

A strategy for ending the college system

By JAN PATTERSON

Being a transfer student to York, brings with it all the frustrations of the incoming freshman (getting lost going to classes, being particular victims of the inefficient bureaucracy) with none of the glamour of entering university for the first time.

Being an old hack at tangling with university bureaucracies I don't have the angelic patience of the newcomer to the game. But being a new student I don't yet have the cushion of apathy to protect me from the worst horrors of the grinding wheels. So things may understandably appear harsher to me than most. One of the most confusing and frustrating and irrational things I have seen yet though, is York's famous college system.

I began to wonder what it was all about this summer when I began to receive friendly notices from my college master to come to outdoor barbecues, dances etc. One would have thought that my being 3,000 miles away in B.C. would have dampened his spirit somewhat. Oh no. They are very friendly these college people. As friendly as a form letter can make them.

On my arrival I went hustling over to my college to see what this social organization was all about, and to ask some questions like to what extent my social life on the campus was going to be ruled by this arbitrary club. But my thoughts weren't all negative. Especially when I heard about the lounges,

and the coffee bars, etc. Unfortunately that was the last time I was in the college. It's a long way from my classes. There was no one there when I went. The main raison d'etre seemed to be the social functions it sponsored. Ah, I said, they are just called colleges. Really they are just loose social clubs in disguise, open to everyone but especially helpful in making social contacts. Fine.

Then I began to hear disturbing rumors. Nothing together mind you. Just a piece of information here. A bit of gossip there. Like when I found out that my student fee of \$17 of my \$27 went to my college government instead of the central student government. Oh, colleges have a student government each, I asked? Oh yes, and a newspaper too. You mean my college has a student government and a newspaper? Yes. And all the other colleges have a student government and a newspaper each? That's right. And there's a central student government which has its . . . You're getting the idea. Let me see. Nine governments and nine papers on a campus that does not seem to be all that into exercising their democratic rights. . . Now either we have a case of super efficient division of labour or I'm supporting a lot of student bureaucrats.

But the finances were really the kicker. The central student government and their newspaper, the Excalibur, depend on the goodwill of six of the nine colleges. So the colleges really hold the purse strings and thus

the student power. What do they do with it? They throw parties, I'm told. They save it up for a rainy day I'm told. They publish their newspapers I'm told. (I'm told all this because I haven't been inside my college because it's so far away and hardly the centre of my social life for reasons mentioned.)

So the colleges weren't just a social club but were the nucleus of York's student government and activities. Now I'll have to agree with the critics of the college system per se. Not only is it arbitrary as compared to the departmental system (where you find yourself at least bumping shoulders with people you have something in common with) but it divides students. Now, while this may not be important if students never want to exercise any influence as a group, if we should take the rash decision to do something, our hands would be tied.

The system divides both by encouraging separate activities and by weakening central ones, namely the central student government and the central newspaper, and so, if you are not into your college, then there isn't much chance that you'll be into anything else. Because of these objections, I didn't want my money being put into an institution I'm not going to have much to do with.

Oh, but the reality is much, much worse (more ridiculous) than the theory. What if I'm not the exception but the rule? What if the majority do not function in their colleges, but support them with their hard earned bread?

The last shred of justification is gone. What should have been a social system of organization is nothing more than eight little governments with eight little newspapers and a lot of money. Very inefficient and very ridiculous. And a central student government and newspaper at their mercy.

And just to add a touch of comic to this ironic situation, the administration is paying for two, two, two systems in one. We have a half corpse of a departmental system, and the mask of a college system. I wonder what the professors think of all this.

Like I said before. Being a transfer student, I don't have all my defense mechanisms in gear yet. Possibly in a week or two I too can shrug my shoulders with the coolness of a York pro and sneer at the whole ridiculous, expensive, and destructive mess.

So now, while I'm still green, let me have my say. The college system and all its attributes, excessive student government and no student leadership, excessive student newspapers and little communication, will remain as long as we, the students allow it. It will be here for our children if we wish. Or even if we just do nothing. And there is only one way we have a hope in hell of changing it. That of letting a voice be heard against it, either through departmental unions, through social or athletic clubs, through the present student government(s) themselves. We've got nothing to lose but our paper chains. . .

Toronto's new domed stadium: four scenarios

By DAVID PHILLIPS

One

In the midst of the smoke, smells and decay of the packing house district on Lakeshore Boulevard rests a vacant lot. Ten years ago it was the site of Maple Leaf Stadium and the baseball home of the Toronto Maple Leafs. It was only a minor league team, but somehow it seemed more important than that. After all, the team had been in operation since the 1920's and had drawn up to 20,000 people to a game in the days before Toronto was a boom town. And faces that belonged to names like Al Sciotte, Rocky Nelson, Jim King and Sparky Anderson even became familiar across the city.

Twenty years ago crowds would flock to the Stadium to see the Montreal Royals. There existed an intense rivalry between Toronto and Montreal and furthermore Montreal had a player named Jackie Robinson who was having some difficulty getting into the major leagues. Several years later however, the Montreal team encountered financial difficulties. After a brief struggle the Montreal Royals declared bankruptcy. The rivalry was ended. Baseball was dead in Montreal.

