

EDITORIAL

Troubled times for York's day care

Peggy Shillingford's three year old daughter may not be able to attend the York University Co-operative Day Care (YUCDC) next year. The Centre, which cares for 110 children, is in serious financial trouble and may be forced to close.

The YUCDC gives Shillingford, a third year sociology and mass communications student, the freedom to study. Without the YUCDC she would be forced to leave school.

The subsidized day care system in Metro is in the midst of a crisis. This year 1,500 additional subsidized spaces were created in Metro, and the cost of day care increased by about 12 per cent. However, Ontario's government will fully fund only 1,000 of these children. Of the remaining 500, the province will only fund about one third of the increase, leaving the YUCDC and many other day cares in a financial crisis.

Metro will provide short term relief by making up the difference for this year, but this money is an advance on next year's Metro contribution.

Next year's crisis will be even worse.

To compound the YUCDC problem, the province has ordered it to paint its premises, buy \$8,000 in toys, and spend about \$3,500 on cots, or its license will not be renewed.

"Next year would have been our 20th anniversary," said Director of the YUCDC Judy Meikle. But now she has doubts as to whether the day care will survive. "We already run a very lean programme. There's nothing to cut out," she said.

The York Community can offer some immediate relief by donating time, money, or toys to the Centre. In fact, the YUCDC has just received permission from the University to use its charitable donation number, so tax receipts can be issued.

However, as the third largest employer in North York, the University has a responsibility to ensure that day care continues to exist on campus.

York has generously provided the YUCDC with rent-free space, 40 hours a week of free cleaning service, about \$14,000 in renovations, and a courtesy account wherein the University pays the YUCDC bills, allowing up to 60 days for the Centre to pay. The account presently stands at over \$100,000.

Part of the crisis could be alleviated if York forgave the \$100,000 debt, or reduced it as an operating or equipment grant, similar to what the University of Toronto did in 1984. In return for this, the University could take the YUCDC under its wing, and through an independent management board, defend its financial investment.

None of these options, however, offers a permanent solution. As the three levels of government are responsible for subsidizing day care, the ultimate answer lies in their hands.

Politicians generally do not like to make long-term commitments, but in order to solve this problem a long-term comprehensive policy is necessary. Currently the federal government, which provides most of the funding for day care, has no defined policy. With the election only days away, it could be months before a new government attends to the problem.

By increasing their investment in day care, and allowing people like Peggy Shillingford to further their education, the government will be benefitting itself. Ultimately, less funds would have to be allocated to the social welfare system and a better educated and therefore more productive workforce would increase Canada's tax base.

By not maintaining an effective subsidized day care system, the government would in effect be telling Canadians that only affluent people have the right to have children.

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LETTERS

"Answer" to parking woe

Dear Editors,

Although your editorial cartoon of November 10th offered one solution to the parking problem at York University ("Perhaps expanding the lot will do the trick"), your answer is not likely to be taken to heart by any of those with the power to do something about anything.

The more typical York answer is contained in your front page article on "Easing the Parking Problem"; change the names. The article talks about "parking lot 8B (formerly Lot I)," "lot 1B (formerly M lot)" and "A (formerly F)."

While the administration talks about lot expansion, it is more likely that they'll just reshuffle names and numbers until the University population gets so confused they'll believe that the lots "weren't crowded in the first place but are even less so now." If you used to have difficulty getting a spot in any of the old lots, I'm sure you'll be reassured to hear that the new designations will effectively double their size. Unfortunately, tuition rates are going to have to increase to pay for the extra ink used to print "8B" & "1B" instead of "I"

& "M" but that's the price of progress.

Insincerely,
 Spike Y. Jones

WHMIS is "too weak"

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter you published in your November 3rd 1988 issue from Clive Holloway of the Chemistry Faculty regarding the workplace hazardous materials information system (WHMIS).

In his letter he states there has never been a serious hazardous incident on campus. That may be true. If so it is to York's credit.

I would also agree with him that no government agency could possibly hope to know more about an unknown substance than the persons developing it.

I would however disagree that it gets the employer off the hook. Quite the contrary, it puts the employer on the hook.

The legislation requires all employees from the lowly cleaning lady who cleans the lab to the highest paid researcher, be informed about what they are exposed to, thus making it easier for the employee and the

employee's doctor to determine if they have a work related illness.

This legislation is admittedly weaker than the labour movement would like. Coupled with the Occupational Health and Safety Act it gives workers one more additional tool with which to protect themselves.

Up until this legislation, no worker had the right to know what he or she was exposed to and the health effects of that exposure, thus making it very difficult to prove occupational illness. Perhaps this is another reason we have not had a serious hazardous materials incident. We simply had no tools to prove the chemical or compound was at fault.

I would suggest that this gentleman become more aware of what the WHMIS legislation entails.

Perhaps it would be to the benefit to the whole of the York community if not only he, but all employees, faculty and staff, become more involved with their union or association health and safety programme.

Currently on campus three joint (labour management) health and safety committees exist. However under law these committees can only recommend to the employer what