

"We're a bar, not a cafeteria!"

Pub managers oppose the utilities surcharge

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rationales was that pub managers, since the beginning, have been saying they saw themselves as a legitimate and fully responsible alternative to university food service."

It is at this point that many people who are opposed to the proposal begin to wonder what kind of pressure is being exerted by the catering companies on campus.

In Excalibur last week, vice-president Bill Small said that there were "too many food outlets at York" and there would have to be a reduction in the number of services offered.

Last August, Alana Smith, then an employee of A and G caterers and currently co-editor of the Atkinson Balloon, attended a meeting between the new caterer and William Allen.

According to Smith, Warren Rill acted as spokesman for the caterers and asked how they were to compete with the pubs and coffee shops when they had to pay rent while the student operations did not. Allen replied that, yes, it was unfair and starting in September the university would be doing a study on the question.

Gord Travers of Winters college council said, "my feeling is that the university would like student pubs to close down". Although this has been denied by university officials, a number of people are of Travers's opinion.

MORE TRAFFIC

Winter's College senior tutor, Colin Campbell has told Excalibur that Rill's has in fact been trying to get the student operations to change their business hours and menus so as to direct more meal-time traffic into his facility. Assistant Cock and Bull manager Doug Ross observed that, "we're not competing with him (Rill) — we don't have full course meals; we're a bar not a cafeteria".

The proposal to charge utility costs to income-producing operations gives rise to questions on other points, such as the question of exemptions.

Taking the weekly Tap and Keg pub as an example, it becomes obvious that some facilities are not using utility resources at the same rate as others. Given the size of the Bethune dining hall it would cost Tap and Keg in excess of \$12,000 a year to provide heat, electricity, and water for that part

of the college. Other less glaring examples such as the Senior Common Room, which is open only part time during the week, indicate that the proposal could turn out to be a problem to administer.

John Becker suggests that a percentage factor could be applied to rates to overcome this problem. However, no amount of factoring would make it any easier for the debt-laden SCR to contribute to any cost-sharing scheme.

There is considerable concern over the question of profit and over the question of who will be deemed capable of paying for utilities. Pub managers claim that their profits are not very high at all and whatever profit is realised is put back into the operation for maintenance and improvement.

DESIRE TORN

Becker stated that, in the past, pub and coffee shop managers "were torn between a desire to provide employment to students and the living trade volume would allow." He added that some of the operations on campus could reduce the number of hours they are open, in relation to the amount of trade.

Colin Campbell who is also chairman of the board of directors of the Senior Common Room, thinks the proposal could be applied to many of the activities on campus and wonders where one would draw a line. "I get the impression we (all pubs) have been singled out."

But more basic than the question of who should share the costs is the question of why any individual group on campus should have to pay anything at all.

In raising this question, Campbell was critical of York's policy that the physical plant should "break even" by charging for all services. In his opinion utilities and maintenance should be looked upon as operating expenses that are deductible from the university's funds before distribution to the colleges.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS

If indeed the administration's request for funds was made at the urging of the campus caterers, as many feel it was, or even if the administration is just looking for another source of revenue, Campbell says that "we should be told."

"I think the university should come out in the open and be more direct."

Harry Knox in an interview with



The Orange Snail in happier times

Excalibur did say that he was anxious to meet with those affected by the surcharge policy so that all proposals could be discussed.

When asked if any trouble was anticipated in instituting the utility charges John Becker said no, that he felt confident that an agreement could be reached and

would probably take effect some time in the spring.

But one pub manager said, "I can see it dragging through until next year."



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