

Editorial

Politics of convenience

Royal commissions and task forces are only as useful as the government of the day can make them.

The recently past (away) Liberal regime is remembered as being the patron governmental saint of commissions, task forces and inquiries. Even so, it implemented recommendations of commission reports only when it was politically sound or necessary.

The reports on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and on the status of Women were commissioned at opportune points of history for their supporters by a supportive government.

The Kent commission, however, dealt with the esoteric operations of Canada's newspaper chains. The Canadian public was too confused to become interested. The government did not need to deal with the complex issues spelled out in the report.

Similarly, the commission report on racism quickly sank into oblivion after the Liberal government realized public opinion polls would not be influenced by what — if anything — the government did about the problem.

Already, the Tory government has ignored the controversial conclusions of the Fraser commission on pornography and prostitution when it determined voters could not agree on a direction the government should take on the issues.

After months of cautious stepping, Mulroney has decided voters would not like Canada to participate in the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI or Star Wars), although Canadian businesses want the opportunities.

Mulroney is already applying the same principles of government fandangioing to the massive and complex MacDonald commission on the economy.

True to form, he's jumping on the part of the document that coincides with his preferences. The report's endorsement of free trade with the U.S. will give Mulroney the ammunition with which he will try to win over the confused Canadian public.

However, it is inconceivable the government will adopt all of the social policy changes the report recommends. The prospect of eliminating unemployment insurance and certain tax breaks scares Canadian voters while the idea of guaranteed annual income is unexplored territory.

If Mulroney supports any of the recommended social policy changes, he would have to adopt the entire package, not just the bits he likes. Members of the government may support abolishing universality, but without guaranteed annual income, the Tories could find themselves out on the streets again after the next election.

How likely is Mulroney to subscribe to MacDonald's view of modern Canadian society? The answer determines how long the public will remember the MacDonald commission report

Suzette C. Chan

Lunch sucks

I was lucky during Registration Week as I only suffered three inconveniences.

The first was being prevented from registering until Friday because I didn't have enough money to pay my parking tickets. OK, that's my fault.

The second was having to substantially change my schedule because sections in the courses I wanted were either full or cancelled. Well, it was the end of the week and in an era of shrinking budgets and growing enrollments, perhaps I should stoically take my medicine and not whine about cut-backs hurting my education.

However, the final straw was walking into a registration room at 12:05 p.m. with several other people only to be told by some smirking bureaucrat to: "Get out, it's my lunch hour. Come back at one o'clock."

I wasn't angered just because he waved his hand at us like he was directing sheep at a slaughterhouse; he graciously helped a wheelchair-bound woman before shunting the rest of us out of his empire. No, what angered me was the absurdity of halting operations during the most hectic time of the year for lunch.

The university has 12 months to plan Registration Week so why can't they plan in the staggering of lunchbreaks to keep things moving?

It's bad enough to see our university's budget drying up like bubblegum on a hot summer sidewalk and to see our education begin to resemble the quality of a CAB fishburger, but why do they also have to slap us in the face with this sort of petty bureaucratic inefficiency?

Oh well. Just conditioning us, I guess.

Bill Doskoch

P.S. A big thanks to those staff who did extend themselves and tried to make registration a little less dreary and silly for people.



Letters to the Editor

Truth in journalism

Thank goodness for Gilbert Bouchard and his column 'Media Watch'! If I hadn't read his column in the Sept. 4th issue of *The Gateway*, which included: "Newspapers, for example, are experts at hiding their lack of research...", I might have actually believed that the University of Alberta is "the university farthest north in America and farthest West in Canada..." as Mike Evans' editorial in the same issue would suggest.

Jim Langman

Editor's note:

The quote mentioned above from Mike Evans' editorial is itself a quote from the editorial of the very first issue of *The Gateway* published November 21, 1910. Mike himself had some difficulty with the statement because it seemed to suggest that Canada is a part of "America" as opposed to North America.

The downward slope of the road makes our feet flop as we head toward the stream... The pine smell of the forest is rich here. It's turning cool and the sun is very low... After Chris has washed out his underwear and has it completely clean and wrung out we head back up the logging road.

"Dad?"

"What?" A small bird rises from a tree in front of us.

"What should I be when I grow up?"

The bird disappears over a far ridge. I don't know what to say. "Honest," I finally say.

from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert M. Pirsig

Suffering from TITANIC BOREDOM?



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Correction:

In last week's story "HUB-profit in poor maintenance", O1B-9107 and 8904-2A should be read instead of O1B-9207 and 8904-2B.

The Gateway

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Tim Hellum started another fad when he fit his entire body into a Java Jive cup. Lutfulkabir Khan and Alex Miller decided they'd squeeze into Greg McHarg's contact case and amazed Blaine Ostopovich until Ian Ferguson found them under a table throwing their voices. Hans Beckers, assisted by the mysterious Stech, folded himself between pgs 756&757 of the yellow pages, while Don Tepley fit his arms and legs into his own mouth. Casualties included: John Watson, who squished into an empty cigarette case and was carelessly lit by Maurise Lipssett; and Gilbert Bouchard, David Boyd, Edna Landreville and Linda Derksen, who all got into an icecube tray and were severely melted when Alex Miller brought his friends over for drinks.