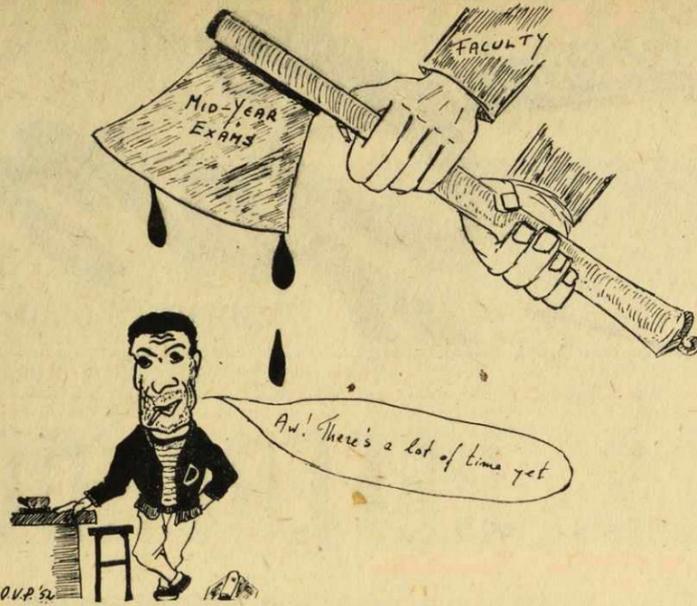


DALHOUSIE Gazette

AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

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Withdrawal or Retreat?

Moved: "That Dalhousie University students withdraw from the National Federation of Canadian University Students." That was the motion passed at the Student Forum a week, or more, ago. That word "withdraw" strikes us as inappropriately used by the person—and his backers—who are in favour of quitting NFCUS.

Consider the use of the word "withdraw" from the militarist's point of view. Generally speaking, when an army withdraws it is moving back from insurmountable forces. It is an honourable undertaking by the army, which has no other choice.

Do those who favor the motion "that Dalhousie withdraw from NFCUS" believe they are conducting or advancing a move because they are faced with the "insurmountable forces" of NFCUS? That would be a ridiculous conclusion. On the contrary we believe that those in favor of quitting the national organization are acting accordingly because of the weaknesses of NFCUS. Thus, they who feel NFCUS should be left out of Dalhousie student affairs favor "withdraw" because its "weaknesses are insurmountable." Accordingly this group should change its motion to read: "We move that Dalhousie retreat from NFCUS." Such a motion, obviously, would be absurd,—almost as absurd as the idea of leaving NFCUS.

But suppose that "the weaknesses of NFCUS might merit a consideration of "withdrawal." If they are such then it would be proper to throw in a counter-attack and eliminate the weaknesses by a revived interest on the part of the students in the objectives and principals of this organization.

Comment On The Students Forum

by ALLAN MARSHALL

The complaint has often been made that Dalhousie students are hopelessly apathetic. They showed no signs of it, however, at the student forum held on October 28. There is no doubt that the action of several universities at the conference of the National Federation of Canadian University Students has raised a storm of protest here at Dalhousie.

David Snow, one of our delegates to the conference, gave a long report of N.F.C.U.S. proceedings. The exchange of students with Russia, proposed last year, had been approved by many student councils and student body plebiscites. The resolution was expected to pass at the conference, when the Laval delegation let it be known that they would no longer remain in N.F.C.U.S. if the resolution was carried. They expressed their views in an amendment to the resolution, accepting student exchanges in principle, but opposing this one. The Manitoba delegation proposed to amend this amendment by expressing approval of the Russian exchange provided that the unity of N.F.C.U.S. was not threatened. This amendment was carried, with the support of Laval and Ottawa, and a number of other universities, including Dalhousie, who, while they favored the exchange, were unprepared to break up N.F.C.U.S. David Snow cast the vote for the Dalhousie delegation. This was the vote described as a surrender to Laval, which it was, and as a repudiation of instructions, which it was not. David Snow cast the

vote for our delegation. He believed, and correctly, that he had no mandate to support the Russian exchange at the cost of breaking up N.F.C.U.S. Quite true; quite true; but his report was so long winded, and so filled with irrelevant matter, that many of the student body (wrongly, I think) came to feel that he was being evasive. Mr. Snow did a rather poor job of presenting his case, and he was handled rather roughly by the student body; but presenting a case to a hostile group is never an easy thing to do, anyway. After considerable debate, it became clear that Mr. Snow was right in his belief that he had no mandate to vote for the Russian exchange at such a cost, and his report was finally adopted at the end of the meeting. That does not mean, however, that the Dalhousie Student Body had any kind thoughts about Laval. Far from it. There is every indication that Laval's high-handed action has caused no little resentment. There is no doubt that if such behaviour is continued in the future, many Dalhousie students will come to the conclusion that continued support of N.F.C.U.S. is a waste of time and effort. Certainly some students already feel that Dalhousie should leave now. The question will be put to the Student Body in the coming referendum.

There are several interesting problems arising from this debate. To begin with, Dal has the choice of staying in or getting out. It seems to me that getting out now would not accomplish much. It

certainly would not bring about the student exchange. Further, Dal would be taking on itself the responsibility for breaking up N.F.C.U.S. If the break is inevitable, then the onus should be placed on those responsible for it, and nowhere else, that is, on Laval and Ottawa. Otherwise, Dalhousie may simply succeed in placing itself out in the cold.

If Dal elects to stay in, there are several possibilities. The matter may simply be dropped, the majority of universities yielding to the minority on the grounds that it is simply not that important. After all, NFCUS does have important work to do, and this should not be allowed to put an end to it. Again, NFCUS could turn the question over to the International Students' Service. This organization handles student exchanges and might be willing to take on this one. Another possibility is that some sort of compromise could be worked out. The two sides might agree to disagree. Perhaps Laval and Ottawa could dissociate itself from the exchange but still stay in NFCUS, if some apportionment of finances could be worked out. This may not be likely, but then, we should not rule it out.

There is another possibility. The conference, by yielding, has allowed a small minority to force its will on the majority. Are there any other disputes between the two sides? Perhaps some horse trading would be useful. Laval and Ottawa, having received so much, should be willing to give something in return, assuming that they have something to give. This would avoid the bad taste that their action has left in everyone's mouth. This will not work, of course, if there is nothing to make a compromise out of.

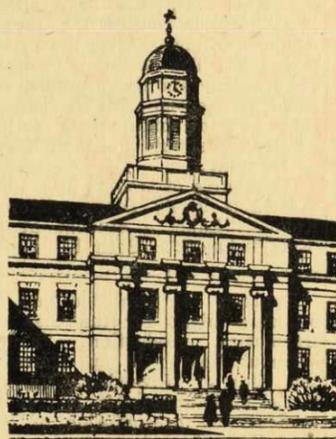
Dalhousie can, of course, go along with Laval and Ottawa, and hope that there will be no incidents like this one in the future. This might be making the best of a bad world. It does not mean, of course, that Laval's action is any less offensive, if Dalhousie is willing to overlook it. It is not likely that the Dalhousie Student Body would be willing to support NFCUS if similar incidents were repeated a second and third time. It is already being put to the test for the first.

Milton,—I think I'm sick.
 Milton, oh wise Milton,
 I need thy genius great
 To write this theme for Guy.
 Send me a Nurse or something,
 Anything,—or I'll die.
 O dear man, thou art too late,
 Gloom is in my head,
 Paradise is lost for me,
 Milton—dear I'm dead.

A. NONY MOUSE.

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