

Why Did The Professors Go?

Gazette editorial readers have undoubtedly been following with interest our lead editorials of the past three weeks. Those among them who are unacquainted with the circumstances surrounding university staff disputes may, however, feel that our arguments have been based on rumour and therefore are unfounded.

Accordingly we would like to point to two of the events that have aroused our concern. These particular incidents have been selected because they do not involve personalities, and we may add that this information has been cross-checked through separate inquiries directed to different sources.

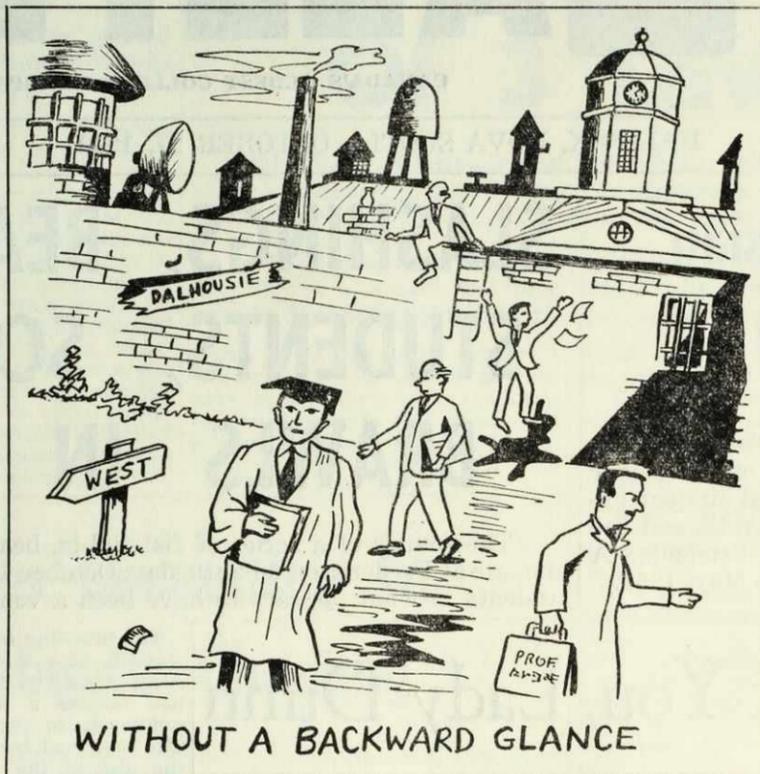
The first of the incidents deals with the revision of faculty organizations on the medical campus in 1954. The problems existing at that time stemmed from what has been described as a "lack of communication" with the administration and from a series of minor complaints and dissatisfactions of various kinds which would be sent to administrative offices only to remain unanswered and apparently unattended to for weeks, and occasionally months, at a time.

Gradually the climate within the faculty grew increasingly intolerable, and finally, in 1954, a series of faculty meetings resulted. A memorandum was at length drawn up embodying recommendations which were eventually incorporated, relatively unchanged, into a sort of constitution. A Faculty Council was created, partly executive and partly a body acting as an advisor to the Dean, responsible to the Faculty Association as a whole. A direct line of communications was set up from staff members to the heads of the departments, through the Dean, and then to the administration.

None of this machinery existed before 1954. Since then, however, it has proved its worth, and the Gazette has been informed that present relations between the administration and the medical faculty can be described as "good."

The second incident concerns the resignations of professors last spring, mainly from the Faculty of Arts and Science. Some of these unquestionably resulted from perfectly normal and usual causes. We have, however, been informed that several of the letters of resignation submitted to the Board of Governors complained bitterly about the policies of the administration. The situation on Studley campus thus appears to be comparable to that on the Forrest campus prior to 1954, and the Faculty Association has set up this year a Faculty Council modeled roughly along the lines of that created by medical professors six years ago.

