

FOOLISH FORMALITIES

At a recent council meeting called to consider a specific business issue the first several hours were spent in inconclusive debate over a bylaw formality. When the original business finally came to the floor it received, in terms of time, something like half of the attention accorded to the formality which preceded it.

The whole affair was unfortunate for several reasons.

In the first place, not all councillors enjoy technicalities; some of them were justifiably bored.

Second, when the real issue came up, so much emotional energy had been dissipated that councillors were too exhausted to do it justice. There was urgent business on the agenda, which needed clear-headed consideration, but heads had become muddled.

Your council couldn't get together with itself sufficiently to pull its head out from under its own bureaucratic blanket.

And unfortunately the above example is not an isolated instance. Your council in fact spends a great deal of time hassling over precedents, interpretations, legalities, and petty niceties, instead of getting on with the really

useful business of specific decisions to meet concrete problems.

Your councillors know that they are wasting your time—and theirs. Some of them admit it and regret it. But apparently they see no alternative.

There is an alternative, however. It is relatively unused because it makes heavy demands both on individual initiative and on individual discipline. But it can work, for folks with some imagination. It is as follows:

- Pare your rule book to a minimum. Have as few rules as possible.
- What rules you must have, use them—don't worship them.

Keep rules as flexible as possible. When they begin to obstruct the genuine business that needs to be accomplished, then change them, and do it quickly, without long faces or long speeches. In an emergency, if your rules are working against you and not for you, ignore them.

If there is one stand which Gateway has consistently taken this year it is for initiative and against formalities; for freedom of movement, and against arbitrary restrictions.

NOTICABLY NO NOTICES

We have just advised you to ignore procedural rules if necessary. Now we will mention some bylaws which have been ignored, but not wisely. These we would like to have seen implemented.

PUBLICATIONS BYLAW

A. THE GATEWAY

4. (a) The Editor-in-Chief shall be appointed by Students' Council not later than February 15 . . .

(b) The Advertising Manager shall be appointed by Students' Council not later than February 15 each year from applications submitted, and shall act as understudy to the former Advertising Manager for the remainder of that academic year . . .

APPENDIX "C"

25. (a) The Secretary-Treasurer shall ensure that extensive advertising shall be carried out for appointments. The advertising shall include an outline of duties involved, honoraria, wage, or commission, this advertising to be run in at least three consecutive issues of the Gateway prior to the last day or receiving applications, and to be supplemented by notices posted by the Signboard Man.

In spite of these instructions, Gateway's Advertising Manager has been neither advertised for, nor appointed. By the time he is appoint-

ed it will be too late to "act as understudy."

The position of Editor has been advertised by only one notice in Gateway, and that without details. Yet your new editor was appointed—finally—last Tuesday.

If any of you feel like protesting the lack of publicity you will be quite justified.

The above is but one example of the inadequate official publicity this year. Another example is notice of nominations for the recent SU elections. The official notice was published at the appropriate time—in just one issue of the Gateway—but it did not include Wauneita Vice-President or Secretary-Treasurer. Yet these positions have been filled.

Again, your protests will be justified.

These oversights are not deliberate. But that fact does not make them any less unfair to you who might potentially fill the positions affected.

Your SU Secretary-Treasurer has been too busy expanding your SUB to take adequate care of his official duties. It might be fair to suggest that his work load has been too heavy for one man.

In any case, it is unfortunate when we get so involved in the big and important projects that we neglect the small and important details entrusted to us.

COUNCIL'S LAST GASPS

Within a couple of weeks your new, next year's council will replace the old.

This is a poor time to chasten council for its inadequacies; it would have been more appropriate at mid-year while there was still a sporting chance for it to make up the lack.

But for the sake of the new incoming council we will make a few suggestions, hoping to influence next year's action.

First, we would like a brief published report by this year's SU president, outlining the things accomplished by council during the year. Such a report is made to the Committee on Student Affairs (COSA). We would like to make it available to our readers, and suggest that this procedure be followed in years to come.

