

Dal Discusses "Apathy" Charge

A PROFESSOR AND FOUR STUDENTS GIVE THEIR VIEWS ON APATHY

Student Council

by Barbara Davison

It is very difficult for anyone of any organization such as the Students' Council to discover the fundamental cause or suggest remedies for student apathy.

One of the difficulties facing a chiefly non-residential and scattered University such as ours is in making students feel that they really belong to a unity called Dalhousie. The Council should try through publicity, through the Gazette, by trying to see that all groups are fairly represented and treated, to make the students feel that they all have a necessary part in the University. We can all, on the Council or off, try to see matters not from a partisan point of view, but as students of Dalhousie.

This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for the Students' Council. We began the year without a publicity manager, and this fact definitely contributed to non-attendance at some functions. The large percentage who paid no attention to the recent Student's Forum can partly be accounted for by the difficulty in preparing publicity, and partly to the negligence of the vice-president in trying to resolve this difficulty. I think the student body must share part of the blame, however, for not turning out simply because no sensational issue was being discussed. There can be no hope of a democratically-organized student body if the students as a whole are not prepared to take part in the day-to-day activity. The publicity organization is now in action, and we hope it will serve to awaken greater interest on the campus.

The Council has, on the whole, worked hard, I think, especially in trying to solve the present financial problems. We really think that cutting budgets, especially of the D.A.A.C. is not likely to relieve the apathetic situation, but we have truly done our best, and we feel that at the worst we have only aggravated existing conditions. Council members have shown willingness to accept responsibility on committees, and as the new

council becomes more integrated and its members understand its problems and workings, real attempts will be made to tackle the situations that arise. A lively interest was shown over the initiation issue, and a committee was set up to look into the matter. There has been a tendency among most of us to ride over certain issues, especially those of national and international importance, partly because of lack of time, and partly because of an unwillingness to face the issues.

There are few concrete suggestions I can make as to remedies for Student Apathy. I think the Council should make use of the facilities of Publicity and the Gazette to a greater extent to make known the whys and wherefores of the workings of the Council and its organization and any issues that arise, and help the Societies see issues from the point of view of the whole campus.

Finally, the leaders of the Council must think hard about the issues and jobs of student life and present them clearly to the student body. In return all the students must be equally ready to think and work for Dalhousie that they may enjoy its benefits more.

Glee Club

By NANCY WICKWIRE

There has been a lot said about "student apathy" at Dalhousie, and new students coming in from other universities have claim to find this one strikingly apathetic, in comparison with their former alma maters. Apathy indeed, seems to strike at many of the student organizations, but this can hardly be said of the Glee Club. I should say, the Glee and Dramatic Club, and give it its full name.

When I entered Dalhousie three years ago, "apathy" was all the rage. Indeed, it had more cause to be then, for as I remember, participation in student activities was much less enthusiastic than it is today. Speaking of the Dramatic and Glee Club particularly, I remember the very meagre turnouts we had when tryouts for plays or operetta parts were announced. I cannot criticize the Glee Club executive of that year, however, because it seems ever to be the fate of Glee Club executives to be enthusiastic and interested in their "baby".

This year, the interest in the activities of the Glee and Dramatic club are much greater than I can remember in the past three years. The tryouts for "As You Like It" were very well attended, and some had to be turned away disappointed. All the students who tried out knew that winning a part meant much work and time given to rehearsing it, for Shakespeare is difficult and Mr. Pigot exacting, but they were interested and came. The "Gondoliers" could only be put on because of the enthusiasm and the number of those wanting leading roles, for the number of solo parts in the operetta is very large.

The executive is willing and able to work as hard as possible to make this year a bang-up success, and with the cooperation of the student body I am sure it will be. Apathy in the Glee and Dramatic Club? Not on your life! Long live the tradition of the stage at Dalhousie!

"College Spirit" and W. U. S. C.

