

The Gateway

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 1964

A Little Freedom -- Please!

Individual freedom of choice is one of the prerogatives of the citizen in democratic communities but this freedom can be constricted by government regulation. There is no doubt some regulation of society is necessary but the degree of that regulation can be too large.

Film censorship in the Province of Alberta is such a constriction on individual freedom. The recent banning of *Irma La Douce* and the threatened ban on *Tom Jones* affords yet another occasion on which this can be realized. The provincial government regulation, under which the Censorship Board operates (72-57) empowers it to "examine and approve or disapprove" of all films that an exhibitor may wish to show in the province. The board may "eliminate any subtitles, words or scenes that it considers objectionable." This is the *ONLY* criterion of judgment set out in the regulation and must prove as difficult to enforce as it is to define.

There has been a good deal of thought given to proposing an alternative scheme under which the Censorship Board would only have the power to place films in a category: Adults only, Children accompanied by Adults or Open to All. There would be no cutting or banning. This is not an invitation to licence; the Criminal Code (Section 150) provides both a description of obscenity and penalties for its publication; and who could doubt that

there would be groups ready to lay an information under this section should exhibitors transgress? For those who would plead the difficulties of enforcement it can be answered that liquor regulations as to age have been enforced with considerable success for many years.

We have, then, an old problem and a reasonable, but not new, solution; but what we are not getting is any *action!* This situation came out of the provincial legislature and that is the only body that can adjust it. For once a cause of action (in the recent banning of films of more than unusual interest) and a session of the legislature coincide.

What can be done? A "Bomb the Ban" campaign with protest marches, placards and demonstrations (orderly of course!) is one solution and despite the relatively bad odor of this method it may be the most effective in gaining both a hearing and publicity. What are the alternatives? Petitions, letters to the *Journal*, or even worse, editorial support from that organ, which past experience has shown to be disastrous.

Some way should be found to get the government to rectify the situation. No one is asking for a licence to show pornography but the chance to see for ourselves the pictures of our time. When the moviemakers of the world are growing up, can this province refuse to follow them? There may be better ways to achieve this end but we cannot, at this time, see them.

The Hollow Ring

The Canadian Union of Students gives as one of its main claims to fame the fact that it obtains travel discounts for students going abroad between sessions.

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that this achievement has resulted in little real benefit to the average university student—who pays to maintain the Canadian Union of Students.

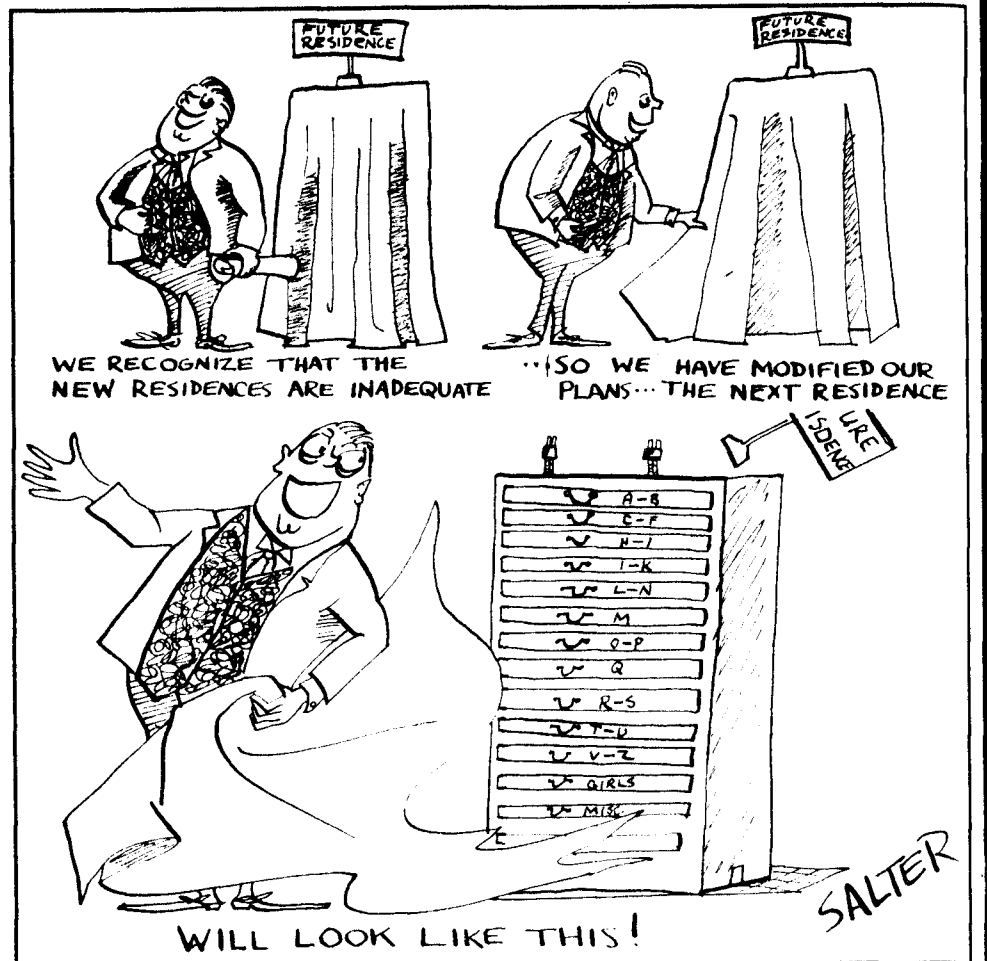
Although CUS has not released actual figures of how many students have taken advantage of the dis-

