

The sick campus



—Jack Segal photo

"Now what did that prof say? All the others must know because they're writing it down."

Sellar views

the Schwarz Report

Diagnosis -- "discontent"

By DON SELLAR

OTTAWA—The Schwarz report on student health services across Canada pays more than lip service to student unrest on the university scene.

Underlining its clinically-delivered observations about the sorry state of student health services in Canada is a four-page warning to university administrators and governments.

Dr. Schwarz's message to them is clear—there is a new generation of students on Canadian campuses which refuses to swallow irrelevant courses dished out by incompetent lecturers.

While their predecessors were content about grumbling among themselves about food services, parking regulations, housing facilities and book store prices, the new breed is challenging "even formerly sacrosanct higher levels of university government" with demands for student representation in open university decision making, Schwarz says.

DESTRUCTION COMING

The report calmly admits that if only negative signs are read into the new discontent, more destructive forms of student protest—the Berkeleys—will be generated in Canada.

And not only that, "but one can also fail to recognize the power which students have to contribute to the growth of universities," according to Dr. Schwarz.

This student yearning for power is based on the student theme of doing something positive to improve university conditions.

"That student concern for what happens to universities is both legitimate and useful has been borne out by student demonstrations in support of progressive university leaders and policies," he argues, pointing out that demonstrations are more "likely to be made within the university, to the university leaders, and not against them."

THE CAUSAL PROBLEM

Finding the cause of student unrest is not as difficult as some ad-

ministrators and faculty members might think.

According to Dr. Schwarz, manifestations of student concern can be attributed to the search by individual students for what he calls "appropriate consideration" as individuals.

"In part," says Dr. Schwarz, "the student is asking that his physical and mental welfare be respected, in order that he may go about his proper business—learning."

The affluent, mass-production he lives in is forcing him to think about his survival as an individual.

The identity quest is only one aspect of current student complaint. The other area, related more to dissatisfaction with the educational

process itself, is seen as a demand for greater individual attention in an increasingly impersonalized university situation.

The knowledge and enrolment explosions are producing this reaction, the report suggests.

BIT BY BIT

Larger classes, more faculty specialization, and a withered student-student dialogue are taking their toll.

"Faculty members . . . although very much concerned about their lack of rapport with students, are fully aware that if they begin to give individual attention to each student their already heavily overloaded schedules will be come unbearable."

Dr. Schwarz nails a grim thesis and warning on the church-doors of Canadian university communities.

"What seems to be needed, and what is being done in many centres, is a new look at the total university experience in order to find more meaningful ways of encouraging true learning even when numbers of students have to be involved. But these approaches require even greater attention to the total individual and to the whole university environment."

A PLAN NEEDED

Treatment for students suffering from forms of personality and behavioral disorders is important, says Schwarz, but what campuses

need more, perhaps, is a positive program of mental hygiene.

Dr. Schwarz advocates revolution, and judging from his report, it's needed.

His descriptions of health facilities or individual campuses are rampant with criticism, even though the psychiatrist is reluctant to condemn or editorialize.

The truth is nearly one-quarter of Canada's campuses have no health services. Only 38.8 per cent 44.9 per cent have psychiatric ser- have infirmaries, and of these, only vices.

And figures show there is a whole generation of student anxiety waiting for treatment from doctors who understand the university environment.

Just don't screw-up the IBM

By KEN DRUSHKA

For many freshmen the first encounter with reality, particularly at a large university such as Toronto or UBC might be the registrar's office, where for the first time he is treated like an IBM card.

He gets the idea that he, the student, is fouling up an important operation by his existence.

Instead of finding an exciting intellectual community he finds an impersonal institution.

Next he is treated to the president's welcoming address, which is usually a speech informing him that he has now arrived. That the university is a great and exciting place. And that the future lies before him if he is ready to accept the challenge.

MEETING THE MYTH

He has now encountered the myth of the university.

If he is very sharp, he might be jolted back to reality in his first classes.

His professors may tell him, in his first lectures, that he is no longer in high school and now has to act on his own initiative.

But underneath this facade of

"freedom" he might notice that his "education" is still rated by marks and exams and that he will still, basically, be told what to study, when to study it, and how to study it.

At some universities the student encounters that insidious form of socialization known as freshman orientation.

TO THE CIRCUS

It may be ridiculous, in the case of initiations, or it may be impressive, in the case of a series of faculty lectures, seminars and displays of academic Barnum and Bailyism.

Although he may question the relevance of such an orientation the student will find it instructive—how to get books from the library, where the washrooms and lecture halls are, what grades he needs to pass and who the Big Men On Campus are.

He may wonder why no one asks what he thinks, what he wants, or what he believes—but at this stage he doesn't know enough to dissent.

He is a scared freshman, who for 12 or 13 years has been taught to obey.

At a later date he might recognize the pressures to conform which bear on him during these first days.

By now the student has probably learned the formal rules of the university—how to get where and when for what, what marks he needs and so on.

THE OTHER RULES

Slowly he learns the informal rules—for example, that it is unnecessary to hard intellectual work to get grades. Just figure out the prejudices and pet theories of the professor, and learn and regurgitate them on essays and exams.

He may or may not choose to play the game, but he will observe that most of his fellow students do.

During his first year the student might be overawed by the university—he might still be impressed by the intellectual paths he sees open to him, as epitomized in senior and graduate students and faculty.

He might be unhappy about a few things—the high school atmosphere, the attitude of "getting by", and the impersonal way he is treated—but he probably feels, or

is made to feel it is his fault, not the institution's.

He sees others accepting, or appearing to do so, and is hesitant about not doing the same.

He may have had the rejected thoughts about leaving the university.

EVER ONWARDS

By the time he is in his second year he may be either cynical or rebellious.

During his third and fourth years he may either develop a protective indifference and resignation or a deeper disenchantment and active dislike for the university. If he is the first kind of student he may resent the second kind, or it may be the other way around.

But in the long run the future paths of both kinds are predictable. Some go on to graduate school and lucrative teaching positions, others to professional schools or straight into business, industry or politics on the terms laid out by those institutions.

And a few retain fragments of a vision of freedom they had as first-day freshman, and wonder what went wrong.