

CYSF speaks up Information must be open

By PAUL AXELROD and KAREN HOOD

The letters to the editor last week from Edwin Rothschild and Ian Brookes on the issue of the withholding of information by the senate, present us with an opportunity to respond to criticism that is unwarranted, misinformed and largely inaccurate, and to further clarify the issue with which the Council of the York Student Federation has concerned itself.

First, neither of the above gentlemen seem to be aware that it was not the CYSF who originally raised the issue of citizenship and educational training of faculty and graduate students. It was the government of Ontario, through the Department of University Affairs who initially requested that the data be included in York's brief to the Committee on University Affairs.

The Senate is, therefore, not simply withholding information from the CYSF, as the two letters last week imply; the people of Ontario are being prevented from seeing data compiled in a public institution, asked for by their legal representatives, about the operation of a university that they pay for with their tax dollars.

Without claiming that the information being sought will provide all the answers to questions related to a currently important social issue in Canada, and without conclusively submitting that the data in question should be used in any particular manner, the CYSF has challenged the senate's legal and moral right to deny the public access to this information.

The main issue is the question of openness of information about York within and without the university itself. It should not be the prerogative of the senate to determine what data the Ontario public may see and what data must be censored.

Furthermore it is indeed ironic that so much debate and controversy have centered around the significance of this information which very few individuals have, as yet, seen. That is, on the one hand, many people have said that one's country of acculturation and one's educational training and background are related to how and what one teaches in the classroom.

It is argued that a person's perspective of reality, his conceptualization of ideas, in fact one's knowledge about a subject, bear directly on where one has learned and how one has been taught.

On the other hand, many people deny these claims. On the one hand, some contend that Canadian universities should respond to the needs and aspirations of the Canadian people by providing jobs for Canadian trained faculty and opportunities for Canadian graduate students to contribute to the development of an understanding of their own country.

It is also said that presently, because of hiring practices in faculties and departments, Canadians are not receiving adequate opportunity to pursue these goals since certain American universities are considered of higher quality, with higher standards than "second rate" Canadian educational institutions.

On the other hand certain people reject these charges.

It is questioned as well, that if citizenship is a totally irrelevant criterion in the hiring of individuals, since the university is a place which supposedly fosters "international scholarship" and procures professors from every corner of the world, then why does it appear (although no one can say for certain, since the figures have not been released) that in certain disciplines there is an overwhelming concentration of faculty and graduate students from one particular country, namely the United States?

Furthermore, how does this fact relate to the nature of course content taught in the classroom? Whatever the truth on these matters, intelligent

discussion as to what (if anything) should be done, cannot occur until the relevant information is open to all who wish to speak on the issue.

We are contending that whether one argues the validity or invalidity of the above statements, it is absolutely essential that everyone address themselves to the same data.

With reference to particular criticisms levelled at CYSF and at others who supported our position at the demonstration last week, Mr. Rothschild contends that the "York Student Federation has implicitly and disingenuously condemned Americans at the university because they are Americans at a Canadian University." CYSF has done no such thing.

We have asked, along with the Ontario government that the presently "secretive" information be made public. We have raised the possibility that York's hiring practices may not be providing Canadians the fullest opportunity to obtain jobs in their own country. We have suggested that the matter of one's country of acculturation and educational training may bear significantly on what is taught in the classroom.

We have simply asked, Mr. Rothschild, that you, as well as all other interested people be given the opportunity to discuss openly the information that is currently being withheld.

Note also that it was not the CYSF who initially approached the issue of Americanization from the point of view of citizenship. Last spring, the CYSF sponsored a Task Force to investigate the content of education at York.

The true significance of the figures in question may only become apparent after such a study is completed, but the senate in its action has chosen to rule that the information has absolutely no bearing on any aspect of education at York, and has therefore denied members of the community the right to include these figures in a more meaningful far reaching analysis of a very crucial issue.

