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SMU Protest Aborted

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St. Mary's Student Council aborted its own protest and student strike in a tension-filled meeting Wednesday, and settled for representation on a Faculty-Administration - Student committee to study the university's power structure.

Council President Bob Shaw told about 600 striking students, "I made a mistake. I say the boycott should be over, and the march should be called off." The change in plans was a result of widespread misunderstanding of the protest, he said.

Angry students yelled "You can't back down now! You asked for our support and you got it" and one speaker said "We have to take one more step to prove our point. If we stop right now, we're dead." Mrs. B. Chasin, a professor, told the students "You are much too concerned with image and not enough with structure."

The protest followed an announcement by Archbishop James Hayes, Chancellor of St. Mary's and Mt. St. Vincent, that the question of co-education for SMU had been referred to a special committee concerned with all Catholic institutions of higher learning in the Halifax area. All elements within

Student Reaction ...

GAZETTE reporter Suzanne Temple interviewed several SMU students Wednesday afternoon before and after Shaw's cancellation of the protest. Here are some of their opinions:

"We're not trying to degrade the archbishop. Bishop Hayes is a great guy. We're not against him as a man but we're against his position of power within the university."

"Bishop Hayes has so many outside pressures of conflicting responsibilities, so that it is too hard for him to do a proper job as chancellor."

"Some people on the board of governors go along with the Bishop just because they believe he is the representative of the Pope who is the Representative of God."

"Archbishop Hayes is the only bishop in Canada who still has veto power over a university."

"We're laying off all activities which might be interpreted as immature, in the hopes that people will take us seriously."

"We're not getting proper news coverage, especially on certain open line radio programs. It's all being distorted."

Mrs. Barbara Chasin, an Assistant Professor in the Sociology department, supported the protest actively and argued against aborting it. She told the GAZETTE: "The issue seems to be one of self-determination, and I am in favour of self-determination whether of a university or of a country like Vietnam."

Brother Peter Geary, Secretary of the SRC and a Jesuit attending St. Mary's as a student, said "I'm behind the action in principle, but not the way they are going about it. They are acting prematurely and immaturely. . . . We are not trying to fight the administration, but it looks that way because we are boycotting classes. Professors will take a stand on March 12. That's when the students should take theirs. I don't think we're accomplishing anything, we're just cutting our own throats."

Another student explained his stand: "I don't just want to go along with the crowd. I'm not sure what I think."

the university had already accepted the principle of co-education and a final answer is expected from Hayes following a 90-day study period recommended by the Board of Governors. The study period will end March 12.

A student rally was told Tuesday that the study period, ending just before final exams at SMU, appeared to be a device to prevent students reaction on the issue. Council President Shaw advised the students to boycott classes for the rest of the week in protest against the lack of autonomy of the Board of Governors, and the general control of the Archdiocese over the school. A symbolic "wake" was planned to mourn the death of St. Mary's as an autonomous institution.

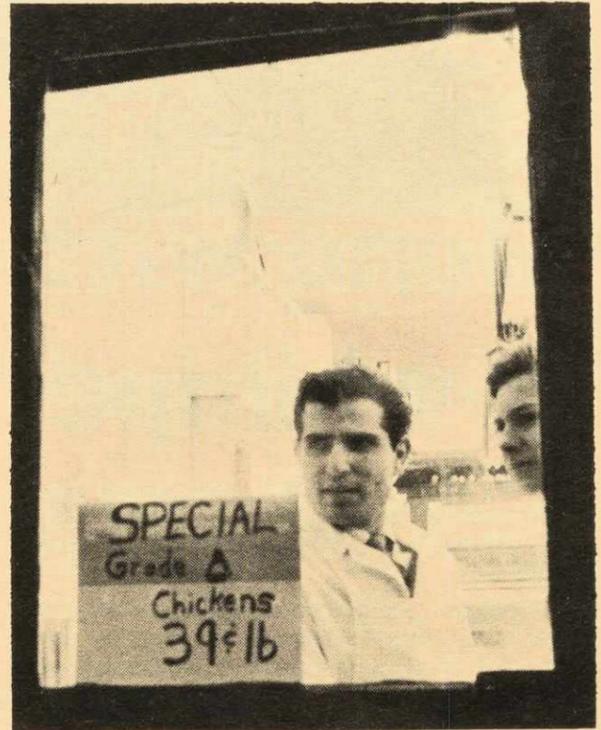
Although University President Dr. Henry Labelle termed the action "unwarranted" and "untimely", faculty reaction did not oppose the protest. Professor M. Wiles informed his students, "those students who . . . do not attend, will not be penalized by me, in any way" and a number of tests scheduled for Wednesday were postponed until next week. By Wednesday afternoon, usually-busy class-rooms were almost deserted; janitors were polishing floors and doing other jobs usually done at night or on holidays.

