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# The Gold "D" Problem

• IT LITTLE MATTERS whether a new student, when first arriving at Dalhousie, bring along with him preconceived ideas of university life. He soon discards them. For once he has spent a year here, very probably distinguishing himself among his fellows in no particular way, this conviction alone resigns paramount in his mind: that to boast of any stature as a Dalhousian, at least once before he graduates he must win the coveted gold 'D'. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, he becomes imbued with the popular creed that extra-curricular activities consist in the main of but various ways and means of securing this award, that the award itself, if it does not quite justify the existence of these activities, is then certainly responsible for their success, and even that the value of each activity to the participator may be clearly ascertained by the number of points with which it credits him. The environment of the University seems literally to reek with the watch-word: "Here the gold 'D' is the thing; get one and never mind what for."

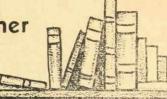
Having employed the best part of his first year to comprehend this situation, the new student usually undertakes no advances along the road to honour until promoted to the rank of sophomore. Then he looks the field over and carefully determines what branch of campus endeavour he can infilterate himself into easily. Should he be athletically inclined, he places his trust in sport—for there the glory lies thickest—and begins turning up hopefully at practices. For those with no special ability, either for the playing field, the stage, or the hustings, there remain always the Gazette and the managerial posts in the

No matter where he goes he finds himself faced with the same problem, in order to obtain sufficient points for a gold 'D' he must share his work as little as possible with others. While this practice is satisfactorily in athletics, where only the best men are accepted, it has decidedly unpopular repercussions in the other organizations. There the monopoly of a few obstructs the ambition and agressiveness of many, and the result is not conducive to campus harmony. Yet the situation is difficult to amend, for a wider distribution of the work on the present point system merely makes it impossible for anyone to earn a 'D'. Under such circumstances nobody would work. Increasing the number of points required would cause a tightening of the monopoly; decreasing them in inflation of awards.

But even in athletics the 'D' system has its altercations. The constitutional guarantee can induce a player to attend practices and games but has little effect in inspiring him with the will to win. This factor explains much of the lack of spirit prevalent among varsity teams in recent years. Also once a player receives his 'D', he has lost most of the incentive to continue in the sport.

Despite all that can be said against the gold 'D', that it brings out the baser instincts in the student body, that it places campus activities in the hands of a few,-to the exclusion of many, and that it adulterates sport with a low and coarse selfishness, it is likely the best system devisable. For it succeeds in putting teams on the field, shows on the stage, debaters on the platform and a paper on the press. What more potent marshall of student energy is available?

# The Felling of "Trees" by Jan Struther



IN the late summer of 1944. when the whole world waited breathlessly on the verge of the Allied push into France, Jan Struther published a little poem in the Saturday Review of Literature. Although short, and apparently quite harmless, it was nevertheless destined to become one many parodies on Joyce Kilmer's little poem, "Trees". A rather ther doubtful-screen successes: whimsical little quatrain, it ran as

I'll never see, where'er I roam, A tree as lovely as a pome. A tree is just a thing that growed, But only Man can make an ode.

Two weeks later, in September, there appeared the first warning of what eventually developed into a virtual flood of comment and criticism. It was the first of a total of 23 quatrains which the Review published during the course of the next 12 issues. (Undoubtedly there were many more not published. Editors sometimes exercise the prerogative of rejecting an occasional manuscript.):

I'll bet you, kid, you never knowed That God was first to make an ode. In seven days He wrote a pome-A global version of Home Sweet Home.

### A Few Weeks Later

The author, a Fred Snyder of Albany, N. Y., was however, apparently not the only one-and certainly not the least-to have read Jan Struther's little poem. A week later, the Review published no less than six similar quatrains, the most pertinent of which

came from Betty Smith, author of "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn": I'd rather say I hated fleas Than be like youse what runs down

Where'd I be, I'd like to know, If o'er in Brooklyn no tree growed?

The second came from James of the most provocative of all the Hilton, author of "Good-bye Mr. Chips", and other notable-if ra-

> A world of trees and poems only Ain't worth a Bean when you feel

Especially if the Bean you mean Is some partickler Human Bean.

The final word of the week, however, was delivered by Margaret Mosher of Jamaica, N. Y. It was entitled " To Jan Struther";

I don't believe you did so well By sending lovely trees to hell. The best of all—as I can see— Is: Just a pome about a tree.

