

# GILLIS

# MUST

# RESIGN

Bruce Gillis has been steadily losing the confidence of his Students Council and even of his own executive over the past four months.

While the first censure motion in the fall failed by a large majority to pass, it was indicative of trouble on the horizon for Mr. Gillis. At that time, although they did not censure him, Council pointedly reprimanded the President for his unilateral actions. They told him, in effect to shape up, but he failed to do so.

He acted unilaterally on the George Report. Council meeting, on the Sunday afternoon before the Monday Senate meeting, strongly expressed their disapproval of the recommendations of the George Report. Mr. Gillis, a Senator, voted in favor of the recommendations against the wishes of Council. They later affirmed their stand in a written protest over the report, yet Council could not, in effect, trust their President to speak for them at the Senate meeting.

This is not an isolated incident. Neither is the recent controversy over Mr. Gillis' handling of the literature table affair. Mr. Gillis understood the wishes of Council in the matter, yet he chose to throw in a "red herring", one of the so-called technicalities, to obscure rather than clarify the debate. Failing with this tactic, he resorted to the tantrum stage of calling a new meeting because he didn't get his way.

Then, of course, there is the moral question of distribution of campaign literature during the CUS referendum. On voting day Mr. Gillis distributed leaflets about CUS which contained fallacious statements. It was election day and too late for the other side to respond. While it has been noted that through a technicality in the Constitution, he was not acting illegally, it does not make it morally justified.

This, then, is the basic question in the upcoming referendum. Has Mr. Gillis been

morally justified in acting against the wishes of Council?

He argues that his mandate is from the students, and not from the Council. While this may be true, how has Mr. Gillis attempted to ascertain student thought?

He has not done it through open meetings of the student body. The first student body meeting this year was held on Tuesday and Mr. Gillis was requested to call that meeting by a number of students. Perhaps there is some mysterious process of osmosis through which Mr. Gillis can ascertain student opinion.

He, like most Presidents, has been isolated by his job from the student body as a whole. Though concomitant with his role as Student Council President rather than through personal desire to provide Mr. Gillis with student opinion.

With these avenues, shut off, he had only two choices: talk to his friends or talk to Student Council. He has chosen to talk only with his friends. Council at least can claim to be elected; the same cannot be said for many of Mr. Gillis' allies, and it seems ludicrous for a man who campaigned on the slogan "We want what you want", to now ignore the only potential source of representative student opinion on campus.

There is another tragedy in all of this: his decision to isolate and ignore Council has negated the potential value of many an eager Student Council Representative. Cathy Smiley, Kirk MacCulloch, Bob Hamilton, Liz Cuzack, Tom Mitchell, and Jeanie MacDonald, among others, were eager to become involved but they were stymied by a lack of responsible leadership. Their frustrations have manifested themselves in apathy, disgust, and cynicism. Indeed his own Vice-President Perry Crowston, supported the call for a referendum.

It is illogical to make these criticisms of course without suggesting that there is an alternative. There is.

This Student Union can begin to operate on democratic principles. We can decide important questions in open meetings of the student body rather than in the cloistered chambers of the student council room.

We must not be afraid of open decision making by the student body, indeed, we should welcome it. The students are the ones for whom this union is operated, and it must be their decision in the end which is accepted and acted upon. This is a basic tenet of democracy.

However this does not negate a legitimate position for the Student Council in the structure of the student union.

They are a smaller group and in a better position to be aware of all the relevant arguments on a particular issue. Thus they cannot stay in their little rooms and argue their relevant arguments. They must get out among their constituents and convince them of the validity of their arguments. The best forum for this exchange and dialogue is in an open meeting of students.

Under our present system, again, once elected, Council is almost sacred. The cannot be impeached singly, but only as a body, and this proceeding must carry the signatures of fifty-one percent of the student body.

We require better mechanisms to rid ourselves of those Council members who are not acting in the interests of their constituents. Students must be able to exercise control over their elected members, or else the concept of rule by the people becomes meaningless.

Bruce Gillis has shown by his unilateral actions over the past four months that he is not even willing to work with his fellow elected representatives. How then can we expect him to work with/and for the student body as a whole?

The Gazette therefore supports the call for Mr. Gillis' resignation.

# EDITORIAL