Mr. Brookes is of the opinion that CYSF believes there "should only be schools for the study of an area towards which you felt superior in culture", thereby implying that we are opposed to the establishment and existence of courses that relate to any country other than Canada.

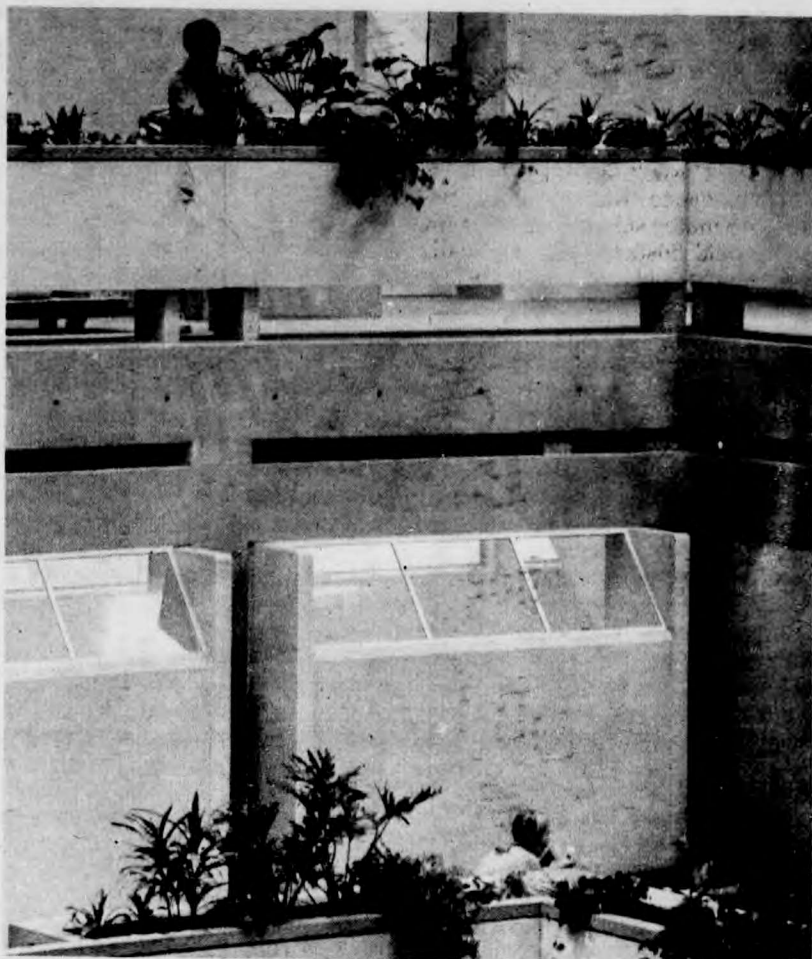
Our point, Mr. Brookes, is not that course content about other societies should be eliminated but that in a time when the survival of Canada is a very real question, it would be useful if not imperative, that Canadian universities commit themselves to establishing environments that would enable Canadian students to develop a critical understanding of the problems and issues related to their own society.

Our experience has proven that in some areas curriculum consideration of Canadian issues if minimal, if not totally lacking, and it is therefore somewhat surprising, given the fact that we are attending a Canadian university, that those who attempt to rectify this situation are guilty in some way, of manifesting emotions of "cultural superiority".

In order to be knowledgeable of how to change our environment we must be aware of the nature of our environment.

But the Senate in its decision to withhold the requested information has indicated its unwillingness to assist the community in achieving such an understanding.

Our major argument, then, although it has been grossly misinterpreted, is that if the university is to approach the issue of Americanization in a rational intelligent manner, then groups such as the Senate, have no right to use their power to prevent information relevant to the topic from being discussed freely and openly in the university and in the community outside.



Excalibur - Harry Kitz

Now Central library sports not only escalators to ride on, couches to rest on, pillars to play around and the promised light show, but also this lovely flora, potted, green, and growing.

