

DALHOUSIE Gazette

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FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF STUDENTS

Elsewhere in these columns today there appears a story which should cause a great deal of comment and controversy on the campus. Basis of the story was a press release issued by the Council of Students following a meeting of that body Jan. 25, at which a plan was ratified;

"Whereby provision is made in advance for joint student-university administration participation in ruling on the admittance of visiting speakers to the campus when their desirability might be doubtful."

The story is headlined—"Future Speakers To Be Screened By Committee."

And that is just what the provision is intended to do—to screen speakers whose desirability might be doubtful. The council has stated that no speaker would be refused permission to speak without the committee first having met and made a ruling. In 99 out of 100 cases, the Council says, permission would automatically be given by the Registrar, as has been the official manner of handling these matters in the past.

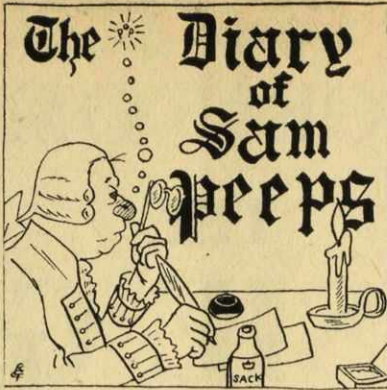
The chances of the plan actually being needed are remote, the Council says, but "prior provision for such matters will often preclude unnecessary confusion if the occasion does arise, as it has at other Canadian Universities this year".

Chief case of confusion arising out of such a matter occurred at McGill University early in November of last year. At that time, Robert Gill, President of the McGill Students Society, issued an order refusing permission to any student group of sponsoring the proposed campus appearance of the Very Rev. Hewlett Johnson, "Red Dean" of Canterbury. Upshot of his admitted "hasty decision" was a mass turnout of students at a council meeting and a reaffirmation of "the fundamental right of students to hear affirmation speakers of all political beliefs", and opposition to "every tenet of Communistic dogma". Although the faculty had not interfered in previous moves to bring the "Red Dean" to McGill, and in fact it was understood that they had approved his scheduled appearance, he did not speak there.

This was confusion as it is referred to in the council's press release. A similar situation could easily have arisen at Dalhousie where there was definitely a duplication of command between students and university, but the new plan seems to preclude such a possibility. The rule is workable, and on the surface is fair, judging by the remarks of the council. But it is dangerous.

As has been said before—specifically at McGill—university students have a "fundamental right—to hear prominent speakers of all political beliefs". No committee, or group, or individual should have the right to decide what information should be available to students, or what speakers they should hear. If students are not capable of judging, by themselves, what is black and what is white, and for that matter what is "red", then the universities are failing in their duty. The "desirability" of a speaker expounding his views to students should not be the big question in these matters. The question should be one of deciding who are "prominent speakers"—and one of excluding penny-ante gabblers of words who have little of importance to pass on to any group. Universities, by their very being, should not only admit students to access to knowledge, but should expose them to as much knowledge, and as many ideas, as are available. The student should decide what is fundamentally good, and if he is sufficiently acquainted with sensible thought of the past and present, he should be capable of doing so.

The Council of Students has stated that "The chances of the plan actually being needed are remote." It will be interesting to see just what happens if a speaker "whose desirability might be doubtful" appears on the Dalhousie scene. A fundamental right of students everywhere will be at stake, and the decision of the committee, when and if there is one, will be reached only with great difficulty.



The Diary of Sam Peeps

Wednesday, Feb. 2—Good God, what a hussy is this Choice Wentron! Did see her prove convincingly to a pair of scoundrels at the Gym Inn the other day that they would enjoy themselves more at a dancing party at a house much frequented by Greeks, than they would at the Allympic Ballroom. She showed them something, I know not what, which changed their minds.

Did hear today what I think is a vile rumor and perhaps, too, a lie. It is said that some great change will occur in the life and habits of Milady Bender, come one year from this September. I know what it is, but am resolved not to put it in my diary today.

A delegation of freshettes from the college on the hill to my office this day, complaining of a man who chases them around wherever they go—so that they have no peace. From their description, I perceive he is "Shadow" Pinely.

Did hear that Nancy MacDoormat has "fallen for" Blockbuster Billsdaughter.

A great love affair has come to an end. Rocket Sheet is no longer in the good graces of Mary the Highlander in Pasha Deadwood's inn.

Thursday, Feb. 3—Great talk today that Pasha Deadwood has met with foul play. He has not been seen in the Inn for some time. In his place there is a tall man with a beautiful new brown suit. Everyone knows that Roy wears a blue suit—or at least he has for the past three years.

Everyone at a certain boarding house is complaining about an incessant babble kept up by one Lewd Cleanser, who knows all about a certain ship in His Majesty's Navy, and has a small knowledge of pin-afores, too, I am told. Some say they will cut the piano there in half and put half in his room and the other half in Winner Stare-At's house.

Great underground campaign going on around the college on the hill. The elections for students are fast approaching, and one who wants to get in on the ground floor as it were, has his henchmen—a scurvy lot—drumming up opinion in his favor. He is also conducting a foul slander campaign against one Shoutwell. His name is Weave Cash.

Sundry Newfoundland savages in the land have protested to the Spectator (early edition) that bull fighting is not the national sport in the Old Colony. One Hide Pebush says that "moose-fighting" is the big thrill over there. I have no patience with these colonial duldards.

Have heard that my wife is to write a column of diary form, like mine, in the female edition of the Spectator (early edition) which is to appear next Tuesday. I am greatly afeared that she will reveal some secrets about me, but there are none bad, so I do not worry too much.

Am resolved to give no more addresses to Jim the Gnat, well known man-about-town. He carries about with him two great books with girls names and addresses and is a good fellow for organizing parties. However, he does go about so much that when I give him addresses I am unable to arrange a rendezvous with any of the ladies when my wife is out of town, for he is with them.

Friday, Feb. 4—Went to a class at the college on the hill yesterday, which is a strange thing, me being so busy. I am resolved to make up with my professors and become a true scholar, if it is not too late.

EVERYTHING FOR THE SPORTSMAN

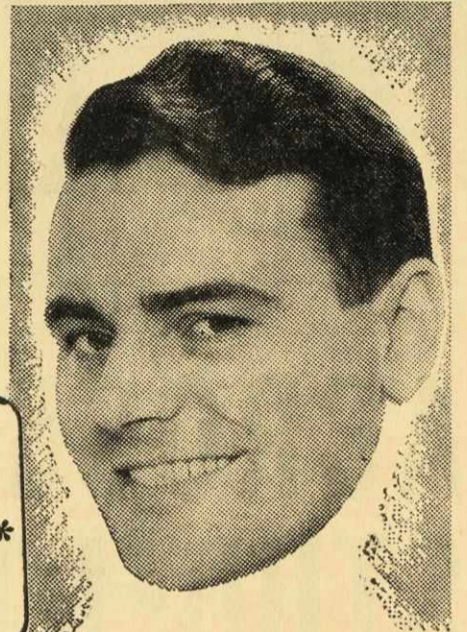
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