

EXTRA



FROM UP THE HILL

BRUNSWICKAN

EXTRA

CANADA'S OLDEST OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION

Vol. 72, No. 2 EXTRA

FREDERICTON, N.B., MONDAY, OCTOBER 20th, 1952

Price 9 cents per copy

EXCHANGE REJECTED?

LAVAL EXERTS PRESSURE TO FORCE VOTE REVISION

The proceedings of the annual conference of the National Federation of Canadian University Students at Laval has exploded into a remarkable example of political skulduggery similar to that being currently uncovered in various governmental departments of the United States. Threats of secession and veritable roadblocking led the delegates to neatly sidestep the vital issues behind the proposed Russian-Canadian student exchange by considering a watered-down version which by-stepped both the principle involved and the question itself.

Denis Lazare made the invitation while in Europe in the summer of 1951 and returned to the N.F.C.U.S. annual conference in London last year for approval of his action. The motion for approval was hotly debated at that time and U.N.B. along with five other universities voted in favour of the motion. The principle only was up for vote and financial details were not under consideration. U.N.B.'s support was based on the argument that if finances were available, the move would be of practical value in proving our good intentions to the eastern student bloc and in furthering mutual understanding among the international student body. The motion was lost in spite of the efforts of several delegates to establish the worthwhile project.

It was clearly stated at the time that the motion did not represent a front in order to spread Communism in Canada. U.N.B.'s participation in support was based on a genuine interest in contributing to aid our own democratic principles by a greater understanding with all nations of the world. The exchange, it was felt, would provide an opportunity for Canadians to meet with and attempt to properly understand Russian students of today.

In the months that followed, student opinion across Canada led to a demand for reversal of the stand taken at the conference. U.N.B. found that there were many new supporters of the move and before the present conference acceptance of the proposal was assured.

At the same time, N.F.C.U.S. suddenly expanded its entire activity in the international field and consequently energy and activity was diverted from affairs at home. While U.N.B. approved the Russian exchange, this change in policy from domestic to foreign affairs could not be approved because of the precarious position N.F.C.U.S. holds on this and many other camps. That is, until N.F.C.U.S. is able to provide greater service to Canadians at home, it was felt impossible to provide greater support for international activities. At the Maritime Conference last spring U.N.B. initiated a strong and lengthy motion calling for a reversal of this new policy and for greater and concentrated efforts at home.

The effect of these various events was to continue our support for the exchange but to seek change in policy of the organization to conform with the terms of its constitution.

Little comment was received on this proposal but the opening sessions of the Laval Conference last week immediately showed that students across Canada share this same attitude. The entire flavor of the conference was "national" rather than "international".

The Quebec conference presented a distasteful scene. The final motion for approval of the exchange contained a rider stating "the Conference approves the principle . . . insofar as if shall not cause any member of the Federation . . . to revise its relationship with N.F.C.U.S." This was passed by a vote of

11-8, but Laval informed the session in the preceding discussion on the original motion, that should it have been passed as it originally stood, they would secede from the Union. Two other delegations, Ottawa and Dalhousie also issued this ultimatum.

This affront was rebuffed by Sir George Williams College and also commented on by Toronto. The ensuing confusion had some seven or eight delegations, including U.N.B.'s decide to alter their vote and turn down the proposal. The British Columbia delegation finally came up with the amendment which effectively killed all hope of achieving the exchange by inserting the clause which gives any University veto power over the scheme, if it threatens to secede. Since Laval and her allies had already issued an ultimatum to the session threatening to secede, the motion as voted upon was actually one calling for defeat of the proposal.

The situation presents three distinct facets for U.N.B. students.

FIRST, the principle of the exchange, which Laval and its followers have objected to on grounds of patriotism according to all reports.

SECOND, the failure of the U.N.B. delegates to vote as specifically instructed on this issue, by allowing it to be nullified.

THIRD, the abuse of democratic procedure as indicated in the methods used by Laval and the effect of such moves on the Federation.

The first of these has been explained above and needs no further comment at this point. The second is more important because our delegates were attempting to act in the best interests of the students by keeping the Federation intact. However, it seems they have overlooked the implications of the third point. Our representatives attempted to act in a spirit of compromise but they have ignored the unfortunate and unprincipled method thrust upon them by Laval.

Laval and its followers have chosen to serve an ultimatum, which might be titled blackmail, on the students of Canada to obtain rejection of a proposal which these same students had previously signified as being favorable. In other words, N.F.C.U.S. no longer is a national union but becomes a mouthpiece for the interests of a sector of its membership.

The reasons for Laval's actions are vague. Basically we understand they think the exchange to be un-Canadian. To our minds, nothing could be more false. Canada's participation in the United Nations and the respected position which she now holds in the world (much greater than most other western nations, according to this writer's experience) indicate that we are not isolationists. Nor are we attempting to create a strong boundary between the East and the West. The opposite is true and has been amply stated by our key statesmen.

We agree N.F.C.U.S. should be more nationally inclined, but the value of such an exchange plus the fact that the invitation has been accepted pro tem leads us to heavily support the suggestion.

Whatever the reasons for Laval's actions, and there have been many speculations on this point, a concise statement should be forthcoming from their Student Council, the A.G.E.L., to explain why they feel they have the right to attempt to destroy the national unity of Canadian students.

This is United Nations Week.

EDITORIAL

A MISLEADING VOTE . . .

The final vote of the N.F.C.U.S. Conference has in effect rejected the Russian exchange. Whether or not this is the last we shall hear of the issue remains to be seen, but it is not likely that the students of this country will be satisfied with a decision that conflicts with the views of the majority of universities. Other university students are in the same position as U.N.B.—they are in favor of the move, but their representatives allowed a compromise vote which effectively killed hope of exchange.

