Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

For Canadian lawyers?

On this past Saturday, I wrote the Canadian Law School Admission Test at Osgoode Hall, at York University. I was only one of the literally thousands of eager students who assembled in the divers university test centres across Canada for the second sitting of this Canadian Law School Admission Test.

I would like to register a grievance against the group of august intellectuals in Canada who provided us with the particular exam in question.

Before this year the writing of the LSAT was not mandatory for law school aspirants in Canada. This year, due to the burgeoning demand for places in Canadian law schools over the past couple of years, the law schools deemed it imperative to institute another criteria for measuring the ability of applicants. Their innovation was an aptitude test similar to the one utilized by our neighbors to the south for some years. That's my beef. The exam I struggled through on Saturday, for approximately seven hours (9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., hour for lunch) was not simply tantamount to the American exam; it was the American exam!

Following the termination of the marathon our delegation from the University of Waterloo reflected on the nature of the test. We were all pretty well in agreement in our feelings on the last one-hour section of the exam entitled "test of general background".

There was accordance among us concerning the American nature of this last section. What was especially humiliating to the Canadian student was the inclusion of only one or two references to Canada. The one I recall had to do with population growth in five countries —Canada, it was discovered, was categorized with the United States under the classification of one country — good for the Canadian ego!

I am not levying my complaint versus the contingent of American scholars who every year set the LSAT but rather against the Canadian intellectuals (?) who saw fit to incorporate the American exam unabridged into the Canadian system.

Why, if the current demand for admission into Canadian law schools warrants a Canadian admission test, cannot there be a truly Canadian exam?

There are probably two defenses for the current situation. One, the exam is currently in its embryonic stage in Canada and there is therefore plenty of time for improvement of its format. Two, the administrative costs of organizing the hordes of relevant material for the exam would be too much at this early stage and therefore let's employ the already "perfected" American exam.

My recommendation to the Canadian scholars responsible for next year's decisions regarding the LSAT would be that they undergo some serious soul-searching in reference to the nature of the future Canadian Law School Admission Tests.

I would suggest that the committee in question present next year's Canadian students with a variant of the American exam; changing only the last section —Have this section written by Canadian professors and professionals on Canadian subjects. This would represent a powerful step forward in the Canadianization of the LSAT.

Lee Fitzpatrick
Waterloo

— from The Globe and Mail

Excalibur

March 5, 1970

editor-in-chief — bob waller
managing editor — john king
assistant editor — bob roth
advertising — rolly stroeter
secretary — jackie stroeter

editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202
advertising phone: 635-3800

excalibur, founded in 1966, is the student weekly of york university and is independent politically. opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. excalibur is a member of canadian university press and liberation news service. printed at newsweb, excalibur circulates to over 17,000 people. office: central square (southeast corner) behind the ministry of love, york university, downsview, ontario.

Colleges should take reps off court too

Last week EXCALIBUR reported Council of the York Student Federation president Paul Axelrod as saying that "We refuse to recognize these proposals (of the Laskin discipline report) until the council takes a stand on them."

Such a stand was taken in response to the refusal of administration president Murray G. Ross to defer implementation of the discipline report until the university-wide student council could prepare an in-depth critique of it, a task which would be completed by Sept. 1, 1970.

CYSF added weight to its verbal opposition of hasty implementation of the report last Wednesday by withdrawing its representative to the York court system set up in the Laskin report. The move is important in that to refuse to serve on the court knocks the cornerstone to the effective administration of the recommendations of the discipline report.

In addition, CYSF is attempting to forge a campus-wide student front against hasty implementation of the report by asking the college councils to consider withdrawing their representatives from the court until the report has received full consideration by students.

The student-administration conflict that is developing over implementation of "Freedom and Responsibility in the University does not have its main roots, at this time, in dispute over the content or attitude of the report, but rather over the hasty and spurious way in which Ross, the board of governors and assorted administrators (particularly John Becker) are attempting to get the recommendations adopted into university policy.

Their actions, unfortunately, also seem to reflect a disdainful attitude toward the possibility that students and faculty at York would want or would be able to develop critiques of the report.

Perhaps the fact that Ross and the board are so enamoured of the report is why they are attempting to avoid any significant revisions to it. One would think so knowing that Ross has approved a limited hardcover edition of the report and is having type set from the report issued last November. He couldn't be anticipating any changes in copy.

John Becker, assistant vice-president in charge of student services, told EXCALIBUR that the book was being printed to respond to demands for copies of the report. Well, until the report is finalized by the entire community, what's wrong with sending them copies of the newsprint supplement which appeared in EXCALIBUR?

Becker also tries to mystify the opposition of CYSF by saying that they are specifically opposed to the content of the 15 recommendations "that have been approved or express existing university policy. .recommendations which have been enshrined in the practice of the university for a decade."

The point of this is that just because the Laskin report reaffirmed these policies does not mean that they should be exempted from criticism by being reimplemented. They too should come under scrutiny, along with the other proposals.

Perhaps the student critique will pass them along, too, but let's wait until then.

CYSF's policies against hasty implementation of the proposals will soon receive support from a 90-page critique of the report prepared by a sub-committee of the York University Faculty Association.

Although not yet public, the YUFA study is said to urge Ross to revise the report so that wherever student and faculty responsibilities are mentioned they would be joined by all members of the university community, including administrators, staff, the president and members of the board of governors.

The significance of these suggestions to the Laskin report is that if they were accepted, it would mean substantial revision of the York University Act, 1965. In effect, the court system would become the highest authority in the university.

The present functions of individuals and groups in the university would remain unchanged except that any of their actions could be appealed through the court by anyone at York.

The significance of the YUFA critique to the CYSF policy is that it should act as a powerful intellectual force on the president to delay implementation of the proposals until the entire community — particularly students — has had time to develop its stand(s).

This intellectual pressure could be ignored by the president, etc. — at great peril, of couse — but if the college councils join CYSF in withdrawing their representatives off the Laskin court for the time being, the two actions — intellectual and physical — would effectively cause Ross to consider carefully before proceeding on his present course.

EXCALIBUR urges the college councils to do so.