

Hockey facilities not suitable for champions

By MEL D. BROITMAN

As a young boy growing up in Ottawa, I was fairly oblivious to the fact that the nation's capital had two universities. When the topic of universities did come up in discussion, I did, however, recognize the University of Toronto as being relevant.

Simply put, I was distinctly aware of a tradition at the U of T. And how did this come about for an Ottawa youth? Well, numerous championship hockey teams at the Toronto school elevated the image of an ivy leaf superimposed over a large blue letter "T" as symbolically significant in my own mind.

You see, tradition is one of the most important elements that permeates our consciousness. Most of us recognize tradition as a prime motivation for much of our thoughts and actions. At York University, tradition is still in its infant stages of evolution. It takes time, especially in an institutional setting.

Fortunately York University's hockey team has offered the Univer-

sity a head start in establishing a rich tradition of excellence. It's unfortunate however that to this point the University administration has not taken advantage of the opportunity. Rather in typical York fashion, the brilliance of a group of dedicated student-athletes often serves to highlight the embarrassing shortcoming of York.

York University is badly in need of a new ice arena. The present facility, commonly known as the Ice Palace is not only inadequate, it is a shocking eyesore to the community. It is lacking in almost every way possible. Yet the administrators that claim to direct the future growth of York University have sat by listlessly as the community floods to the arena to watch our national game performed in the most disgusting environs.

I've heard the excuses. No money. Not a priority. Academic concerns come first. I've listened long enough.

I have heard York's President Harry Arthurs speak of academic renewal, of the desire to see York as a place of educational excellence. It is truly unfortunate that our "leaders"

in this new academic plan fail to perceive the incredible significance of the success of York's hockey programme. Four successive OUA (Ontario championship seasons and two CIAU National) titles have firmly established the basis of a rich tradition of hockey excellence at York.

Even more important, in Canada hockey is deeply rooted within our cultural system. In Canada, a hockey arena is a centre of intense social interaction. Oftentimes we regard an arena with a religious fervour. Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens, and Montreal's Forum are referred to by the populace as *shrines*. Yet at York this powerful symbol is negated by the Ice Palace. Whether you like hockey or athletics in general, an enlightened and educated individual cannot refute its importance and relevance to our psyche. Thanks to the York Yeomen, this university has been handed the richness of a tradition most Canadians can appreciate.

Will York University take advantage of this wonderful opportunity? Perhaps.

Perhaps York will recognize the fact that in this hockey-crazed metropolis there exists countless arenas, yet not one facility between the range of a Maple Leaf Gardens and a Varsity Arena. Not one medium-sized rink (6,000-8,000 seats) with an Olympic-size ice surface.

The City of North York has noticed. Recently, talk has leaked of the potential for this building in the North York area. Obviously, the city's politicians see the chance to grab an identity and instill this tradition in their own hockey shrine. Where is York amidst all this talk? I thought imagination, insight, and creativity was a big part of academic renewal.

Then again, I was in attendance when York President Arthurs made



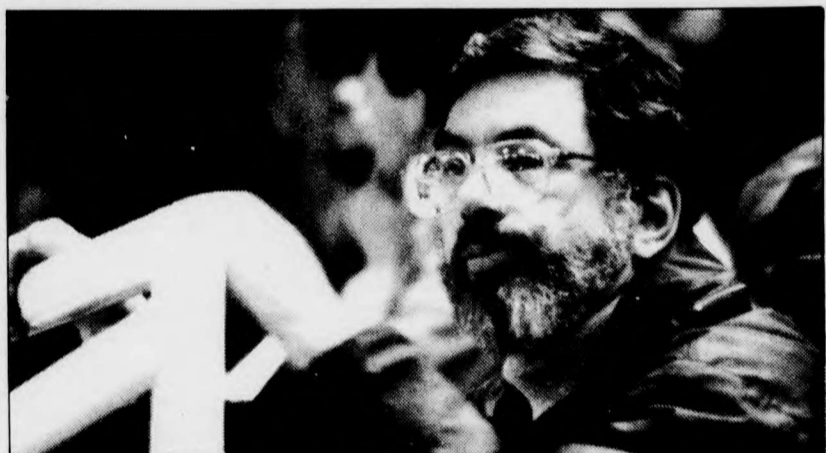
The sign says it all: York fans, the guy with the small head is CYSF Prez. Drew McCreadie, show their displeasure with the inadequacies of the Ice Palace.

a surprise announcement as part of the opening remarks at last year's athletic banquet—as he proudly proclaimed that \$22 million had been allotted to new athletic facilities. I remember the packed hall of athletes, coaches and administrators, applauding loudly, delighted with the exciting news. I remember discussing how the money might be spent. I remember a university official telling me that Harry was joking, and being shocked at the revelation that the audience was completely unaware of Harry's humour. I wish I could forget the ignorance and arrogance of Harry's *crass joke*. If I could forget then I could revel in the naiveté that this administration just might *do something*.

It was wonderfully ironic as this past weekend the Yeomen sported brand new jerseys for the National Championship. A gracious gesture by Vice-President Ian Lithgow was responsible for York's fine attire.

Actually the uniforms were available for the previous week, in time for the OUA Final Four at the Ice Palace. But because of a superstitious tradition, the Yeomen refused to wear the new shirts. When it came time to be scrutinized by a national television audience the players had no choice. WEAR THE NEW JERSEYS! Amazing how the possibility of President Arthurs tuned to CTV in the comfort of his own living room along with a half-million Canadians brought such concern to the plight of how the Yeomen look!

No matter how bright and clean those new shirts are next season, the York skaters will still *look* like they play shinny in a dump. We are left then to wonder whether the fresh jerseys symbolize a new enlightened perspective, or the growing tradition of York's hypocrisy of fine athletes and poor facilities. Nothing to joke about.



Where's the hot dog, Harry: President Harry Arthurs has a perfect view from his reserved centre ice seat. He looks like he's into some analysis of the match between Western and York. Go Harry Go.



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