The Size of the Bite

The Student Committee on Educational Policy (better known as Scep) has recently announced the indefinite suspension of their investigation into the possibility of establishing a summer work program in foreign countries for MIT students. Under the chairmanship, making the announce- ment on what would otherwise have been the investigation’s first anniversary, told Inconcern that it was being dropped because of the difficulties involved in dealing with the gov- ernment.

The apparent failure of this investigation should raise some challenging basic questions about the province of the deliberations of Scep in particular, and student government in general.

We do not mean to question the value of Scep as an organization; we merely object to the vast amount of time and work put into this investigation. Rather, it seems clear that this problem was simply too great a magnitude for a small student organization to cope with.

Last term we saw what a committee like Scep can do, at its request the library was kept open later than usual. In this instance the needs and wishes of the student body were brought to the attention of a cooper- ative and interested faculty. This finally resulted in action which was of great value to many members of the student body.

We grant that the problem handled, and handled well, was in this case small. However, we applaud the fact that here something concrete was accomplished.

This was refreshing in contrast to all too commonplace attempts at student government, a trend which has led to the failure of the National Student Association.

The trend is that of neglecting what seem to be small problems in favor of the more idealistic large ones. All too often student organizations become so engrossed in these elaborate considerations, in most cases beyond the realm of effective control, that the small problems, with which they can deal effectively, are left.

Perhaps this is the main reason that student government can remain relatively untested in the average student’s life. The year to year workings of all student committees seldom produce more than a roar or two of mistraphographed reports, which are conveniently filed for future considera- tion which they seldom receive.

We do not mean that groups such as Scep should aban- don long range discussions, rather that they should not allow themselves to be dominated by these considerations. Scep, like other student committees, should realize its limitations; more important, it should realize what it can do effectively.

It should be the duty of Scep and other student groups to make the current problems, and potential solutions, known. Only through this communication can such organ- izations offer a real service and accomplish the pur- poses which justify their existence.

review

Sigfus Riders Again

"I Was A Teen Age Dwarf," by Max Schulman (Ber- nard Getts Associates, 204 pp. $5.50) is a collection of short stories recounting the youthful love affairs of one Dobie Gillis. If the name sounds familiar, the reason may be that this Dobie Gillis is also the hero of a television series entitled, appropriately enough, "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis."

Max Schulman seems to have two more or less distinct styles of writing, the situation comedy type, typified by "Rally Round The Flag, Boys," and the slapstick style used in "Bonnie Boy Wish Club." "I Was A Teen Age Dwarf" is written in a style more like the former than the latter. "Dwarf," occasionally slips over into slapstick, but, to in- dicate in a degree of taste, let me point out that some- body with the name Sigfus crows up only once and briefly.

I"I Was A Teen Age Dwarf" diferently greatly from "Rally Round The Flag, Boys," in that I thought "Rally" was hilarious. "Dwarf" has enough novelty to keep it from being boring; it is sometimes amusing. The ten stories have one plot: Dobie Gillis meets girl, Dobie Gillis loses girl, Dobie Gillis gets girl OR Dobie Gillis gets another girl. This prac- tically makes the book a classic.

As can be seen by the brevity of this review, the book does not leave much of an impression. It is, let's say, really a poorly-written book, however. It might be said that the book is so bad that it isn't worth the trouble to read it; likewise, the book is very easy to read. Let us leave it at that.

D. S. Brown IV

SHRDLU

For an observer who has been off the scene for some time the change of brassus welcoming the engagement of the Kingdom trio for JP seems an excuse for a little specula- tion. Now I don't pretend to know anything about folk music, having never, perish on my grandfather's name, heard it strummed or sang. In fact I don't think I know anybody who learned about it that way. And yet it seems as though, from a historical standpoint, the real stuff in- volves an intimate passing-on from one generation to the next. So how do you explain the current, wide popularity of what is called folk music? Surely it is due to some- thing more fundamental than a huge promotional effort by the advertising industry. Perhaps it ties in with certain trends in American life which, having infinite despullus, lay claim to cultural recognition. Maybe so, but being relatively uninstructed myself, I can only hope to understand the new folk music in a very simple way.

My friends tell me they like it because it is "warm, rhythmic, and down-to-earth." It seems to give a new expression to what has become trite and worn-out emo- tions. It gives you a relationship which you can feel. And it is only coinciding the more it is authentically.

If the "new" folk music has all these qualities it has one more which is probably the most astonishing; its repertoire is international. Folk music used once to be strictly re- gional and its practitioners, while they may have been aware of other traditions, felt much more at home in their own. Now, however, you hear every nation's songs sung in this country and you wonder how an American listener can really sense the meaning and feel himself a part of so many different kinds of folk music. Perhaps the American listener, long cut off from any folk music he might once have had, is looking vaguely and nostalgically — and not so — a foreigner, and traditional which will be meaningful to him. It is a nos- tranger without a well-defined, concrete identity of an object, you will. Somehow, amid all the shortcomings of the year, people are remembering, or maybe only longing for, an artistic tradition that is simple and genuine. People seem to know how they want to react to art; it is only a question of finding an evocative medium. Well, even if the new folk music just manages to put a little meaning back into some very beat-up English words we should all be satisfied.

Ben Pinkus

Solar eclipse planned

(The Tech - Sept. 29)

Clementine

Call me Fiskuel. Some months ago—don't trouble yourself about how many—I signed on as a deck hand aboard the charter boat Pesopo, a most melo- mancholy craftailing out of Bay Shore, Long Island.

There are certain queer times in this patchwork quilt we call life when a man discerns the approach of some calamitous event: such a time came to me of a hot Saturday morning, as we were icing the Schaefer beer for the day's fishing aboard. My un- easiness centered about Captain Abah, asleep in his cabin since Thursday night—he swore he had con- tracted sleeping sickness in a battle with Mopy Dick, the Lazy White, and I found myself beset by the fear Abah would attempt vengeance.

The natural ebullience of our fishing party, gentle- men from the city of the Mahattans, was somewhat higher when they espied the Schaefer all agleam in ice and sunlight. "Ah!" cited one, "it is evident you know what is heard in the best of circles?" "Aye, sir," said Moonbuck, our first mate, "Schaefer all around!"

Suddenly a sleepy-eyed Cap- tain Abah was in our midst.

"Blod and thunder," he yawned, "today I wrek my hate upon Mopy Dick. Full speed ahead for the open sea."

Only Moonbuck made bold to ease the man. "Drink this Schaefer, my captain, and think on the wisdom of your move. Savor the smooth rowed taste—never sharp, never flat."

"I thirst only for revenge," he mumbled drowsily, but he took the proffered beer and stumbled wearily to his cabin. Perhaps in his dreams he vanquished Mopy Dick or was vanquished by him. I never knew, but I think it all had some great, allegorical meaning. The Pesopo and Abah and Mopy Dick and the Schaefer were symbolic of something surely—something as mysterious and enduring as the rise and fall of the sea.