

# Burning Issues

## Student Government History # 31

Once Dalhousie built a temporary gymnasium (where the Arts Annex is now) there was tension over its use for dances and other social events. In 1923-24 these tensions were increased as demand for the facility grew and some dances were not run as well as possible. The Senate proposed a new set of dance regulations, and the Students' Council responded with its own proposal.

On November 8, 1923 the Council spent an entire evening discussing matters with the Senate Committee on Dancing, with no conclusive result. A week later the Council continued with the topic, and finally it accepted the bulk of Senate's second proposal, which was itself based upon the student proposal. There was one area of disagreement remaining. Senate wished all Dalhousie-wide dances to be held in the gym, and nowhere else. The Council would not agree to this. It approved a Law dance at this point in the negotiations, warning that the Senate might veto the idea.

On another front work was continuing on the negotiations with King's College, and the Council felt that \$400.00 a year would be fair payment by King's for the right to participate in the non-athletic activities.

During the dancing negotiations the university closed the gym to all dances. A GAZETTE editorial commented that the Senate had shown willingness to meet the students half-way. Then, in January, Len Fraser announced Council's decision to have a referendum on the question whether Dalhousie dances should be allowed off-campus locations, or only in the temporary gymnasium. The referendum was to be on January 23, and Council prohibited campaigning, to permit a fair assessment of the students' opinion.

The only activity was that the President of Council, Mr. Fraser, would meet with the students in each faculty to discuss the issues impartially. At the Law, Medicine and Dentistry meeting it was pointed out that caterers were unable to keep food hot in the gym, and so

another location might well be preferable for some dances. The Board of Governors agreed immediately to install an electric stove in the gym.

GAZETTE, on voting day, printed a lead editorial calling for a vote favouring the gym rule. It relied mainly on the university's good faith in providing the gym as a Dalhousie social centre, and on the fact that if unworkable the rule could be changed. In the referendum the professional students voted by a large margin against the rule. The Arts and Science students were about two thirds in favour, but they had a lower total turnout. The overall result was that by a narrow margin the vote went against the rule. GAZETTE mourned the "low" turnout of about sixty percent. Soon after the vote Senate approved the rules - without the gym rule.

In February, 1924, another burning issue took up much of the Council's attention. It was started when Carl Bethune, President of the Dalhousie Glee and Dramatics Society, D.G.D.S., wrote a letter to the GAZETTE. He denounced the Dalhousie "hoodlums" who, on the opening night of the latest D.G.D.S. production, threw beans and flour from the balcony onto the audience. He stated that the manager of the Majestic Theatre had decided that Dalhousie students could no longer use it, and that \$150.00 had been withheld from receipts to pay for the students' damage. His real aim appeared in the last paragraphs: "...surely the Council of Students, after seeing this scene enacted for two successive years, is not going to allow the occasion to pass unnoticed."

At a February 16 meeting, after allotting \$465 for D.G.D.S., the Council authorized its President to reply to Mr. Bethune. The reply, also printed on the GAZETTE front page, described the Bethune letter as "ill-advised". It reviewed the events, and made it clear that, although not condoning what happened, the Council could not act unless a specific charge was laid before it, since the incident did not take place on the university premises, and had not been sanctioned

by Council. The general jurisdiction over all Dalhousie students was exercised only through charges and their investigation.

The reply continued by stating Council's resentment of the fact that Mr. Bethune made general charges that could apply to most Dalhousie students, rather than go after the culprits in the normal manner. It was explained that the \$150.00 was being held subject to settlement, that the Council had no legal responsibility to pay for the damages, that the withholding had been protested and that an appraiser set damage to the Majestic at \$40.00. President Leonard Fraser, a Law student, made much of the fact that no one had proved that Dalhousie students did the damage, but said that a payment might be made as a "peace offering".

The theatre damage controversy continued through February, into March. Next week the rest of the charges, and the final resolution of the issues, will be covered.

Mention should be made this week of the fact that A.B. Morton who was a Council member during the period we are discussing, and who was President in 1925-26, has been kind enough to provide GAZETTE with further details about events of these years, and the subsequent careers of many students who graduated during the 1920's. Six of those students went on to become presidents of other universities. These included N.A.M. MacKenzie, a two-time President of the Students' Council who eventually headed the University of New Brunswick and then the University of British Columbia. Sydney Smith was President at Manitoba and Toronto before becoming Secretary of State for External Affairs. Max McOldrum went to Carleton after World War II and R. Gushie went to Memorial.

Further items provided by Mr. Morton will be included in future issues of Student Government History.

## Book Fees Boosted by Yankee Bums

There is usually no justification for Canadians paying 8 to 20 per cent more for books than people in the U.S. says George Parry, owner-operator of the Laughing Rooster Bookstore in Calgary. Parry puts the situation down to the "colonial attitude" American business has toward Canada.

