Bennington College
September 25, 1940

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 24th, 1940

The Community Council met in the Committee dining room on Tuesday, September 24th. Present were: Mary Berna, chairman; Florence Booker; Dorothy Coffin; Carol Haines; Joan Hyatt; Ruth McCormick; Lydia Schoepperle; Molly Stimson; Nancy Victor; Susan Winter; Jean Davidson; Mrs. Garrett; Mr. Chapman; Mr. Truman and Mr. Leigh.

Additional Comments on the Refugee Policy

At the opening of the meeting, Mary Berna, chairman, asked for any questions, which had been raised in the course of the house meetings last Wednesday, concerning the refugee policy. It was found that certain students feared there would be feeling at home against any reduction of the food budget if the parents were not informed before that reduction went into effect. Mr. Leigh stated that such objections from the parents would be handled as they arose.

It was asked also whether money taken from the food budget to provide for an influx of refugees, would be sufficient to keep up the building and additional details pertaining to them. Mr. Leigh said that here again the suppositions character of the policy at present makes it impossible to foretell these expenses accurately. It was suggested, and approved by all present, that a student committee be chosen and associated with the savings to be undertaken.

A third question arose over the refugee scholars now on campus. Acute feeling was expressed concerning the difficulty of helping the visiting lecturers to feel at home when they are suddenly launched into the community, and the impossibility of much student contact with them. Mr. Leigh explained that the faculty have daily contact with the lecturers, and that he and Mrs. Leigh & Miss Bowie have had charge of arranging for and receiving them and of making the necessary social activity for them on campus. It has been necessary to restrict the contact of the student body with visiting lecturers because of 1) the possibility of student bores, and 2) it was formerly felt that enough opportunity for discussion was provided in question periods and informal gatherings. Mr. Leigh felt, however, that some kind of reception with the students might have been appropriate in the present case, particularly in view of a point subsequently raised, namely: that under the present system the evening speakers may not have enough idea of the general student attitude, and there would consequently be difficulty in preparing a lecture.

The information to go back to the houses is that matters concerning the refugees are handled by Miss Bowie, and questions about the evening program of meetings, for this semester or next, are to be referred to the Evening Meetings Committee.

Driving Licenses

Names of students applying for licenses were submitted to the Council and approved as eligible for driving tests. (See page 29)

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, SEPT. 24th con't

House Secretaries

Lydia Schoepperle suggested that the house secretaries be encouraged to take minutes in house meetings and to have charge of morning check-up, or to delegate this duty to thoroughly responsible representatives. The importance of checking up was emphasized, and it was pointed out that the delegation of the duty to a freshman was inadvisable unless her capability was assured.

It was later suggested that there be a liaison group to handle food complaints. The secretaries are to have this function in reserve, and their duties are to be embodied in a new bylaw.

Presentation of the Itemized Budget for the Fall Term

Charlotte Watson presented the Budget and mentioned the important changes in it since last year. These are:

1)A larger quota has been granted to the Dance Committee, with the consent of the Athletics Committee and the Recreation Council, to cover the added expenses of informal Informals and orchestra charges.

2) The transportation fund for the Community Council, which was formerly $25, has been reduced to $15. This is to cover only specified Council undertakings.

It was pointed out that the estimated income of the Gift Fund Drive was identical to last year's, and it is up to the discretion of the Council to present the Gift Fund Budget to the community. It was suggested, however, that the fall Gift Fund be included in the Spring Budget Report to the community.

The Budget for the fall term was accepted as read. (See page 28)

Student Collectors

Charlotte Watson presented the names of student collectors chosen to fill recent vacancies. They were approved by the Council. (See page 30)

Liquor Policy Report

Dorothy Coffin read a report on the Liquor Policy in relation to the Coach House. (See page 31) In the ensuing discussion, certain points in the Liquor Policy of last spring were reviewed, namely:

1) That there had been a definite informal investigation of each student house to discover specific experiences, and the percentage of shock to freshmen and unpleasant incident was found to be negligible;
2) that during formal dances there had been organized supervision of drinking in the houses, and this arrangement was found to be adequate.

It was recommended that there be an investigation of the working of liquor policies in other women's colleges, such as Wellesley and Sarah Lawrence. This could be carried out through visiting of these colleges by campus officers, or by securing written information on the policies. The values of this measure were pointed out as a) the possibility of obtaining constructive suggestions from the comparison with other college policies, b) the use of these policies ~~as~~ an illustration of our own method, and as a demonstration of the possible consequences should our own method fail. However, it was also mentioned that the relevance of the comparison might be doubtful since the organization of the Bennington community is in many ways different from other colleges.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, SEPT. 24th con't

It was further recommended that 1) the Liquor Committee investigate the records of the Central Committee, and supplementary information to be gained from Mrs. Garrett and the house chairmen, so that a sound evaluation of the Liquor Policy could be made. Such a sustained and complete record of the success and failures of the Liquor Policy would be of value in a) defense against unfounded criticism, b) information on the working of the policy, and c) the revelation of difficulties in its operation.

Finally a motion was made to accept the Liquor Policy reportdas read, on the basis of what is already known, with the added stipulation that the Council work out the procedure of investigation to be followed and have the report explained in the houses. The vote, as recordedd was 13 aye; one refrain from voting and, Mr. Leigh's vote, nay.

Health Committee

It was mentioned that there has been a misuse of the leniency of infirmary hours during the infantile paralysis scare, with resulting inconvenience to the infirmary. A request was made that the hours posted on the infirmary door and in the College Bulletin be observed. Also cooperation in care of symptoms was requested.

Student Editorial Board

The Council approved the recommendation that the E. P. C. be the body to handle the college magazine and act as the approval agency in place of the Community Council. Such an agency has been found necessaryto act as a check on the magazine, which is self-perpetuating, and to promote its closer relation to the community as a whole. Since the magazine is now to be a laboratory for the literature division and a means of coordinating all the divisions more closely, it was generally felt that the E. P. C. would be a more suitable approval agency. It was suggested also that this change be included in the Bylaws.

Student Houses**Points to be Emphasized

In conclusion, the chairmen were reminded to have guests in the student houses reported. Also the fire regulations concerning smoking in the theatre and at Fairview should be explained thoroughly to the Freshmen, as well as the difference between out-of-town slips and the off-campus record. They might also be reminded of the community decision not to smoke or knit until the question periods after evening meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Strong, secretary