Meanwhile in Toronto, kids continued to stream to The Stadium to try to win a pony or receive a free baseball from a Leaf player. But the stream suddenly turned into a trickle and the Toronto Maple Leafs were in trouble. After several unsuccessful attempts to salvage the team, the inevitable happened. On Oct. 17, 1967, the Toronto Maple Leafs died. As The Stadium stood empty throughout the cold winter, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners sealed its death notice by awarding a \$29,000 contract to have the building demolished. The task was duly carried out. Memories were all that remained of Toronto's past baseball glory.

Two

Toronto alderman David Rotenberg has a vision. He sees a magnificent 55,000 seat, domed stadium standing on the 80-acre site of the Canadian Armed Forces base in Downsview. It is the home of a major-league baseball team as well as the training center for the Canadian Olympic team. The domed stadium is used for other amateur sports as well and sometimes as a convention center. The Argos play there and even the hockey Leafs. The domed stadium is serviced by a modern expressway stretching south through the western half of Toronto. And this domed stadium stands as a monument to the Great City which built her — a growing, developing, powerful modern city. The 21st Century belongs to Toronto.

Mr. Rotenberg is in the bright City Council Chamber attending a City Council meeting. He is an executive alderman and the deputy mayor of Toronto and he will probably be a candidate for mayor in next year's election.

The Council is discussing the proposal for a domed stadium. One of the difficulties of Rotenberg's scheme is that all of the \$55 million needed for the project must come from the public purse since it appears that private interests are not either interested or capable of putting up that massive sum. Rotenberg explains that 50 percent of the cost will have to be paid by the federal government, which is justifiable, he explains, because the stadium is meant to serve as a National Athletic Center. Another 30 percent is meant to come from the Province of Ontario and the remainder is to be supplied by the municipal government. Only under this formula, Rotenberg explains, is the domed stadium a feasible project.

Karl Jaffray is one of the four radicals on Toronto City Council. He makes a motion that a plebiscite be held before any municipal funds are spent on the project. Rotenberg is very opposed to this and he asks why there should be a plebiscite on a domed stadium when other public expenditures such as sewers are passed easily without such measures. A debate follows — one of those long, rambling, yet fascinating City Hall debates in which out of a conflict over particulars emerges the more fundamental

conflict in philosophies between those supporting Rotenberg and those supporting Jaffray. Finally the vote is taken. There will be a plebiscite on the issue of the domed stadium.

Alderman Rotenberg leans back in his chair. He has lost the vote but he remains as determined as ever. It may be more difficult than he had originally expected, but he will do it. In four years, Toronto will have a domed stadium if David Rotenberg has his way.

Three

The first winds of winter blow across the Keele campus of York University. Dark, huddled figures drift from building to building. They are part of a drifting non-community where 9 percent of students voted in the last CYSF election. It is a non-community of separate fiefdoms waging continual war against each other. It is a non-community which has lost the sense of its own organic nature, of each individual depending on the others, in the midst of an ever greater and growing community. It is a non-community which exalts every divisive issue and ignores its common welfare. Consequently, the need

for a traffic light at the Keele entrance goes unheeded and it will probably cost someone their life before anything is done.

It is not surprising that a non-community should be isolated from its surroundings. Student leaders have shown no concern for the type of development which is being planned for the region surrounding York and if past performance holds true, they will probably successfully ignore the fact that the proposed site for the domed stadium is located just one mile away from the campus.

Some York officials have not ignored this fact. Vice-president of finance Bruce Parkes and athletic chairman Bryce Taylor are members of a non-profit organization known as Mission Dome Inc. As the name suggests the organization was formed to promote the development of a domed stadium for Toronto. The status of the members of this group is ambiguous but it is clear that such members as Eugene Cavotti, vice-president of Leaside Contracting, C.A. Ballentine, business representative for the Toronto Building and Construction Trades Council and D.R. Montgomery, area supervisor of the Steel Workers of America have a professional interest in the building of the domed stadium. Parkes and Taylor also have an interest, for if the stadium were to be built on the Downsview Site, it would render unnecessary the plans for a York Stadium.

The involvement of Parkes and Taylor in the domed stadium project underlines the necessity for debate on this issue at York. As with the Spadina Expressway and the University City development, the domed stadium is a project of such great scale that the final decision, whatever it be, will profoundly affect the future of the York community.

Four

The attempt to resurrect a stadium for Toronto in a new and magnificent form takes place in the midst of a fourth scenario. It is the scenario of poverty and neglect which exists in many areas across Toronto. We are a city desperately in need of low-cost housing and better community recreation centers staffed with trained people to run community programs. It is in this context that we must discuss the need for a domed stadium in Toronto. We require at this stage a clear statement from the university administration about the extent of its involvement to date in the planning for a domed stadium. If the administration is committing York to a position of support for a domed stadium, then this necessitates response from other groups in the university. Only through a process of open debate and free interchange of information between administration, faculty, student newspaper and Council of the York Student Federation can we come to some general conclusions on this issue.

