

1920's Students Revolt

Student Government History No. 34

This week's number starts with more of the information provided by Mr. A. Blenus Morton about Dalhousie students of the 1920's. The leader of the first student revolt (a strike against a rule requiring 100% attendance in Arts and Science) was Billy Jones. He became a friend of Winston Churchill and during World War II was parachuted into Yugoslavia where he was one of the leader's of that country's revolt against the Nazis.

In previous numbers of this series we mentioned the dispute between Carl Bethune of the Dalhousie Glee and Dramatic Society and Leonard Fraser, President of the Students' Council over damage done to the Majestic Theatre during a D.M.D.S. performance. Mr. Fraser became Nova Scotia leader of the Progressive Conservatives, while Mr. Bethune served for many years as Halifax City Solicitor. Both had graduated in 1925, they died within minutes of each other and were buried on the same day, although from different locations.

The three leading Law graduates in 1925 went on to become, respectively, a Judge of the Exchequer Court of Canada, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and President of Memorial University of Newfoundland. They, as well as Fraser and Bethune, were taught by Angus L. MacDonald, who was to be elected Premier of Nova Scotia and eventually a member of the wartime cabinet in Ottawa. MacDonald was hired in 1924-25 to be the third Donald lecturer at the Law School. Teaching that could not be done by the three lecturers was handled by judges and lawyers.

Among GAZETTE Business Managers was Charles Fogo MacKenzie, a nephew of the university's President, Stanley MacKenzie. He eventually reached the Presidency of Canada

Permanent Mortgage. An earlier graduate, John R. Nicholson, was a St. Laurent cabinet member, President of Polymer Corporation and Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia during his career in public life.

Henry Borden, a relative of Prime Minister Robert Borden and a member of the early 20's football team, introduced the first Dalhousie fraternity, Phi Kappa Phi. He became a leader of the group that drafted the World War II legislation, which also included Dal grad, and national Liberal President, Gordon Fogo.

To return to our chronological review of Dalhousie's student government, a prominent graduate of another university visited Dalhousie in January 1925. It was Eugene Forsey, one of the three students on the McGill debating team that met Dalhousie's team on January 30. On the Dalhousie team was Fred W. Bissett, future Judge of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. Dalhousie won the debate.

On the 18th of February, 1925, GAZETTE renewed one of the unchanging themes at Dalhousie. This was the attitude among students, and often voiced in the newspaper and Council, that the university authorities did little to maintain or foster a strong Dalhousie spirit. This was still seen as the cause of a generally poor attitude towards the university on the part of many students, and possibly some alumni. In 1925, according to GAZETTE, the Medical students were the most disaffected. An editorial called for both faculty and students to consider the problem, and to debate it publicly in the correspondence section of the paper.

While this point was being considered, the Students' Council was becoming tangled in the kind of backwater that so often plagues Councils. Upset with the lack of action on the part of those

assigned to revise the constitution, the Council met on February 26 in the absence of President Leonard Fraser. It received a report that the year would end without a deficit and gave the Board of Governors permission to use the rink's water connection during the summer.

Getting on to the main attraction, the Council first decided to change the date of the upcoming elections from the first to the third Tuesday in March. Then Elinor Barnstead was appointed to the revision committee, presumably to balance its membership in favour of quick action. Finally, the committee was formally urged to do its work as soon as possible.

A few days later, on March 2, President Fraser called a meeting and informed the Council that it did not have the power to amend the election date without notice, and he declared that vote out of order. Council decided that the elections would be held on March 10. Notice of motion was given for an amendment to have women in Arts and Science elected in proportion to their numbers within the student body of that faculty, although still on the one rep per 25 students formula. If there were 50 women and 100 men, the two women and four men receiving the highest number of votes would be elected, regardless of how many women received more votes than the men, or vice versa.

On March 12 the amendment was discussed, and although it had the support of Vice-President Harriet Elliott the amendment was defeated by the Council. The Council then proceeded to pass a third debt on to its successors by allocating \$100.00 from the future fees to pay for medals for students who had participated on an athletic team for two years. As with the other such debts, the Senate still had to approved the advance, although it turned out that they had no objection in any case.

Pres Explains \$10. Raise

by Dan O'Connor

It has been suggested that there should be some attempt at an "official" explanation of the decision to increase the Student Union fees by \$10.00, and this article is an attempt to do it, briefly.

