

# INITIATION TO DALHOUSIE

In the midst of the 1953 initiation programme, a terse announcement was made by the president of the Council of Students for 1953-54, Gordon MacConnell, which abruptly put an end to the wearing of beanies, placards, and hazing. In reality, initiation, from that day on ceased at Dalhousie. With the opening of the 1954 term, the administration continued to hold its ban on Dalhousie initiation, saying that an "Introductory Programme" for freshmen students was sufficient. The results of such an "in-

roduction to Dalhousie" can easily be seen by any active and interested Dalhousian.

There is no other organization on the Dalhousie campus better qualified to survey the student body and the effects of this "Introductory Programme" than the Dalhousie Gazette. Its representatives, which incidentally are also most active in other organizations, reach into many fields. From the sport level to the social level; the organization level to the administrative level; the Dalhousie Gazette, as the

official publication of the student body, has quite naturally the greatest information on the Dalhousie students' campus life. It is with this in mind, that the Gazette presents a two page survey of the initiation situation at Dalhousie.

The views expressed on these "Initiation Pages" are the views of the Dalhousie Gazette alone. We have spoken freely, not trying to present the views of any particular group or class, but our judgment of the issue is based on the Gazette experiences with Dalhousie campus life during the last few years.



## Views on Initiation Program

### Initiation A Touchy Item

For at least the last two years, the matter of Initiation has been a touchy subject on the Dalhousie campus. University officials, some of them at least, have objected to the form initiation took at this institution. Their objections have grown steadily until the present situation was reached: for all intents and purposes, initiation has been banned at Dalhousie University. It may well be that there were isolated instances which warranted the objection of university officials. It could be that those instances would reflect a bad light on Dalhousie. It is also possible that some irreparable harm was caused to some over-sensitive freshman or freshette, but we doubt it.

The problem was taken to Dr. Kerr, but the president remained steadfast in his objections to an initiation program along the lines that initiation took here. It is also understood that the subject of initiation was brought before the Senate, but so far no positive suggestions as to the form initiation should take have been forthcoming from that quarter.

As a result, the Gazette has undertaken to publish what it considers would be an initiation program agreeable to all new students and acceptable to the university. You may or may not agree to what has been suggested; there could well be improvements made in the list of proposals as set forward by the Gazette, but from the newspaper's point of view the suggestions are good ones.

#### THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE MAKES THE FOLLOWING INITIATION PROPOSALS:

1. Initiation should be reinstated at Dalhousie University immediately.
2. The elements of hazing, in the form of oil, molasses and flour, are to be excluded from the Initiation program.
3. The Initiation program should be compulsory to all first year undergraduates, unless the incoming student is physically or mentally unable to participate in the Initiation program. Students who do not wish to participate in the Initiation program should not be bullied into doing so.
4. The Sophomore class should have the duty of seeing the Initiated students obey the Initiation rules and carry out all forms of penalty for wayward freshmen.
5. The Council of Students should form an Initiation Committee, whose duties will be to supervise and advise the Sophomore Initiators. This council committee will see that Initiation is carried out within the set of prescribed rules and will protect the interests of the Freshmen class and Dalhousie University.

#### GYMNASIUM MAIN CENTRE

Realizing the obvious fact that the gymnasium is the most popular spot on the Dalhousie campus, the Gazette proposes that the gymnasium be the main centre of the Initiation program. From the gymnasium, social, introductory, and entertainment functions will emanate. Other centres of campus life, such as the "Men's Residence," and Shirreff Hall will also be the scenes of several Initiation aspects.

#### ADVOCATES DANCES

The Gazette advocates three dances; the Initiation Dance, where skits, entertainment, and modern dancing will be featured; a special square dancing evening, featuring all square dancing; and the big Freshie-Soph dance, culminating the Initiation program.

#### FRESHMEN SHOW

Other forms of entertainment are to include a giant freshmen show, to be held on an afternoon. At this, every Freshman is expected to participate. Such a show needs plenty of planning in order to be a success, and so the Gazette offers the following tips: Impromptu dances, speeches, skits, male fashion show, kicking female chorus line, quartettes, recitations, and individual vocalizing.

#### SMOKER AND SERENADE

A smoker for male students and a hen party for all female students are two other fea-

tures of the social aspect of the Gazette's proposed program. Following these events, a serenade by all freshettes is to occur at Shirreff Hall, the evening ending with modern dancing.

#### SCAVENGER HUNT AND SING SONG

The Gazette also feels that a well organized Scavenger Hunt, an equally well organized sing-songs are a vital part of any Initiation program.

#### ORGANIZATION BOOTHS

One of the biggest features of the Gazette's proposed program, is the setting up of booths in the gymnasium. Every organization, sanctioned by the Council of Students is to be represented in a booth. The Freshmen would be compelled to walk past these booths, receiving information from them and in turn being recruited by the various organizations. The Gazette feels that the old system of having the various students executives address the assembled Freshmen class is not only boring, but also valueless. Since it is essential that all student organizations carry several freshmen in their groups, it is of the utmost importance that every student have the opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with all student groups. The booths could be in operation while other Initiation aspects were being performed.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to such an "indoctrinating program," every Freshman would be required to fill out an extensive form, listing the students' interests, and giving a complete account of his high school life as regards extra-curricular functions. The administering of such a questionnaire would presumably occur during Registration days. During the Initiation Week, every Freshman would wear an identification card, stating his main interests, and also showing other essential information.

#### UNIVERSITY SHOW INTEREST

The Gazette feels that the University should show a more positive interest in the Freshmen class and should have a representative address the new students early in the week. The University should also tender a buffet supper.

#### BEANIES AND PLACARDS

Finally, the Gazette urges the lifting of the ban on the wearing of beanies and placards. These are considered essential in the forming of University spirit and student acquaintanceship. The placards are to contain some remarks, but vulgarity is definitely not allowed.

The Gazette honestly believes that such a program would not only create friendship and spirit, but would also make the Freshmen class more aware of student groups and campus life.

### Initiation What is It?

Mention the word "initiation" to any dozen people and you will probably invoke a dozen different ideas. Most of them will centre around the idea of one group of people doing something to annoy and make life miserable for another group. Be that as it may, the dictionary defines initiation as the "ceremonious introduction into some sect, society or association." Three ideas in this are worthy of note. (1) An initiation should be a ceremony. "Ceremony" implies the idea of something formal, impressive and dignified, and, while no one suggested that college initiations should be impressive and dignified, nevertheless the fact remains they should consist of a more or less laid down and formalized program. (2) Initiations have their chief value in introducing people to one another, a very important fact in any large and scattered group. (3) College students form a distant sect or association. Interested, as they are all presumed to be, in obtaining as much of an education as they can, they at least have a common goal which unifies them and makes them a distinct segment of society.

Thus the word "initiation" does not of itself carry any idea of "one group making life miserable for another," and if it does invoke this idea, the solution is not to be found in abolishing initiations but in making them conform to what they are intended to be.