

McGill still in South Africa

MONTREAL (CUP) — McGill University's board of governors has decided to retain its investments in South Africa.

At a meeting March 23, while 50 pro-divestment students in the meeting room looked on silently and another 200 chanted anti-apartheid slogans outside, the board approved an investment policy which will result in the McGill divesting itself of its South African holdings only as a 'last resort.'

Under the new policy, the university will attempt to use its influence as a stock holder to pressure companies operating in South Africa to improve the conditions of black employees.

The board reserved divestment as a last resort, to be used only in the event that individual companies proved to be unresponsive to pressure.

"I'm very disappointed," said Todd Ducharme, student representative on the board and president of the student society.

"The university has acted in a way that is logically inconsistent. They've admitted that the wrong exists, but they're not prepared to go far enough to right that wrong."

The investment policy was put forward by the board's committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility. Committee chairperson Hugh Hallward said neither he nor his colleagues on the committee were apologists for apartheid.

"However, we feel that McGill can play a greater role than it would by grandstanding," said Hallward.

"We feel there has been progress in South Africa. We feel we should show support where it is warranted."

Hallward's view was echoed by graduate representative Ken Matziorinis. "We've seen evidence that conditions in South Africa may have been worse had it not been for the presence of a substantial business sector in South Africa," he said.

"The issue at hand is how we can bring about a constructive, non-violent, albeit slow, but steady, change in South Africa. We have now rejected divestment as an option but we have chosen divestment as a last resort measure."

"To take a position of instant

divestment would create some waves in the media but would not bring the desired change in South Africa."

Matziorinis claimed divestment would be discriminatory against corporations that are striving to liberalize conditions in

South Africa.

"This is an emotional issue. I feel very strongly about it. But emotionalism is not the best way to proceed. And that is why, as a graduate student, I've gone along with the committee's report."



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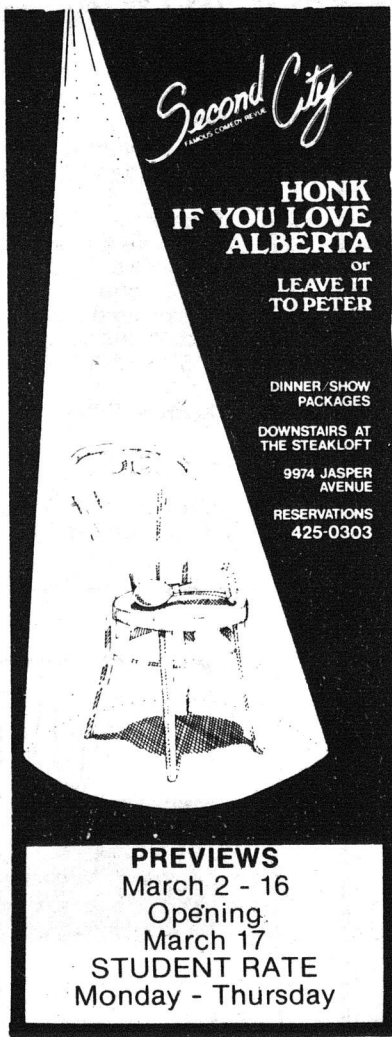
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