

# Content is problem- not U.S. professors

Last term, Rob Matthews did a paper for Education 4141 entitled "Americanization of Higher Education". Excerpts and statistics from that paper are used in the following article although it is not meant to be fully represented.

"Higher education, eh? Higher on whose scale? — Education on whose terms?"

by Erin Flynn

Those American imperialist rascals are doing it to us again! Bad enough that they own and/or control so much of our industry, glut our media with their news, their entertainment and their celebrations, lead the fashion world and consequently our clothing stores, etc.etc. But now, ever so gently they've moved, like surgeon with scalpel, to take over higher education in our country! "My God, it's an outrage!" "How'd they do it? The CIA—was it a CIA assignment?" "Bought their way in, I betcha!"

It sounds very simple according to Matthews. Almost as if someone south of the border said "Spread 'em!", and we did.

That was in the 60's when US government expenditure for research escalated tremendously (especially in terms of defense and space exploration) which meant many more dollars for university research facilities as well as increased demand for skilled and well educated people. That was also in the "war-baby-goes-to-university" period. The result of all this was a tremendous increase in the education dollars chipped in by the Canadian federal gov't, rising from \$28 million in 1964-65 to \$621 million ten years later! With the system expanding so rapidly, many Americans, for reasons ranging from Vietnam to the urban survival syndrome to a two year tax exemption for American professors teaching in Canadian Universities (sound familiar?), chose to step across that 2000 mile unguarded line into the Canadian education frontier. In 1968, our delayed reaction alarm went off. (the border really is guarded??)

Two Carleton University professors, Robin Matthews and James Steele showed that foreign scholars, especially the 'just south of the border' breed, were being hired to Canadian university staff at an alarming rate. As an example, "In 1965, 58% of the newly appointed full time academic staff were foreign. In 1967, 72% were non-Canadian, and in 1968 the figure rose to an unbelievable 86%, making Canadians the smallest category of all only 14%. As a result of this trend in hiring policy, the proportion of Canadian professionals in Canadian universities diminished by 25% in just 7 years from 1961-68. This left the proportion of Canadians at less than fifty percent!"

Hugh McLennon called it 'a program of national suicide'.

Not only were the American professors arriving in great hordes, but they were getting the best jobs! Deans, Deputy Deans, Department heads, Chairpeoples—all American citizens.

Matthews (the student) hypoth-

esizes that:

-there is a correlation between the number of Americans in administrative posts and the number of Americans on the faculties.

-the proportion of non-Canadians on staff is related to the course offerings involving non-Canadian material.

This second hypothesis I'd like to focus on. I guess it only makes sense. As Matthews says, "American professors come to Canada with American backgrounds and American textbooks. Therefore their knowledge, their concerns and their viewpoints relate to American problems and issues." He continues, "If educational programs and course material are biased in favor of studying American issues and problems, how will this affect the Canadian student?" Well, I don't think we have to be reminded of the ways in which Canadian students are affected. 'Race relations' is something which is characterized by the bussing issue. It has no Canadian reference point. Science or history have no place here in Canada except as they relate to someone else. It goes on and on. But is the central problem American professors in higher education? I would say not.

The problem lies, not so much with **who** is teaching, but rather with **what** is being taught and **how**. **How** one teaches usually depends on teacher training or teacher education. **What** one teaches, unfortunately, too often depends on urban bureaucrats. And how are our teachers trained?

Some recent research in the Maritimes has shown that in the twelve universities / teacher's colleges involved in teacher training here, more than 900 courses are offered. Less than ten percent of them have any Canadian reference. In other words, teachers here in the Maritimes have less than one chance in ten to choose a course with content relevant to Canada, let alone content relevant to the Maritimes. The point is, this isn't new. It didn't just arrive in 1965 with the Americans. It was here long before.

In elementary school, if I remember correctly, I was taught that history happened in Europe and later in the U.S.. I was taught to read with Dick, Jane and Spot. I was made to understand that to be a success meant to get to Toronto. I was taught by Canadian teachers from textbooks written about urban experiences in Toronto and, more frequently, some U.S. center such as New York City. And I guess if my textbook is going to be one on New York City, why not someone from NYC to tell me about it?! Similarly, if schools in Northern Labrador are going to use textbooks written for Toronto schools talking about sidewalks and skyscrapers, why not have someone from there to help explain these phenomena?

Then again, if we want an education based on the 'Canadian' experience or perhaps even more regionally defined than that, then we're looking at a completely

## Comment

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different approach to teaching, as well as different content.

As Hilda Neatby sums up so well in her book **So Little For The Mind: an Indictment of Canadian Education**, published in 1953, "surely, a clear and precise statement of a Canadian philosophy of education, based not on an awkward synthesis of three or four mutually exclusive

American schools of thought, but rather on a consideration of the essential values of Western civilization, would be a worthy project."

Getting rid of Americans is not a panacea. We shouldn't blame them for our unwillingness to make some basic decisions about educational goals and directions in this country.

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