"What often happens," he says, "is book prices sent from American publishing houses to their Canadian branch plants are immediately jacked up at the factory."

The case is the same for textbooks except they are usually marked up in Canada and the new price pencilled in. As an example Parry cites

the Whole Earth Catalogue which has a \$5 tag printed on the cover but sells for \$6.50 in Canada, even two years after it was declared duty-free by an Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE) customs appeal.

He states that book distributors justify the mark-up by

claiming tariffs and freight rates as the culprits, but, says Parry, over two-thirds of the books on Canadian bookshelves, are duty-free and it is the booksellers not the distributor or publisher, who pay freight.

The Laughing Rooster, David Fallis Books, also in Calgary and Banyen Books in Vancouver all place many of their orders directly with U.S. wholesalers there by passing on U.S. retail price or close to it, to their customers. Parry says the three stores are the only ones he knows of in Western Canada that follow this practice.

He feels it is in no way anti-nationalistic because a majority of the suppliers and some of the publishers in Canada are American subsidiaries and the Canadian across the counter deserves a "nationalistic" break.

Parry adds that some bookstores buy U.S. wholesale but sell at Canadian retail prices.

David Fallis calls the whole situation "obviously ridiculous". He says that the ordinary rules of economics, in the form of tariffs, should not apply to books.

"Tariffs", he says, "are there to protect a country's own industry. If the country is producing socks and doing well at it and another country wants to import them cheaply, a tariff is set to bring them up to a competitive price. But in the book industry that doesn't apply since authors are internationally known."

He feels the present form of distribution through a Canadian-based subsidiary plant is of little use except that it creates jobs for Canadians. But with prices as they are, Fallis prefers to buy from a U.S. wholesaler except in the case of Canadian published books.

Parry feels the textbook scene should be another major point of protest by Canadians. Distribution time for textbooks (which are all duty-free) is hopelessly delayed by the U.S. agencies in Eastern Canada which tie up sole distribution rights as well as raise prices.

On the other hand, Carmen Moore of Carmen Moore Books Ltd. says the price discrepancy is "one of the many hazards of having a wide population in a large country."

She adds that the Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) is gaining strength and has been able to pressure distributors into offering a "more equitable exchange." Parry feels the CBA is pressuring in the right direction. Although the situation is far from being resolved it has been getting better. Mark-ups used to be higher and some publishers, such as Collier and Van Nostrand Reinhold, have now started printing one price with 'United States and Canada' on their books.

Parry suggests as a possible route of action that students collectively boycott texts which sell for higher than the U.S. list price.

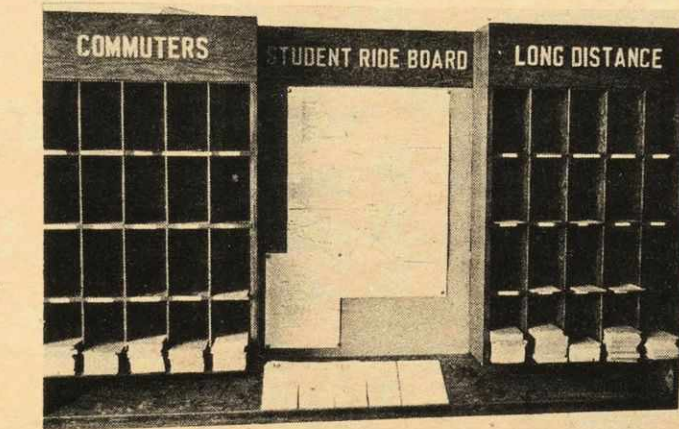
## No Cars On Campus

A Student Ride Board has been erected in the main Lobby of the SUB to take the place of the bulletin board on the basement level of that building.

The Ride Board, it is hoped, will facilitate carpooling among students and members of the University community. A map is tacked to the Board which divides the Metro-area into fifteen districts. Users of the Ride Board locate the district in which they live, fill out the appropriate card (blue for ride wanted, and brown for ride offered), and place the card in the pigeon-hole with the name corresponding to their district on the map. When a ride or rider is located the user removes his card from the pigeon-hole. In this way the Ride Board will maintain itself.

Another box of pigeon-holes has been provided for those seeking drives of longer distances on weekends and holidays. The procedure is similar to that used by commuters.

A shelf on the bottom of



the Ride Board has also been provided which holds information pertaining to public transportation in Metro. Schedules and route maps will be available.

The University community is urged to take advantage of this new service. It can help alleviate parking congestion on campus, reduce costs of commuting, and make commuting more convenient for those presently using public transportation and more pleasant for those who travel alone.

To achieve these goals the Ride Board is designed to put students with similar schedules and from similar districts in touch with one another. Specific arrangements are then to be made by Ride Board users themselves.

The Ride Board was suggested by Student Union President, Dan O'Connor, and Student Union Communications designed and now maintains it. It was built by the University Carpenters.