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LETTERS

... appreciation ...

Sir:

I would like to express my appreciation to the Gazette staff for choosing me as the Dalhousie Gazette Beauty Queen. I also would like to thank the five boys who made it possible for me to be an entrant in the contest. This competition will I hope be repeated in years hence and thus become an established institution on the campus.

ANNE LEACH, Arts 2.

... flog-a-wog ...

Sir:

One can only feel pity for those white men, who, at last feeling the draught in the nastier parts of the British Empire, leave home and thenceforth reveal their origins with wearying talk about national greatness, greatness of spirit and charismatic leadership. The flog-a-wog theory of administration has had some setbacks lately in Mr. Abbott's homeland, and to this one

The Necessity of Meaningful Action

by RUTH ANN IRVING

Miss Irving graduates this year from Dalhousie with a B.A. Having majored in Psychology, she is well-qualified to discuss the problem of action that is based on principle and that is meaningful at least in the sense that it has definite significance for the doer. She carefully rejects the psychological theories of stimulus response as well as taking issue with various proponents of the idea of the preponderance of the unconscious mind.



The aim of this article is to put forth the notion that the only way to live is as if one's life had meaning. Obvious as this may seem, most of us don't live this way, for life can be meaningful only if one's actions are based upon some principle and are consciously willed.

may attribute his free-wheeling arrogance. So I would like to congratulate you, Sir, for your great tolerance in opening your columns to Mr. Abbott's revealing recital of the conservative virtues which he finds so absent from the Canadian citizenry.

It is curious though that Mr. Abbott should invoke the argument that one has to go to a place in order to criticize it: he himself is happy to praise Classical Greece and Rome, and yet he was never there. He does so of course—and justifiably—on the strength of the literature produced by those civilizations. Similarly I should be content to judge South Africa by its contemporary literature. Nadine Gordimer, Doris Lessing and Dan Jacobson seem to be typical South African novelists — and very good they are (and unanimous in their condemnations of their white compatriots).

Mr. Abbott comes from a country where politics are not dull and criticizes a country where they are: might one suggest that it is not life, but cruelty, for which he is nostalgic?

WILLIAM H. JAMES.

... Gorings arguments still-born ...

Sir:

A front-page article in the Gazette issues of February 16 quotes Rev. Vince Goring as having said that "not too much thinking" is being done by Christians on the question of birth control. It would appear from the obvious lack of understanding of the Roman Catholic position on this important question displayed by Rev. Goring further on in the article, that he has unwittingly placed himself in the ranks of this group of unthinking Christians that he condemns.

In attempting to expound the Catholic position on birth control, Rev. Goring apparently avoided any consideration of an unchanging natural law, manifesting the will of an omniscient and omnipotent Providence, to which the sincere Christian must make himself responsible.

For a Catholic, this natural law dictates that the parts of any organism are ordered, each individual part having an end in itself, and collectively all parts concurring to produce an overall result. This end is determined by Providence, while the ordering of the parts in such a manner is a manifestation of the intelligence of the Creator.

When this essential principle is applied to the organs of reproduction, the primary purpose of the sex act is clearly apparent from the very nature of the organs themselves. Therefore, to interpose a device for the purpose of preventing conception is an attempt to frustrate the primary end of intercourse. The pleasure that results from the sex act is clearly a secondary result and cannot within the framework of the natural be enjoyed to the exclusion of the primary end.

Therefore, for a Christian to take it upon himself to frustrate artificially the primary purpose of intercourse is a disobedience of the nature law and consequently of the law of the Creator. Such a move continued on page 8

In saying this I am making the assumption that the value of one's life depends solely upon one's actions. If we do not consciously will what we do, that is, if life is meaningless, the logical solution in a world of anxiety is suicide. If we do not choose suicide, we can either bumble along and be an insult to the human race, or choose to live consciously and develop ourselves to the fullest extent.

The overwhelming fact of human existence is that we must act. We cannot avoid action by refusing to become involved, for by such an action we are influencing people and events (my definition of action) as surely as if we were acting in the more conventional sense of the word. Within this definition I therefore hold that action is inescapable.

I realize that in taking the position that our actions unavoidable and important I am differing with such worthies as Tolstoy and Eliot, nevertheless this is how I see the problem.

Moreover, I believe that we are morally responsible for our actions. Psychologists will differ with me here on the grounds that, because of the unconscious mind, we do not control what we do and therefore cannot be held responsible for it. However, they will admit that we act as if we could control our actions (self-delusion), and that is sufficient for my purposes here.

This sense of responsibility can be quite shattering, especially if we go so far as to consider ourselves responsible for the chain reaction of action that our own action sets off and over which we have no control.

The existentialist says that we cannot decide how to act on the basis of what we know for the simple reason that we cannot know. We cannot decide beforehand how we will act; the decision is in the action. Yet we must act, so we make the "existential leap," that is, we choose. But we choose, not in the light of our knowledge, but of our ignorance.

