

## HEREDITARY ILLNESSES TO BE PROBED

The realization that a wide range of afflictions in living organisms is caused by genetic factors and that radiation is an important factor in these changes, has of late given rise to a completely new science: radiation biology. Dalhousie University has entered this field with a new research group under the guidance of Dr. Om P. Kamra.

Facilities for the laboratory of radiation biology are now being arranged at 6090 University Ave. Alterations of the building to allow installation of radiation source and laboratories are to begin shortly.

Cost of structural work and equipment will be about \$60,000, financed by grants from the National Research Council.

Dr. Kamra, who came to Dalhousie from the University of Manitoba, expects to have his department in operation when summer arrives. He was born in Lahore, India, studied at Dehli University and received a master degree in genetics and plant breeding at the University of North Carolina. In 1959 Washington State University granted him a Ph. D. in radiobiology (genetics.)

The following figures, cited by Dr. H. B. Newcombe, head, biology branch, Atomic Energy of Canada, a native of Kentville, illustrate how important better knowledge of genetic changes is to public health:

"At least 2 to 3% of the pop-

ulation suffer from serious hereditary illnesses and handicaps and more than 4% of all individuals born are so affected at some time during their lives. The figure of 4% represents an underestimate of the hereditary component of ill-health, as some very common and severe conditions are excluded. Such are coronary thrombosis, gastric and duodenal ulcer and rheumatic fever. Also excluded are a number of less severe deviations."

At least part of the present load of hereditary defects owes its continued presence to the repeated occurrence of mutations in cells of the reproductive tissues, arising out of natural causes. As man-made radiation forms a source of additional gene changes (mutations), it is important to know exactly what influence such radiation has on the cells of

living organisms.

"We shall have one laboratory for tissue culture, where both plant and human cell populations will be studied," says Dr. Kamra. "In another laboratory and greenhouse we shall study the genetic effects of radiation on plants."

For the study of chromosome breakage and other effects of radiation, he says, a very special organism will be used. It is the plant *Haplopappus gracilis*, which has only four chromosomes, in contrast to the 46 chromosomes in normal human cells.

This is the lowest number of chromosomes in any flowering plant. The flower of *Haplopappus gracilis* is much like that of the dandelion. It is a weed that grows abundantly in the southwest United States.

Using such a simple organ-

ism will save time and will give an idea of what to look for in more complicated cells.

To study cumulative effects of radiation on consecutive generations another plant will be used because of its short life cycle. *Arabidopsis thaliana* reproduces in about one month.

Mutation of even a single gene may have a profound effect on the organism, be it plant or animal, and this new field is wide-open for research. When the radiation biology laboratory hits its stride, Dr. Kamra expects to have a staff of one geneticist, two technicians and several graduate students.

Tenders for alteration and further equipment of the laboratory's building will be called shortly.

## Regional CUS Conference Acadians Now In The Fray

The annual regional CUS conference took place this year at UNB in Fredericton, Jan 5-8. It was attended by about 50 delegates, including Council Presidents and CUS chairmen, from 12 Maritime Universities.

Five people were sent from Dalhousie - George Cooper, and Eric Hillis from the Council, and Gail Young, Margie MacDougall and Bill Bezanson from CUS. Peter Green, also from Dalhousie attended the conference at the request of the National Office of CUS as one of the group discussion leaders. Pete is a former Maritime Regional President of the organization who has been put back into harness.

The conference was also attended by Dave Jenkins, CUS National President; Pat Kenniff, Loyola, National Vice-President of the English Caucus; Jean-Pierre Bourduas, associate secretary; Andre Ouellet, of the faculty of law, Laval University and Mary Mahar, Maritimes representative on the English section of the board of directors.

The main topic of the Conference was Biculturalism and Confederation, a topic with which CUS seems to be preoccupied at the moment following the drastic change in structure effected at the National Congress in Edmonton last September. The leaders of the Conference were concerned firstly to find the views of Maritimers on the new structure so as to better determine, in their frequent meetings in the newly set-up Structures Commission, exactly what happened in the Edmonton shake up. What, for example, is a "fundamental issue" - the issues in which, as laid down at Edmonton, the French and English cultural groups are to have equal votes? Secondly, they wanted to promote lively discussion of this timely topic (biculturalism and confederation) in the Maritimes, where, they feel, people are not as aware of the "French facet" as in other places. Thirdly, the views on the Acadians, which are somewhat unique among French Canadians, were solicited.

In the opinion of our delegation, the first objective failed dismally. Apart from the conference leaders from National organizations, the only delegations prepared to discuss this topic intelligently were UNB and Université de Moncton. More than that, it soon became apparent that no other delegation even wanted to discuss the matter. Maritimers, it appears, are more concerned with the practical aspects of CUS. What the organization can and should do in a tangible way for the average student and the Student Council seemed to be the only concern of most people present.

The second objective both failed and succeeded. It succeeded very well in the small group discussions which were very well led, highly organized, and at which several scholarly papers were presented. This approach was very valuable in-

deed, and all delegates learned a great deal about the views of French, English and Acadians. The difficulty came when the results of these small group discussions were brought before the whole assembly and attempts were made to pass resolutions based on these results. Since only small segments of the assembly were present at each discussion group, only a few people were well-versed in any particular topic and mild interest soon degenerated into apathy at the plenary sessions.

