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Deathless Quote of the Week

Rt. Hon. John D. Diefenbaker, speaking upon his arrival in Halifax last week said: "I am happy to be in this city and am gratified to know that there is in Halifax, that identical feeling of Canadianism that means so much to each and every one of us, as fellow Canadians." O.K., Dief, we give up. What does it mean?

Kabitzer's Corner— POOR NFCUS-STILL CLUTCHING AT STRAWS

by BOB SCAMMELL

The so-called mass petition protesting the execution of 150 Hungarian students has bogged down because no one is sure that there are any students that are to be executed. Rumor has it that all the furor started from an aside Ed Sullivan made on one of his recent big, big, "shews". So out at UBC they decided that still another petition should be started, and the hue and cry went across the nation.

As Goes The University So Goes Nobody Else

With the arrival today of Mr. Pearson, the stirrings of campus politics are already in the air; it is singularly unfortunate that they are little place else.

Outside the quiet reserve of Studley, however, the results of campus electioneering are expanded and analysed in a far more profound light. It is popularly seen as the result of competent reasoning by Canada's young intellectual elite (such as it is) on the far-reaching effects of political policy. Consequently it is thought to give a guide to equally thorough political and economic decisions in the future.

These elections are seen also by more optimistic observers from one side or the other, as the result of intelligent consideration by the students, the meat of which will inevitably seep through to the ordinary citizens. The hope is that this citizen will gradually accept a modified and simplified truth, as it is made explicit in campus elections by his "intellectual superiors."

There is still abroad, if you like, the idea that as the universities go, so gradually will go the nation. If one may go by Dalhousie, it is a blatant deception.

The significance of this campus' results can be seen only in the present sterile context of the national or provincial political scene. The University is in a position to show how reasonably intelligent people are reacting to the myriad of cunningly devised political influences and even some that aren't devised. Indeed, campus elections may very well show how the prospective leaders of our society may react in the future, but only if the political status quo remains the same. It would be a mistake to say "as goes the nation, so go the universities", because student tendencies are towards light-hearted rebellion. It would be a far graver mistake to say that there is a distinct equality about university political thought that sets it apart, and gives it some measure of universality.

Why? The reason is simple. There are no issues. To put it bluntly, nothing is said, and not, we suggest, because there is nothing to be said.

The lack of divergent political philosophies, although hindering parliamentary vitality, does not prevent spirited discussion on thoroughly stimulating issues, even if these are the practical application of thought which many regard as practically truistic.

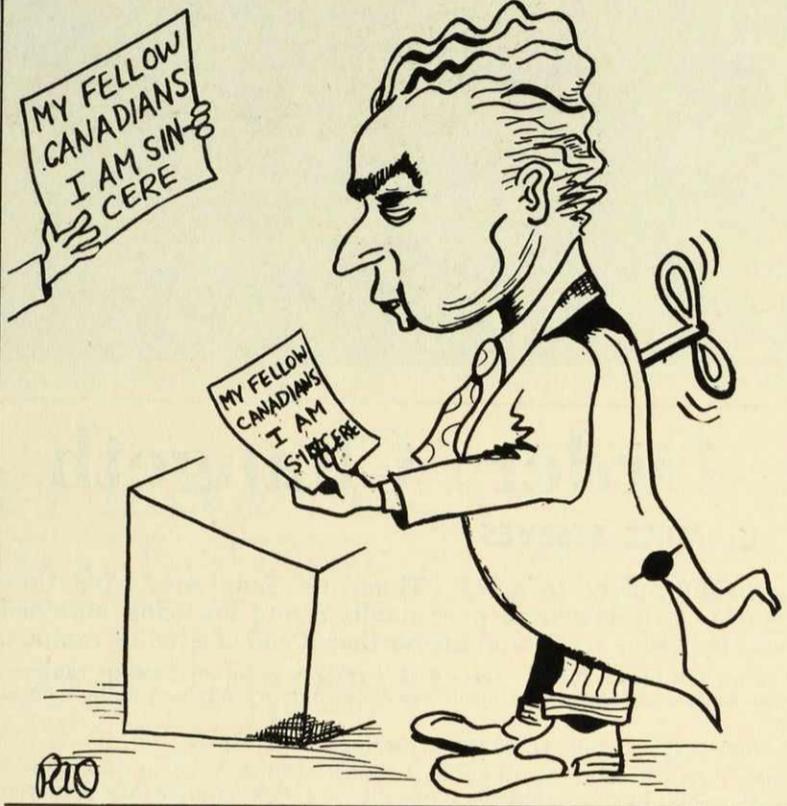
If the university voice is to mean anything, we must seriously come to grips with such issues as education, foreign policy and trade, provincial subsidiaries and American investment, and not be content with the listless mouthings of party slogans which are all too prevalent.

