

CARAVAN not perfect

by Melanie Aguila

According to Caravan's 1990 Passport, the "festival was incorporated to promote the preservation, development, and advancement of the cultural traditions and lifestyles of Canada's people."

Although Caravan has a positive goal, it isn't a solution to stopping the downfalls that a multicultural society imposes on its people.

As Canadians, we celebrate the many cultures within our country, but at the same time these cultures are separated and often condemned because of the implicitly racist society in which we live. The role of the police in the community is "to serve and protect" all races, but some officers have done otherwise. The unnecessary shootings of Wade Lawson and, more recently, Marlon Neal reflect the racism of some individuals on the police force. Racism is also inherent in our history.

The exhibition, "Into the Heart of Africa," at the Racist Ontario Museum reveals the kind of attitude toward Africans that dominated the European and North American ethos of the past. Today, these sentiments must still exist, as we have failed to end this exhibition even though it is deeply offensive to Africans.

An ideal multicultural society would be one where the different cultures live side by side in harmony. The alienation of Quebec from Canada shows the extent to which our cultures can be separated and set in an environment of disharmony.

A multicultural society has so many cultures that people rarely have the chance to really learn about them. Caravan could be

used to educate people about cultures other than their own, but it seems that the pavilions are merely trying to promote tourism in their country. It is questionable whether the depiction of a country as a tourist centre or its citizens as tourist vendors presents a realistic view of any culture. People also tend to go to these pavilions to be entertained and eat the food, rather than focus on learning values and lifestyles.

Our country consists of many different races and it is crucial to represent them equally. Caravan 1990 had a good mix of 35 pavilions; however, not all cultures in Canada participated.

Caravan cannot reflect the cultural traditions of Canada's people if not everyone is represented. One group which was not included this year was that of aboriginal Canadians. Because of the frequent misrepresentation of Indians in the media, they should have had a pavilion to show their true values, beliefs and lifestyles.

Since Canada's multicultural society has so many diverse cultures, they need to work together. Many cultures may not have participated in Caravan because of the risk of losing money, or lacking funds to start a pavilion. Caravan should be a community effort where profits are channelled back into the festival to help start and fund other pavilions and to reduce financial losses. This year the Lithuanian (Vilnius) pavilion had to pull out of Caravan because it was losing money.

Caravan's purpose has been distorted; the focus has changed to profit. If the amount of money made determines whether a pavilion will remain or not, the spirit of competition will overwhelm that of cooperation.

The Stalkyard

YFS committed to bilingualism

by Salman A. Nensi

The York Federation of Students (YFS) is officially bilingual... but what does that mean?

YFS President, Jean Ghomeshi, spearheaded the move to bilingualism and is understandably proud of the positive reaction received from across Canada.

But, when one boils down all the rhetoric surrounding this new initiative, the basic fact remains that YFS has budgeted \$5000 to help implement a program that will service, according to Ghomeshi, seven per cent of the York population. "Going bilingual means we have twice as much work as before," said Ghomeshi. "There are extra costs in paper, printing, postage and advertisements."

Since the direct student levy will give the 91/92 YFS council an increase in revenue, this year's council feels comfortable with deficit financing. They will add an additional \$4000 to the \$6000 deficit left by last year's council.

Neither the current executive, nor the staff of YFS are bilingual: Ghomeshi is closest — "functional," not fluent. All of them are trying to improve their command of the French language. Said Caroline Winship, VP (Internal), "Everyone is so open [to this new initiative], we've all agreed to do as much as we can." In addition, the council will be placing an emphasis on hiring bilingual people for all future vacancies.

The new Speaker of the council, Andreanne Lavallee, who was appointed last Friday, will also be a member of the Government Affairs Tribunal. Currently, she is the Speaker and Translator for Glendon's student union. Lavallee, who is fluent in both English and French, will act as a translator during YFS meetings in addition to her other procedural duties. The new Deputy Speaker is also from Glendon College. Sebastian Dinolfo, who is currently the president of Glendon's Debating Society, will act as Chair of the Government Affairs Tribunal as well as helping to adjudicate council meetings.

So far the York community has been very positive and supportive of this move, but Ghomeshi is

very candid about possible reactions. come September.

On one side, he sees anglophones becoming annoyed at such a large expenditure of money and human resources when only seven per cent of the population benefits. On the other side, he sees francophones taking the pronouncement that YFS is now bilingual as mere tokenism. (His appointment of Glendon students as Speakers will certainly help to diminish this problem.)

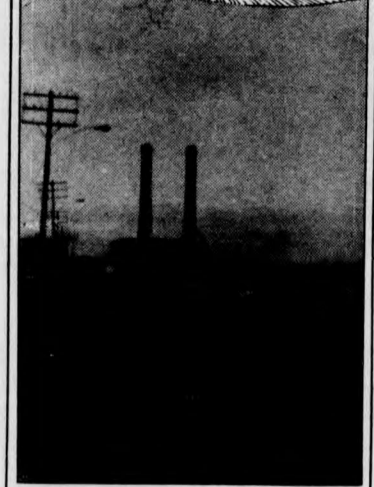
However, the possibility of being attacked from both sides still has Ghomeshi concerned that future councils will try to eliminate the bilingual infrastructure he is building. In an effort to avoid that, Ghomeshi is attempting to institutionalize the bilingual nature of YFS by entrenching bilingualism into the YFS constitution.

There is no "official opposition" in YFS' council, so I asked President Ghomeshi point blank, "What will you do if, come September, the sentiment at York is overwhelmingly against your new bilingual policy? After all, you have been elected to represent the students."

Avoiding a direct answer as smoothly as any politician on Parliament Hill, he replied, "You know Sal, it will be a sad day at York if that happens. We made this decision upon coming into office in May and now the mood of the country is uncertain. I know it [the bilingual initiative] is not a large beacon of hope for the country, but in our small way, it is an important step."

The YFS executive is genuinely behind this move and they become quite intense when trying to convince others of its benefits. YFS will be spending considerable cash and resources on promoting and developing itself to a point where it can truly be called a bilingual council. They have begun releasing bilingual press statements and other documents. Ghomeshi opened the last council meeting by addressing the members in French, and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are both bilingual. The only question now is, what next? Will YFS continue to deliver on this issue if significant problems arise in September?

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