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Cops shop for new status

by George W. Mantor

An unidentified university administrator has gone contrary to the recommendation of the GFC and filed an application to regain special constable status for campus security personnel.

As a result a special meeting of GFC has been called for Monday, to debate whether or not it is advisable for Campus Security Services to regain special constable status.

An application to obtain this status was submitted to the Attorney General after the new Police Act was passed July 1, 1971. The act suspended the special constable authority of the University police. The application for renewal was brought to the attention of David McMurray, Grad Student Rep on GFC. In a letter to GFC dated June 13, 1972, McMurray urged that the university withdraw their application for constable status until such time as the issue could be debated in GFC. He cited a recommendation made as the result of the Ad Hoc Committee Report on Campus Security Services of May 10, 1971. The Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation was that:

"the Campus Security Services should be retained essentially in its present form, subject to the control of and direction by representatives of the University Community with regard to its policy."

The motion implied (as it was prior to the new police act) that the special constable status be retained.

After much discussion the council finally amended and then approved the motion, deleting the phrase "retained essentially in its present form."

So as to read:

"the Campus Security Services should be maintained subject to the control of and direction by representatives of the University Community with regard to its policy."

Mc Murray pointed out that the application for status renewal "violates at least the spirit (and quite possibly the letter) of a recommendation passed by council, and that it seeks to encroach upon the function of a duly constituted GFC Committee."

Special constable status would give officers the power to undertake investigations on the campus in cases where a criminal charge was involved. They would also have the power to detain a suspect on campus until City Police arrive.

Without this status, security personnel have only the power to make a citizen's arrest and any evidence has to be turned over to City Police who are then responsible for campus law enforcement.

C.A. Breakey, Director of the Campus Security Force stated in a brief that if special constable status is not regained by the force, "the skills at present will deteriorate and disappear; and it is extremely doubtful that another opportunity to organize and train such a force will present itself."

In the average month the force investigates 14 traffic accidents, issues 3,000 parking tickets, tows away 40 of a list of 400 repented violators placed on a tow away list, finds 300 cases of insecure buildings, and administers first aid to 10 people, three of whom are taken to hospital.

All members of the force are qualified in St. John Ambulance Society First Aid, and are able to operate the resuscitator and the Scott Air Pack, provide bandages, splinter and bleeding control, and administer first and last rites in the variety of religious encountered in the university community.

The force operates an information and lost and found center, attempts to provide traffic and parking supervises and provides a basic security service for campus property and buildings.

G.H.I. Fridman, Dean of Law, in a correspondence to the Campus Security Services Policy Committee advised against special constable status.



He contends that: "the criminal code contains several provisions which detail the extent to which someone not a peace officer can use force, make arrests, lay

information, and so forth."

G.S.A. submitted a document to Max Wyman, chairman of the General Faculties Council stating that "we have been unable to

discover a single argument which convinces us that special constable status would be necessary, or even useful to the staff in question with regard to rendering the services outlined."

"don't ban censorship"

"The public has the right to protection from those who exploit freedom." This was the opinion of well over half of the dozen briefs presented yesterday at the public hearings on censorship. Most of the briefs read to the provincial government's committee on censorship opposed the idea of replacing film censorship with a classification system.

In fact several submissions argued that to slow "moral pollution", the regulations ought to be more stringent and more rigorously enforced than they are now.

Strongest support for liberalizing the system came from the censorship committee of the Calgary Film Board, represented by R.B. Zelickson a distributor for Walt Disney and Twentieth Century Fox. Zelickson called for classification of films without cutting and lauded the position of Ray McDonald, the director of film classification in B.C. who has refused to accept the title of censor or to act as "arbiter of public morals".

"Alberta has the distinction of being the only place in the world to ban a Walt Disney film for violence," Zelickson commented. He recommended more liberal guidelines for film classification and for the appointment of "people who have insight and knowledge into public taste" to the censorship board.

A stop to banning and cutting of films was also advocated by D.C. McDonald of the Liberal Party of Alberta. "The citizen has the right to make his own mistakes," Mr. McDonald said. Adult Albertans should be able to see films of their choice, subject only to the laws governing obscenity, he argued.

J.J. Vein, presenting his brief as a private citizen put it, censorship is "a direct infringement on the right of the individual to decide for himself." He called for a rating board to review books, magazines, films and stage shows and argued that if the

government is willing to censor movies which may encourage violence, it will have to censor the news, too.

Roxy Travers, a representative of the National Film Theatre and the only "young person" to speak at the hearings, suggested that even if censorship is retained for commercial theatres, a special exemption from both censorship and ratings be arranged for film study groups like the National Film Theatre and the Edmonton Film Society. "We are not saying people shouldn't see films cut; we are not playing God, but we are intelligent enough to choose what we want to see," Travers said. She explained that N.F.T. offerings are chosen by the members and are described in program notes before the showings so that people can decide whether or not they wish to view a particular film.

In response to a question, Travers recommended that the censorship board should include people with a knowledge of film history. In Edmonton, you'd find "a hard core of about 560 qualified people and in Calgary you'd be confronted by 1200," Travers estimated.

Calgary M.L.A. and censorship committee member Art Dickson charged that members of film study groups are not representative of the general public but are "a pressure group".

"We're not the general public. I thought that was the whole point of my brief," Travers retorted.

"Now you're admitting what I wanted to get you to admit in the first place," Dickson returned, referring to an earlier discussion about the fact that the exemption from the censor board would apply only to members of the film study groups.

"You misinterpreted the phrase 'selective membership'," Travers replied. "You wanted me to say that I was elitist and I didn't want to call myself that. I don't like the word."

Other briefs generated less controversy.

Those in favour of retaining censorship argued that pornographic and violent films encourage depravity and crime by identifying them as reality. G.M. Hutchinson argued that young people in particular will be affected adversely by seeing "sex as an exploitive sport, the commonplace use of guns and violence as a way of settling disputes." She said that abolishing censorship would be "an abdication of responsibility" and would allow "entrepreneurs to do the choosing for us." "We are already being flooded with the doctrines of the Almighty Dollar society," she warned. She predicted that if the censorship board was weakened, "the market would be flooded with censored and cut films."

Other speakers wondered "why when so much has been spent on medical research, so little attention is given to the mental and moral health of normal life," and warned against "the degrading material which a few conspiring individuals are trying to foist off on us as public entertainment."

Several speakers recommended that the censorship board be made more representative. "Censorship is really a moral question and not a matter of art," in the opinion of Roy A. Prete. Censorship should be a matter of community standards which are different from those of people "who have gone through the mill of being influenced." As Miss Edna Hawken of Robertson Wesley United Church put it, "it would be a sad world if we had to depend on degree people to run it."

A Canada-wide censorship board and more government support to Canadian films were also widely recommended.

The legislative committee, under the chairmanship of Ernie Jamison, M.L.A. for St. Albert, will hear submissions in Calgary tomorrow.

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