

Last week, Jack Santarelli, Director of Safety and Security Services, met with *Excalibur* editors Lorne Manly and Paulette Peirol to discuss concerns raised in our editorial "An Open Letter to Jack Santarelli" (November 6). Santarelli spoke about contentious issues such as staff morale, arming security officers, the Security Union's contract, and grievances. The following are excerpts from an extensive three hour interview.



# SANTARELLI SPEAKS ON SECURITY

**EXCAL:** *Would you agree that "morale is at an all-time low," as Chief Steward Claude Williams said?*

**SANTARELLI:** No. I'm firmly convinced there will always be a morale problem with respect to the shift. You can't please everyone, except if we can get enough officers to work weekends only. Morale is never 100 percent, but my gut feeling about morale in this place, right now, is that it is relatively good.

**EXCAL:** *Some security officers have said that receiving Special Constable status would go a long way to alleviating some problems; not just improving morale but also to enable them to do their jobs better.*

**SANTARELLI:** By and large, I don't really think (Special Constable status) is necessary. However, we are going to talk to the Solicitor General about it. I don't think it would give them any more authority than they've got now. If I saw you committing a crime right now, I could apprehend you physically, but any citizen in this country can do that also. If you see a person committing a crime you can arrest them per se and must call the police immediately.

Now, I don't know what being a Peace Officer would do for these officers that their existing authority doesn't permit them to do.

**EXCAL:** *But it seems that they only have the same powers as an average citizen; unless they witness a crime they can't arrest anyone. With only six officers on duty, the chances of them seeing a crime are slim.*

**SANTARELLI:** It's a good point, and it's something that management will have to decide on . . . Is it really our job to dash in there (pubs, for example) to arrest people? My concern is that this is an academic institution and the security department is part of the academic process. We are not here to superimpose security on top of the organization. We are here to ensure that the security department blends into the normal day to day operations in which the University conducts its business. When you have students—boys and girls, men and women, male and female—and you know what alcohol does to some people, what do you expect to happen? Is it necessary to arrest them? By and large it's just overexuberance . . .

We've never had a situation that's been so bad that we need to arrest them. There have been times when we've had to call the police, but mainly as a threat, to disperse them (the students).

**EXCAL:** *Yet sometimes Metro Police in 31 division are too busy to get to York quickly when called by Security. For example, a few weeks ago, a York security officer had to sit on a suspect for an hour until police arrived.*

**SANTARELLI:** Well, one can only assume that the police are busy with higher priority things. And it's regrettable; I was crushed when I read (the report), because I knew how my officers would feel. When we talk morale, that's the type of thing that adversely affects morale. But by the same token, I can't call Bob Kerr (Staff Inspector of Police, 31 Division) and say, "Hey, Bob, you've got to get your guys up here."

**EXCAL:** *Isn't that even more reason why Special Constable status may be needed, since Metro is too busy? What about weapons for protection?*

**SANTARELLI:** Handcuffs, I could accept . . . But I am absolutely opposed to night-sticks and told (Vice President Bill Farr) yesterday that I would leave the job if he brought them in . . . A night-stick is a lethal weapon. I have one not far from me now, in my car, and one in my house. But the big thing is to think before you use it.

Now we have officers here who come from different social cultures who don't think the way you and might do as North Americans. Now I'm not making disparaging remarks about them, but they think differently. Most of us know the law of the land here . . .

I'm afraid that some of my officers might get so involved in a situation, so emotionally involved, that that stick might come out when it shouldn't. The law of the land says you've got to be in a life-threatening situation before you use it (a night-stick). And some of my officers, who don't speak English as well as you or I—again I'm not making any disparaging remarks—but their thinking isn't quite the same. There are some officers in my organization, they say, "Well, I don't agree with the way we're doing things here and I'm going to do it my way." But really now, you can't, with respect to the enforcement of University security regulations and policies . . .

What would you think here at this academic institution if you saw the officers with handcuffs dangling from their belts? Holy smokes, let's keep the atmosphere here more academic than anything else.

On the other hand, I'd be prepared to accept restraining straps, rather than the handcuff per se, because the handcuff is an ugly thing . . . I think there may be some instances where restraint may be necessary, but the community should be made aware of this and have some input in it.

**EXCAL:** *Do you think that the Security department would benefit from having more officers?*

**SANTARELLI:** Yes, there are areas which could be improved on with more officers, such as the Crime Prevention unit . . . But before I would go pushing for more security officers I would like to eliminate some of the things we are obliged to do, that is responding to opening of doors because someone lost a key. We do an awful lot of that, and that's time consuming. If I could assign my officers to perform those functions that I think would contribute 100 percent to the security of persons and property of York University, then I'd be happy with the manpower we've now got.

I've been talking to Physical Plant about this, trying to shift some of the responsibility.