

Dalhousie Gazette

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Council Votes

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REFERENDUM ON GILLIS

Dalhousie students will vote Thursday December 11 to decide if present President W. Bruce Gillis should remain as Student Union chief. The motion to herald such a referendum was passed after an initial motion calling for the resignation of the President was defeated by Council. It was felt that the decision regarding Mr. Gillis' fate is one warranting the ultimate expression of the student body as a whole.

In presenting the original motion of non-confidence Science Representative Hugh Nicholson, outlined his reasons. He cited the instance of the George Report, where, he said, the President had acted "completely without regard for the sentiments of the Student Council".

by Andrew Cochran

Secondly, he thought Mr. Gillis' actions during the CUS referendum held in October, were somewhat questionable. He concluded his remarks by stressing that the motion was motivated by the President's "misuse of powers granted to him", and that the number of incidents where this was evident "would force one to bring about a motion of non-confidence".

Arts Rep Trevor Parsons, seconder of the motion, warned Council that all of Mr. Gillis' objections would be on technicalities, which "he used to get out of quite a bit". He went on to add that as President, the third year law student was attempting to serve his own political ends, where he should instead be "serving the ends of the students of this university".

D. A. Campbell, Internal Affairs Secretary, supported Gillis' position in her remarks. She expressed the view

that he was in a difficult position, and it was "unfortunate that Bruce made a mistake".

In the course of Mr. Gillis' ensuing remarks, he offered explanations to partly refute the allegations intended in the motion. For each, instance mentioned, he countered with his variation of the situation. On the whole, he attributed the matter largely to a problem of apathy on the part of the Council.

Throughout the rest of the debate, both members and observers, from an audience of over 100 students gave their opinions pro and con relating to the issue of non-confidence.

What was perhaps the classic commentary on the discussion came from Law Representative (interim), Bob Hamilton. In obvious disgust, he said, "How 1 or 2 people at 1 or 2 tables can cause all this ruckus is so utterly amazing." He was referring to controversy surrounding the question of selling in the Student Union Building lobby.

Kirk MacCulloch - member-at-large - was the first to make mention of polling the student body about the matter. "After all, who are we (the Council) to accuse?"

After a close defeat of the first motion of non-confidence (6 in favor; 9 opposed; 2 abstentions), a motion calling for a referendum was moved by Graduate Rep Larry Fredericks. Seconded by Cathy Smiley, the question, of the referendum is to be "The President of the Student Union should resign. Yes/No". Decision to adopt the campus-wide vote was supported by all but two Councillors

Questioned immediately after the end of the meeting, President Gillis declined comment. All he had to say was, "I really haven't had time to think about it all... anything I'd say now would probably be incoherent".

At any rate, assuredly this Christmas vacation will be one of significance for, W. Bruce Gillis, either as a welcomed vacation, or as the beginning of an early retirement....



Gillis must face student vote.

Vote obscures council feeling No Real Support

"I don't think he's shown himself to be responsible in his position as president". This opinion comes from a Council member who voted against a motion to have Union President Bruce Gillis resign his position.

There is more opposition on students' council to Gillis' rule than Tuesday night's vote on the resolution calling for his resignation would indicate.

The vote was nine against, six in favor, with two abstentions, but within minutes of the count it became apparent that it could easily have swung the other way had hindsight been at hand earlier.

Vice-president Derryn Crowston said that she had abstained on the assumption that she would be implicated by the vote and to avoid possible conflicting interests. When Gillis ignored this customary procedure and voted to save himself, V. P. Crowston revealed her feelings and said, "I would've voted 'for' (the non-confidence motion)."

After the meeting, Science Rep Cathy Smiley and member-at-large Kirk MacCulloch, both of whom opposed the motion, said that they should have abstained on the vote because they personally wish to see Gillis removed but felt that it was not their decision to make. They will actively oppose Gillis in the Dec. 11 referendum called to determine whether his term of office will be aborted.

The vote thus might have been 7-7-3. This is, in itself, conjectural and not what really did happen at voting time, but it does illustrate the precarious nature of Gillis' position in relation to the members of council.

The article on page 2 is based on a conversation with councillors Smiley and MacCulloch in which they talked about their feelings toward Gillis and those of the Council as a whole. The reasons for the grounds well of opposition inside the student council offices can be found in the remarks of two people "on the inside".



The great "not-so-silent" majority registers their opposition to Gillis motion.