The reasons for Laval's sudden and belligerent about-face have not yet come to light, nor have the reasons why they were allowed, by the other universities represented, to influence such great power over the Conference as to change its first affirmative decision of 16-4 to one of 11-8 with a crippling stipulation. The first vote tells the real story of the way in which Canadian students feel about the issue. In this vote the representatives voted the way their student councils had decided. The second vote came after Laval threatened to pull a "Gromyko Act".

The idea of the Russian exchange has brought to light across the country the question, "Why should we entertain these students?" Fears of all kinds of subversive actions have been expressed. An editorial in last year's Athenaeum (Acadia) spoke of the damage they can do while in the country. How much damage can a group of people do which is travelling from coast to coast in the short space of about three weeks? Are we Canadians afraid that we are that susceptible to propaganda of any sort that a day or so spent with representatives of a different governmental system is going to change our way of life? The idea is preposterous!

The exchange could do nothing but show these visitors a cross-section of the country, show them life under a democracy, and further international understanding. That is one of the aims of N.F.C.U.S. . . . better understanding among students of the entire world.

The S.R.C. of this university has expressed its extreme disapproval of the turn the Conference had taken. Last Thursday they tried to reach S.R.C. President Bob Spurway and N.F.C.U.S. Chairman Colin Harrowing, and instruct them to stick to their original decision, but the vote had already been taken. It is unfortunate that we, while voting in favour of the Exchange which the Council heartily endorses, at the same time saw hopes of it vanish and our only plan of action is to express across Canada our real feelings toward the exchange. We can rest assured that we will not be the only ones to raise a protest against this vote.

TELEGRAM SENT TO N.F.C.U.S. REPRESENTATIVES AT LAVAL THURSDAY NIGHT

COUNCIL STRONGLY DISAPPROVES YOUR STAND RUSSIAN EXCHANGE AS REPORTED ACADIA'S MATHESON CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS AND CFNB. REQUEST YOU ATTEMPT REOPEN MATTER IF CLOSED AND REAFFIRM COUNCIL'S ORIGINAL STAND, AND DEMAND REASONS FOR LAVAL'S ACTION AND DEPLORE TO CONFERENCE THAT FEW SHOULD INFLUENCE DEMOCRATIC PROCEEDINGS OF NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE.

FROSH, SOPHS, S.R.C. TO PAY ALLEY DAMAGES

Thursday's S.R.C. meeting also saw definite steps taken to reimburse Mr. Deep for the damage done to his bowling alleys during Freshman Week. After the acceptance of the report of the special committee set up to investigate the entire matter and make recommendations as to S.R.C. action, the following motions were passed: that four hundred dollars be offered Mr. Deep as complete and final payment of the damage incurred and that each Freshman and Sophomore be assessed one dollar to pay for the damages, the remainder to be paid by the S.R.C. (This motion was carried on a vote of 8-7.) A further motion restricting all future Freshman Week activities to the campus was defeated, and followed by a motion that no more street parades or street dances be held down town during that week. The Council passed this motion. It was also voted to set up a committee to investigate the Freshman Week activities in other Canadian universities, and try to work out a better system for U.N.B. in the future. This committee will be set up following the Freshman elections and will be composed of a member from each of the five classes. Further details of the meeting and the Special Committee's report will appear in the regular issue of the Brunswickan this Thursday.

The Background of the Exchange Proposal

In the mid-September meeting of N.F.C.U.S. in 1951 a proposed exchange between twelve or fifteen Canadian and Russian students met with some stiff opposition from most of the universities attending the Conference. At this time however, six universities voted for the scheme.

Immediately following this Conference at which the exchange was rejected, student bodies across Canada began to change, re-affirm or debate their stands regarding the proposal. Student Councils throughout the country voted on two questions, if they were in favour of a Russian delegation of from 12 to 15 students visiting Canada for about three weeks, and if they were in favour of an equal number of Canadian students visiting Russia for the same length of time.

College newspapers across the country started vigorous campaigns, and, one by one, universities started to give their approval of the plan. The University of Toronto, which had vetoed the proposal at the first meeting, reversed their decision by a student vote. Bishop's College reaffirmed its affirmative nod given at the Conference with a student plebiscite. The University of Saskatchewan voted against the idea, both at the Conference and later at a student body count.

The University of British Columbia, when the formal exchange was defeated last September, issued a personal invitation to four Russian students to visit for a year. This proposal, sent to the Soviet Minister of Higher Education, did not work out, although at the time of the N.F.C.U.S. Conference the Russian student body involved approved the national exchange and was highly in favour.

In a report this week, Syd Wax, chairman of the International Activities Commission of N.F.C.U.S., stated "if it is the considered opinion of the (Canadian student representatives) that a Soviet visit should be undertaken, the visit can be arranged in a very short time and in a most efficient manner."

He also told of correspondence with the Canadian Government regarding the exchange, and said "It would appear from their replies that the Department of External Affairs would not oppose such a visit provided it did not take place under Communist auspices."

This, then, was the situation when the N.F.C.U.S. Conference took its first vote on the question at the Conference last week. In favour of the Russians visiting here were eleven universities, with four against and five abstentions. In favour of Canadian students going to Russia were ten universities, with four against and six abstentions.

Acadia, Dalhousie, Bishop's, Mt. Allison and U.N.B. favoured the visits, but suggested that the number to be exchanged be reduced. Manitoba favoured the principle of the exchange, but said they would vote against it if any of the universities threatened to withdraw because if it, Laval voted against the plan, and added that the unity of N.F.C.U.S. was threatened. McGill also cast their vote in favour of the exchange.

The Conference also received a telegram from Moscow, signed by the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth, which stated that the Russians favoured "exchange of student delegations between different countries on a reciprocal basis."