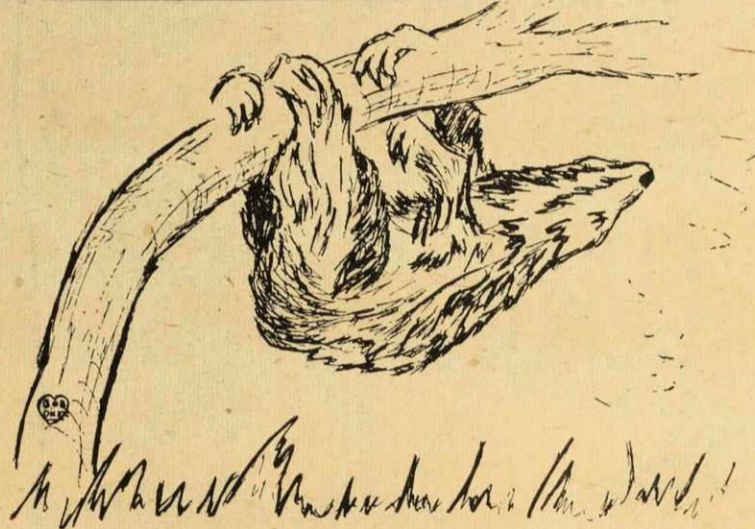
By SALLY ROPER

"College spirit" — that enigma, the absence of which student leaders are always bemoaning, has reared its ugly head. I am asked to discuss "college spirit" as I find it in the World University Service of Canada committee on our campus. But what is this intangible? Can it be considered in relation to each individual student activity, or is it an esprit de corps?

This year, the committee of WUSC on this campus numbers about twenty members. In relation to the committee itself, we have as large an energetic committee as Dal has ever had. In addition, however, we received the co-operation and aid of at least seventy-five other students, when we held the exhibition and sale of Indian handicrafts two weeks ago. If "college spirit" means being able to mobilize student effort in

order to execute some project successfully in the name of the university, then in relation to WUSC on the campus, there is such a spirit.

I do not think that it is within the committee itself that one should look for this elusive "college spirit". It is not to the members of the team that one looks for such spirit. College spirit, if it is to be found at all, is to be found in the support which the college as a whole gives to the various student activities, undertaken in the university's name. Is there a desire to see the university distinguish itself rather than to allow it to disgrace its prestige? If this is what we are looking for, then on behalf of the WUSC committee, let me hasten to say that "college spirit" at Dalhousie is very much alive.



The creature portrayed above is the three-toed sloth and is one of the most apathetic creatures on earth. How's the sloth situation at Dal?

A Member of The Faculty Speaks

by C. L. Bennett

With a fine sense of poetic justice the Gazette has given me a theme and a deadline. "Are Dalhousie students apathetic?" By Friday, or else.

In the pattern of Dalhousie this theme recurs with such frequent regularity and so little variation that we may assume that our apathy, or what passes for our apathy, is a feature so permanent and distinctive as to call for comment and, m- implication if not explicitly, for correction. For myself, if I understand the nature and the cause of this alleged shortcoming, this supposed deficiency, this so-called lack of feeling, I am glad of it and proud that I am permitted to live and work with it. There is a difference between lack of feeling and lack of demonstration: one may have a heart and yet not wear it on his sleeve. The spirit of a college may reveal itself by the absence of a display of "college spirit".

Perhaps our Maritime temperament can justly be blamed for being chilled and repressed by too much sea-fog in our lungs and salt water in our veins. But that is how it is, and to some ways of thinking it is a way that needs no apology or excuse. Students with a more volatile inheritance may put on a better show. Good luck and more power to them if it comes naturally. Dalhousie students usually manage to do what they want to do; but they know, perhaps by intuition, that enthu-

siasm cannot be induced by going through the motions under pressure. A generation ago, two student leaders (now honoured and successful in the larger world) called a well-advertised meeting to discuss "What's wrong with Dalhousie?" The total attendance, including conveners and reporters, was five. The general conclusion, of course, was "That's what's wrong with Dalhousie; no one is interested in anything." Without suggesting that everyone was completely satisfied with the University at large or even with his own personal preoccupations, I feel that this classical example of "apathy" was not without encouraging significance. Evidently the students of Dalhousie had sufficient practical common sense to know that little good has ever been done by mass meetings, vigilance committees, and pep-rallies. For those who enjoy them, pep-rallies may be good for their own sake. But there are other forms of amusement, most of them no less productive, that may be better suited to other tastes. To each his own.

