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—Ken Hutchinson photo

THAT MOST AUGUST BODY, THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

By ELAINE VERBICKY

Things may change at the top of the ivory tower.

First the provincial government revised the University Act. Then the General Faculty Council was restructured. The professors were getting democracy.

Now, a move to get students represented on the Board of Governors.

U of A students' council is currently preparing a brief proposing direct representation at all board meetings by the president of students' council.

But should students have visiting privileges or a seat on the board? A voice or a vote? The answer to these questions will come with the answer to another—will the board change its policy of holding all meetings in camera?

MAY BE CALLED

As the situation now stands, students may be invited to make a presentation to the board when it is discussing matters of direct student concern—like residence rate increases.

The students attending the meeting are bound by the in camera ruling, and cannot bring back a detailed report of discussions. The Board of Governors decides what will be made public and what will not.

As well, the agendas of board meetings are not made public. Students have no way of knowing when a particular matter is coming up for consideration, and no time to prepare an adequate presentation of the student view.

The council brief (unrevised) proposes a line of communication—all agendas and other material go to a student member of the board, and he attends and speaks, "as of right", at any meeting on any matter the board is discussing.

NO VOTING SEAT

The proposal does not ask for a voting seat. If the representative were voting, it says, "he would be obliged to act in the best interests of the board, to the detriment of the interest of the students' union."

"If he were a voting member, he would be obliged to support and accept a reasoned final decision against which he may have voted."

Non-voting representation would mean the students' union reserved the right to protest any decision of the board.

However, a vote would mean the students would not be just making themselves heard. They would be making themselves felt. A vote would be power in decision-making.

Dr. J. E. Bradley, chairman of the Board of Governors, commented, "It is important that the board have direct communication with the student body. Personally, I don't think a one-year term with voting rights for a student would be too valuable."

Asked whether a student representative could take any matter out of the board meetings to students' council for consideration, he said, "It couldn't be done. There could be no feed-back. The board's decisions are confidential."

Would Dr. Bradley be in favor of open or partly-open meetings? "It couldn't be done," he said. "There is interference in the development of policy when you have open meetings."

BIG BUSINESS MAN

Dr. Bradley explained that the function of the Board of Governors is like the executive of a large corporation—financing and building. He felt that the board was not concerned directly with student life.

University president Dr. W. H. Johns was against student membership on the Board of Governors. "Why should it be?" he asked.

"We do get expression of student opinion now.

"The president and vice-president of your students' council attended part of our meeting on Friday. There should be no difficulty in students presenting their views."

Dr. Johns also opposed open board meetings. He said he thought there would be no advantage to students in having the meetings open.

GO SOMEWHERE ELSE

He suggested other forums where students and the university exchange views are adequate now. "I'm all for staff-student communication," he said, "and I think the Council on Student Affairs is very effective this way."

When last year's students' council requested two voting seats on the Board of Governors, the board opposed the idea, but two board members, Mr. Louis A. Desrochers and Chancellor Dr. F. P. Galbraith, filed a minority report in favor of student representation.

"I favored it in the report and I haven't changed my mind since," he commented. "A student there would be a great convenience in deliberations because he could always be relied upon to let us know

the thinking of students on certain matters."

SOME FOR IT

Mr. Desrochers said he personally favored open meetings, "so long as the committee of the whole was still available.

Students' union president Branny Schepanovich would like to see the union president as a non-voting member of the board. He commented on the question of open meetings, "Council executive rejects the CUS policy of open decision making. There are reasons why the board deliberations should be kept secret in the best interests of the university." He felt that it was largely a question of sound business procedure.

Board member Mr. R. K. Banister added, "If meetings were open to the public, we would not get the free comment within the meetings. Right now there is a variety of opinion freely expressed.

"In an open meeting, it would be curtailed," he said.

So the debate goes. Soon the union will make a second attempt to place students on the board. The questions of voice or vote and open decision-making are the contentious issues.

UBC - a closed shop

reprinted from The Ubysey

UBC president John Macdonald Monday sent The Ubysey the board of governor's refusal to allow the paper to report board meetings.

The statement read in part:

"The Ubysey has compared the university to a municipality. This is not a valid comparison. The university is not legislative body, but an institution devoted to learning.

"The Board of Governors has vested in it by the Universities Act the management and control of the property, revenue business and affairs of the university.

THE ATMOSPHERE

"The board wishes to conduct its business in an atmosphere conducive to sound decision-making. Many of the items on each agenda are necessarily of a confidential nature.

"It is easier for the board to consider proposed policies and decisions in an objective and analytical way when meetings are in camera rather than in the environment of a public meeting."

IMPROVING

The statement continued, giving ways in which the board felt communication is now being improved, for example student-faculty advisory committees and student liaison committees.

Student leaders were disappointed with the decision.

"Decisions of the board should be made open as are the deliberations of city councils," said AMS president Peter Braund. "The AMS is committed to open board meetings, except where personnel information is involved.

TOO SECRET

"The board says it is interested in establishing lines of communication—open meetings would only add to this communication.

"At present, decisions are being made where students don't know what segment of their opinion is being considered."

AMS first vice-president Charlie Boylan was opposed to the decision.

"For once I agree with the editorial policy of the Vancouver Province. They state the case simply—the university is a public institution paid for by public funds, therefore the decision-making body of that institution should have open meetings.

ELITE ANGLE

"The letter to The Ubysey from the board says the board is responsible to the province as a whole—why then are all its members from the corporate elite? The people most concerned with higher education are the students and faculty, and they should be represented.

"It's not enough to express opinions as such, we want to share in the process of decision making."

Over the last several weeks Casserole has run a series of articles by Howard Moffett on the Vietnam scene. The analysis on C-4 and 5 is the conclusion.

We ran Moffett's articles not because we think Vietnam is particularly relevant to university students as students—it isn't—but because it is a student view and a view with a difference.

Of the 500-odd newsmen in Saigon and Vietnam, Moffett seems to say something other than the usual one-sided trash in the other media.



On the cover this week is a photo by Wm. C. Stenton, past leader of U of A's award winning photogs. Stenton took this shot at Banff during that other great student exodus to the slopes—Christmas. The girl, whose name slips our mind, looks like she is getting her money's worth, even though it isn't guest weekend.

Stenton was photo director from 1962-64.

Other articles include a write-up on the board of governors by Elaine Verbicky, a Gateway staff reporter, on C-2, a run-down on Frontier College on C-3, and an article on the failure of activism on C-5.

This last article tells the sad tale of ideas gone bad. The activists aren't writing the briefs or keeping the books all across the U.S. The result is a slow-down.

We hope the thinkers here aren't caught in the same bind.