his reception and would make it a point to mention the incident in Ottawa.

A display of this nature only has the potential of doing harm to Dalhousie. It neither leaves a good impression in the mind of our guests, nor does it afford any lasting feeling of satisfaction in those students who "told him off".

We are all to blame for this. A public and personal apology is owing by the Presidents of the University, the Council of Students and the Chairman of WUSC for this regrettable episode.