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blue law unnecessary

The Sunday blue law, an idea conceived by far-sighted people and enforced by despot and democracy alike, appears to have been around so long that it is wearing out its welcome and the purpose of this editorial is to thank it for services offered, remind it that it is time to go and ask it to hurry, please.

The blue law, of course, is simply one aspect of a legislative pattern designed to prevent all but necessary work on Sunday and we agree that historically such legislation was sound, for it was conceived in an era when the workingman, prevented from bargaining collectively, would probably have been forced to work a seven-day week or make way for someone who would. As a matter of fact, the Christian basis for a restful Sunday has this in mind. When the Pharisees asked Christ if it were lawful to do certain jobs on Sunday, His reply was to ask them whether the Sunday was made for man or man for Sunday. The question was phrased so as to allow only one answer.

Today is an age of collective bargaining and state intervention; protecting the worker against the seven-day week is no longer necessary. In this high-speed age what is needed in order to give the true leisure sought through the ages—the true retreat from the hectic work week — is a reasonable system that staggers the day of rest, so that half the labor force works to provide goods and services for the half at rest and then vice versa.

If this analysis is correct, what is wrong with baseball players working on Sunday to provide enjoyment for a bus-driver who works on Monday so the same ballplayer can take his wife to a picnic?

The argument that Saturday is the working man's day for enjoyment, Sunday the day of rest, was probably authorized by a single man. There are sufficient household tasks piling up through the week to keep the worker from making Saturday a day of enjoyment, and Sunday is the only day left.

"But this takes the Christian element out of Sunday," protest tho who favor continuance of the law and surely one day a week should be set aside for religious contemplation." But a Christian element that is maintained by the force of the state is no Christian element at all.

What, then, must be done when a law made for the comfort of man is, by changing circumstances, turned into one that is uncomfortable for him? The great difficulty lies in determining where the line should be drawn but, without any great research on the point, we suggest that the state should exclude from the vigilance of the law those activities which, in the eyes of reasonable men, are primarily intended for the cultural or recreational instincts of the individual. This, we think, would allow the symphony or jazz concert, the movie or baseball game, but would draw the line before embracing the used-car dealer or department store.

And to those who still insist that Sunday be reserved to God, may we suggest that they reserve to Him all seven days of the week, not by sitting in mental and physical stagnation but by positive application of the concepts of morality, be they charity, honesty or whatever they may mean to any given person.

Somehow, we can't help feeling that this would offset a Sunday baseball game.

J. P.

letters to the editor

mock parliaments

Dear Sir:

The Dalhousie Law School Mock Parliament, like most mock parliaments, is primarily designed as an exercise in parliamentary debate conducted along the same lines and with the same procedures, as nearly as possible, as the House of Commons in Ottawa. The aim of such an exercise is to give university students some insight into the methods of democracy as practiced in Canada. And in the Law School, it is also an opportunity for budding lawyers to practice a tool of their trade, public speaking. On the evenings of 12 and 13 February last, the 72nd annual session of the Law School Mock Parliament was held.

It was with sincere pleasure that the occasion was honored by the presence of the former Mayor Leonard Kitz, as Speaker of the House. The Law School were extremely fortunate in obtaining the friendly services of a man of equal stature to fill the void left by the tragic death of Mr. Leonard Fraser, the previous Speaker for 22 years.

At this point the compliments must end. One would expect that Law students would display the decorum and character the public expects, and indeed is entitled to expect, from future custodians of the law. Alas, nothing could be farther from the truth. From the instant the first member began to speak it was apparent that the House had no intention of obeying the Speaker's call to order. Heckling and ripost rocketed across the floor until the speaking member's voice could no longer be heard. When the Speaker appealed for order, his voice was drowned; and when he did finally succeed in restoring silence his admonitions were heeded for a bare minute only, and the hullabaloo broke out again. Some members apparently thought they had a priority on the House's time; they demanded the floor, argued with the Speaker, and continually interrupted the speeches with some trite remark calculated to inflate their own egotistic sense of humor. The disregard, or more probably, ignorance, of the rules of Parliament was appalling.

Why should this have happened?

In the first place, the Speaker lacked the emphatic and strong support of the party leaders which he undoubtedly expected and deserved. He was given only token support.

In the second place, the member paid little or no attention to their party leaders during the odd instances when some attempt was made to control them. It was as if there were no parties at all, but only a mass of independents. A possible exception could be made of all but one member of the Canada First Party from this criticism.

