

EDITORIAL

Propaganda wars

The Alberta-Ottawa energy war, dormant for the last few months, is about to heat up again. The occasion this time will be the March 1 implementation of the first oil production cutback.

And the dispute will have to be resolved before July 20, when the federal government's \$40 million grant to Imperial Oil to remain in the suspended Cold Lake project expires. Ottawa is not likely to extend the grant, and the symbolic loss of that project would seriously damage both the federal and provincial positions.

Neither side has remained silent in the past few weeks; the provincial government, especially, is not above firing verbal volleys at Ottawa. The latest is the recently released pamphlet "Energy Issues for the People of Alberta."

This little propaganda tract is handed out like a religious testimonial to every hapless person who wanders into the Legislative Building. That the pamphlet gives the government line is not galling; what is galling is the arrogant assumption that the government view should be the gospel truth for all Albertans. What would the reaction be if the Socreds or NDP tried to distribute their policy papers on the steps of the Legislature?

Lougheed and his ministers have elevated a purely political battle, with its attendant posturing, platitudes and general cynicism to a sort of spiritual calling; all who challenge this are labelled heretics. Lougheed at times seems genuinely amazed that the people of Ontario consider Albertans nothing but filthy rich robber barons and do not acknowledge the massive financial bonanza Alberta has foregone by accepting less than the world price for oil.

But surely he is not so naive that he does not realize attitudes on both sides are shaped not by right and reason but by calculated media manipulation. And his little blue tract on energy does just that, using catchwords such as "discriminates," "infringing" and "ultimatum" to establish a siege mentality.

On the federal side, of course, Marc Lalonde's effrontery and haughty manner do little to resolve disputes. In Alberta the age-old sport of Ottawa-baiting has been honed to the point where even separatism is no longer considered unthinkable.

The energy issues that must be resolved in the 1980s are many and complex. But it is definitely in the long-term interests of all parties to resolve the disputes and get on with more important matters. Politicians who spend their time feuding while neglecting our better interests should be put in their place.

And Lougheed is doing just that: ignoring his fundamental duty to the people of this province in pursuing a Golden Fleece existing only in the minds of oil companies executives.

Keith Krause

the Gateway

If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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Yellow journalism thriving

As a long time compulsive reader of the *Gateway* I can't recall a year that the *Gateway* has been as obscenely subjective as this one.

Subjective is used in the latter sentence as a euphemism to describe deliberately omitting or distorting facts.

Last Thursday's issue, the hatchet job on the Kirk slate, was a classic example. I don't favor either Kirk or Soper (I don't get to vote) but it's hard not to sympathize with Kirk. Keith ("Have you stopped molesting small furry forest animals, Mr. Kirk? Answer yes or no.") Krause in an astonishing tour de force said that Kirk has experience "not directly relevant to students," and "one suspects he cares little about things like clubs and S.U. finances and other purely 'Students' Union' issues." Soper "on the other hand has his experience on the student level, with Students' Council."

Now you or I might think this indicates that Kirk has never been on Students' Council. Wrong yellow journalism breath. An unfortunate slip of the typewriter in an article elsewhere on the election forum unwittingly reveals that Kirk was on Students' Council until September. That article further states that Kirk's slate was "slick... and politically expedient" but then points out major disagreements between

Kirk and his Board of Governors representative. If this is an example of a slick slate then the

Gateway is an example of a slickly written and edited newspaper. On

the basis of these kinds of articles you might be hard pressed to prove mere competence.

Jim Talbot
Grad Studies

Absurd to cry slander

To: Elaine Keenan (Law II)

I know for a fact, Elaine, that I for one was not subjected to any "slander" when I read the *Gateway* last Thursday. In fact, I doubt if anyone at all was subjected to any slander of any sort. You see, Elaine, slander is a term used in law to denote spoken defamation.

Perhaps in your letter you should have gambled with the word libel. At least with that word you would not have provided me with an opportunity to correct a second year law student on a legal term I learned in grade eleven. At any rate, terminology was not the reason that I decided to sit down and write this letter.

When a person intentionally puts (himself) in the public eye, (he) automatically leaves (himself) open to a certain degree of criticism and/or support. Mr. Krause, as the editor of the *Gateway* can, if he wishes, exercise his free will and privilege to criticize or support whatever group or individual that he wishes, as long as he makes it clear

that these are his own personal opinions. This criticism of public figures (especially those associated with politics) is a necessary part of the system, and has precedent in law.

I'm sure that you have picked up an *Edmonton Journal* and found harsh criticism of the Prime Minister, Premier, or some other public official within its pages. The *Edmonton Journal* is not a political paper, and this is not libelous (there goes that word again) journalism. This criticism is simply part of journalism as is Mr. Krause's editorial of last Thursday.

As far as the influence of the editorial is concerned, I say this: A university encourages independent thought, and I'm sure that the majority of students recognized the editorial exactly for what it was — an expression of independent thought. Did I say majority? What a coincidence, that is exactly what Mr. Soper received at the polls.

Tim Sayer
Commerce I

Let she who is without sin...

Re "Aspidistra" *Gateway*
Feb. 5, 1981

My apologies, Ms. Thomson. I was unaware that you were in charge of enforcing the rules of the English language. I also had no idea that there was such a thing as "correctness" in English. But I certainly would not expect a medical student who has, in all likelihood, taken a total of one (freshman - 1 level) English course, to know that there are, in fact, no rules to the English language at all, only generally accepted social traditions.

However, if you wish, Ms. Thomson, we will all stop aggravating — pardon me, irritating — you by using terminology of which you do not approve.

Please forgive me, Ms. Thomson, but I feel a need to point out that there are a few instances in which you strayed from "generally accepted social tradition" (if nine can be called a few). Nine times you have mistaken a noun clause for a sentence. A noun clause is not a sentence, Ms. Thomson, it is simply a noun

clause. It is generally accepted that a sentence has a main verb in it. (Yes, Virginia — pardon me, Alison — you did this nine times.)

In closing, I would like to say that comparing a *Gateway* columnist (such as yourself) to almost any *Journal* columnist is like comparing Mother Goose to Charles Dickens. This kind of pseudo-intellectual snobbishness is something up with which the rest of us should not put!

Marlyn K. Lyall
English IV