Word of Barnes’ Suicide Stuns Hanszen Cabinet

BY CHARLES DEMITZ

Ronald J. Barnes, Hanszen freshman and gamesman extraordinary, resigned his soul to the Registrar last Monday. After days of pointed remarks to his friends concerning the recalcitrance of certain faculty members and graders, Barnes put his affairs in order and shut himself in his room after dinner. Consigning his last poignant—“Tell my parents goodbye. They did it”—thoughts to a paper slid out under his door, the playwright reached for his blank pistol and, in an awesome display of imaginative powers, shot himself.

HEARING the report, anxious neighbor Bob Zelenka threw open Barnes’ door and discovered the distraught freshman’s riddled body floating in a veritable sea of ketchup. Understandably concerned that a student had shuffled off this mortal coil without first obtaining the permission of the college authorities, Zelenka hurtled downstairs and into the commons, where Dr. Masterson and the Hanszen Cabinet were in session. Zelenka’s long-drawn shriek of “Ronny Barnes just shot himself!” somehow scaled the heights of the Cabinet’s renowned imperturbability.

THE CABINET, awakened more than usual by the volume of the outcry, arose and decamped en masse—save for President Tilson who, adopting a commendable “Wayward sisters, depart in peace” stand toward his seceding comrades, upheld the torch of Good Government and continued his prose reading of the minutes in almost solitary grandeur.

ZELENKA, in the vanguard of a flying wedge, sprinted puffily back to the scene of the tragedy. Bursting in upon a room strangely devoid of a prostrate corpse, he displayed an immediate grasp of the situation and fainted.

News of Barnes’ miraculous recovery was conveyed back to Dr. Masterson, bringing up the rear. The Master of Hanszen requested the presence of resurrected Ronny at a formal audience at Hanszen House. At the appointed hour Barnes and thirteen of his disciples trooped in and were given a royal critique of their evening’s work: “Amusing but untimely.”

What does the future hold for Barnes? He looked down longly at his gun. “Study, I guess.”