

# the RIGHT TO REFERENCE

Rumour has it that an amendment to the Student Union Constitution will be proposed to Council. The amendment entails the deletion of all sexist references from future Student Union documents. "Sexist", here meaning for example that references to an unknown third person will be recorded as he/she; the Chairman will become the Chairperson", etc. The GAZETTE urges all Council members to vote in favour of such an amendment.

Unfortunately many people both male and female deem this sort of procedure trivial and unworthy of attention. On the contrary, we feel that the perpetuation of references excluding women, often lead to implications and steadfast "images" of positions held exclusively by men, which then serve to impede any female who should advance into a position - of for example - Chairperson.

In the same way, derogatory references towards a race, creed, or colour can encourage and perpetuate prejudice, referring to mature adult females as "girls" rather than their proper title of "women," reinforces (often unconsciously) in many minds a concept of women as immature and weakminded.

The GAZETTE also suggests to Council that they might specifically state on their employment opportunity ads in which past experience creates the implication that only men are acceptable, (the most recent example being the application for SUB night manager), that women are welcome to apply and will be considered on an equal basis.

#### Canada's Oldest College Newspaper

The Dalhousie GAZETTE is the weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union. The views expressed in the paper are not necessarily those of the Student Union, the university administration, the editor, or the staff. We reserve the right to edit or delete copy for space or legal reasons. Deadline date for letters to the GAZETTE and outside contributions is the Friday preceding publications. No anonymous material will be accepted, but names may be withheld on request if there are extenuating circumstances. The Dalhousie GAZETTE is a founding member of Canadian University Press.

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#### Disgust Due

#### To Decision

#### To the GAZETTE

Dear Sir:

I am sitting down to write this letter in the heat of anger and disgust.

Ten minutes ago, in total disregard of their constitutional powers, the Student Council passed a motion which stated: "That Student Union Fees would be raised by \$10 to take effect in the 1975-76 year". I realize that many people will ignore my letter due to the fact that I previously came out in favour of Proposal D for reasons which are now unimportant. In truth, if Proposal D--or any increase for that matter--had won a clear majority of all votes cast, I would not lodge this complaint. I would have felt that the students had been adequately consulted and that therefore the constitution could be waived in this instance. I know this is not correct, but I also know that I would have accepted the results of the referendum as a fair indication of student opinion, even though this would not have been strictly correct in constitutional terms.

The case as it stands, however, shows that the results of the referendum were not totally conclusive. On the final count, Proposal D had 809 votes and Proposal B had 797. On the first count, Proposal D had 676 votes and Proposal B had 474. Although in all fairness, I cannot ignore the vote cast for Proposals A and C, it nevertheless remains that the votes cast under a preferential system in which there were FOUR distinct options cannot be interpreted after the referendum in any other way than that which had been previously explained to the student body. I will not try to claim that Proposal D -- No Increase-- should be automatically accepted, but I do insist that the Student

Council has ABSOLUTELY NO RIGHT to decide on their own what increase, if any, should be adopted.

According to By-Law VIII, Section 1: "... any change in this fee shall require the sanction of a simple majority of those voting at a **student union** meeting held during the academic year." I will point out that a Student Union meeting is a meeting of all students, not just a council meeting. I am willing to concede that the students can sanction an increase through a referendum in which the results are conclusive. (That the results of the October 30 referendum were not conclusive was not disputed by anyone at tonight's meeting.) However, I am NOT willing to concede that the Council has any right to put themselves **above the students, above the Constitution**, and decide by a simple Council majority how much the increase should be.

Tonight your elected representatives knowingly broke the Constitution. The vote to have a general student meeting as required by the Constitution was resoundingly defeated with only 6 reps voting in favour. A motion which would have opened the way for another referendum was defeated by an 8-7 vote, with the remaining reps abstaining. The Council obviously felt they were under no obligation to consult the student body any further than they had already consulted them. Choosing a \$10 increase, the representatives totally disregarded the substantial vote for No Increase whatsoever, although \$10 was a compromise between \$7 and \$12. The vote to increase the fees by \$10 was passed by a vote of 14-4, with 2 abstentions. A comparison between the votes of the individual reps and the voting patterns displayed by their own constituents showed that many representatives did not feel obliged to let the referendum results affect their own personal opinions.

The course available now to the student body is unclear to me. Under By-Law XIV, there is provision for removing all officers and