

6 April, 1960

## GALLEY

More than one writer in Galley has recently pointed out the shaky nature of the Community's rather fluid governmental structure. It is hoped that a new or possibly two or more new, constitutions will remedy this.

But that is not the worst of it. We simply cannot wait. There is pending right now an issue which will illuminate the cracks in the machinery of democratic self-government at Bennington, the issue of which may well be to deprive students of all freedom, making them subservient to the unfortunately all too efficient operations of a well-oiled faculty.

The following account may dramatize; it is hoped, the weaknesses inherent in a power structure such as we now have, where it is perfectly possible for an Eminence Grise (Grey Eminence) to climb to power by the backstairs of the committee structure. We do not identify the man or woman responsible, beyond saying that he or she is a member of the Bennington College Community, because we do not believe in gossip but rather in social history and justice.

The proposal soon to be debated in several Faculty Committees, and then at a Faculty Meeting, reads in part as follows:

### Proposal for Improving Student Identification.

1.a. That every student admitted to Bennington College be assigned, at time of admission, a license number.

b. That this license number identify, according to a simple code of number groups to be devised by the Faculty, all pertinent information about the student, for example her age, high school record, temperament category (Sheldon, or some other convenient scale), and the record of her performance at College. For entering Freshmen this would naturally be 0000 at first, but would be expected to change rapidly.

c. That such license numbers, which need not necessarily be very large, be made up in the form of attractive metal plates in the College colors (puce and blue), and worn on the student's front and rear.

It is further proposed --

II. a. That a fuller record of the student's potential, her achievement, and especially the gap between them, be carried in a folder attached to the student's belt. This would preferably be in a form of cipher (as is already done at various institutions across the country) so that the information contained would be available to the Faculty but kept secret from the student.

b. That any faculty member be empowered at any time to add an endorsement, whether favorable or adverse, in cipher, to the student's record.

c. That periodically, random samples of student life be collected for inspection of these documents.

The present writer regards these proposals as extremely repugnant, and unlikely to further the cause of democracy at Bennington.

Students, it is not too late. What can you do? Well, first, you can write, wire, or otherwise harass your counselor. Tell him you will not stand for it. Then, as an indirect means of bringing pressure to bear, heckle and interrupt the instructor in class. Let him know you mean business. Third, a student proposal to make faculty wear the letters of their degrees, A.B., B.S., or whatever, on their foreheads, should be organized as rapidly as possible.

Students, unite! You have nothing to use but your brains.