In short, the relations between professors and administration at Dalhousie during the past decade or more can hardly be described as ideal. In one instance they resulted in a virtual revolution. At present the indications are that conditions are equally intolerable on the Studley campus. Unless these conditions are ameliorated, students can expect to see another flood of professors leave the university at the end of this year.



The Dire Consequences

We would like to point out at this junction a few of the consequences that will result if the present trend continues, indeed, consequences that have already begun to make themselves felt:

1. An immediate decline in the quality and numbers of the staff due directly to the resignations themselves. It may be added that the professors who leave first are those who find it easiest to obtain positions elsewhere, and they are invariably the men who are best known and have the highest qualifications. Moreover, this situation is aggravated by the fact that many of the older departmental heads in the Faculty of Arts and Science are due for retirement within the next three or four years.
2. A long-run continuation of this same decline arising from the fact that good replacements become increasingly more difficult to obtain as knowledge of our degenerating academic atmosphere spreads elsewhere. Like a rolling snowball, the backsliding movement gains momentum as it progresses down hill.
3. A reduction in the number of competent post-graduate students, and eventually also of under-graduate students, as a direct outcome of the increasing inadequacy of the university staff.
4. A noticeable decay in the quality and quantity of Dalhousie-produced periodical articles, theses, general works and other contributions to the progress of learning, as well as wastage of the research facilities available on campus.
5. A decrease in the number and size of money contributions to the university. Sensible benefactors do not support second-rate institutions.
6. A decline (and this should appeal to every student regardless of his interest in the welfare of the university itself) in the value of Dalhousie degrees. Employers in 1965 are not going to distinguish between a degree granted in 1950 and one given in 1960.

The Action Needed

Clearly the time for action has arrived. Managerial policies within Dalhousie have become intolerable (and if our university is to be worthy of the name we must all take corrective steps.

What steps: The Gazette suggests:

1. That the Board of Governors, which is ultimately responsible for the welfare of the university, investigate administrative conditions and take whatever corrective measures it deems necessary. We have reason to believe that a concerned minority within the Board has expressed sympathy with the opinions of professors and students on campus, and we particularly urge this group to continue its pressures.
2. That the newly created Council of the Faculty of Arts and Science, where most of the trouble has been centered, make use of its organization to exert pressure on the administration for the protection of its academic rights. There is no reason why it cannot adopt measures similar to those taken by the Faculty of Medicine in its constitutional revisions of 1954.
3. That professors who have suffered from administrative interference and have hitherto remained silent voice their grievances to their fellow faculty members and discuss the problem openly. Too many people on this campus have been too passive for too long.
4. That the student body likewise resort to open and frequent discussion of what has become a pressing problem. We are particularly concerned here with first and second year students who have little or no information regarding conditions at the university. We would like to see them informed. We would like to see rumor separated from fact, and we would like to see those who are informed of the facts exert what pressures they can as a student public—that is, we would like to see them express their views, write to the Gazette, and urge members of the Students' Council, verbally or in writing, to take up the matter.
5. That the Council of the Students consider the question at length and use the power and prestige arising from its representative charter to the full. Possible it could organize a petition to the Board of Governors. It could hold a Student Forum to bring the matter out into the open. Eventually it might be able to hold a joint session with the Arts and Science Faculty Council. The Students' Council has a duty to care for the welfare of the student body; now is the time for it to fulfill its obligations.

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If this editorial sounds desperate, it is because the situation is desperate; it sounds like a call to arms, it is because we all have something to defend.

Morally and practically there can be no shelving of this problem.

If the university administration is competent, it should have no trouble justifying the actions that led to the resignations of professors last spring.



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LETTERS

...flooding away...

Sir:
I should like to express my gratitude to you for writing that forceful editorial, "Why Did the Professors Go?" It expressed my opinion exactly and, I think, has met with the overwhelming agreement of most of the campus. It was certainly an editorial which needed to be written.
I feel that Dalhousie has already started its slide down the academic continued on page 8

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