

Dalhousie students oppose fascism

Student Government History # 62

At the beginning of the 1935-36 academic year freshmen had the unusual experience of hearing the university and student presidents agreeing about something. Both urged involvement in extra-curricular activity. A week later it was clear that under Carleton Stanley the University authorities were continuing to reduce student-university co-operation. The Student's Council was told that the Senate had unanimously decided to resume jurisdiction over the matters which had been administered by the Committee of Nine. The committee was composed equally of students, alumni and faculty. Its purpose had been to regulate student-university affairs without the expected bad feelings. President Stanley had run afoul of the committee several times. Students were given the impression that regulations made by the Committee had been revoked, thus throwing regulation of athletics, dances and the gymnasium into some confusion.

By reducing expenses to compensate for low revenues during the Depression Council had managed to maintain a considerable amount of cash on hand. The new Council did not begin spending money all at once. Rather, it dealt with matters such as confirming the practice of no athletic decisions without a

DAAC recommendation. Eric Mercer presented Council with a proposal for a student plebiscite, to be called the Peace Questionnaire. Council agreed to sponsor the vote on condition that the results would only be published with Council permission. This condition was accepted.

Despite abolition of the Committee of Nine student-alumni relations were improving as demonstrated by GAZETTE institution of an alumni section.

As orientation continued the freshmen were treated to events more usual than student-Stanley harmony. John Fisher was emcee of the Glee Show and he used the occasion for discussion of his ideas about student politics. Carleton Stanley asked the undergraduates to revolt against "the type of dancing and music that is rife at Dalhousie University". He moved on to another pet dislike by describing compulsory student athletics as robot-like.

It was soon plain that 1935-36 would be a year in which Dalhousie students were very conscious of the international scene. An editorial stated that, "Our job right now is to wipe out any possible chance of Canada becoming involved in a war." The supporting argument was that only such action would stop

a world-wide war that threatened civilization. The newspaper said that interest in the federal election was due to Mussolini's troubles, the assassination of Huey Long, the Social Credit victory in Alberta and Steven's new federal party.

The Peace Questionnaire turned into a major event. Much of the GAZETTE's front page was taken up with "PEACE or WAR". One editorial discussed the issue and predicted a large turnout while another expanded at length on the theme, "Let's Keep Canada Out". It was reported that Students' Council feared student endorsement on an illegal course. Pacifism was receiving so much attention that the paper never got around to reporting the end of the Committee of Nine.

The voting showed that while students were unanimously in favour of economic sanctions against the fascists, only 40% were for any kind of military effort. There was only a small minority in support of intervention. Although Council only permitted publication afterwards, results went immediately to the daily newspapers. GAZETTE criticized this undercutting of its ability to get a scoop. It also used the occasion to accuse the press of being pro-British while not giving the Italian side. The Council

President, Harold Taylor, was content to call the questionnaire "silly".

Perhaps demonstrating the authority of a university professor, one of the professors who spoke to the freshmen declared his support of Carleton Stanley and asked for better appreciation of art and music.

The Council quickly recovered from the peace excitement, merely giving permission for publication of the results. It moved on to the question of budgeting for the academic year. There were doubts about the Council's financial stability so by narrow margins many requests for increased funds were defeated. GAZETTE salaries would be increased only if the paper did well financially. A special committee was formed to see how payment for ads could be forced. Feeling that participation in the NFCUS debating schedule was an excessive item some Council members produced the novel solution of only sending teams elsewhere and refusing to host any debates. They were ignored for the moment.

DAAC had been all-male until on October 20 a mixed sport, Badminton, was placed under DAAC jurisdiction by Council.

Minister's letter reiterates legislation

Dear Mr. Russell:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated today, concerning the threatened strike by the membership of C.U.P.E. Local 1392, the Maintenance Staff of Dalhousie University.

An Act enabling the provincial government to enter into an Agreement with the federal government respecting the application of federal Anti-Inflation guidelines in the public sector in Nova Scotia was passed by the provincial legislature in December of 1975 (Bill No. 205, an Act Respecting the National

Anti-Inflation Program, Chap. 54, Acts of 1975). As I am sure you are aware, Bill C-73, the federal Act, provides jurisdiction in the private sector in Canada.

With respect to the communication between the Anti-Inflation Board and Dalhousie University referred to in your letter, the Board has advised that it is unable to rule on the proposed settlement until such time as the federal-provincial agreement referred to above is entered into.

This agreement will be completed

after the Members of the Provincial legislature have been provided an opportunity for a full debate on the regulations made under the federal Act. A special sitting of the legislature for this purpose will take place this coming Friday, January 16th.

There are some special problems of interpretation of the guidelines relating to this proposed settlement. I met yesterday with federal officials concerning this and expect to have clarification of these problems in the very near future.

I can fully appreciate the difficult position of the university in this case as well as the adverse effects that such a strike poses for the student body. I hope that the foregoing will help to clarify the situation somewhat for you.

Let me assure you of my desire to be of assistance in the resolution of this matter. I will be happy to provide you with further information when it becomes available.

Sincerely yours,
M.C. MacAskil

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so many
ways . . .

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