

Bennington College
November 11, 1940

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, NOVEMBER 5th

The Community Council met in the Committee dining room on Tuesday, November 5th. Present were: Mary Berna, chairman; Florence Booker; Dorothy Coffin; Carol Haines; Joan Hyatt; Ruth McCormick; Lydia Schoepperle; Molly Stimson; Nancy Victor; Priscilla Sherman for Susan Winter; Jean Davidson; Joan Strong; Mrs. Garrett; Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Truman.

Central Committee

An article published this week in the Bennington Banner was brought to the attention of the Council. The article deals with a Halloween incident which occurred at the Paradise Restaurant. The Central Committee is to ascertain whether some Bennington students were involved, and will take action accordingly.

A question was raised as to the nature of incidents or situations reported to the Central Committee by house chairmen. It was pointed out that since the definition of cases requiring such reporting has been unclear and subject to the discretion of the chairmen alone, the function of the Central Committee has not been wholly consistent. It was mentioned that there are two aspects of this function: 1) the observation and correction of irregularities, and 2) the assistance to house chairmen when local control breaks down. On the basis of these points, it was decided that house chairmen will continue to report at their discretion to the Committee, but with particular attention to those cases affecting the house as a whole, and with the purpose of the Committee, as a unit coordinating college experiences, clearly in mind. It was also decided that, at the end of her term of office, each chairman will make a report to the Committee on the problems which confronted her house during that term, what was done about them, and whether she considers them solved or unsolved.

Liquor Policy Committee

The action to be taken by the Liquor Policy Committee was described as follows:

- 1) Both present and former house chairmen are to be questioned on all cases of objectionable conduct, resulting from the use of liquor, which may have occurred during their term of office. They will be asked to write up those cases not already recorded by the Central Committee.
- 2) A group of questions will be arranged for the transfer students on the subject of liquor policies in their former colleges, and the corresponding attitudes toward liquor as compared with that of Bennington.
- 3) The counselors have been asked to find out, by judicious means, the attitude of the freshmen toward liquor.

Secretary Council

A new bylaw concerning the recently established Secretary Council was read and accepted. (See page 51)

Analysis of Community Government.

Section III of the questions on Analysis of the Community Government (see page 52), issued by Mr. Chapman and Mr. Truman, was read as answered by the Chairman. The contact of the President with the Community Council was discussed. The Chairman expressed the opinion that hitherto the President's word, at his occasional attendance of meetings, has perhaps been too influential in the Council because of his prestige and experience. It was felt that the Council has sometimes been influenced to make decisions based more on the President's opinion than on the Council's own deliberation. A remedy suggested for this situation was to have the President attend meetings more often so that the Council could, through familiarity with him, learn to carry on discussion more competently. It was decided, however, that the authority and prestige of the President, and the consequent weight of his judgement with the Council, are necessarily a part of his office. For the present, the Council will continue to carry on meetings with the President when he has something of special importance to discuss.

The questionnaire, which is the basis of the analysis of community government, is designed to discover the real scope of committees and subcommittees. Informal discussions, and all similar items which are not included in formal committee procedures, should be included in the answers to the questions.

The house councils are to be reported on by Faith Richardson, with the cooperation of the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Strong, secretary