The third objective succeeded quite well. By far the most interesting speaker we heard in Fredericton was M. Emery LeBlanc, former Editor of L'Évangiline, voice of the Acadian people, a voice which is soft and more reasoning in contrast to the sometimes sharp and angry tones of the Quebec "separatists". He showed how the Acadians started off in the Maritimes feeling inferior to their English neighbours, and pointed out that this inferiority complex still exists in Acadia. His solutions, and those of the other Acadians who were present at the Conference, were practical and therefore of a nature comprehensible to Anglo-Saxon Maritimers. These included increasing the per-capita provincial government grant to Acadian University students, a grant which now stands at \$89 per French student as compared with over \$700 per English student from New Brunswick; a chance for Acadian students to study high school subjects in their own language; a separate French normal school to promote this end; and use of French in the courts and legislature of New Brunswick, among many others. All of these proposals seemed reasonable in view of the fact that almost 40% of the people of that province speak French - and the fact that there are no Acadian separatists sweetens the pill.

There was little time devoted at the conference to a study of the problems affecting Students' Councils in the Maritimes. This was the greatest failure of the conference. But the organizers of the conference could hardly have known this when the agenda was drawn up. However, for future conferences, it ought to be borne in mind that the Maritime Universities are more concerned with practical matters than with the larger, ethereal topics that have been forced on us - unless such topics are left to small group discussion.

Finally, organization was exceptionally good from a technical standpoint. Accommodations were the best; food and transportation well organized. Entertainment was terrific. UNB's campus is very well suited to a conference of this sort, and it is doubtful whether any Maritime University could do a better job.

In summary, the UNB Conference was very well run, but only a qualified success, having regard to the topic under discussion.



KNOW YOUR CARNIVAL PRINCESSES: Just so that you don't forget who is in the running, here they are. From left to right: Janet Davidson, Gail Pheeny, Ginny Saney, Joanne Godfrey, Brenda Mann.

-Munroe

## DGDS Hits Council

When asked to make a statement upon the relations between the Student Council and the Dalhousie Glee and Dramatic Society, Acting President Joe MacDonald said, "Due to my position at present I do not feel that I should make any critical comment."

However, an interview with a reliable source high in DGDS, who does not wish to be identified, turned up the following facts:

The exact working arrangement between Council and the Dramatics club is no where defined satisfactorily. The constitution, as it is set down in the students' handbook makes the organization responsible for an "operetta" each year, a major dramatic production, a radio programme, the Connolly Shield competition, and the "Black and Gold Review". Such a volume and diversity of operation is considered impossible by both the executive of DGDS and the Students' Council. The Council expressed an intention to rewrite the constitution along more practical lines early in the fall term of last year. This change has not materialized. Therefore, there is not a satisfactory framework within which the Council and the Society can co-operate.

Council dismisses money matters with very little consideration. DGDS presented a budget of approximately \$10,000 during

last term, and Council reportedly discussed the entire budget for ten minutes, after which it was effectively approved in toto. The average was about \$1,000 per minute. Following this quick dismissal of the large budget, there was effectively no control exerted on the funds allocated; Council reviews the use of all such moneys at the end of the school year . . . after the money has been spent.

Each year Council appoints a representative to act as liaison between itself and DGDS, this year the person thus appointed is Eric Hillis. The general feeling of those working in DGDS is that Mr. Hillis has left much to be desired in this respect, among other feelings he has allowed his personal feelings and animosities to interfere with his function.

## English Lawman Here

Appointment of A. W. Brian Simpson, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford University, as Visiting Sir James Dunn Professor of Law is announced by President Henry D. Hicks of Dalhousie University. Professor Simpson will teach the courses in Jurisprudence and History of Law at Dalhousie Law School for the second term of the 1963-64 academic year.

In addition to supervising and teaching the law students in Lin-

## REPRODUCER WANTED

"Moved that we look into buying a reproducing machine," said Council President George Cooper.

"Ho ho!" said Council, for Coops has meant a reproduction machine, which Council wants to buy to duplicate its propoganda.

A Gazette reporter pointed out that several duplicators were advertised at a liquidation sale in the city.

Said Councillor Hillis while eyeing a female legislator across the table: "let's find out what their secretaries are selling for, anyway".

"Ho, ho!" said Council, and grumped on to more legislating.

## MORE COPS AT HOPS

Friday - night dances at the gym will be more tightly controlled in the future.

Council Thursday approved a committee recommendation that 3 policemen be hired for dances in an effort to control rowdiness and drinking.

Only Dal students with CUS cards and student nurses will be let in at dances. They are allowed one guest each.

Maximum dance prices are set at \$.50 a head for record hops, and 75¢ for dances with a band.

If sponsor societies fail to conform to gymnasium regulations in future, Council threatens to freeze all receipts until violations are cleared up.

A Council member will attend all future dances.

coln College, he is a University Lecturer in Law and a member of the Board of the Faculty of Law. After service in the British Army as an officer in the Royal West African Force in Nigeria, he entered Queen's College, Oxford, as a law student. While there he was awarded the Winter Williams and the Gibbs University Scholarships and graduated with first class honours.

After a period as a Junior Research Fellow at St. Edmund Hall where he did research on the history of law reporting, he was appointed to his present post as a Fellow of Lincoln College in 1955.

In 1961 Oxford University Press published his book entitled "An Introduction to the History of Land Law". He takes a novel approach to historical study of law and has been unanimously acclaimed by scholarly reviewers as being "learned, illuminating and stimulating". He is now preparing a similar history of the law of contracts and will include this topic in his lectures at Dalhousie.

His wife is a graduate of St. Hugh's College, Oxford, where she now teaches English literature.