The Council had first to decide if there should be some sort of run-off, either a

referendum or student union meeting. The Union meeting was rejected, the main reason probably being that 2000 students voted in the referendum, and it was virtually impossible to get even 1000 to attend a Union meeting, which could also be packed by a faction.

A second referendum was

vote again, after already expressing their views once.

Assuming that Council had to make a decision, no matter what the alternatives, the members turned to the voting results. The cause of difficulty here was that 47% of the voters had neglected to vote preferentially, but rather indicated only one

proposal. The vote was counted as a first choice, but for the 396 "A" and "C" voters who only indicated one choice the result was a wasted vote.

A proposal on a preferential ballot does not win until it receives over 50% of all votes cast. Every time the votes are counted, and no proposal wins, the one with the lowest total of votes is dropped from the counting, and its votes are redistributed according to the next highest preference indicated which is still being counted. In this referendum, several polling officials actually advised people to vote only the first preference, and many other people did not read the ballot carefully, so they did not realize that is was preferential.

The Council had to take account of these factors. It is not legally bound to accept the referendum results, and if it is possible to reach a result which fairly accurately reflects the majority wishes, that result should be sanctioned.

Looking at the figures, several calculations were rejected, for two clear reasons. One is that it would require a lot of money and time, with little assurance that the number of informed voters would be larger. Even if, even more time and money were spent on a second referendum, there were strong doubts that students would be willing to

obvious. The total first round vote for an increase of at least \$7.00 was two thirds. If

the wasted votes had divided like those marked preferentially, \$12.00 would have received just under 55% of the total votes. The weighted average of the first round votes was between \$11.00 and \$12.00.

The Council realized that for the most part, the real issue is not a \$10.00 added expense, but rather whether people know what the Union is doing and if they know, whether they approve. The officers of the Union have been asked to prepare a report on how the new fee revenue can be spent most effectively to accomplish the mandate in Proposal B.

A full \$12.00 increase was narrowly rejected so that, although it may be difficult to enact Proposal B, some concession will be made towards those who supported a lower amount. This was done because Council had to make the decision, and therefore felt an obligation to give the minorities more consideration than they normally receive in legally binding elections and referenda.

If any student organization or group of students wishes to discuss this matter with myself or other members of the Council, please try to contact me at the Council offices on the second floor of the SUB, at 424-2146.

Dental Care for Dal ?

by Doug Hendsbee

One of the items not discussed at the Council meeting on November 17 was a recommendation by Paul Sherwood concerning the possibility of establishing a comprehensive dental programme for Dalhousie students. The report grew out of his interest in this area which he discussed with Dan O'Connor. Student Council then gave their approval so Sherwood could present a report to them.

After investigating several proposals he choose the proposal presented by Maritime Insurance. Blue Cross presented several plans they were involved with but failed to present a specific plan with cost factors. The Dental Association of Nova Scotia expressed an interest in the plan but were hesitant in entering into an agreement since they had never done so before.

The proposal of M.M.I. is divided into three parts.

Part I was a list of services provided at 100% of the cost. Included in this list of services is all necessary procedures or techniques needed to assist the dentist in evaluating conditions existing and to the dental care required, all procedures or techniques to prevent the occurrence of dental abnormalities or diseases, extractions and other oral surgical procedures and minor restorations, such as silver fillings, silicon cement and plastic fillings.

Part 2 includes a list of services covered at 70% of the cost. This includes pulp therapy and root canal fillings, necessary for detecting and eliminating diseases affecting supporting structure of the teeth and major restoration including silver fillings, silicon cement and plastic fillings.

Part 3 which is optional includes services provided at 70% of the cost. It includes

prosthetics such as bridges; partial plates and complete plates.

The proposal says that all students must join the plan. The plan leaves open two options. Either a single student will pay a monthly premium of \$5.66 for Parts 1 and 2 or pay a premium of \$9.06 for Parts 1, 2 and 3.

There are several drawbacks to such a plan. First there is the cost factor. If the plan was implemented it would mean that tuition fees would rise from between \$45.00 and \$75.00. The administration of the university might be opposed because of the cost factor. Such a programme would benefit those who need dental work and would be a burden to those who needed little work. Any programme would have to be submitted to a student union meeting. It seems quite doubtful that the required number of students would vote for it.