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THE WOODEN HORSE

by FEC

The Nova Scotia that isn't

by Bernard Kumau

We often say that "Nova Scotia's greatest export is brains". This laconic pride in our biological superiority is somewhat justified by the statistics. But it is really nothing to be proud of at all -- indeed, it is a very sad thing when opportunity is so limited that those with guts and imagination (and without vested interests) seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Any prospective graduate of Dalhousie is familiar with this. The first question his friends ask him is not: what are you going to do? but rather: are you going to stay in Halifax? He is considered bold and adventuresome if he leaves the Province, gutless and bland if he stays behind.

The fact is that many of the Nova Scotians who do stay behind possess an inherent opposition to progress. The native Nova Scotian is amazingly devoid of imagination. And his ignorance is blissful.

You are all familiar with this concept of Nova Scotia, which, though exaggerated, and though less true nowadays than it once was, is still at least partially true. And furthermore, it is true of all the Maritime Provinces.

Why are we "backward"? Certainly part of the answer is lack of economic vitality and diversification. Confederation coincided with the passing of the era of the wooden ships; so that just when we should have been on the threshold of expanding commercial opportunity, our economy was dealt a blow from which we have never really recovered. Even in modern times we have never dealt pragmatically with our economic problems -- for example: The collapse of the Cape Breton

coal mining industry could be foreseen even before the Second War; but we merely cried in our beer, blamed it all on Ottawa, and did nothing. This has been the characteristic method of dealing with our economic difficulties -- it has only recently occurred to us we might be able to solve some of our problems ourselves.

Another reason for our "backwardness" is simply a matter of demographics. The natural flow of trade on this continent is north-south; the natural centre of industry is around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. We are outside this flow of commerce. And we are outside the centre of population -- 800,000 people is not a very alluring market for modern industry.

But our backwardness is not entirely a matter of environment. Take, for example, the establishment of Universities in this province. Dalhousie was founded for the simple reason that King's would only take Anglicans and Saint Mary's would only take Catholics (indeed, at one time, Saint Mary's was for Irish Catholics and Saint Francis Xavier for Scotch Catholics). And, of course, we have Acadia for the Baptists.

The result is, with the exception of Dalhousie, a senseless and wasteful proliferation of second-class Universities.

I could go on forever: the bottle exchange in the last Liberal government (which exists in a disguised form in the present Conservative government); the rag-bag of wire copy and advertisements that passes itself off as a newspaper in Halifax; etc.

But Nova Scotians are real friendly people.

The Dalhousie Gazette joins with the student body in expressing our deep sympathy to President Dr. Hicks and his family on the passing of his wife, Dr. Hicks, who officially became President of our school on February 1 has already exhibited the leadership that will make Dalhousie a premier place of learning, and we can only pass on our sympathy and prayers for him at this time of great personal loss. Words are not sufficient to express our feelings, and our sincere grief that we share with him at this time.

Mrs. Hicks was the former Paulene Banks, daughter of the late George F. and Francis Banks of Bridgetown, Nova Scotia. She graduated as a Registered Nurse from the Halifax Infirmary and was married to President Hicks in 1945. She is survived by two sons, Henry and John, two daughters, Catherine and Frances and three sisters.

We were all greatly moved by her display of courage when she left the hospital briefly during her illness to attend the Inauguration of our new President.

It is our hope that our President be granted the strength to sustain this loss and to continue the long association he is certain to have with Dalhousie University.

Letters

More from Mr. Barbour

The Editor,
Dalhousie Gazette.
Dear Sir:-

I think that something needs to be said about Michel Guite's review of DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS: the Neptune Theatre, the players, and your readers deserved better. They deserved to be told something about the play now on view at the Neptune. Something, anything, even what little Mr. Guite could show he understood.

Mr. Guite's reaction, one of uneasiness and lack of understanding, led him to write a "plagerized" review. But the play we are interested in is not the one Krutch saw or read in the 1920's. Guite's reaction is I suspect, akin to that of the woman who laughed at a very solemn moment in the last act the night I was there. It is based on ignorance of what drama is, and, more important, of what O'Neill was trying to do.

The play falls as tragedy, though not as a powerfully moving serious drama, mainly, I believe, because of its language. O'Neill tried to fashion a tragic language out of the talk of poor American farmers in New England, and it couldn't be done. Especially for today's audiences. Some of the speeches bordered on the ludicrous rather than the sublime. Many were moving, however, and it is a credit to the fine acting at the Neptune these days that they did retain the power to evoke emotion that O'Neill tried to give them.

Mr. Guite, in his interest in some other play that Krutch saw, and, I suspect, because he lacks understanding of them, neglected to fill us in on the fine performances of the principals in the play. Gavin Douglas and Ted Follows were struggled successfully against some very difficult speeches for the short time they were on, and engaged belief in the two brothers. George Spurdakos grew into his part quite well. It was a difficult role, and one cannot be sure of the exact degree of his success, but at the end of the play he had captured our belief, I think, and that is to be praised. Dawn Greenhalgh, in a most demanding part, did an exceptional job. So often, especially in the love scenes and

the final long scene of retribution she could, by just the slightest slip of a nuance, have plunged into ridiculousness. She kept herself under firm control, however, and fully convinced in the final scene. As with practically all the other characters, she had some terrible lines to overcome (the rough hewn attempts at imagery of the sublime): she did so, for the most part, magnificently. Bernard Behrens, as the father, had the strongest part and the best lines (suited throughout to his character) but he worked on them to produce a portrait of a man almost inhuman, "stone", tormented by his terrible stark vision of God and man. It was a memorable performance. I don't know if it is to the point, but I have watched Mr. Behrens for about five years across this country, and he has grown greatly until today he is an actor of exceptional emotional power.