Council Reps say Gillis "irresponsible"

Council Opposition Widespread

Vote Misleading

Science rep Cathy Smiley and member-at-large Kirk MacCulloch both voted against the motion of non-confidence despite agreement with its intent.

C. S. "First of all, I was thinking about whether I was going to resign or not and I decided against resigning because that would be irresponsible and wouldn't be making any move to change the structure it would just leave the same problem for someone else. Then I got to thinking about what I'd done as a Council rep in terms of my own constituents and what Bruce had done in terms of Council and the student body and decided that they were somewhat similar. Therefore, I didn't feel that I was in a position as a Council rep to (criticize Bruce for being unrepresentative and unreflective of what Council was saying, although I certainly realize that he has been... and he's been dead wrong. That's why I voted against the motion of non-confidence, but because, as a student I feel that he hasn't been doing his job as president, I'm going to work against him in the referendum."

K. M. "I voted against the resolution because I didn't feel I had the right to personally vote to throw Bruce out of office. He was elected by the students and a conflict between some of the Council members and the president was not sufficient reason to he has to get out of office, especially in my situation where I'm not elected by the student body at all. I'm elected by council. Secondly, Bruce has done a lot of things that I have found very frustrating and have not approved of at all, but he hasn't made one big boo-boo that I could hang my hat on and say this is an absolute atrocity and I just can't tolerate this at all... it's been more a slow development of a feeling."

The point was brought out repeatedly during the discussion... the feeling of frustration and the suspicion of Gillis' motivation

C. S. "I don't think he's shown himself to be responsible in his position as president. I don't think he's acted in accordance with the desires expressed in particular by council members. He hasn't communicated to Council the things that he should... he's

omitted to tell us certain things that he should tell us... little things that he learns from President Hicks and from letters gets in the mail, other things that go on at meetings he attends. It's getting to the point of frustration right now."

K. M. "How sincere is this man?" How interested is he in fulfilling the role of president when he rarely shows up for executive meetings or shows up only for a few minutes, and shows up for council without any great consistency recently?"

C. S. "Sometimes it's hard to say what the interests are that he's got in mind. (Has this become a general suspicion on your part?) Yes."

Commerce Rep Resigns

One definite resignation has resulted from the controversy concerning President Bruce Gillis. Daphne Shedd, Commerce Rep, submitted her resignation to Council last night (December 2). Her action was preceded by the Commerce Society's vote of non-confidence in her Council representation earlier that day.

The Society has consistently supported the position of Bruce Gillis in the dispute over the sale of literature in the SUB lobby. Miss Shedd opposed his position. The Commerce Society instructed her to vote in support of Mr. Gillis in the debate at the Council meeting dealing with the motion calling for his resignation.

She explained to Council members that she would vote against the motion, but because of personal conflict, she was going to resign.

Miss Shedd is the third Councillor to resign this year from the Students' Council. A by-election will be held in the near future to fill her vacated post.

K. M. "I feel a great disappointment in Bruce personally which I have expressed to him in private, and I've warned him that this sort of thing could happen, in fact I warned him last week. I think that no matter who replaces Bruce next year, or sooner,

the same problem is going to arise with the structure. We have a lot of well-intentioned people on council.

Maybe Bruce was well-intentioned when he started, but there a lot of other people who just feel absolute frustration at the whole system and who are well-intentioned... Jeanie Macdonald, Derryn Crowston, the Vice President, hasn't done anything but not because she's not willing... there are a lot of people who just throw up their hands... Bob Hamilton, the most influential and brilliant person, losing him through frustration... really bad"

C. S. "We all started out with really good intentions then... I don't know... it got frustrating and we couldn't find ways and means of accomplishing anything."

K. M. "The Council was spirited... people have become too cynical... you've seen the trouble we have getting a quorum... it's too late now."

C. S. "I don't think Bruce enjoys the whole-hearted support of anyone on Council at this point"

We then asked the councillors if they felt Gillis would win the referendum, and if his attitude would change as a result of the criticism.

C. S. "I think it's quite possible that Bruce is going to win the referendum. I suspect that I'll have quite a time trying to convince them (my own constituents) that Bruce really isn't fit to be president." On his attitude: "It may just harden a bit"

K. M. "I think he's lost already. There's an unhealthy attitude between the Council and the president, generally speaking, now. It's the result of two things: the office of president is both a personality and a position within a structure. We have had to work with a structure that isn't very effective as far as representivity and efficiency go. Still, given the structure, if everybody is sincerely interested and enthusiastic enough, we can accept an inadequate structure and still do the best job possible. But this is where the individual personality comes in, and if one individual in a key position, the president, is not an initiator, is not a leader, is not open to consensus then the structure which is inefficient becomes inoperative."

