

New laws will cramp teachers' style

Hopefully, everyone who reads this newspaper has read one of New Brunswick's dailies, and thus knows something of the controversial legislation now before the Legislative Assembly.

We hope, too, that every student has been thinking about this legislation in the light of his future. How will the new laws, if passed, affect us?

If we knew, of course we would explain, but unfortunately the text of the new legislation is so voluminous it is difficult for us to examine it in detail. It is unfortunate that many of us have to let the details go by the board. We must let our legislators and other interested groups analyze and, if necessary, protest the reorganization the Government has put before the Legislature.

Most of the many protests complain about the extreme centralization of authority the Government wants. The Government claims that the province's many ills can be cured if all the authority is in the hands of the Cabinet. Final authority in most issues should lie in the hands of the Minister whose department deals with a given problem.

For example, it is the Minister of Education who will decide how a school subject will be taught. If a teacher or school board does not adhere to these regulations, teachers and school board members will be subject to fines. Other employees of the Department of Education, too, will be subject to fines for various infractions. It is imperative, says the proposed law, that Department policy be strictly followed.

We doubt that matters will be improved much by such strict regulations. The best support for this view is a massive (three volumes already, a fourth soon) Royal Commission report in the Province of Quebec, which strongly recommends decentralization of education. In Quebec, the teachers will teach as they see fit, given a certain budget. What is the basis for the New Brunswick legislation? The Minister claims to understand the problems, but he does not have enough information to be able to deal with the subject justly.

It is regrettable that the Government could make such hasty and ill-conceived proposals. If they are passed, it will likely cause an exodus of New Brunswickers to greener pastures. Surely this is not the aim of the Robichaud Government.

Elections coming soon

A few people, mainly those on the Students' Representative Council, are aware that nominations will soon be open, and soon closed, for positions on the new SRC. Our experience tells us that there is barely enough time to lobby for those who think they can do some good on the SRC.

In other words, if you think you have something to say about student government policy, you should consider running, or should try to find someone who will be able to carry the ball for you.

SRC's have been improving in the last few years, but that is no reason to assume that the trend will continue. It certainly won't, unless competent people run. Most students are more competent than they believe, so they should gather up some support and get a nomination in before they regret having been left out.

Brunswickan

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THE Brunswickan NEEDS A CARTOONIST

The Shape of our Student Council

by Lia Gyual

It is to be expected that smaller governments will mimic larger ones when the larger governments are undergoing major reforms. It has been that way since the first governmental reforms took place. It is with this in mind that I will examine the government of the student body, the Students' Representative Council, in the light of the recently proposed reforms to the Provincial bureaucracy.

New Brunswick is in the process of changing from a decentralized, and to a great extent, disordered, governmental system, to a system which will depend strongly on the judgement of a few individuals, the Provincial Cabinet. The Cabinet will be called upon to establish policies, which will be carried out by the Civil Service. Much of apparatus of government will be independent of the decision of the Legislative Assembly, whose votes will count only in major policy decisions. Most of the actual power will be vested in the Ministers.

Those opposed to this system have accused the Liberal Government of being undemocratic and unconcerned for the rights of citizens. Of course this is just the extreme right, exemplified by Mr. Wardell and his conservative and confusing Daily Gleaner, leaking through. Of course the value of the Gleaner must be discounted, since it is well known that it only acts on the whims of its eccentric editor and publisher. But still, occasionally, the issues it fights for are picked up by the local loaves, and cause trouble for the government.

After discounting the Gleaner, I have come to the conclusion that the best argument against the Government proposals is simply based on the competence of the people who would be delegated to carry out the legislation.

We all know, if we have attended sittings of the Legislature, that the Members are not among the best debaters, and certainly make little effort to show off whatever ability they may have in any field. This discouraging fact makes us assume that they may be incapable of hiring capable civil servants to do their work for them, and hence we have our doubts as to the possibility that New

Brunswick's lot will improve at all under the proposed program of centralization.

In the case of the Students Representative Council, however, I feel we have a different case altogether.

It is well known that Universities function best under benevolent dictators. Perhaps UNB is such a University, certainly St. Thomas, Mt. Allison, and Dalhousie are. Consequently, the smooth-running of the University depends on the amount of control held by the central authority.

But in the case of student councils, it has long been the case that there has been disorder and confusion in the ranks. Student Councils have failed, and they have failed because they do not hold enough power.

The power, of course, should not be complete. It should be, simply, a small group, with legislative powers equivalent to that of the present SRC. With certain limitations, the legislative group should be at least as productive as the present SRC, probably more so.

It is unquestionable that in four out of five SRC decisions, council members have decided how they will vote beforehand, except for a few whose vote will be swayed by the executive anyway.

So, all we need is to avoid the delaying action of the council vote: all motions that are clear-cut will be passed anyway; those that would have been close would have been passed or defeated according to the will of the executive. Those that would have failed would fail anyway under the new system.

So our thesis is this: Elect a student council of five members, all of them voted on by the whole student body. Make certain parts of the constitution changeable only by a student referendum, and let the council go to it.

This is not only my own thesis, it is also the idea of a noted British sociologist named C. N. Parkinson. His works have been internationally acclaimed.

Let's hope the SRC acts on these ideas before it is too late.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE HANDS THAT ROCKED THE QUEEN

Editor:

Thank you and your staff for attending the special meeting of UNB student executives held in Montreal during the Christmas vacation.

Your group, and the other student executives who attended this voluntary meeting, should be commended on their concern for the future of their campus.

I regret that the detectives in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel mistook our meeting for a disorderly student demonstration, and I hope the three or four emergency adjournments did not upset you.

In future we hope to provide for such occurrences by assuring that a number of

professional gentlemen (flunkies), stand at strategic points to convince these detectives that we are peace loving adults.

We would like to thank the Queen Elizabeth Hotel for graciously providing the facilities for this meeting, and hope that in future the thirteenth floor will be available for another meeting. In fact, we hope the floor is still there. At this moment the fact is questionable. Due to the student demonstration, of course.

Until our annual meeting next year, I am

Yours,
B. M. Cooper,
Chairman,
Student Vigilante
Committee.