

DALHOUSIE Gazette

AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE PAPER

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A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

At its last meeting the Students' Council agreed to a proposal, generously extended by a member of the faculty, to transcribe all proceedings. It was revealed at this meeting that the Student Forum has been recorded in permanent form on a tape recorder.

It may sound at first like a good idea to record for posterity all the proceedings of the student legislative bodies, but this practice can easily lead to abuses that could endanger student privileges.

The most obvious wrong that could result would be the transcription in permanent form of some incautious statement by an excited speaker that would transform a calumny of a fellow student from a mere slander to a much more serious thing, libel, for which the civil damages recoverable are greater.

The whole idea that what they are going to say is going to be recorded for all time will make students think a second time before they speak. This will keep the majority of students from saying anything, and the rest will not feel free to say what they really think.

Some may think this would be a good thing, but as it is the students have too little to say about how their affairs are to be run. It is better that students should say too much and even become abusive than that they should maintain an uneasy silence and watch things going on of which they heartily disapprove.

The fact that anybody can hear what they said at a Students' Forum or Council Meeting if it were to be recorded would certainly make a student think twice before making a criticism, even if justified, about the University or Faculty. There is much hesitation as it is to voice any opinion on these important subjects. Many students who could contribute much to the general welfare of Dalhousie keep silent because they fear to express their views. How many others would hesitate to express criticism of anything to do with the faculty if they knew that everything they said would be recorded for posterity.

The meetings of the Students' Council and the Student Forum are for the students and for the students only, although faculty members are ex-officio members. The proceedings of the meetings, with the exception of the coverage given in the GAZETTE to more important items, are kept secret, and it is better that they should remain so. They are mostly uninteresting detail items that are recorded in the minutes anyway. It would be of no advantage to record these meetings and, on the other hand, it would cause great harm.

Those running the last student forum had no right to record the meeting without notifying those present beforehand. To continue the practice would be dangerous to the whole system of student government at Dalhousie.

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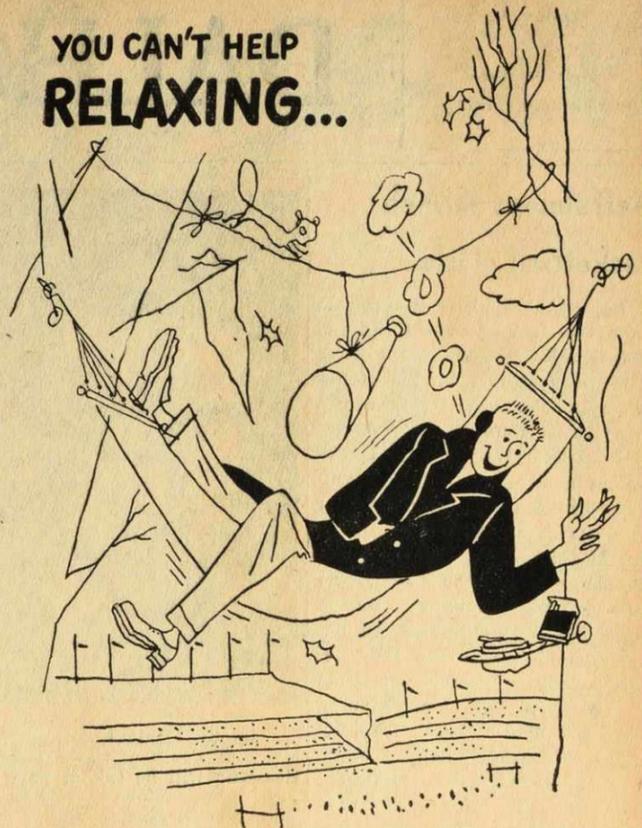
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- (d) In the international field, should N.F.C.U.S. enter it.
- (2) The pooling of present strong features of each organization.
 - (a) N.F.C.U.S.:
 - i. Its representative feature and Students' Council support
 - ii. Its assured annual income
 - iii. Its power in the national picture.

- (b) I.S.S.:
 - i. Its voluntary feature and faculty support
 - ii. Its established national office
 - iii. Its established channels of aid and administrative know-how.
 - (3) The assurance of an integrated policy for the national and international fields.
- And so the advantages of an I.S.S.-N.F.C.U.S. amal-

gamation are obvious, if one accepts the basic premise that national and international objectives can be reconciled within one organization. But beyond that, a hasty progress toward an amalgamation for the sake of being "visionary" must be tempered with some slow, methodical planning, and if necessary, horse-trading, in order to build up a practical, stable organization.

Bruce Lockwood,
Chairman, Dalhousie I.S.S. Committee

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