

Traditions in change

Student Government History # 40

In number 39 we saw how in early March 1927 the newly elected Council decided to streamline its Executive. At the same time it made the most important appointments. Finally, perhaps in response to a GAZETTE hint that Dalhousie sports and activities were existing on a backwater level, the new Council debated at its first meeting the question of raising the students' fee. Although the Secretary-Treasurer felt that the matter was "time-honoured" the Council immediately delayed action until it could discuss things with the old Council.

That discussion was scheduled for March 22. It turned out that an inconclusive discussion of NFCUS membership was all that took place between the two Councils. It resulted in a referral to the executive for further study, and the fee issue was conveniently forgotten. Breaking with decades of tradition the outgoing Council did not meet in April or May.

The newspaper remained active, however. In mid-March an editorial declared that "we have too few radicals in our college". Soon afterwards the GAZETTE took up a suggestion made by the student Editor at the U. of New Hampshire and urged that the leaders of the five leading students activities be given Council seats with voting rights. The reason was co-ordination and more pleasant relations that were to result.

The first students picked out by the Malcolm Honour Society for their outstanding contributions were Avis Marshall and Fred McInnes. Both had served several years on Council and the executive as well as leading other organizations. March 27, 1927 was the date of the first Dalhousie radio broadcast. It was a program prepared by the Glee Club for CHNS.

At the close of the year University President

Stanley MacKenzie issued a statement acclaimed the quality and abundance of student spirit in 1926-27. He stressed especially the good work become by the Committee of Nine which dealt with student/Senate matters. The growing refinement of student activities was also welcomed by him. The outgoing and incoming Council officers also took advantage of the occasion to congratulate all concerned.

The fall of 1927 featured the first real Orientation Week to be held at Dalhousie. New students were treated to a series of lectures by student leaders and university authorities. There were also athletic events, entertainment and tours of the Studley and Forrest campuses. This innovation followed immediately the success of another innovation, the year book. It was 84 pages long, featuring messages from university officials, description of student activities, photographs, biographies and autographs of the graduates.

The first Council meeting was thrown open to the public by President Godsoe. Until then the meetings had always been in camera. At the meeting NFCUS was still on the Council's mind. Interest had been stimulated by the NFCUS proposal for a Maritimes debating team to tour western Canada. Council decided to get more information for the executive to consider before it reported on the matter of membership in the national organization. The Council appointed Ewan Clark a Dalhousie representative at the U. of Toronto Centenary Celebration. Much of the time at the meeting was taken up with scheduling of dances and major athletic events.

In addition to the routine business that had accumulated during the summer Council tackled a sore point of several years standing - the King's

fees. A different approach was taken this time, with the Dalhousie university government being approached first of all. Again the Council decided not to discuss its own compulsory fee. The last item was a decision to try renegotiation of the agreement with the university for financing and upkeep of the bleachers on Studley Field.

The 1927-28 enrollment of 807 was the largest in Dalhousie's history. Just before World War I it had been thought that enrollment of 1,000 would only be achieved in the 1960's. Although only a few students had attended the first Council meeting it was decided that in the future all meetings would be open, a custom which has continued in the years since.

NFCUS became more and more prominent. The GAZETTE devoted an unusually long editorial to the organization. This included the fact that a two-time President of the Dalhousie Students' Council, Norman A. M. MacKenzie, had assisted in the December 1926 formation of NFCUS. MacKenzie participated as a member of the League of Nations Labour Bureau.

Late in October the Council was informed that a dispute was emerging over payment for the upkeep of the football field. There was also the bad news that the university officials refused to get tangled in the King's fee question. However, they did say that the fees going from King's students to the Dalhousie administration were only for general university expenses. This left untouched the problem of King's students benefitting from Dalhousie student undertakings and not paying anything towards them. The Council tried again with a proposal that the matter be referred to a joint committee representing the governors and students of each university.

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Separate Convocations

by Roger Metcalf

The Honorary Degrees Committee surrendered to the Faculty of Law at the January meeting of Senate. The signal was the Committee's recommendation that there be separate convocations this spring for Law, Dentistry and Health Professions.

In December Senate agreed to a separate convocation for Medicine, because of their late exams. In January, the other separate convocations were approved, as recommended by the Committee. After these decisions only Arts and Science and Graduate Studies are left to participate in the general University convocations.

For several years Senate has gone through the charade of first agreeing with the Committee that there should be no separate convocations, then agreeing with a delegation from Law that there should be separate convocations where requested.

This year, faced with increased demand for separation, the Committee decided that it would not even try to convince Senate that general convocations should be enforced.

The only vocal opposition to the surrender was Dr. Hicks, who stated once again his opinion that it was ridiculous for Dalhousie to have six convocations and that the President could no longer be expected to attend all of them. As in the past it is likely that Vice-Presidents will confer the degrees at several of

the convocations.

Arts and Science admission policy was the other matter of some substance dealt with at the January meeting of Senate. Two important changes were approved.

Commencing immediately, Grade 12 in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island will be treated as the equivalent to Grade 12 in Nova Scotia. This will permit students from those provinces to enter Dalhousie earlier than has been the case.

There is some concern that the change may have an effect on relations with other universities in the region. As well as increasing the number of potential Dalhousie students, Dalhousie will now compare more favourably with institutions such as the University of New Brunswick.

New Brunswick students will need Grade 13 to enter a three-year bachelor programme in Fredericton, but only Grade 12 for entrance into a comparable programme at Dalhousie.

A second change, to go into effect in September 1976, will require that at least half of the classes, including half in the field of concentration, be taken at Dalhousie to obtain a Dal first degree or diploma in Arts and Science.

This will restrict the number of potential Dalhousie students. However, it is reported that most leading universities have similar or stricter requirements.

Dr. Hicks unexpectedly

renewed discussion of the composition of Senate and Senate Council, asking whether a committee should be formed to look into the matter.

Since the item had not been on the agenda members did not react at once. Dr. Hicks mentioned that slight imbalance on Senate Council in favour of administrative officials. Several members of Senate spoke for and against the present system of composition, which results in about 250 members of whom about 30 attend meetings regularly.

An attempt to delay action on the matter indefinitely was defeated, and instead it was placed on the agenda of the next meeting. In the meantime members will have an opportunity to consider the question.

It is well over a year since Senate requested action on its composition, and that of Senate Council. The Senate Council had several inconclusive debates each time delaying because of impending administrative changes. The last possible change in the near future is Dal-Tech merger, so there is no longer much of an excuse to hold off on a review of the composition.

Student representatives have been in the forefront of agitation for a review of Senate composition. It remains to be seen whether they will take advantage of this new opportunity to press for the best possible review of the membership qualifications.