This position is not entirely incompatible with the one I am putting forward, for I think it is infinitely better to clarify the issues involved and then "leap," knowing to some degree the course of the action to which you are "leaping," than it is to muddle through life in a fog.

My anathema is the other sort, the people who mumble along in their own cozy puddle of muddle, twaddle and quackery. Their usual response to an unpleasant fact is to ignore it or to lose it in a mass of platitudes. In fact they rarely make choices, for their decisions are forced on them by circumstances. They are not living like people, they might as well be vegetables.

But surely this is not the way to live! The best way to live is as if your actions were significant; after all they are the external "you." If one does not think of the principles on which an action is based, that action simplifies nothing. One's whole life can come to have no meaning.

If life is meaningless, why put up with it? The logical solution to a meaningless life is suicide. Since most of us balk at suicide, we must therefore contrive to act. We must act as if our acts were meaningful, even if we must say, as the existentialist (continued on page eight)

A Dearth of Leaders

Student elections are scheduled for next Tuesday.

But where are the leaders?

While there seems to have been little trouble in finding candidates for subordinate posts on the Students' Council and for the executive positions in other campus organizations, it had become apparent by the time the Gazette went to press late Sunday that there is a dearth of students interested in the senior offices of Council President and Vice-President.

This editor has heard personally of two individuals (doubtless there were others), both of them experienced in campus affairs, who contemplated running for President, but after some consideration decided not to grasp the opportunity. Still another actually accepted a candidature only to withdraw from the contest two days later.

Moreover two other active and competent campus figures who had agreed to act as running-mates with Presidential candidates for the Vice-Presidency retired after they had given the matter a second thought.

The constitution of the Council provides that neither the President nor the Vice-President can be selected by acclamation, and it is for this reason only that the Gazette is confident that competitors will be found, even if they have to be shamed, shoved, pressured, lobbied and browbeaten into the running.

This is hardly the best way, however, to fill a responsible position of leadership. Indeed it seems shocking that among 2,050 intelligent individuals there are not at least a few who would jump at the opportunity to try their mettle and broaden their administrative experience. Neither of the posts are without their advantages, and no former President or Vice-President will deny that he has gained much from his tenure of office. A certain amount of work is, of course, involved, but it is obviously not overwhelming, and the rewards far outweigh the inconvenience and the loss of time.

The argument presented by many declining nominees to the effect that they feel themselves insufficiently versed in the details of campus life does not carry much weight. Any student who has been at Dalhousie for three years or more will have some knowledge of its student organizations, and the outgoing President can easily supply a President-elect with all the technical information required.

In point of fact, the requisite qualifications include only a small degree of administrative ability, a realization of the values of the type of experience offered by this kind of work and a little self-confidence.

Since only a very few individuals have offered their services, we must conclude that these characteristics are sadly lacking in Dal-

housie's student body.

It seems a pity that among a group containing, theoretically at least, the future leaders of this country, there is no one who can lead.

* * * *

Congratulations, Mr. Rowe

The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Liquor represent one of the most important reports ever tabled in the Nova Scotia Legislature. Should the government adopt all the proposals, they will have established a landmark in Nova Scotian history.

The proposed changes are of great importance for many reasons. First, because of the boost they would give to the tourist trade. For many years Nova Scotia has appealed to Upper Canadians and Americans as a scenic province. Many of them each year travel our highways admiring its natural beauty and the rustic appearance of its countryside. Yet many more have stayed home, or have gone elsewhere, because we have nothing besides the beauties of nature to offer. There are not nightclubs and no cocktail lounges in which to spend a quiet evening. There is, in short, no night-time entertainment available for Nova Scotia's guests.

Legislation along the lines suggested by the Royal Commission would eliminate this problem. It would give the weary traveller places in which he could rest in comfort, sip his favourite drink, and enjoy the benefits of professional entertainment, the very elements, as many hotel owners have pointed out, that are required if we are to remove the last obstacle in the way of making Nova Scotia a truly thriving tourist area.

The opening of bars and nightclubs would, moreover, be welcomed by native Nova Scotians since it would provide them with places to go for an evening's relaxation and entertainment, while at the same time colouring cities like Halifax with a touch of the night-life that has made other North American centers so popular.

But perhaps the most important reason why the Commission's recommendations should be adopted is that most people are in favour of them. For years certain elements of the province have been crying out against the evils of alcohol, and alcohol, we agree, does occasionally cause social problems. How harmful to society it really is we are not prepared to judge, but we do feel that the way in which it is used should be a matter of personal choice. It should not be denied the public solely because a small minority feel it is their duty to protect the majority.

The automobile, after all, is in many respects a social menace, yet we do not find anyone advocating its abolition simply because the privilege of driving is occasionally abused.