count service, it is common knowledge that the number is almost negligibly small.

And of whom does the small percentage of beneficiaries consist? Of the more affluent students who are not so needy even of travel discounts.

The very large majority of students will not be able to jet to Europe for a holiday between sessions. Thus they will realize no advantage from the travel discounts.

It appears, then, that the CUS boast about travel discounts as a good service rings hollow



"AT TWICE THE PRESENT RATE, OF COURSE"

What the hell

by Jon Whyte

A FURTHER FABLE FOR OUR TIME

Many, many years ago in a small country there lived a ruler who had great concern for the moral well-being of his citizenry.

Because the people of the state were liable to be influenced by advertising of intoxicating beverages the ruler forbade any such promotional matter. Mathematical texts had to be revised because the number six or sixty-nine might be included in them, and the weak might be influenced by these subliminal overtures. The expression "O.K." was also removed from the vocabulary because it might have overtones.

But the protection did not serve all of its ends. It was found that the people continued to partake of beer and other beverages. And although ginger ale was allowed to be advertised there was no appreciable increase in sales of that drink.

And the weak citizens were found to be even weaker in their appreciation of the cinema. The evil outside world was attempting to influence the citizens and lower them to the same depths of turpitude it was engulfed in.

Thus the ruler deemed it necessary to appoint a national censor who would excise any portions of films which the populace should not see.

This censor, a Col. Phlegming, was thought perfect for the job by the ruler because the colonel had never had a nasty thought in his life and would be able to see any corruption which any film contained.

Many films about problems that the rest of the world was having, such as juvenile delinquency, were of no import to the small country which had not yet been corrupted by

the lands beyond. "We have a rat free nation," the ruler stated, "and we intend to keep it clean."

Other films about alcoholism and sex and prostitution were not allowed to be shown. The piety of the nation had to be preserved.

And thus were the citizens of that country saved from wickedness. Some argued that if the people could not have an outlet for their desires via vicarious means they might find it necessary to undertake empirical studies of their own, but the ruler felt this was not enough of a danger to offset the danger of biting of the tree of knowledge.

And so the citizens lived in paradise all the days of their lives.

Looking Back through The Gateway

February 24, 1933

"Great hope is felt that the World Economic Conference will solve the difficulties which are preventing business recovery; certainly its failure would be a sad commentary on the intelligence of those directing the course of world affairs."

March 10, 1933

"The inauguration of a new president of the United States has titillated the yellower portion of the press to express their delight at the prospect of what is familiarly known as 'a new deal.' The human race is much like a drowning man—it will clutch wildly at a straw in a frantic effort to save itself . . . no one human being, or his immediate political satellites, can evolve an immediate panacea for present problems."