One could go on, but this is not the place. The point, I hope, is clear: a play is its production and that production is what it is the critic's duty to review. Mr. Guite failed lamentably to do just that, and no review at all would be a better service to your readers than a non-review like his last. I don't like to be harsh, but my own viewing of the play convinced me of the wrong he had perpetrated, and I felt it had to be answered.

Yours Sincerely,

Douglas Barbour M. A. 2

Dear Mr. Editor:

In these days of technological development, we find that technology has not only excelled in the field of science "and what have you," but also in culture.

For instance, how would you like to room with a guy who has the following names: WAIYAKI GICHINGAE MWAURA MURIRA IKIHIA NA IKIHURWO AGAKIRA WAMBAA?

My problem is that I cannot pronounce these crazy names and I cannot find an acceptable substitute. If you are so smart, why don't you give me some suggestions.

Sincerely,
PADDY

And the Hall Strikes Back

Shirreff Hall,
February 22, 1964.

Dear Sir:

A certain editor of the Dalhousie Gazette has caused many ill feelings among the girls at the Hall. Two weeks ago he aimed a biting article at the femmes here, and last week some of the replies were published. Now I have a point against him which I feel ought to be publically known. Our little hero that calls down girls for being late or for refusing a date at the last minute is a fine example of his own remarks.

Last Thursday afternoon this editor confirmed a date for the Neptune Theatre Saturday evening with one of my friends. He did not tell her what time he would arrive to pick her up, and she naturally assumed that he would phone her (yes, her name is listed correctly in the directory) and tell her the time. Well, our angelic and perfect man did not phone, nor did he even appear for the date! And he feels that he has the right to call down girls (from the Hall in particular) for what they do? Perhaps he had better take a look at himself in the mirror before he judges others. Any form of gentlemanly conduct is sadly lacking.

I would like this letter to be published, for I feel that our sex has been given a very unfair treatment in the article, particularly when the editor does the very same things that he blames on us. He insinuates that "the light of tolerance and sociability" does not burn very brightly at Shirreff Hall, and do you wonder why it should when circumstances such as the above occur?

Disgustedly,
Jeannie Gibson.

(Ed. Note:) While both sexes are guilty Labour and management must get together to solve the problems facing our complex society and ever strive towards harmony and top production at the lowest possible social costs and maximum benefit for the consumer. P.S. The personal attack on this man is not warranted nor does it absolve the hall girls of the just complaints at some of their ways and means.

DGDS - next year

The Editor
Dalhousie Gazette,

I would like to take this opportunity to make known to the students of Dalhousie that I have offered for the position of President of D.G.D.S. I feel that the time has come for the student body to be better informed concerning the affairs of D.G.D.S. and to take a greater part in its activities. Unfortunately during the past year the Society has been fraught with internal disension and has been forced to operate on a greatly reduced scale.

It is my contention that the production of a musical as the single major activity of the Society defeats its main purpose. The purpose of the Society, I feel, is to permit participation in drama and theatre by the student body. At the present time this is not the case for only a small group can actively take part in such a production. It is my feeling that by enlarging the scope of activity to compass at least three major productions each year -- these productions to be broken down into a classical play, a contemporary play and a musical production -- will enable a greater segment of the student body to participate actively in any one of these productions.

It is my contention that greater care should be taken in the preparation of the budgets for the various shows. Professional advice should be sought, particularly in the matters of set design, costuming and lighting. It would not be necessary to go beyond Dalhousie for this advice, since we are fortunate in having on the faculty and among the student body people well qualified to render opinions on such subjects. It is my opinion that three complete productions could be

staged for the amount presently expended on one musical show.

I would suggest that an effort be made to bring D.G.D.S. into closer association with the University's drama program and with local theatre groups. It is most impractical and wasteful to have two independent theatre groups on campus. We would realize from this association the benefits of professional coaching which would assist the Society in its various presentations.

It is time for drama to be brought back to D.G.D.S. and for the Society to be known once again as a dramatic as well as a glee society.

Yours very truly,
George A. Munroe.

Dear Sir:

I would like to inform the students of Dalhousie that I am running for the Vice-Presidential position of D.G.D.S.

In the last few years, the Vice-Presidential position of D.G.D.S. has, for some unknown reason, been vacant. One of the results of this policy is a singularly chaotic situation at the end of each and every year in selecting the person to fill the position of president for the coming year. This course of action ultimately led to an executive structure which collapsed.

It is my aim and that of my running mates to rectify this situation. I feel that by filling the position of Vice-President the Society will benefit. This will take considerable of the burden from the person filling the Presidential office as well as furnishing the Society with a presidential candidate, well versed in the operations involved, for the year to come.

Yours truly,
Glenn Hoover.