

Bennington College
December 14, 1940

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, DECEMBER 10th, 1940

The Community Council met in the Committee dining room on Tuesday, December 10th. Present were: Mary Berna, Chairman; Florence Booker; Dorothy Coffin; Carol Haines; Joan Hyatt; Ruth McCormick; Lydia Schoep-
perle; Molly Stimson; Nancy Victor; Susan Winter; Jean Davidson; Joan Strong; Mr. Chapman; Mr. Truman; Mrs. Garrett and Mr. Leigh. Charlotte Watson and Margaret Stein and Margaret Dudley came in at 1:30.

Secretaryship on the Council: length of term

The question was raised as to whether the term of office of the Council secretary should be one semester or a whole year. The point brought out in favor of the short term was that the secretary's job ceases to be educational after the routine work is mastered, and becomes merely a time-consuming task. This tends to make the secretary lose both in interest and efficiency. The Council felt that continuity in the minutes could be maintained without the long term of office.

Mr. Leigh stressed the importance of the secretary's job as training for positions taken after college. The short term is advisable because as many students as possible should have an opportunity to receive this training.

The change in the secretary's term of office will be recommended to the next council.

It was suggested that the duties of the chairman and secretary of the Council be incorporated in the programs of the students in office. This may be optional, depending on the individual in office.

Secretaryship on the Central Committee

It was suggested that the work of secretary on the Central Committee be certainly included in the student's program because of the time it takes. Since this job thrives on experience, it seems advisable to continue the long term of office. However, Mrs. Garrett suggested that the chairman and the secretary change positions for the second semester. This would widen the experience of each and would not interfere with the functioning of the Committee, because each officer would be already familiar with the duties of the other. The only inconvenience would be the adjustment of the students' schedules in the middle of the year. The Committee will talk over this proposal before including it in the procedure.

Elections

It was recommended that elections take place in December rather than in the spring. This would do away with the waste of time at the beginning of the second semester.

The change cannot legally go into effect until next year, but will be recommended to the next council for inclusion in the bylaws.

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, DECEMBER 10th cont'd

Student Treasurer: nomination

Charlotte Watson submitted the nomination of Ann Wickes, as the new Student Treasurer, to the Council. The nomination has been approved by the Comptroller, and was approved by the Council.

Work Camp Proposal

Mr. Leigh explained the Work Camp proposal to the Council. The plan, in connection with the Work Camps for America, was brought to the President's attention by one of the affiliated group organizers. It is an enlargement of the Friends' Group, and aims to broaden education in the liberal democratic tradition. Groups of students are sent to selected communities, and under adult leadership are engaged in constructive community projects. The past experience of students in such camps has been favorable, both as opportunity for social work and as a means of learning how to get on in a community.

The proposal advanced by Mr. Leigh was to discover whether there is enough interest in the college to warrant sponsoring such a Work Camp experiment. Action would depend on 1) an interested group of students, and 2) a member, or members, of the faculty who would be interested in leading such a group.

A member of the Council expressed a fear that, in view of the present world situation, the Work Camps would become defense mechanisms. The groups are, however, directed toward social reconstruction, and are unconnected with military service or compulsion. It was emphasized that young people today must recognize themselves as active members of democracy, and the Work Camps represent a strong group interested in broadening education for that purpose.

Mr. Leigh is in favor of having such a Work Camp group compulsory in the college curriculum, but recognizes that Bennington is not prepared for such an organization at the present time. However, a small experiment, closely watched by the college, could be undertaken if a sufficient number are interested.

The proposal will be introduced to the community next semester.

Guests

The house chairmen were reminded to have all guests in the houses registered.

Winter Period: packing

In the houses which are to be headquarters for the Convention this winter, it is necessary for the students to pack and remove all their belongings before leaving.

Students expecting to move must pack and label all possessions so that the moving can be done over winter period.

Optional or audit classes may be omitted by those leaving early.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Strong, secretary