

Council Speaker Speaks

Towards the end of September, the Dalhousie University Students' Council passed a resolution establishing the position of "Permanent Speaker" for the Council itself.



By Dennis Perlin

Applications were submitted by or on behalf of two people, Wendall MacKay and Dennis Perlin, both third-year law students. At a meeting of Council on Thursday, October 9, applications were closed. Wendall MacKay decided not to take the position and so the Council elected me, to attempt to fill the position.

I was subsequently approached by a member of the Gazette staff to write an article on this newly-created position and why it was adopted by Council.

Perhaps a more easily understood term than "Permanent Speaker" would be "Permanent Chairman" for it is the Permanent Speaker's duty to chair all meetings of the Dalhousie University Students' Council according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Student Union and Students' Council and according to Robert's Rules of Order. The "Permanent Speaker" title comes from Parliament Hill where both the House of Commons and the Senate have what are called "Speakers" chairing them.

I have already stated what the "Permanent Speaker's" job is, namely, to chair all meetings of Council. It was created by Council for a number of reasons:

(A) It allows the President to take full part in a debate or discussion and at the same time it prevents him from taking more than an equal part in a debate or discussion with the rest of the members of council. Under the Rules by which Council runs its meetings, the Chairman is not to make any motions or express any opinions in any debate or discussion without first leaving the chair. This "leaving the chair" and handing it over to someone else is a nu-

sance especially where the President plays such a major role in policy-making as he does on the Council.

It, in effect, means he has to leave the chair every other minute if he is to follow the Rules properly. What, of course, happens is that the President often does not leave the chair and uses his position in the chair to express opinions and take part in the debate or discussion. Every time he does this, he is breaking the rules and this leads in many cases to a break down in respect for the rules and to disorder in the meetings.

The appointment of an impartial "Parliament Speaker" or permanent chairman (i.e. the appointment of a person who is not a member of council, who chairs the meetings but takes no part in the debates or discussions) is designed to prevent such disrespect and disorder.

(B) A "Permanent Speaker" or permanent chairman position also helps to alleviate the natural animosity which grows between ordinary members of Council and the President when he uses the chair to his own advantage as he invariably does once or twice, if not more, a meeting. This animosity results many times in wariness of the President and what he is trying to do and, at times, even outright mistrust of the President and his motives. The ears of an impartial chairman like the "Permanent Speaker" are open to all; he has no vested interests to protect; he is not trying to "put anything over on anybody" and so usually he commands the respect and the trust of the ordinary members of council as well as the President.

This invariably leads to more efficient and effective meetings and it was with this latter purpose in mind that Council adopted the position of "Permanent Speaker".

Contemplation But No Action

By Dorothy Wigmore

With so much in the news today about student unrest and various methods of quelling campus disturbances, the interview with Dr. Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa in the Oct. 18 edition of *Weekend Magazine* cannot go by without some comment.

Dr. Hayakawa was appointed acting president of San Francisco State College last winter in the midst of student and faculty unrest. His calling in the police to end a student-and-faculty-backed strike resulted in about 600 arrests, many injuries and enormous publicity.

Typically, his first act once in office was to declare that "rallies, parades, beins, hootenannies, hoedowns, shicarees and all other public events likely to disrupt the studios in their reading and reflection" were banned.

The phrase "reading and reflection" show the president's idea of university. For him it is "a place where the serious problems of the world and of the past and the treasures of cultural heritage are nurtured and passed on and new thoughts encouraged. It is not part of the world of action. It is a place of study and contemplation and discussion. It is really a Utopia."

We should not get involved in the community any more than necessary and the phrase "outside world" — referring to anything unassociated with the campus — is repeated often in his advice to university presidents faced with student unrest.

Dr. Hayakawa was greatly influenced in his ideas of a university by Cardinal Newman and Matthew Arnold. He admits that the modern university is more in contact with the community than foreseen by them, but "the college remains a place for study and contemplation. And it will become a better university insofar as it remains so."

In Canada, the older NFCUS was forced to deal with social issues, because they affected students. CUS resulted from this necessity to confront social issues and attempt to solve them. Problems today affect students as much as others in the community.

Why should students be so absorbed in their studies that they cannot try to attack problems and take action if possible? This is part of education, the reason we are supposed to be at university. It does no good to contemplate if everything is falling down around us. We must do

something about it. If we have buried ourselves in the university and have not learned how to face and act on problems by the time we graduate, we are going to be entering another world and will have great difficulty adjusting.