York briefs

More briefs on discipline

Briefs and comments are now being received by the university senate's Duff-Berdahl committee on the Laskin report on campus discipline at York.

The discipline report, when released last year, received harsh criticism for suggesting that members of the administration be exempt from any penalties the proposed university court might levy on them should they be found guilty of an offense.

Examination of the report will continue during the fall. People wishing to express opinions should contact the committee's secretary, Mel Ransom, room S944, Ross Building, 635-2201 or John Becker, room 260, Vanier College, 635-2226.

Homophile group formed here

York University may have its own homophile organization if enough interest is generated by a small group already working on campus.

Homosexuals at York have been attending weekly meetings at U. of T. Primary aims of the group will be attempts to combat myths and fears of popularly-held stereotypes with accurate information, by distributing pertinent literature, providing the opportunity to discuss homosexuality and related topics, and by inviting authorities to address the membership or the university community as a whole.

Anyone interested, homosexual or otherwise, in attending regular meetings or organizing the group can attend a general meeting Tuesday, October 20, at 8 p.m. in the 'Back Room' of Winters coffee shop.

MOOT COURT, Osgoode

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Wednesday, Oct. 21 12 - 2:00 pm.

New Age arises from the tunnels

By GREG McCONNELL

(Ed. note: The recent discovery that Physical Plant workers are testing mini-bikes in the steam tunnels under the campus prompted the following response.)

In a vast network of dimly-lit tunnels below every building at York a practically unknown race of Physical Plant men moils and toils.

It seems to be a degraded civilization, shunning as it does both the wind, dust, and rain of summer, and the snow and freezing gusts of the York winter. It ignores, in fact, the most important discovery of York's space-age plan, the "walking campus" concept.

It is easy to see, then, how this culture has been passed over by our anthropologists. The race seems to exhibit all the characteristics of the usual Concrete Age stage — total absence of paint on its newer walls, an abhorrence for gaudy windows and light of day, and a normal bureaucratic tongue.

My recent research for anthropology 401 (Studies in Comparative Mediocrity) has brought to light an exciting bit of new evidence — of the "missing link" variety — to prove once and for all that the

Physical Plant culture is really far more advanced than we are willing to credit.

I came across it as I walked alone, and frightened of their officious signs, along one of the half-lit, tropical-temperated tunnels, with huge snake-like steam pipes threatening on all sides.

There arose an ever-increasing and machine-like vibration; it was as if the pipes were closing in. I began to run. Suddenly, as I rounded a corner, there it was — Physical Plant's first experimental mini-bike, barrelling towards me along the tunnel.

A frantic check of the vicinity revealed a door behind me, and I exited in a rush before the rider could see me. I knew they could tow away any strangers found in their hunting ground.

The next day I phoned one of their chiefs, Mr. Bales, to find out about it. In their dialect of bureaucratic swahili he asked me how I had found out. I just told him that I'd "heard".

Mr. Bales said that the mini-bike in question was a Honda, and was being tried out right now (in b.s. referred to as "feasibility study"). If it worked, they would probably buy two more.

I asked about pollution, thinking that I'd

use a word that was untranslatable in his culture; he surprised me and replied that the tunnels were force-air ventilated for the heat, and that the problem was minimal.

This discovery, and my other research are fast destroying my preconceptions about the backwardness of the Physical Plant culture.

I now believe, and invite the reader to believe, that this civilization is actually far ahead of us, both in transportation, and in "common sense" (social scientific meaning).

The force of this discovery led me far

afield looking for comparison. Startling news came from Carleton, far away in Ottawa.

"Here," the reply said, "we have tunnels wide enough for both Physical Plant and the students. We also use golf-carts in them."

Then it asked, "Don't you have tunnels?"

I wondered how far we had really got out of the Concrete Age. I wondered at the very concept of the "walking campus". Was it really based on good scientific comparative mediocrity? Or are we sitting atop a campus dinosaur?

