

Energy conference at Vanier

Consumerism overcomes dull, alienated lives

By ANNA VAITIEKUNAS

Amid the post-dinner debris in the Vanier College dining hall last Friday, 100 people listened to three individuals sitting at the front of the hall talk about energy conservation and other components of a conservator society that, they warned, we will have no choice but to live in the future.

"We are slowly losing control over the direction of our lives," said one. The speaker, relaxed but a trifle despondent, was Andrew Wells, the executive director for the Institute for Man and Resources in Prince Edward Island.

He continued, "Our lives are filled with considerable affluence, an affluence which alienates and bores us in our jobs, our home lives and in our governments."

"We buy consumer goods to overcome the drabness and dullness of our lives."

"Consumerism," said Wells, "is our compensation for the sterile lifestyle we have."

Arthur Cordell, member of the Science Council of Canada told the audience of a recent report published by the Science Council that admonished the fact that Canadians have to change from being members of a consumer society to a conservator one.

PEEL BACK THE LAYERS

"What we did," Cordell explained, "was peel back the layers of society to find out why we demand so much and why our demands have doubled in the past seven years."

According to Cordell, the Science Council, instead of trying to find a technical solution to our consumerism-induced, attempted to unravel the multitude of reasons why 20 per cent of the world's population (which includes Canada) consumes 80 per cent of the world's resources.

He said that our mindless consumerism is a direct result of our political, social and economic systems, which, "have proven themselves dysfunctional".

The Science Council Report 19, entitled Natural Resources Problems and Issues in Canada, stated that the earth's resources are finite, including fossil fuels which have been for decades thought to be infinite, and that some of the political decisions that are made today cause irreversible results involving our natural resources.

"SOCIAL DISCOUNT RATE"

The report also said that Canadians consume resources

faster than the natural rate of depletion. Thus the science council coined the phrase "our social discount rate" to measure the time and amount of energy we allow ourselves to consume.

Cordell said the Science Council, unlike its discovery ten years ago that fossil fuel supplies were running out, can now circle a date when the fuel supplies will completely run out.

Ruth Johnson, a conservator activist in Toronto offered several tips on how to introduce the conservator notion into an individual's life.

Johnson, the author of "What to do before the garbage man comes" told the audience of her three-pronged plan to become a 'conservator citizen'.

THREE R'S

"Instead of the three R's representing reading, writing and arithmetic, I use, "reject, reuse and recycle", she said.

To reject, the conservator should ask himself, "Do I really need this product?"

"Items are so over-packaged today because the products have been improved so many times that there is nothing left for the manufacturer to do except improve the packaging. Most items we can do without."

To reuse, she suggested, one



From left to right: Arthur Wells; Ruth Johnson; moderator Rob Macdonald; and Arthur Cordell.

could keep a 'jump box' in which to place old used things which might otherwise be thrown out. Most used things can be made into something else, she said.

And to recycle, she concluded, all one has to do is to bundle up old

newspapers, start a compost heap in the back garden and take bottles back to the grocery store.

The panel discussion was the last of three of an energy conference held at York, Wednesday and Thursday. Other notables who

spoke included Barry Spinner from Energy Probe, Arthur Johnson from the Ontario Ministry of Energy and Peter Strauft, the director from Design and Development division of Imperial Oil.

Store underorders books, frustrates profs

By GRAHAM BEATTIE

York University's Bookstore has come under heated attack lately by professors as students search in vain through the store's crowded aisles for required texts.

"The problem seems to be mainly in the undergraduate programmes where the enrolments are realitively high," says T. MacHenry of the mathematics department.

"The bookstore is cutting our orders down. For one of my courses I had asked for 300 texts and the bookstore had cut 25 off that number. Even this wouldn't be so bad but they haven't been honest with us. When I called and inquired, they assured me that the 300 were ordered and later I found out from the distributor that the order was for only 275," he said.

McHenry added that in subsequent telephone conversations the bookstore was "most uncooperative" and finally they refused to talk to him.

Chairman of the mathematics department M.E. Muldoon has

recently asked his department for written complaints concerning the York University bookstore to submit to the senate bookstore committee, a six member board of three students and three faculty formed to review suggestions, complaints and the bookstore budget. Muldoon contends that dealings with the bookstore have been far from satisfactory. "It's impossible to get information on an order, once an order is placed there is no reply to the faculty," he said.

Faculty members are not informed when the number of books ordered is reduced. Last year the senate bookstore committee recommended that the bookstore adopt an ordering form with tear away sections that can be sent to the faculty member to keep him informed about the status of an order.

York University Bookstore director Raphael Barreto-Rivera said this procedure would put a costly burden on his administrative staff. "These people are in a fantasy world that everything should

be provided for them. I'd need a public relations department just to handle the complaints. Paranoia seems to earmark the low mark-up businesses like books and food. I'd say 95 per cent of our textbook orders meet with no problems."

In fact, inventory as of December shows the bookstore had \$480,000 of textbooks in stock and Barreto-Rivera estimates that at most \$200,000 of these will be sold by April. He says this proves they have been over-ordering rather than underordering books. Annual sales are currently around \$1.8 million and textbooks account for 71 per cent of this figure.

In a report to the senate bookstore committee Barreto-Rivera explained the policy of the bookstore on ordering. Books are ordered immediately after an order is received. If the faculty member receives no message about his or her order, he or she can assume the books will be available when needed. If the faculty member has a "bad record" of overordering books, the bookstore reduces the

number of books ordered from the number estimated by the faculty member. Barreto-Rivera said if a faculty member is ordering for the first time the number of books specified is ordered.

Committee chairman Ian Howard said he's not convinced.

Bookstore order forms ask for an enrolment estimate and the designation of a book as either absolutely essential, important — but not essential, summer reading, or for term essay.

The enrolment estimate is based, explains Dr. Muldoon, upon previous enrolment, projected university enrolment and any changes in course status as degree requirement or availability of similar courses.

Muldoon feels these estimates have been fairly accurate. The bookstore then decides how many books to order based on this estimate along with previous course enrollment, the past performance of the faculty member, the price of the book and the publisher's return policy.



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