

# Society is undergoing sex change

By Raymond Yao

"The Industrial Age is coming to an end and the world is in desperate need of growth of a different kind," British economist and author James Robertson told 100 spectators at the Faculty of Environmental Studies Dean's Colloquium last week.

Robertson was at York to talk about "Another Development: The Post-Industrial Revolution".

"The discussion today is about what form a post-industrial society might take", he said, presenting two prevalent but conflicting views. One is what he calls the "HE" — (hyper-expansionist) future; the other is the "SHE" (sane, humane and ecological) future.

scales of activity, asymmetry of the less- and super-industrialized (or 'over-industrialized') nations, Robertson argues. Such a culture keeps people behaviourally conditioned to leisure, unemployment and ecological irresponsibility because of the omnipresent assumption that science will enable the human race to perpetuate its domination of Nature.

"The second, or SHE alternative," he said, "implies that instead of technological acceleration we should focus on reducing specialization, increasing self-sufficiency and becoming less dependent on the technical infrastructure in education, health, agriculture, etc. We need to focus

technology approaches. HE development policies have served to widen, not narrow, the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

In the past few years, recognition has grown of the existence of "The Dual Economy". The formal economy consists of the transactions of business and government measured in terms of GNP but there is a strong informal economy in which goods and services are bartered for or traded without cash exchanges. In this economy, people in households, communities and neighbourhoods help each other and themselves in a variety of ways.

To encourage the shift from formal economic activity to informal do we change society first or ourselves? According to Robertson, we do both at the same time through changes in consumption lifestyles; liberating ourselves from dependence on reducing and people-dominating institutions and technologies; helping others to do the same and, finally, through metaphysical reconstruction by changing the present, dominant paradigm of work to one which emphasizes socially useful products and the blurring of distinctions between paid and unpaid work, (called "Flexi-life" in Britain).

These kinds of changes, he said, are important to the proposed shift in future development of society and its individuals:

- Humanizing and decentralizing of organizations.
- Changing patterns of work, especially to individual-agricultural activities, (more self-sufficiency, less meat in the diet, urban/agriculture)
- Shift to more part-time employment with men and women sharing equally the division of paid and unpaid work. "Men are under-achievers in the informal economy", says Robertson.
- Re-evaluation of different types of work to upgrade the lowest and vice-versa.
- Changes in patterns of settlement towards decentralization but not isolation: people to live closer to their work and be able to spend more time in family activities while maintaining contact with others through decentralized

communication technologies.

Regarding the politics of the post-industrial era, Robertson states that despite apparent polarization of people to the Left and Right, in practice, both systems are geared to the growth mentality and some form of the 'corporate state' with its top-down direction. In such states, "The corridors of power are so congested the individual can't get through", says Robertson.

He should know, having himself withdrawn from top jobs in British government and banking. Robertson is a graduate of Oxford, in economics, he served as a senior

civil servant in the Cabinet office and the Ministry of defense before becoming a consultant in computer systems analysis and management science. In 1968 he participated in the establishment of the Inter-Banks Research Organization.

He is associated with The Turning Point, a British - based international network of people with a wide range of individual concerns who share a common feeling that Man is at a turning point. The group sees that old values, lifestyles and systems of society are breaking down and that new ones must be helped to break through.



Scott Dingwall

James Robertson

"The dialectic between these two is interesting and fruitful". Robertson sees a recent shift towards SHE, especially during the past three years. Which of these is realistic, which fantastic?

The vision of the HE future is that of constantly-expanding high technical advancement, professional elitism, space colonization, nuclear energy, automation, etc., with the best of industrialization yet to come. "We've had 200 glorious years. We have 200 more to come" is the common proclamation of protagonists of technological imperialism like Herman Kahn of the Hudson Institute.

This culture carries with it alienation of people from the institutions meant to serve them, polarization on many fronts and

on intuitional, emotional and people-centred growth".

Other aspects of the SHE alternative involve shifts from urbanization to more dispersed settlement; from the culture of a consumer society to that of a conserver society; from centralization to decentralization, generally.

The Dag Hammarskjold Foundation recently used the term "Another Development" to describe an alternative direction for future growth emphasizing SHE elements. In this scenario, the standards of material consumption, waste and throughput of the developed and lesser-developed countries can converge if both are willing to adopt people-centred development policies instead of the present super-

## Scientists juggle genes in York's new biology lab



James Carlisle

By James Carlisle

Molecular geneticists at York now have one of the most advanced facilities in Canada for recombinant DNA research. The new laboratory, located in the Farquharson building will be used by Drs. J.D. Friesen and R.E. Pearlman to study the structure, regulation and expression of complex genes from higher organisms.

Safety guidelines from the Medical Research Council (MRC) require that certain experiments be performed in 'physical containment facilities'. York's new lab is one of the first in Canada to be built to their standards.

DNA molecules code for all the genetic information in an organism. Using special 'restriction' enzymes scientists are able to cut out specified bits of information, whether it is from the cells of a man or from other organisms. By the use of a virus, or other 'vector' the researchers are able to transfer these bits of information to bacterial cells where they are duplicated. This addition of 'foreign' DNA into bacteria is called recombination. The

bacteria are grown and multiply many times, providing researchers with enough material for detailed study. Occasionally this foreign DNA may be 'expressed', that is, the bacteria may begin to make an enzyme, a hormone, or other protein which is coded in the foreign DNA. Many future applications, often termed 'genetic engineering' depend on this expression. Laboratories have already produced strains of bacteria which make insulin.

The new lab provides both physical and biological containment. It is under a negative air pressure so that dust particles cannot escape from it. Nothing can be disposed of without first being sterilized. The bacteria used for experiments are a type which will die immediately after leaving the lab environment. Even so, a biosafety committee has been set up to monitor recombinant DNA research at York and ensure that it strictly adheres to MRC guidelines. It is made up of two scientists engaged in the research, four other members of the university and two from the community at large.

Dr. Pearlman is quick to point out that the work done at York is 'basic research'. However, many industrial and medically important spinoffs from newer, safer, vaccines to pure hormones for combating deficiency diseases and even plants which make their own fertilizer are expected in the near future.

It is a great source of satisfaction that York scientists lead Canadian research in this important field.

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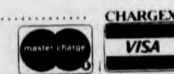
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