GA meeting

Tonight the General Assembly meets for the first time this term, and a major item of business must be discussion of proposals for reorganization. The pressures for change that are building up are too large to be ignored.

The present government structure was developed two years ago when forces for change were also considerable. The demon then was Inscomm, a close-knit body of people with little claim to being representative of their fellow undergraduates. Steve Curhart and Carson Agnew, two The Tech editors, and SCEP chairman Peter Harris offered their constitution as an alternative that might both better represent students and more effectively carry out the business of government.

In a referendum held that spring the proposal drew 859 votes, easily outdistancing the wealth of sports, office has tried to improve the prospects for a better student's image of MIT to draw him away from other schools when much of what they want is here on campus.

Many students and faculty complain that the MIT student body is not well-rounded, that it represents only the finest. The Tech suggests, however, that all delegate remember a few important points: student government must reflect and provide for the real needs undergraduates today share; student government must provide some formal mechanism for pressing student interests; and a lot of thinking has to be done about how much representation is necessary to insure credibility.

Finally, it seems likely that the General Assembly, or at least the majority, will have to go to the way of Inscomm. We consider it doubtful that the structure is worth the trouble of the massive repairs that would be needed.

Shaking up Congress

By Harold Fedorow

Someday, just for fun, some people should propose a constitutional amendment that would prohibit a person from serving in the House or Senate for two consecutive terms. One could serve alternate terms, but there would be no mandatory retirement of two or six years. The possible advantages that might accrue are simply mind-boggling.

First of all, there would be a good chance of doing away with the seniority problem, at least in the House. With a mandatory retirement every two years, how could one build up seniority? Also, over the years, the committee chairman would have to change. No longer could people regard the legislative as a personal faradom. In the Senate, the problems of seniority would be trickier, but would also be alleviated.

Second, major advantage, and one that appears to be such a major advantage that it is doubtful that it will not pass, is that of the change in outlook such a change could bring. Knowing that, no matter what, one will have to be out of office might produce the desire to regard the long-term effects of legislation, to examine things more closely; one will not be running in November, but in two years, when the whole of legislation will be felt. Who knows this might tend to produce a different atmosphere, instead of only politicians.

And, a third, and somewhat less important advantage, is that office holders would be regularly reminded what it is like to be one of the "common folk." This would be a marked improvement of legislating, since most of them think of themselves as sitting in line, or waiting while some VIP just walks in and immediately is made chairman.

There is a story that tells of two senators trying to push through a measure in the Kentucky legislature. They kept shouting, "Make way for the representatives of the people! Make way!" To this the crowd responded, "Congressmen, we are the people!" Despite the lip service, however, they could not help but wonder how many members of Congress really be come involved in the legislation. Perhaps, after a wait of two or six years, they will realize that they really did not want a certain congressman.

Throughout this little piece, I have been assuming that the Congressmen would run and be reelected after their term off. At present there is a large advantage in running as an incumbent. Part of this is simply the momentum in voting the congressman in off. But in this proposal, there would be no incumbents and there would be more opportunity for a consideration of the merits of the candidates. Perhaps after a wait of two or six years, the candidates might decide that they really did not want a certain congressman.

Then the amendment would never be adopted. Assum- ing that the Congressmen would pass the amendment, it would pass. several of their school back home for dinner.

As for the Baker forum, those discussions marked another in a series of structured attempts to involve the faculty/student contact that stretched back over several years. Two years ago some fraternities began experimenting with periodic dinners that involved invitations to a few professors and students. During April, 1969, classes were cancelled for two consecutive afternoons to promote seminars and discussion groups; almost all living groups took advantage of those days to invite their instructors over.

The Tech urges that all MIT living groups consider the possibilities for inviting faculty and administrators over for an evening. An easy start is to have a half-dozen students invite their favorite professor or someone from the Dean's Office. Once the living group feels comfortable with the format, it could try asking in some of the many professors that don't seem really interested in undergraduates. Whatever the approach, though, students should commit themselves to increasing that-of-class contact with the faculty.

And it wouldn't be a bad idea for faculty to show a little initiative and invite several of their students back home for dinner.

The weekly news

by Alastair Parker and Johnny Hart

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