Thirdly, it is up to 3rd year to set the standards of both behaviour and skill at such a function, and the number of participants from that year was shamefully small. How can either 1st or 2nd year students be expected to acquire and improve their speaking techniques if those with the most experience do not provide an example?

What is to be done?

The most important things to be done is to take steps now to ensure that there is never a repetition of this shocking experience. Each political party must take the necessary steps on its own. It is their responsibility. And the leaders must in future give the Speaker all the support they can.

The members who plan to make speeches should adequately prepare them, and take pains to see they are delivered in their own individual style. A mock parliament need not be dry and dreary; it should not be. But humour and sarcasm are not an end in themselves; they are tools of persuasion, instruments of rhetoric. Let the experienced speakers try their hand at sleight-of-word but let the novice try a simple, sensible oration before he ricks embarrassment for himself and others.

Also, the party leaders should keep in mind the object and purpose of Mock Parliament, and provide

agenda and speakers to fulfill that purpose. This means reasonable bills to be debated and competent (not necessarily skilled) members to talk on them. Of the 29 members who spoke this year I would guess that three were worthy of attention.

There is much to be learned even from a failure. Are the Law students big enough, and mature enough, to admit their error, and take steps with the necessary vigor to correct it? No one will know until next year—and that is probably a blessing.

A. C. WHEALY,
Law III.

epitaph

Dear Sir:

English 2 is not dead yet, but it will never be the same after Professor Bennet leaves it next year. He has been teaching this class for some 35 years, and we students who take the course for only a year or two cannot very well feel the tradition it has gathered as the faculty could.

Professor Bennet has been trying to raise some appreciation of literature in the minds of us, the younger generation, for a long time, and we must all admit that only a few respond and none perfectly. One thing that must make his work seem hopeless is the way we begin to gather our books, coats and feet when the 12:55 bell rings — while he is making the final point of the day's lecture.

There may be some consolation in the thought that the proportion of literacy has never been much higher back in history. But life was then too laborious for many to be cultured; now we have time—and out of proportion we play cards and go to hockey games. "Shall we throw away the opportunity our forefathers earned for us in the sweat of their toil?" A hackneyed expression but valid.

This writer is far from a top-ranking student, but I appreciate ranking student, but I appreciate Professor Bennet's English 2 and hope his successor, whoever he may be, will carry on in his exacting leadership.

Anonymous

stair climbing

Dear Sir:

What kind of stride does your modern architecture-loving "a. f." have? In my six or seven years of dashing the 9 o'clock classes in the Arts building I have often noticed how neatly the steps on the north side of the building are geared to my early morning stride.

Now, however, your inane editorial of Feb. 5 states that the steps

can be taken neither one at a time nor two at a time. May I suggest that "a.f." find a lawn chair, sit beside the steps some wintry morning and watch Dalhousians skipping easily up the steps. Perhaps senior psychology students might like to keep him company and study the stair-climbing habits of the Genus Dalhousianum.

Sir, your "a.f." must have legs longer than five feet or shorter than two. Anyone with measurements near normal will agree the steps are well spaced, just the right distance apart to be hit by each left foot or each right foot (depending on whether one is left or right footed).

If no definite conclusion can be reached by "a.f." and the psychology students concerning spacing of the steps, perhaps the engineers could come to the rescue. Instead of trotting 'round and 'round Sherriff Hall with their transits next summer the engineers might employ their time more profitably by measuring the distance between various steps on the campus and comparing the results with the distance between the average hip and the average heel of the average campus step-climber.

Surely this matter deserves serious study.

David Betts
Arts 8

umbrage

Dear Sir:

I must agree with yr obedient servant, John Samson and take umbrage with you for continuing to besmirch your pages with the besodden meanderings of one Sam Peeps. You have given vent to his over-inflated ego far too long. I take only slight comfort from the fact that he will be taking his understuffed presence from our midst before long. However, sir, I suggest you use a subtle hand on this pompous paranoid. His grip on reality is not strong. Even a gentle rebuke may loosen this precarious grip and plunge him into the abyss of slobbering sadism. Such a development would be catastrophic. His irresponsible jottings have until now, been relatively harmless and not without their humorous moments. But if Mr. Peeps' demented mind were to lose its last small vestige of discretion, such maniacal ravings would emit from his foul mouth that the gentle denizens of the Hovel would rise up like a mother tiger protecting her own and administer a sound clawing to this peeping jackall. To prevent such a happening, justified though it would be, I would suggest easing Mr. Peeps into some other form of literacy endeavour such as reporting of girls interfaculty basketball games.

Yours sincerely,
John Harrison

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