

MONUMENTUM, REQUIRA, CIRCUMSPICE

by Gary Gayda

"At present, the major emphasis at universities is on vocation. The real business of a university is man." And Murray Ross believes it. The quotation is from our President's book, *The New University*. It should be compulsory reading for every York student.

Here, in only 110 pages, is sketched the *raison d'être*, the philosophy, and the method of development of York University.

The need for a new university in Toronto was evident in the mid-fifties because of the burgeoning population of Ontario and its dense nucleus, Metro Toronto. In 1921, 4.6% of youth in Ontario attended university. This number doubled to 9.3% by 1961, and the projected 1975 figure is 15%. Without a new university in Toronto, 20,000 students would be denied higher education in 1975. So York University was born.

Despite the large number of students it would have to accommodate, York would have high standards. "It was not impossible, we felt, for us to make a question of quantity a problem of quality," Dr. Ross recalls. York would meet "refined and subtle needs" in preparing the student for today's world, for "(the university's) principle function is to create, stimulate and nourish the community as a whole".

To accomplish this, York had to become a first-rate university. Dr. Ross considers four criteria which distinguish first-rate from mediocre universities: "(1) the quality of the people associated with it; (2) the fundamental idea around which it is organized; (3) the capacity for self-criticism and change that exists within it; and (4) the buildings and property it uses".

People are most important in his analysis. Whether they be administrators, faculty members, or students, those associated with the university must participate in its life and growth with intelligence and energy. And there must be meaningful contact within and among these groups, for, as Karl Jaspers has pointed out, a university requires "an atmosphere of communication based on a community of thinking".

Stephen Leacock considered professors as the least important requirement in the ideal university, but Professor Ross espouses their validity. Though his pro-prof praise may be true, his proposals for their selection seem somewhat demanding; "All members of faculty must be scholars, but there must be some balance in respect of age, experience, subject of study, temperament, teaching and research experience".

Without students, however, a well-balanced faculty is meaningless. "Those who strive, we shall redeem", says Faust--and Murray Ross. Quoting Northrop Fry, he points out that "the great blight that threatens standards in a university is not the few who should not be there and soon fail, but the large group of '...personable, docile, polite young people who do all they are asked to do and yet are somehow not students, but merely young people at college.' "What they lack, from the teacher's point of view", he adds, "is drive or momentum, the sense of urgency of knowledge, the awfulness of ignorance, the crucial responsibilities of an educated man, the immense gap between wisdom and *savoir faire*. "For too many of those who come to university are not students; by their striving and the university's stimulation, they must quickly become so or their

days at university are wasted."

"Striving" is not restricted to books. The arts, athletics, politics beckon to a student; he should risk pre-conceived attitudes in these fields and "discover what merely interests or attracts him and what moves him profoundly" and "experience moods and ideas and people hitherto unknown to him".

The philosophy of education at York is based on the tenets of a "liberal and general" education, and the development of "the whole man, the well-rounded individual". Inquiry and understanding are its constant aspirations. York's curriculum--thoroughly explained in this book--embodies these principles.

In this era of specialization, we often lose sight of the importance of a general education. Ross comprehends the situation of ed-

facilities, common rooms and residences--show his concern for a learning environment. Recalling the words of King Henry VIII--"I tell you, sirs, that I judge no land in England better bestowed than that which is given to our universities" and Henry's later denial of them after sharp university criticism, Dr. Ross could well be thinking of a certain contemporary Conservative.

The second section of the book is addressed specifically to students--to York's first class of students, and to Acadia University's 1960 graduating class. Dr. Ross asked if the graduating students had learned the habits of scholarly inquiry, of challenging traditional beliefs, of self-discipline in work, of caring--for themselves, for others, and for truth.

This is a book that is forthright,



Dr. Murray G. Ross, President of York University

ucation today with an admirable combination of observation and introspection. He grasps the student's difficulty in establishing an identity and worthwhile goals. Further, he sees the problem in integrating diverse interests within a meaningful life-pattern. But he cautions that self-interest alone is not enough, that social cognizance is necessary. The university can direct the student in his search for knowledge, but it is the student himself, with self-knowledge and social responsibility, who must continually ponder problems of beauty and justice and goodness. For, none of these views will be meaningful to the individual, unless he has sought, questioned, and discovered for himself that they are compelling for him."

Dr. Ross's examination of the university's material tools--land, buildings, libraries, lab

but considered. Its style is conversational, never ponderous. The arrangement of the first section, "To the Society", flows orderly from "Development" to "Agency". The second section, "To the Students", speaks with enthusiasm and wisdom (and assuredly not the "conventional" wisdom that often stultifies such addresses!).

Whether Dr. Ross's optimism will see its total fruition is unascertainable at this time. But if his hopes are realized, if York does indeed become the community of well-rounded scholars envisaged in this book, then generations of York students will be able to say of Murray Ross: "Si monumentum, requira, circumspice."

The New University, Murray G. Ross, University of Toronto Press, 1961; 110 pages; \$3.50 hard cover.

CUS and ALBERTA

Branny Schepanovich has argued that Canada does not need an activist student group like CUS. He suggests that the union is over-extended in areas like international affairs and domestic policy. Thus he implies that there is no role for the student as a member of the student community to promote social reform. But even from a strictly selfish point of view, the integrity of the university cannot be secured by working strictly within the hallowed halls. To be concerned for the future of the university one must accept the responsibility to act upon the social and economic systems which sustain or threaten teaching and learning, openness and relevance. This means involvement; and it means involvement on the part of the student community if it is to play a viable role in our society. If people are starving in Malawi--not just Malawi citizens--then the Canadian student community should be working on programs to confront Canadian students, the Canadian government and international agencies with the need to respond with speed and determination. If people are living in slums around Edmonton the student community should be confronting it; and if students at the University of Alberta have serious emotional problems, the student community should be tackling that, with considerable resources and intellectual application.

STUDENT AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The most immediate community that the student can become involved in is the student community, and this is the place of his immediate concern. But the student cannot allow himself to adopt such an elitist position as to see all his concerns ending with the immediate. The Canadian Union of Students is primarily concerned with questions directly relating to the Canadian student community but we are also concerned with the scores of other social problems which in some way come out of an understanding of so-called student problems. One cannot draw a rigid line between a student problem and another kind of social problem. The problem of poverty on an Indian reserve and the problems facing the Indian student in first year university are part and parcel of the same societal concern. To admit otherwise is to contend that our society is a collection of ticky-tacky boxes--unrelated and unrelating.

ALBERTA

But what of specific points that the Alberta delegation has made. If our disagreement is over the fundamental I have attempted to outline above, then Alberta is wise to question its involvement with fellow student associations in a national organization. The matter bears much debate--and the vote of the students. If however, the disagreement is about the specific points raised by the Alberta council so far, then I would very seriously ask you to consider the following.

OVEREXTENSION

There is no doubt that this has become a CUS problem. But I have asked for a mandate for the union to "pull in its horns" and stop trying to write a brief for the sake of verbosity to every