#### Many Weeks Later

Throughout September and October, and late into November the controversy raged. Late that fall the Review published the following quatrain from the famous dogpoet "Rover", whose address, I'm sorry to say, was not given:

> I think that I Shall never see A poem as useful As a tree.

In time, of course, the issue became personal - most issues do. From Jan Struther's single parody on "Trees", to parodies on parodies on "Trees", it developed into parodies on those who write parodies on "Trees". (All of which is

rather involved, but then so was the issue by this time.) From Julia Green in Los Angeles, came this rather philosophical poem, arguing sweet reasonableness: Why should a pome and tree pos-

The self-same kind of loveliness? Dear chattering comrades pray have done

With this useless comparison. Poor Kilmer little dreamed his

Would start a hot discussion curse! I swear the pen's a vicious tool.

Another rhyming "fool".

The editors were, by this time, quite evidently beginning to show signs of boredom. Each week's list of parodies was headed by the editor's note, "Trees Again", "More Trees", and sometimes-for variation - "Trees Again and More Trees". Seizing what appeared to them the final word on the matter, early in November, they published the following from Richard Armour in Washington:

Joyce Kilmer's lines may not be

But here and now I rise to state: I'd rather far have written "Trees" Than all its thousand parodies!

That, apparently, closed the issue. A week later still another quatrain slipped in, but it was insignificant. As for Miss Struther she remained altogether aloof during the course of twelve fervent weeks. Whether she felt she had done enough damage, whether she felt it worthwhile answering, whether or not she had even been aware of the controversy raging about her, we'll never know. Will we?

## LETTERS to The Editor

#### CANADA SOWS SEEDS OF WORLD WAR III

• IS THE POSITION of Canada as a power seriously endangered by her lack of foresight? Are we as citizens going to stand back and watch the degradation of Canada as a democracy? If not, we must take a strong stand against Japanese-Canadian deportation.

Despite the fact that 1700 Canadian citizens of Japanese racial origin did not commit one act of sabotage all through the war; despite the fact that they were interned in re-location camps and suffered the difficulties of readjustment, the Canadian government is indiscriminately shipping back both nationals and citizens immediately.

This action is based solely in the hearts of a few Canadians, due to propaganda designed to cause racial prejudice. Canadians have been wrongly led to believe that atrocities mirror the character of all Japanese; yet they have the lowest criminal record of any racial group, and yet they alone are being persecuted.

We certainly did not fight a ghastly war against a nation which oppressed and deported a minority group only to have our own country do the same thing. The Government's stand in this matter violates all the laws of democracy, Christianity, and decency. It is our own responsibility to think seriously about these things and decide what stand we want the Government to take, so that our own country will not be guilty of sowing the seeds of a third world

LOIS RATEE,

Secretary, Dalhousie Division Students' Christian Movement.

#### CANADIAN CAMPUS

Canadian Campus needs no introduction from us this week. In face of overwhelming evidence, who are we to tell you that INTERCOL-LEGIATE SPORT IS BACK! Dalhousie University

Halifax, N. S .- Of three Dalhousie teams entered in Maritime English rugby-football competition, only one, the senior team in the city league, has so far met with any degree of success. Both Dalhousie's senior team in the intercollegiate league, and intermediate team in the city league, fell to the cutting blows of Acadia's

However, Dalhousie's tennis team, organized last week, swamped Mount Allison in its initial engagement. With one team entered in the city soccer league, Dalhousie has further plans under way to enter teams in Maritime intercollegiate boxing, badminton, hockey, basketball and swimming competi-

### Mount Allison University

Sackville, N. B .- The intercollegiate football series is well under way and now that Mount Allison is no longer in competition for the title, maybe our views might be interesting to outsiders.

The University of New Brunswick, as the New Brunswick intercollegiate champs, now have to meet St. Dunstans in a home and home series. The Hillmen should win as St. Dunstans has not the team she had.

In the Nova Scotia loop it is hard to predict who will come out on top. St. Francis Xavier were upset by Acadia's Axemen and enter the second game with a one point deficit. With all due regard to the Axemen, we predict St. Francis Xavier will prove to be the winners. Therefore, as we see it, the University of New Brunswick and St. Francis Xavier will be the semi-finalists.

In the meantime we sit back, as far as intercollegiate sports are concerned, waiting for hockey and basketball to begin.



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