

# the inside

Students' Representative Council  
Appendix III  
September 26th 1965

RE: A National Student Day

At the recent CUS Congress in Lennoxville, a great deal of heated and emotional discussion was refined and resolved into a concept which was found acceptable to an overwhelming majority of the delegates.

What resulted was the acceptance of the principle of "universal accessibility to post-secondary education". Although factions developed as to what exactly "universal accessibility" involved, it was generally agreed to entail these two major qualifications:

1) that the sole determinant for individual advancement in education should be academic ability.

2) that individuals should not face social, psychological and economic barriers, in the event that they have the necessary academic qualifications.

It was further agreed that tuition fees, be they \$250 or \$700, and the present trend toward increasing these fees represent a philosophy directly opposed to that of universal accessibility. This means that the long range goal of the Union must be the elimination of the tuition fee.

Other practices suggested as opposed to our adopted principle were payment of the cost of books, transportation, room and board, and the "cost" of forgone income during the years of study.

There was considerable and violent as to whether these other "costs" to individuals could be legitimately considered as barriers to universal accessibility. Given the present social and socialized structure of the nation it was felt unprofitable to enter into the debate required to gain public consideration of these "cost" factors.

The elimination of tuition fees, therefore, was fixed upon as the only objective which it would be practical to seek - given the current political, economic and social conditions of Canada. Reaching this objective would certainly not mean that we felt the conditions of "universal accessibility" prevailed, but it must certainly be the first and a major step in that direction.

It was therefore felt by the delegates that the Union should undertake the long and laborious task of educating public opinion, and thereby legislative opinion, to the acceptance of this principle in Canadian education.

Since this concept is one that is not widely discussed in public forum and since the greatest public forum of all - that of a national election campaign - was known to be coming along in the near future it became the agreement that during the future election campaign the universities and technical institutions of Canada should attempt to commandeer the national news media for the purpose of announcing the commencement of our struggle for the acceptance of the universal acceptability principle.

The only effective way to receive this type of attention from newspeople and campaigning politicians is to strike in force and preverably on the same day all across the country. Hence a National Student Day is being organized for October 27th.

The Congress realized that this type of proposal would have to be approved on individual camp and that the form of the "manifestation" would probably vary considerably across the country, due to local conditions.

All the national union asks is that an educational programme aimed at students legislators and the general public be begun immediately as a long term project and that on October 27th each institution be forthcoming with some manifestation which will (in total) catch the attention of the general public and national press.

\*We did not know it would be November 8th at that time.

## Universal Accessibility: A Reply

by R. B. Harley

The Canadian Union of Students is asking the nation to embark on an irresponsible course of educational inadequacy. In the September 26th Minutes of UNB's Students' Representative Council appears an Appendix (III) which contains the core of present CUS objectives. Were the matter not so important to Canada's future educational program, the document would be no more than a cause of amusement. Its pretentious, "revolutionary" language is an excellent satire of current student preoccupations. But the unfortunate, almost pathetic aspect of the issue is that its initiators and some politicians are preparing to take its propositions seriously. Furthermore, they ask that Canada's students will naively acquiesce in their adventures. Such an insult necessitates a reply to these intentions, and a firm rejection of them.

Few people, particularly in the academic world, will deny that "something must be done about higher education in Canada." Most will agree that all levels of government must act in this area, through the application of great sums of public money. But the directions in which the application should be made have not been adequately resolved. As administrators of public money, the governments are publicly accountable for their disposal of it in the most effective manner possible. The "Union" (how splendidly evocative of the labour-student "struggle") is suggesting its application in the most inefficient and least measurably productive areas.

Let us examine their proposals:

1. "the acceptance of the principle of 'universal accessibility (sic) to post-secondary education.'" Apart from their failure even to spell their principles correctly, we can already object. Suddenly, the university has been transformed from a centre of higher learning to a post-secondary institute. UNB is destined to become Fredericton Post-High. Even now, with extremely time-consuming schedules forced on engineers and foresters, there are far too many people at UNB who are not permitted time to reflect. This has a depressing effect on the academic atmosphere of any institution, and it is not because engineers or foresters are incapable of reflection - on the contrary, they are just as capable of it as those in Arts - but because training and technical school methods have imposed so heavily on these students' time. How much more impetus would be given to this unfortunate pattern if we came to think of the universities as mere extensions of extensions of school education?
2. "the sole determinant for individual advancement in education should be academic ability." Agreed. It is to be lamented that CUS does not consider this objective worthy of further discussion. It is a theme to which I, at least, shall return.
3. "individuals should not face social, psychological and economic barriers, in the event that they have the necessary academic qualifications." All individuals face social and psychological hurdles in going to university. If some of those turn out to be barriers, then either the individual or society may be at fault. As the document never specifies any particular problems in these two areas, we cannot determine the significance of removing the barriers, nor whether society could, in fact, remove them.

In economics the statements are more specific, though not less unfortunate. And we see that this has really been their concern all along. They insist that the tuition fee must be abolished because it is a barrier. It is at present a barrier to some, but only a hurdle to others. It ought to be kept within manageable limits, but it ought not to be eliminated. Interest-free loans, scholarships, and grants to universities can guarantee its "universal manageability." And, if done, there is no reason why students should not pay that small fraction of the cost society incurred in fitting them for positions with substantial salary ranges. They owe (at least) that much to those who were denied access on the grounds of academic incapability and who must nonetheless pay, through taxes, to support the universities.

The other costs, which CUS would attack later, are also sub-

(SEE Page 6, column 1)

OUTPOST PIZZA AND BARBECUED CHICKEN For Delivery Call 472-9823