

## QUO VADIS

The Students Union must go! This is a phrase that is on the lips of a few students and in the minds of many at S.D.U. Some, no doubt, will be outraged at the thought of such action; however, the fact that this is being thought of shows that it is time for us, as students of Saint Dunstan's University, to take a soul-searching look at the methods and condition of our student government.

It must be said that the present system under which we operate is excellent—in theory—and in fact is quite good for a small school or university. The basic idea of this venerable institution is that all students know exactly what is being done by the members of the Students' Union, and that each student is given a chance to voice his opinions, publicly, at general meetings which are to be held once each month during the school year. A quorum for these meetings was to be fifty percent of the total student body and if not attained twenty-five percent would do for a second meeting. It is obvious that this concept embodies the true principles of democracy to such a degree that John Foster Dulles would probably like to sponsor it personally—if it worked. Now let us take away the gift-wrapping and take a look at how this democratic showpiece really works.

It has already been noted that general meetings are to be held every month with quorum stipulations as noted above. In looking back over the years, it may be seen that this particular part of the constitution has given rise to great difficulties and also to diverse methods of solving them. In all due justice to the present administration, it must be said that last fall a rather sincere effort was made to manufacture enthusiasm for these meetings. I say "manufacture" because that is literally what was done. Some of the upper classmen got together and appointed from among their numbers one who was to act as a scapegoat and they prepared to mutilate him, upon his giving a certain report. This was done, and by the time the fellow's bones were picked clean and hung to dry in the sun, a good deal of enthusiasm had been manufactured. I leave it to you to decide whether this is either necessary or desirable in a model democratic society. However, this enthusiasm was doomed to a sudden end, when a number of students, with a zeal for parliamentary procedure and armed with O. Garfield Jones' *Parliamentary Procedure At A Glance*, sat like so many vultures waiting for some slip whereby they could hold up the meeting for an hour with an argument on procedure. After one glorious evening during which these illustrious gentlemen listened to themselves talk, the general meetings had died an ignominious and premature death. The weary executive kept trying, with little or no success, until on January 25, 1959, a general meeting of the Saint Dunstan's Students' Union had to be cancelled because thirty-two students, or less than eight percent of the student body,

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were present. Nor had the preceding executives had better luck; they were only more adept at circum-navigating the constitution.

Since the present system is unworkable we must have an alternate system. Is is a well known fact that eighty percent of the work done by the students' council is of the type which may be done by a group of student representatives without the need of general meetings. The other twenty percent could be taken care of in two other general meetings—one in each semester. In this way there should be no trouble getting a large percentage of the student body to attend as there would be a worthwhile agenda and the "sharp" students would have more to occupy their minds than to search for legal technicalities.

There are numerous ways in which these representatives could be chosen, with the present system probably being as good as any. These representatives could report to their respective societies and could carry with them the wishes of the people they represent. This would not give the average student as great a chance as does the present system to practise his oratory, but then few take advantage of this opportunity now. In fact, this would be a very pure form of democracy as the representatives would be acting in the same manner as do our members of parliament.

The only changes necessary to place such a plan into effect could be quite easily made in our present constitution.

The purpose of this article is not to insult anyone, but to place before the student body a few facts and thoughts concerning a very pertinent subject. The opinions concerning any proposed change will probably vary greatly, but we must all agree that something must be done and now is the time to do it. The plan outlined above is not the only feasible one, but it is one which is being used at several Maritime universities today. The need is great, the time is short. It is now up to the Students' Union executive, to make its move.

—LORNE MacGUIGAN '60

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A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
 Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring,  
 For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
 But drinking largely sobers us again.

—Pope