Specifically, we would like to know the intentions of council on the following problems:

OFF CAMPUS HOUSING: a committee was struck and a report presented; what effort will be made to establish the permanent housing committee recommended therein?

NATIVE INDIAN EDUCATION: another committee and another report; what implementing action? The report is excellent, with the exception of the two recommendations,

which are appallingly weak. Will council insist on some forceful recommendations on this important issue, and then proceed to act?

LIQUOR ON CAMPUS: a pub in SUB was proposed at a leadership seminar; we've heard nothing since. We believe that there is, and ought to be, strong support for ridding the campus of its liquor restrictions. Why has this problem not been followed up?

NEW RESIDENCES: we understand that there was a student committee appointed last year to work with the administration while the new residences are being built; why has it been defunct this year?

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS: one more committee: its recommendations—pins. Why be content with awarding "pins" for academic achievement? Why leave the financial end of it entirely to government and administration?

If it really is the business of council to promote high scholarship, why not a substantial, competitive academic scholarship—or several—supplementing Queen Elizabeth?

Better yet, why not bring in a top-notch negro exchange student from South Africa, or Ol' Miss—or from Communist China?

One last question: why are committee reports presented at the LAST regular meeting of the year, instead of at mid-term where there is still time to act on them?



"... AND ACCORDING TO BY-LAW 497, SECTION IV SUBSECTION (iii), PARAGRAPH D, CLAUSE (c) POINT II, WE'RE FORBIDDEN TO FULFILL THE PROVISIONS OF ..."



During the campaign furor last week one of our sweet little chorus lovelies stopped a serious looking young man in the hall, petitioning him to wear a campaign tag.

"No," he replied almost furiously. "NO! I don't wear labels of any kind."

I cheered. Momentarily I was tempted to rip off my own tag and run after him shouting glad hurrahs. But as that would have been ever so undignified I cheered silently and went on with the show.

I've felt good about it ever since.

His sort of bird—the loner sort—is rather rare, for most of us are only too anxious to identify with an organization, an ism, an ingroup of some description. So it gladdens me each time I meet a man or woman who is content to be just himself and nothing more—just a human being.

The trouble with labels is their tendency to promote myopia. If I am a good Conservative it is hard to be at the same time a good Liberal, let alone a good New Democrat, because as everyone knows just one label is white and the others off-color.

If I am a Christian I can hardly be a Hindu or Taoist.

If I am a Canadian I can not with consistency promote the Yankees or the Soviets, unless of course it be for specific Canadian advantage.

And obviously it would be treason of the worst sort for we Edmontonians to admit those barbarous Calgarians to the human race.

The trouble with this sort of nonsense is that it just doesn't arouse my enthusiasm.

I'm not convinced that I ought to do my little bit of promotion for Edmonton, or for Canada, or for Christianity. I'm not entirely sure that "me and mine" are the best, the wisest, the happiest, the most virtuous. So don't count on me to be particularly loyal to the alma mater or the fatherland, to the white race or

the "chosen people."

And as for the political parties, their mutually exclusive claims to divine enlightenment strike me as approximately equally banal.

Leave me room to move. You can call me a humanist, if you must call me something. As soon as you narrow it down more than that I'll feel pinched and start to squirm.

The politician who seems closest to the approach I like is Governor Romney of Michigan. According to reports "he tried not to label himself a Republican. None of his campaign literature identified his party. When pressed he said: 'I'm a citizen who is a Republican, not a Republican who is incidentally a citizen.'"

Two hundred years ago Montesquieu said the same thing even more forcefully:

"Si je savais une chose utile à ma nation qui fût ruineuse à une autre, je ne la proposerais pas à mon prince, parce que je suis homme avant d'être Français ou bien parce que je suis nécessairement homme, et que je ne suis Français que par hasard."

Is it too Cloud 9-ish to believe that our grandchildren will want a world wherein difference does not necessarily mean division: a large, whole world, not dismembered by isms?

le baron