The spirit bloweth where it listeth; resort to artificial respiration is an admission of imminent if not actual death. In spirit Dalhousie's students may be quiet and restrained, self-contained and self-sufficient, but they are far from dead or dying. For their restraint, let their instructors be thankful. If it were not for this restraint—mis-called "apathy"—I can think of at least one who would have been murdered long ago.

The Gazette

by Helen Scammell

Being the only member of the present staff who is in the process of checking off the third notch in time spent on the Gazette, the Feature Editor has asked me to set down on paper my opinion of student apathy concerning the Gazette. This is one thing which, in my opinion, is very much over-emphasized. If the student body heard less about "apathy", it would tend to be less apathetic. It is not my intention to editorialize, but, to get on with the matter at hand.

Apathy on the Gazette? Never! The success of the paper depends almost entirely on the lack of apathy. How could the Gazette function if those working on it were unaware of what was going on, around and about, the Campus? How could the News Editor and the News Reporters fill up six weekly columns on the title page if they were totally oblivious to what was happening on the Campus?

How in the same manner could the Sport's Page function? How could the Feature Page appear each week without the support of interested students and a highly competent Editor?

It is not my intention, however, to laud the Gazette to the skies. Too often have I been left staring at blank columns, which had to be filled within the hour, and no sign of anything with which to fill them. Occasionally I have been told at the last minute that "due to circumstances beyond their control" reporters could not get their assignments done. I, too, have been seized with the "I-don't-care-what-happens-to-the-darn-paper, — let someone-else-do-it" attitude. The amazing thing is, however, that the paper seems to get out every week notwithstanding all these particular phases. Do you remember the issue last year with a blazing headline announcing "Snowfall Blankets Dal Campus"? That was one of those days when we stared at blank columns and sought inspiration from Above. It came. It snowed. Imagine our pride when a few weeks later the Halifax Herald and Mail showed a similar

banner entitled "Halifax Records Record Snowfall".

All this may seem to you like so much getting nowhere. I can't begin to describe the work, the drama, and B, S, and T, that goes into each issue of the Gazette. You have to work on it to find out. You have to rush around trying to get your assignment, you have to fight for a typewriter, you have to type it, you have to meet a deadline, and all this for about four inches of news crowded near the bottom of one of the pages. Or if you are an Editor you have to know what is going on, you have to put up assignment sheets, you have to make sure the reporters do their assignments, you have to write the lead story every week, you have to lay out the page, you have to headline each article so that it fits a given amount of space, and lastly you have to choose the type of print to go on each head. Now you ask is the Gazette apathetic? We answer how can it be? We can't afford to be apathetic. It is our duty to know what is going on, so that we can inform you, the students.

The Arts and Science Society

by Stu MacKinnon

In such a widespread faculty as that of Arts and Science, a certain amount of indifference to an organization of the faculty as a whole, is to be expected.

To begin with, all students who are taking their degree either in Arts or Science are automatically members of the Society. These students' main interests may lie anywhere from Ancient History to Biochemistry. They may, for the first year, take a few of the same courses together, and then branch into their diverse fields so that they seldom come in contact with one another. The Society is distinctive in this respect—it is the only Faculty society on the campus in which the members are not taking the same courses, in the same building, with each other. This means, that compared with the other societies, the Arts and Science Society spirit is off to a bad start. The strong common bond of working together is lacking.

Another reason why indifference (let's get away from the word "apathy" for a while) might be expected to be found in Arts and Science, is the fact that it offers nothing so concrete an outlet for the individual talents of its mem-

bers as does the Glee and Dramatic Society, or the Gazette.

Let's not sell the Society short though, it is a big factor in the student organization of our University, and as such, there is a great deal of interest therein. A quick glance at our Students' Council will show that almost half of the members represent Arts and Science. Enthusiasm is high within the Society around nomination time. After the elections are over, on many occasions the students in Arts and Science have been under a storm of abuse for not supporting their candidates 100%. Probably closer to the truth is that these students prefer to think for themselves, rather than vote for a candidate simply because someone in his society has nominated the candidate.

The character of the individual student as a rule changes very little with respect to such things as student participation, just as there are people that don't seem to be interested in much of anything, there are those who are into practically everything. In short, we will always have with us both apathetic and active students. The Arts and Science Society, no exception, has its share of both.

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