How to destroy an able Council - death by suffocation. But even the dying have been known to perform extraordinary acts to save themselves before going under for the third time.



Kirk MacCulloch
Cathy Smiley

Fed up . . . Gone

Daphne Shedd
Bob Hamilton

GILLIS

MUST

RESIGN

Bruce Gillis has been steadily losing the confidence of his Students Council and even of his own executive over the past four months.

While the first censure motion in the fall failed by a large majority to pass, it was indicative of trouble on the horizon for Mr. Gillis. At that time, although they did not censure him, Council pointedly reprimanded the President for his unilateral actions. They told him, in effect to shape up, but he failed to do so.

He acted unilaterally on the George Report. Council meeting, on the Sunday afternoon before the Monday Senate meeting, strongly expressed their disapproval of the recommendations of the George Report. Mr. Gillis, a Senator, voted in favor of the recommendations against the wishes of Council. They later affirmed their stand in a written protest over the report, yet Council could not, in effect, trust their President to speak for them at the Senate meeting.

This is not an isolated incident. Neither is the recent controversy over Mr. Gillis' handling of the literature table affair. Mr. Gillis understood the wishes of Council in the matter, yet he chose to throw in a "red herring", one of the so-called technicalities, to obscure rather than clarify the debate. Failing with this tactic, he resorted to the tantrum stage of calling a new meeting because he didn't get his way.

Then, of course, there is the moral question of distribution of campaign literature during the CUS referendum. On voting day Mr. Gillis distributed leaflets about CUS which contained fallacious statements. It was election day and too late for the other side to respond. While it has been noted that through a technicality in the Constitution, he was not acting illegally, it does not make it morally justified.

This, then, is the basic question in the upcoming referendum. Has Mr. Gillis been

morally justified in acting against the wishes of Council?

He argues that his mandate is from the students, and not from the Council. While this may be true, how has Mr. Gillis attempted to ascertain student thought?

He has not done it through open meetings of the student body. The first student body meeting this year was held on Tuesday and Mr. Gillis was requested to call that meeting by a number of students. Perhaps there is some mysterious process of osmosis through which Mr. Gillis can ascertain student opinion.

He, like most Presidents, has been isolated by his job from the student body as a whole. Though concomitant with his role as Student Council President rather than through personal desire to provide Mr. Gillis with student opinion.

With these avenues, shut off, he had only two choices: talk to his friends or talk to Student Council. He has chosen to talk only with his friends. Council at least can claim to be elected; the same cannot be said for many of Mr. Gillis' allies, and it seems ludicrous for a man who campaigned on the slogan "We want what you want", to now ignore the only potential source of representative student opinion on campus.

There is another tragedy in all of this: his decision to isolate and ignore Council has negated the potential value of many an eager Student Council Representative. Cathy Smiley, Kirk MacCulloch, Bob Hamilton, Liz Cuzack, Tom Mitchell, and Jeanie MacDonald, among others, were eager to become involved but they were stymied by a lack of responsible leadership. Their frustrations have manifested themselves in apathy, disgust, and cynicism. Indeed his own Vice-President Perry Crowston, supported the call for a referendum.

It is illogical to make these criticisms of course without suggesting that there is an alternative. There is.

This Student Union can begin to operate on democratic principles. We can decide important questions in open meetings of the student body rather than in the cloistered chambers of the student council room.

We must not be afraid of open decision making by the student body, indeed, we should welcome it. The students are the ones for whom this union is operated, and it must be their decision in the end which is accepted and acted upon. This is a basic tenet of democracy.

However this does not negate a legitimate position for the Student Council in the structure of the student union.

They are a smaller group and in a better position to be aware of all the relevant arguments on a particular issue. Thus they cannot stay in their little rooms and argue their relevant arguments. They must get out among their constituents and convince them of the validity of their arguments. The best forum for this exchange and dialogue is in an open meeting of students.

Under our present system, again, once elected, Council is almost sacred. The cannot be impeached singly, but only as a body, and this proceeding must carry the signatures of fifty-one percent of the student body.