The campus politician (assuming certain qualities) is in an exceedingly fortunate position. He is appealing to an audience of above average intelligence, with all media for political knowledge at its disposal, and he is untrammelled by the economic, social and cultural pressures which pull on Ottawa like a disjointed marionette master.

In a somewhat varified atmosphere he should theoretically determine basic (if only idealistic) political truths for Canada and his government's consequential action. Certainly this is not an unhealthy atmosphere for the aspiring politician who will be forced to realize his limitations soon enough. As well, it gives a theoretical picture of Canadian government for the average student to build up into a realistic conception of this country's politics.

It is to be hoped that the "bluster" of our debating will not find its way again to "model parliament" next term to be manifested in adolescent name-calling and people who say vite "—" because "it is the party of the people", and leave it at that.

"MY FELLOW CANADIANS (TICK)... I ASSURE YOU... THAT I AM (TICK) SINCERE..."



Give Us a Chance To Learn

Experiencing the first symptoms of "examinitis" this week, a GAZETTE editor reluctantly opened the university calendar to the Almanac page to see what the "powers that be" had in store for him. He was amazed at two sets of entries:

Dec. 9 W.—Last day of lectures in classes in which Christmas Examinations are held.

Dec. 11 F.—Christmas Examinations begin.

and Apr. 22 F.—Last day of classes in Arts and Science and 3rd and 4th years in Dentistry.

Apr. 25 M.—Spring Examinations begin, in above.

That leaves one day between the last day of classes and the first examination at Christmas, and two days for the corresponding interval in the spring.

Who was the idiot?

It strikes us that anyone who could co-ordinate a whole term's work, not to mention a complete course, in one or two days would have to possess mental powers bordering on the supernatural.

We have no quarrel with the professor who argues that the student should keep his work up to date right through the year, and who feels that the crammer ought not to be encouraged. He's right.

But those same professors are likely to be the ones who organize their courses so badly that they have to pile up half the year's work in the last three weeks, apparently expecting their classes to review past material at the same time.

And it seems to us that there can be little difficulty in setting examinations that will corner the crammer. The mass of detail that this type of student memorizes in the last few hours does not comprise education, and examinations, poor measures of learning though they may be, should at least separate the steady and hard-working thinker from those who "learn it by rote".

So why can't we have at least a week to correlate and organize whatever we have learned?

FOUND

A man's watch. Apply to Room 38 Arts Building. This offer goes for one week only.

Only at old McGill did the Students' Council refuse to back the petition, basing their boggling on the grounds that Canada's External Affairs Department knew from nothing about 150 condemned Hungarian students.

So now NFCUS is frantically trying to verify the reports so that all those signatures will not go to waste.

I am slightly more than somewhat amused by the whole thing.

Although they will be quick to deny they ever gave active support to the petition, there can be no doubt that NFCUS was beaming with pleasure at the whole movement.

And the present frantic scrambling to verify that in fact 150 Hungarian students have been or soon will be executed adds strength to a pet contention of mine—that NFCUS clutches at more straws than a Nebraska hay-baler.

NFCUS needs an issue oh so badly!

Since it first started (Does anyone remember when?) NFCUS has been devoted to self-preservation. Everything it has done since has been done only to strengthen its position and make it look indispensable to the Canadian student.

People will point to discounts, life insurance, sundry briefs to the government, and a somewhat vague promise of an income tax reduction to students to prove me wrong.

Bloody but unbowed, I will still assert that these "advantages" to the students have been nothing more than public relations ploys.

And NFCUS is the only organization I know that has to tread the tight-wire of public relations with its own members.

NFCUS is akin to a trade union in the sense that in order to appear to be doing more than keeping itself alive, it has to appear also to be protecting the varied interests of the downtrodden student.

The major trouble is that NFCUS is certain that it has to clutch at foreign straws to find these downtrodden students.

So! NFCUS crams petition after petition down our throats about the woes of students in any country—any country but Canada.

I am getting tired of deploring so many things related to the lives of students in Hungary, China, and etcetera, when there are so many things to deplore right here in Canada.

Perhaps NFCUS is right. Perhaps they have to clutch at foreign straws because the Canadian student is quite satisfied with things as they go from day to day.

At UBC last year, the fees jumped as much as 50 per cent in some courses; at U. of A., the city raised bus fares to students; at the University of Ottawa this year, the administration put out a "students' handbook" that did everything but tell the students when, where, and how they could blow their noses.

And where was NFCUS then? Back clutching at foreign straws. Only at U. of A. did they attempt even a petition.

Only at UBC did a small group of students take matters into their own hands and stage a small, but admirable riot. The riot NFCUS deplored.

Perhaps this is the trouble: NFCUS completely fails to catch the imagination of any but the chosen few NFCUS zealots.

In fact, I would go as far as to suggest that no national or international student organization has ever caught fire in North America.

NFCUS should realize this, stop printing their pitiful petitions, and let us riot on our own behalf when, and if, we are so inclined.

—Stay Sober.