

Bill Of Rights With Bite

Last month Canada's new Bill of Rights came into effect. The merit of this bill has been the target of a great deal of criticism. Indeed, Bora Laskin, University of Toronto law professor and constitutional expert has termed it "an important step backward".

Traditionally, a bill of rights guarantees to the inhabitants of a nation the basic human freedoms including those of speech, religion, association and the press, as well as the cardinal principles of justice. It is usually incorporated into the constitution in order to make its abrogation more difficult. Thereby it becomes part of the supreme law of the land and takes precedence over any statute law which may violate its terms. As part of the higher law it governs the conduct of all citizens and of the bodies which govern these citizens.

Our Bill of Rights fails to satisfy these criteria.

It is not part of the constitution but merely a statute. As such it can easily be altered by Parliament simply by passing another statute without the rigorous steps entailed in amending the B.N.A. Act.

In addition the Cabinet may still invoke the War Measures Act. This act gives the cabinet power (in time of war emergency) to terminate the rights set out in the Bill. It was this Act which provided the legal justification for the abuse of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War and of suspects rounded up in the spy investigations of 1946. These incidents are a black mark in Canada's history and demonstrate the need for a limitation on the powers of our governing bodies. Dire action may be necessary in time of national peril but it must not be taken at the expense of those liberties for which we are fighting in the first place.

Probably the greatest weakness of the Bill of Rights is that it does not restrict the provinces. Under our federal system of government there is a distribution of powers between the central and provincial governments. Each is free to legislate within its given sphere. In the past there have been grave abuses. Among the most notable are the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Quebec in 1954 which struck at the freedom of religion and the Alberta Press Bill Act of 1937 which attempted to control the press.

No provincial legislature should be able to determine the extent to which its citizens may enjoy the basic freedoms. It is imperative that a uniform standard be achieved in order that all Canadians, regardless of their place of residence are assured equal rights.

If Canada's Bill of Rights is to be effective it must become part of the B.N.A. Act. Only in this way can we receive maximum assurance that arbitrary action of an insidious nature will never again be taken by our federal or provincial government.

In the past the provinces, especially Quebec, would not agree to constitutional amendment which encroached upon their absolute jurisdiction. Indication that this attitude might soften was given last month by Quebec premier Jean Lesage who announced his province might agree to a change in the means of amendment.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker will meet provincial attorneys general next month to discuss an acceptable amending process. If the Bill of Rights is to become a binding and respected statute, the Prime Minister and the provinces must agree to incorporate it in the British North America Act.

Foamin' In The Gloamin'

The first home football game of the season, played Saturday on Varsity Grid, was marred by some very low-brow high-jinks.

Persons unlucky enough to be seated in the east stand had to see what they could of the game through a haze of two kinds of foam: the variety that issues forth from a fire extinguisher and the type that shoots out of vigorously shaken beer bottles.

Fortunately for the reputation of the University of Alberta, the occupants of the east stand were students. Some had their clothes splashed with foam, but better than indignant alumni and Edmonton residents.

Probably the only evidence of rowdiness brought to the attention of the spectators in the west stand was the scramble for possession of the fire extinguisher which erupted onto the track in front of the east stand. Let us trust that the waving of bottles in the east stand was not visible across the football field.

Do University students not have the maturity to forego drinking at afternoon football games — or at least hide the bottles from view as do the crowds at Clark Stadium? (apparently the latter tactic indicates maturity).

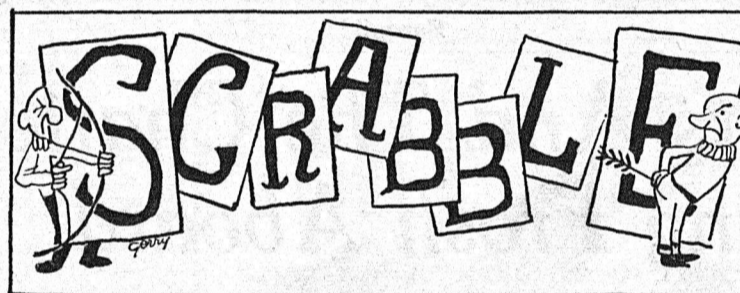
If this behavior is to persist it is indeed fortunate that the University of Alberta's student football fans are kept segregated in a stand some 80 yards from the general public's view.

A truly magnificent bogus crosswalk has appeared at the Tuck Shop corner. It is a horizontal monument to independent thought on campus. And never let it be said that Gateway editorials don't bring quick action.

We hope no engineers making dates this weekend had any wrong ideas about the contents of the Black Hill's Passion Play.



Ride Relaxed-Ride with **ETS**



I wish more people would wash their feet before going to sock dances. At last Saturday's Joseph College Dance, somebody's friend didn't tell them "you know what". The result was overpowering. Next year, I'm going to open a foot-powder concession at the door. Shades of the 'Great Unwashed'. (Aren't you glad you use Dial soap don't you wish everybody did?)

The Household Economics ethnic group are really going in for this practical home-making jazz in a big way. This week, the Candidates for MRS are having a seminar on 'How to Make Skirts Out of Old Patchwork Quilts!' Next week, they take a similar seminar entitled 'How to Make Patchwork Quilts Out of Old Skirts', "Crazy!", said Red. "Wild!", said Grandma.

Warning to all gullible people! Some wretch in a blue trenchcoat, looking like a talent scout for "Varsity Varieties," is sneaking around on campus trying to get suckers to sign up for cut-rate portraits by a certain photo studio here in town—which shall remain nameless, though not blameless. If this male Mata Hari comes fawning around you, looking for names and deposits, don't bite! Direct him to the nearest engineers who, I hope, will lose no time in depositing him in the nearest hydraulic tank. Down with all salesmen in seersucker suits! Ten-four.

Bad Day at Black Rock, gang. After many years of outstanding work on campus, one of our favorite Gold Key members (in fact, the only GK we ever liked) is departing camp to get, naturally, a job with a Calgary advertising agency. The other night, a going-away party was held for this person, and just before certain minor dignitaries passed out, it was sworn in a solemn oath that the West Lounge should be renamed in honour of this great U of A worker. You had all better damn well wipe your feet before you enter the 'Drina Hutchison Lounge'.

Late Flash: Sign on Fence: "Presbyterians! Come to a square dance."

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