

The Gateway

member of the canadian university press

editor-in-chief - - - Rich Vivone

managing

editor Ronald Yakimchuk

news editor Miriam McClellan

sports editor Bill Kankewitz

make-up editor Dan Carroll

photo editor Al Yackulic

STAFF THIS ISSUE—Here to welcome this old snake back from two weeks of terror at the hands of engineer captors were Ellen (still wearing a skirt) Nygaard, Terry (she made it without getting blued) Pettit, Andy (bust an engineer for God) von Busse, Philip Lenko, Dick (by-line) Nimmons, Al (let's get a house) Scarth, Cathy Morris (let's get to know her better), Bob Anderson (were the Bears all that bad?), Forrest Bard (he didn't do anything, but he wanted his name in staff anyway), B.S.P. (back for a return engagement) Bayer and of course, I'm glad its all finished, Harvey G. Thomgirt.

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PAGE FOUR

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1969

Editorial

You can't talk to 15,000 students

Many, many students agree that the students' union, as it is presently set up, is nearing the point of complete irrelevancy to students at this university. What we mean is that nobody gives a sweet damn about what they are capable of doing, what they are doing or what they are supposed to do.

In this regard, it would seem logical the students' union take steps to diagnose the situation and present workable (or at least debatable) solutions.

One of the chief problems is that very few students know who the people are who run the students' union. Students on campus don't know who the president of the students' union is, they don't know who the vice-president is (or how many there are), they have no idea of the structure of the union.

For an organization paid for by students and run by students, this is an incredible situation. The most horrid thing however, is that few of the students in power have indicated they want significant changes.

For example: on Feb. 21, students

will be asked to cast ballots for their favorite people (because students' union elections are popularity polls). All students' council positions are vacant and some people will be asking for your support so they can fill the holes.

Casting ballots is serious business because the people who win the elections will be running the students' union and its immense budget (you contribute about \$30 each) for the next 12 months.

It should be expected therefore that students serious about student politics present a sound platform during their campaign. The students on campus should have time to get to know the candidates and have an opportunity to analyze and question their platforms.

That takes time because there are roughly 14,500 students on campus. Probably you won't believe this but the candidates have exactly 59 hours in which they can campaign. Because elections are always held on a Friday, the campaign period extends from 11 a.m. Tuesday prior to 9 p.m. Thursday prior.

... in 59 hours

Saskatoon—10 days.

In the latter case, Eric Olson, students' union president at Saskatoon, was here for the Canadian Union of Students education program. He told us though there were just over 12,000 students at the university, he couldn't reach them all in 10 days of campaigning. Even then, he said, he was totally exhausted after his campaign. And, he said, he still didn't reach all of the students.

Until views such as these are considered by the students' union, there will be no educated voter on this campus and there will be no candidate that enjoys the support of the people.

In a university so concerned about representative leaders and representative opinions, this is a colossal contradiction.

Now how can any student contesting a position expect to talk to a significant portion of the campus in that time. It just can't be done. The election bylaw was setup when the university population was less than 8,000. It is stupid to expect a high turnout at the polls (or an educated voter) when few know what or whom they are voting for.

Recently, we sent letters to a number of universities of comparable size (all around 15,000) to find the extent of their campaign periods. These are partial results.

