



Senate Safari

photo by CROMBIE

The Senate meeting of November 7, 1973 was a strange event indeed. Here were gathered those that form the "elite" of U.P.E.I.; that "elite" which possesses the power over the academic functioning on this campus.

First off, R.J. Baker, the chairman of the Senate, welcomed the new members of Senate that were elected by the faculty, and those elected by the student body. Everyone congratulated each other; patted each other on the back and proceeded to their monumental deliberations concerning the smooth and efficient running of this university.

The opening debate concerned the Tenure Document, of which I wrote two issues ago. Apparently Senate has been unable to devise a method to correctly decide the needs of the various departments; especially the number of professors each department should be allowed. After the odd comment from the odd senator this issue was refined to committee. ("when in doubt, mumble").

The next item involved the the maintenance of S.A.C.U. exams as a requirement for entrance into U.P.E.I. It appears that S.A.C.U. is not adding any information that high school transcripts do not already provide. M. Hennesey, registrar, asked Senate to remove the exams as an entrance requirement, and Senate complied.. However, the registrar then asked Senate to maintain S.A.C.U. as a means for judging the awarding of scholarships. This quest opened the door for the broader issue of why there are scholarships! Stan Dalton, newly elected senator, asked what were the criteria for awarding scholarships? No one seemed to know exactly what they were; except to say that there exists a committee which handles the problem of awarding scholarships and if the Senate desired, a report covering all aspects of the awarding

ng of scholarships could be presented at a future meeting. This suggestion put an end to the debate, and the problem of criteria for gaining scholarships faded away. Yet the S.A.C.U. problem remained! It was asked by Dean Edmonds what type of exams were used before the advent of S.A.C.U. President Baker informed Senate that the university had tried its own set of exams for scholarship purposes and they were a failure. At any rate this debate became very confused and the issue was quickly ended by a vote supporting the useage of S.A.C.U. for scholarships. In my opinion the whole matter of S.A.C.U. was railroaded through Senate without enough being known by the senators to effectively form an opinion on the matter; apparently the senators felt they knew enough! (I wonder if they even know what S.A.C.U. means?)

The final major area of debate, at the meeting, was the final exam issue. Since I expressed an anti-exam opinion in this journal (?) some time ago, I was particularly interested to see the majority view of Senate.

The discussion opened up with Ron Baker informing Senate that Prof. M. Foley, Dept. of English, is the chairman of the evaluation committee. Why Senate was given this information I do not know because Foley said absolutely nothing to the assembly concerning the exam issue. I, for one, expected a major presentation from that committee to help the senators form a more informed view.

So the discussion opened up with Prof. Ellison offering a very definite pro exam stance. Ellison (business Dept.) stated that unless some sort of final exam was made compulsory, the standards at U.P.E.I. would fall drastically in the eyes of other academic institutions.

Dean Edmonds, Faculty of Education, countered Ellison's view by informing Se-

nate of the new trend in high school evaluation procedures, namely the continuous evaluation method. This method, Edmonds noted, consists of daily recording of a student's progress or regress through the term with a final mark consisting mainly of the picture painted by this daily record. Edmonds further stated that the high schools using this method were finding it very successful.

Dean Duffy, Faculty of Science, pushed for departmental control of evaluation because of the vast difference of teaching techniques in the various departments and courses. He also offered that students on entering courses should be told in the first week of classes the evaluation procedures being used. He further stated that student opinion of evaluation procedures should be considered. This reporter got the impression that Dean Duffy was a soft liner on the compulsory exam issue.

Prof. Naylor, Dept. of Philosophy, stated flatly that he abhorred final exams as an effective method for determining a student's mark and if Senate forced exams on the university he would act out the motions of giving a final but would not consider it in evaluation of a student.

Prof. Love, Dept. of Mathematics, pushed heavily for compulsory final exams. He agreed with Prof. Ellison's view that standards would go down unless some sort of final exam were given in each course. Carol Ward, student union executive, expressed doubt that exams had anything to do with standards. As far as she could see exams had to do with quality of professors and content in the courses rather than a final exam.

This was the major portion of the debate that occurred.

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS: I was not impressed with the ma-

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