But a reaction started against the boycott Tuesday night. Vice-President-Elect Simon Robenblum began to feel that "boycotting classes was a big mistake" and Shaw cancelled plans for the wake Wednesday morning. The original plan was scrapped because the Council executive believed the protest had been misunderstood by the people of Halifax. The student body was warned that they had to appear mature to the public. So all symbolic rituals were cancelled and a parade permit was obtained for the student body to march down to Archbishop Hayes' residence on the Northwest Arm.

The schedule at this point called for a forum on Academic Freedom: it was the last event on the schedule which was adhered to. Shaw announced after the forum that he had had the march permit cancelled and that he wished to see the whole protest called off. A student shouted "Who's pressuring you, Bob?"

Several speakers argued against Shaw's stand and at one point the president submitted his resignation, but withdrew it after the meeting. It was decided to renew the debate later in the day.

The outcome was explained to the GAZETTE



Local grocers stared skeptically at one of the demonstrations of student power this week.

Thursday afternoon by Vice-President Mike O'Sullivan. The boycott of classes was cancelled as of Thursday he said, "because we feel we have achieved our aim of making the public aware of the situation here." The Archbishop, he said, would be approached as soon as he returns from Toronto, where he has been during the week's events, and he will be asked to state his position to the students by next Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Council representatives are meeting with faculty and administration spokesmen to define a common stand on the issue of university autonomy.

Over 500 in NSUS March

More than 550 Nova Scotian Students marched on the legislative building in Halifax Thursday night to protest the provincial government's treatment of education. The march, sponsored by the infant Nova Scotia Union of Students, supported the NSUS brief presented earlier in the day. The brief demanded an end to residence fee hikes, and criticized the government for the means test on the provincial loan program forms and for the low wages afforded secondary school teachers. It also asked for a \$300 bursary for each first-year student in Nova Scotian universities.

Among the university marchers were 150 students from Shirreff Hall, 100 from Howe Hall, 60 from St. Francis Xavier and Mt. St. Bernard, 100 from Mt. St. Vincent, 40 from King's, and seven from St. Mary's, the latter campus still smarting from its aborted first venture into real campus politics. Also marching were 50 students from Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, who presented a separate brief.

The march to the legislative building wound its way through Halifax by a devious route (necessitated by the police edict that the marchers could not share any street with a trolley). Once there, the gathering was addressed by Kim Cameron, President of NSUS, G.I. Smith, Premier of Nova Scotia, Gerald Doucette, newly-appointed Minister of Education, and Hugh Armstrong, President of CUS. All were greeted with applause.

While the government spokesmen only noted that there could be more emphasis on education in the future, Armstrong told the student marchers that their requests only represented a first step. While the demand for a freeze on the cost of education was valid, he said, the ultimate goal must be the removal of all financial barriers to university entrance.

Cameron later said that he felt the brief and the march had already achieved part of their goal, as consultations with government leaders were started soon afterwards. He noted that a government-student committee had been set up to study the distribution of student loans and bursaries. This was requested in the brief presented following the 1965 march, which had only just now been achieved. Cameron said "This is just the beginning of what I feel will be most productive talks between the provincial student union and the government."

He said that the march had been reasonably orderly; the government, he felt, was favourably impressed. However, he noted that many students were unselective in their applause, and at times seemed to be clapping only to keep their hands warm.

The march was the second major project of NSUS since its inception in November.

Students from several Nova Scotia campuses strain to catch every word as government and student union officials warm up the Legislature's courtyard with political hot air.

LEFT Premier Smith faces the microphones in front of the Legislature Thursday night. His short speech might be summarized, "I have read your brief." Students applauded his stand enthusiastically.