Ball State University of Muncie, Indiana—30 days

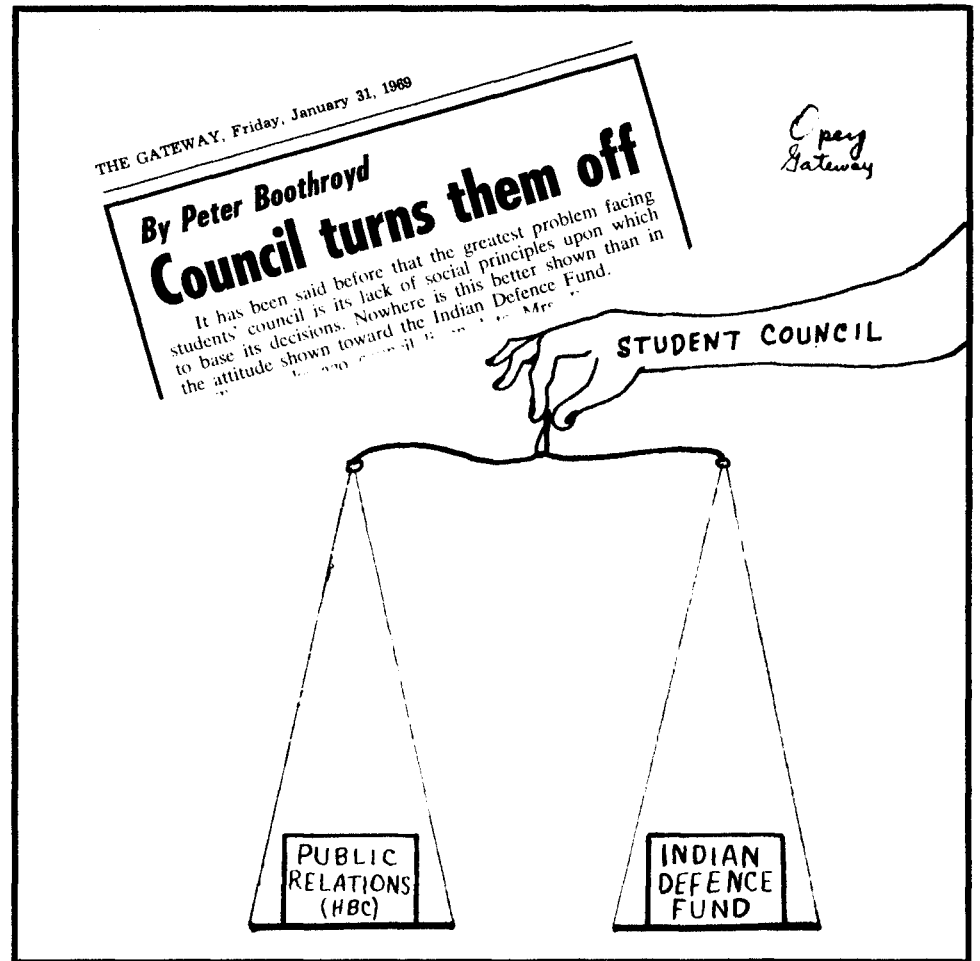
McGill University—10-12 days

University of Nevada—one week

University of British Columbia—up to two weeks

University of Nebraska—15 days

University of Saskatchewan at



which weighs more?

The official languages bill —why is Alberta balking?

By BRIAN CAMPBELL

If anyone still believes the bilge the provincial government gave us in the White Paper on Human Resources they haven't been reading the papers in the last week.

Two years ago they were telling us that the development of human resources would be the ultimate aim of our provincial administration and that physical resources development was only a means to that end.

Then last week Harry Strom and the rest of the prairie premiers balked at the Official Languages Bill which would guarantee bilingualism in federal services all across the country.

Strom told us the bill was "objectionable" and went on to make statements that learning and understanding the French viewpoint was an "individual" concern and did not fall within the legislative capacity of a government concerned with the development of "free and creative individuals."

Walter Weir, the ailing Ross Thatcher, and Harry Strom all went along with a demand for a court test of the Trudeau government's legislation. Their action is a good indicator of the importance they place on bilingualism and biculturalism in terms of the survival of the country as a unit.

I do not deny that economic problems are also of crucial importance, but I think, and the White Paper seems to agree with me, that some statement is forthcoming on just what these governments want the money for.

Last week Harry Strom also told us he thought French was adequately taught in Alberta schools. When we take his pronouncements and put them together a picture of the Alberta stand emerges. And it is a bleak picture. He has told us he is satisfied with present schooling in French; he will not force French on anyone who does not want to learn it; and he will not make many changes in language use in the province, or allow the federal government to make any of their own, until his collection of "free and creative individuals" have made their free and creative choice.

I have no doubt that there is a consensus on this question in Alberta, and

that consensus supports Mr. Strom. The trouble is that it is an ugly and animal consensus made up of fat old men and ugly old women all nursing their private prejudices. Mill said representative government depended on an educated electorate. That claim cannot be made for the Alberta consensus on the language question.

To me, the people who oppose bilingualism and biculturalism are consulting their hatreds and dis-likes, not their minds, in reaching a decision. All Harry Strom has done is give elegance to a collection of garbage. His actions are the politics of expedience in the worst sense.

Mr. Strom is hedging with his language stand. He should tell us—yes or no—whether he thinks Canada is worth the effort. If the answer is not the Albertans who believe in a united Canada should organize and send him back to the simple life he came from and, it seems, still stands for.

The prerequisite for keeping the country together is understanding and empathy. We have neither even when it comes to regional differences in so-called English-Canada. There is work to be done.

Last fall I suggested the humanities program—English, Social Studies, and French—should be amalgamated and improved in our high schools. Regardless of what Mr. Strom thinks, this is still the vital first step towards real understanding in our fragmenting society. At that time I said we would have to start in the first grade and improve French instruction so that students could handle both English and French. This means they would take lectures, hold discussions, and write papers in both languages.

Of course this would mean compulsion of a sort in the training of our teachers, but it would be a vital step in developing "free and creative individuals" in the context of a total Canada.

I wait with interest for some changes in our educational system at the next session of the legislature. If changes are not forthcoming we will know the true color of our provincial government.

I think that color is black.