We require better mechanisms to rid ourselves of those Council members who are not acting in the interests of their constituents. Students must be able to exercise control over their elected members, or else the concept of rule by the people becomes meaningless.

Bruce Gillis has shown by his unilateral actions over the past four months that he is not even willing to work with his fellow elected representatives. How then can we expect him to work with/and for the student body as a whole?

The Gazette therefore supports the call for Mr. Gillis' resignation.

EDITORIAL

Meeting decides

Literature Can Be Sold

The students have decided, and sale of literature in the lobby of the SUB will be allowed. This decision from a heated meeting of the Dalhousie Student body Tuesday afternoon affirmed the official stand taken by Students' Council Sunday night. Dissemination of information, including sale at cost, is an essential part of freedom of speech, and on this ground, Council and the student body have supported the right of groups to sell material in the SUB lobby.

The decision made at the student body meeting was not so much in support of the right of students to sell literature as opposition to a motion presented by Council President Bruce Gillis. His motion however, would have effectively banned the sale of literature in the lobby.

The sometimes raucous meeting was chaired by Council's permanent Chairman Dennis Perlin, who prior to the meeting said: "I'll run the meeting if I can." He was forced on countless occasions to call for order as shouting and heckling erupted in the audience. The motion presented by Gillis claimed that the Building might lose its tax exempt status if students were allowed to sell in the building. However Student Union General Manager, John Graham, in an interview with the Gazette, while agreeing that it was a potential problem, doubted that the issue would arise. Grad student Kim Cameron went further. He termed the tax exemption issue "a red herring".

Debate centred mainly on the right of students to sell literature in the SUB and on the question of rules and regulations in the Building. The audience polarized and both sides were well represented in numbers. Several speakers castigated an unsigned pamphlet run off in the Commerce House which spoke of "non-Canadians" in their arguments against the DSM in what was termed an appeal to blind prejudice.

As the call for the vote arose, supporters of the Gillis faction shouted that I.D. cards should be shown to vote. Mr. Perlin, however ruled against this asking, "Can't we trust people at least that far?" He was also jeered when he ruled against a vote by ballot, saying it was not feasible. Results of the head-count vote declared Gillis' motion defeated by a 260-176 margin. Amid cries of "illegal", the meeting was adjourned. However President Gillis, then under his authority as President called another meeting immediately, declaring that in spite of the vote: "This issue has not been resolved."



Right caucus at Student Body Meeting

The battle was on again with another motion to adjourn this second meeting without discussing the issue again. "We voted on it already," lamented one student, "what's the point?" Two other students, including Student Council Rep., Liz Cusack, called on Gillis to resign. Gillis remained adamant. "I get my mandate from the students, not from Council," he declared, and warned that if this meeting was adjourned, he would call another one right away anyway. "And I'll go on calling them until this issue is resolved."

The meeting began to degenerate into a morass of charges and countercharges, as both the left-liberal coalition and the right-wing faction resorted to name-calling. Chairman Perlin then called for the vote on adjournment which was carried.

The results of the votes served to confirm a Council decision of Sunday night to permit selling on the building by student organizations, and ran counter to regulations set forth earlier by SUB Affairs Secretary Dave Stephenson.



Police Need Support

By Dorothy Wigmore

The Campus Police will no longer patrol the SUB during the day.

"On my own initiative, I've pulled all the Campus Police out until the situation is clarified for events of this nature," said Dave Bright, the head of the force Tuesday night, in reference to a recent confrontation between campus police and students over SUB regulations. They will still be in the building during their regular evening hours, but none of them were in uniform at the student body meeting Tuesday.

Bright says he is not getting support from Students' Council. "I'm employed by Students' Council and it's only fair to me to expect Students' Council to give me certain directions, i.e. should I enforce this rule, should I not enforce this rule. Is Students' Council willing to stand behind me if they tell me to enforce it? Apparently, it seems they're not."

Sunday night the Council voted to permit selling of literature at tables in the SUB foyer, overruling a decision Thursday by SUB Affairs Secretary, Dave Stephenson, that literature could not be sold in the SUB. The Campus Police have to enforce rules in the building, and the two different decisions have created an impossible situation, says Bright.

There are alternatives, he suggested. Hiring security people, bringing in the police if an incident occurs, or having nothing and leaving it up to individual responsible students, are possibilities.

"Or, you could have the Campus Police, respecting and carrying out the wishes of Council," he said. "If Council requests Campus Police be present to maintain order, the Campus Police will be present."