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Arts Rep removed from seat as Council "purifies" itself

By STEPHEN KIMBER

Before a packed gallery, Student Council members took three hours and ten minutes to try, convict, and sentence their colleague and Arts Representative, Willoughby Newton Offley Jr. for what Bruce Gillis termed, "deliberate and willful breach of Council decorum." Offley was censured, suspended, and then ordered to pay the costs of a telegram he sent to Simon Fraser University supporting the demand of one hundred and fourteen students arrested after a sit-in in the university's Administration Building. The telegram which was sent to both the Student Union and the President Kenneth Strand was signed "The Student Council."

Though Council had passed a motion to send such a telegram at its January 9th meeting, Offley took it upon himself to send the message, including in it support for their struggle against a "technocratic, beurocratic, dictatorial elite," and termed the RCMP, "the running dogs of Imperialism." The message ended: "yours for victorious Marxist-Leninism."

This was too much for Treasurer Bill Smyth, who refused to pay for it and called upon the President to convene a special meeting to deal with Offley. The meeting was called for last Tuesday night at 8:30.

In his opening remarks on the motion to censure, suspend, and make Offley pay for the telegram, Smyth told members that his first reaction on reading the telegram was "stunned silence" and that he had spent the next twenty-four hours without sleep wondering "how a human being, the same species as myself, could commit such an act." Because it was an offence, not only against "common sense," but a criminal act against CN Telecommunications, he told them, "no penalty we can impose is great enough" for this "irresponsible and damnable deed."

In his defence Offley stated that democratic assemblies operated on the basis of precedent and that on January 9th, the Council had passed a resolution to send a telegram to Immigration Minister Allan MacEachen regarding the plight of the nine Polish seamen facing deportation. Because of the urgency of the matter and because President Smith had not sent the telegram, Offley took it upon himself to have the message sent. He told Council that there had been no official disapproval of his act and that Smith had in fact, given his unofficial approval to the matter. "This bears a great deal on this matter," the Arts Rep said telling his accusers that he felt "a precedent had been set."

Offley also cited the events regarding the telegram ordered to be sent to the United States consulate following the recent American elections as a further precedent for his actions. In that incident, Smith was directed by a Council motion on October 31, 1968 to send a telegram of condolences to the American people. Smith assumed a veto power not given him in the constitution and refused to send the message, yet Council at that time took no action to censure the President, even though his actions had contravened the Constitution.

Offley, however, did tell his fellow Council members that his actions "might have detracted from the intent of the telegram." At the conclusion of his defence Offley was required to leave the Council chambers, according to procedural rules, while



Will Offley

members debated his fate. After almost fifty minutes of legal wrangling on whether or not Council had the right to punish a Council member, Hugh Cowan led off debate, charging that what Offley had done was "forgery," an indictable offence under the criminal code and that as an American, he could be deported for it.

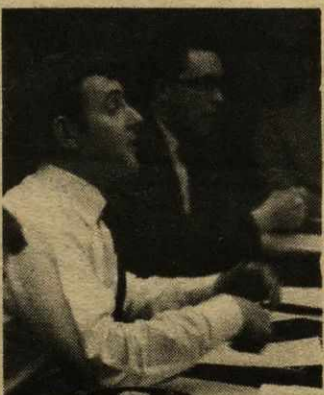
Engineering Rep Dave Bell admitted that the whole affair was "regrettable" and that "we should in fact censure him," but he added that "things have been getting pretty sloppy around here" and felt that suspension was not a useful punishment for his "mistake." The motion was dealt with in three parts, first part dealing with the motion to censure him. It passed 18 to 1 with Pittas the only representative voting against censure.

On the motion to suspend Offley several students in the gallery spoke on Offley's behalf. Rocky Jones told them that "Will screwed up, obviously," but he felt that the "dialogue must continue" and that suspension would be, in effect, saying that they were afraid of the Arts Representative. Law stu-

dent Tony Jordan concurred with Jones and added "By suspending him you are depriving his constituents of their representative" and he added that he did not believe such action was "a viable sanction." The seconder of the motion Bruce Gillis countered that to censure Offley was not enough, to which Science Rep Murray McCutcheon caustically remarked "Why don't you hang him?" The suspension was sustained with Pittas, Bell, McCutcheon, and Cook voting negatively.

After the motion was carried Bell and Pittas left the chambers, although Bell later returned. The final section of the resolution ordering Offley to pay the cost of the telegram was then passed unanimously with little discussion.

To complete the evening, Smyth and Gillis introduced a motion to repudiate "the content of the telegram," in effect, negating their vote of January 9 to support the four points of grievance, outlined in that motion and included in Offley's telegram. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.



Assassins: Smith, Cowan and Sharphan, Etter & Smyth and Gillis