It is also interesting to know that the conditions found at Dal and other campuses are a Utopia. Ask any Sociology 100 student what he thinks of his Utopia. Overcrowded classes, inadequate numbers of staff, expansion problems, student housing, democratization, and universal accessibility, to name a few, are confronting every university these days. Is that Utopia?

Dr. Hayakawa's calling in the police and the subsequent injuries and turmoil were what made the news. He believes that if "tactics of the outside world" are brought onto the campus, the protective force of that world have to be brought in. The way the police handle the disturbances is up to them. He says that force is no way to achieve change; "the whole essence of civilized society requires change to be slow and deliberated on."

Those radical students who try to change things, in his mind, are simply interested in revolution. The professors who disagree with the system and who back student strikes are trying to sabotage the university system and their job is on the line. Scholars have agreed in unspoken terms, he says, that they do not use violence of any kind if they disagree with each other.

The best ideas for change usually come from those who are in closest contact with the problem — namely professors and students. Why should their suggestions be overlooked simply because they do not agree with the almighty President? Progress is never made that way.

As Martin Loney said, in the same article, in his opinion of Dr. Hayakawa, the tactics of force he used brought the students and staff back to classes — unsatisfied. "The whole history of South Africa, the Soviet Union under Stalin and Spain under Franco has shown that vicious suppression does work." But we live in a democracy — or is the university of Dr. Hayakawa so much outside of the community that democracy no longer exists?

Again agreeing with Martin Loney, the police cannot solve situations such as those existing at Simon Fraser. There student demands backed by many trade unions, community organizations and the NDP were ignored and the police were called in when students took action by occupying the administration building.

Sure, the students occupying the building were removed, but the problem was, and still is, not solved. Police cannot solve the campus problem. It must be solved within the university itself by the whole university community working together.

The George Report, passed last Monday by our Senate, will certainly raise quite a few eyebrows. What will the students do about it? Will the administration at Dal react as Dr. Hayakawa would, and call in the police, if students show their displeasure with the Report? Or, will they listen to the students and interested professors and arrive at a democratic and fair solution?

Mills on Media By Steve Mills

Intimations of 1984

Last week Dal Radio carried a report on the "death" of Paul McCartney three years ago, presenting a mound of evidence to show how the other Beatles, through media manipulation, "preserved" Paul while at the same time throwing subtle hints to their panting public that he had passed away and that they were mourning him.

No one but the most gullible believed the story and any doubts were cleared up later that afternoon when local DJ Frank Cameron announced on his show that the whole story was a sick rumour and that Paul was alive and well in London.

However, there was one aspect of the whole affair that frightened me: it could easily have been true. Because the Beatles hold such sway over the mass media and because the mass media holds such sway over the average mind (especially the average mind of the younger generation who have always been under its influence), if McCartney had been killed in an auto accident, he could well have been kept alive in this manner.

A similar event of several months ago comes to mind. It was reported one day by the local media that Chinese Leader Mao Tse Tung was in very poor health. Most people who heard the story believed it until the following day when the same media broadcast a denial of the whole story from China, the newspapers running a photo of Mao looking, as one might suspect, alive and well.

Then people didn't know what to think. Was Mao ill? Was Mao well? Indeed, was Mao even alive? The idea of

"preserving" Mao, to me, at least, seems more plausible than preserving Paul McCartney.

Both these stories point out our growing dependence on the media to provide us with all our information about the world around us and not only do we depend on media, we trust it. Man's fascination with machinery has not died out because machinery has become commonplace; it has merely taken on a more subtle and grotesque form.

The "similarity gap" between the real world and the media world many think exists is widening, slowly at present but the rate increases as communication improves.

So where will it end? Will we become totally divorced from reality, believing only what is fed to us by our newspapers and our televisions? Three quarters of the people reading this will now be thinking of Orwell's presentation of the socialistic media masters who create reality for their own purposes in "1984". Orwell paints a horrible picture but it becomes even more repulsive when such incidents as the McCartney rumour and the Mao story (and dozens of others you take in every day) remind us how quickly we are approaching such a situation.

So take this as a warning! Be doubtful of everything you read and question every television and radio report your hear. If we are to prevent mass media manipulation of the masses' minds, it must be as individuals, for individuality means non-conformity and non-conformity is one thing the mass media men must eliminate if they ever hope to triumph!