

Women come second

Yeomen on top again.

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Bath raids condemned

Susan Kuhn

Recent Metro police raids on gay bathhouses were sharply condemned by civil libertarians yesterday in a public forum at Osgoode Hall.

In fact, Chief of Police, Jack Ackroyd, whose absence left metro police unrepresented, would have had his work cut out for him.

George Smith, Chairman of the Right to Privacy group staunchly defended the rights of the gay community. He described the bath houses raided by metro police on February 5 as "social organizations for gays."

"These places," said Smith, "are in no way involved with prostitution, and derive no income from such activities." He said that it would be naive to believe that sexual activity did not take place. It did in fact occur, according to Smith, but only in private, and only between consenting adults.

Smith stated that this activity is perfectly acceptable under the provisions of the current criminal code. He pointed out that one of the bath houses raided had been operating with the knowledge of metro police for seventeen years.

Charles Campbell, a Toronto lawyer active in the area of civil liberties, described the raids as "a deliberate attack on the gay community."

The first of such raids took place at a Toronto establishment called the "Barracks" two years ago, Campbell said. The resulting legal proceedings were to establish whether bath houses such as those raided on February 5 would be judged by the courts to be common bawdy houses.

Metro police did not wait for the results of these charges before making the recent arrest of 306 more people from four different bath houses in the one night.

"Such an obviously deliberate move displays an effort to roll back gay rights which have been hard won over the last ten years," said Campbell.

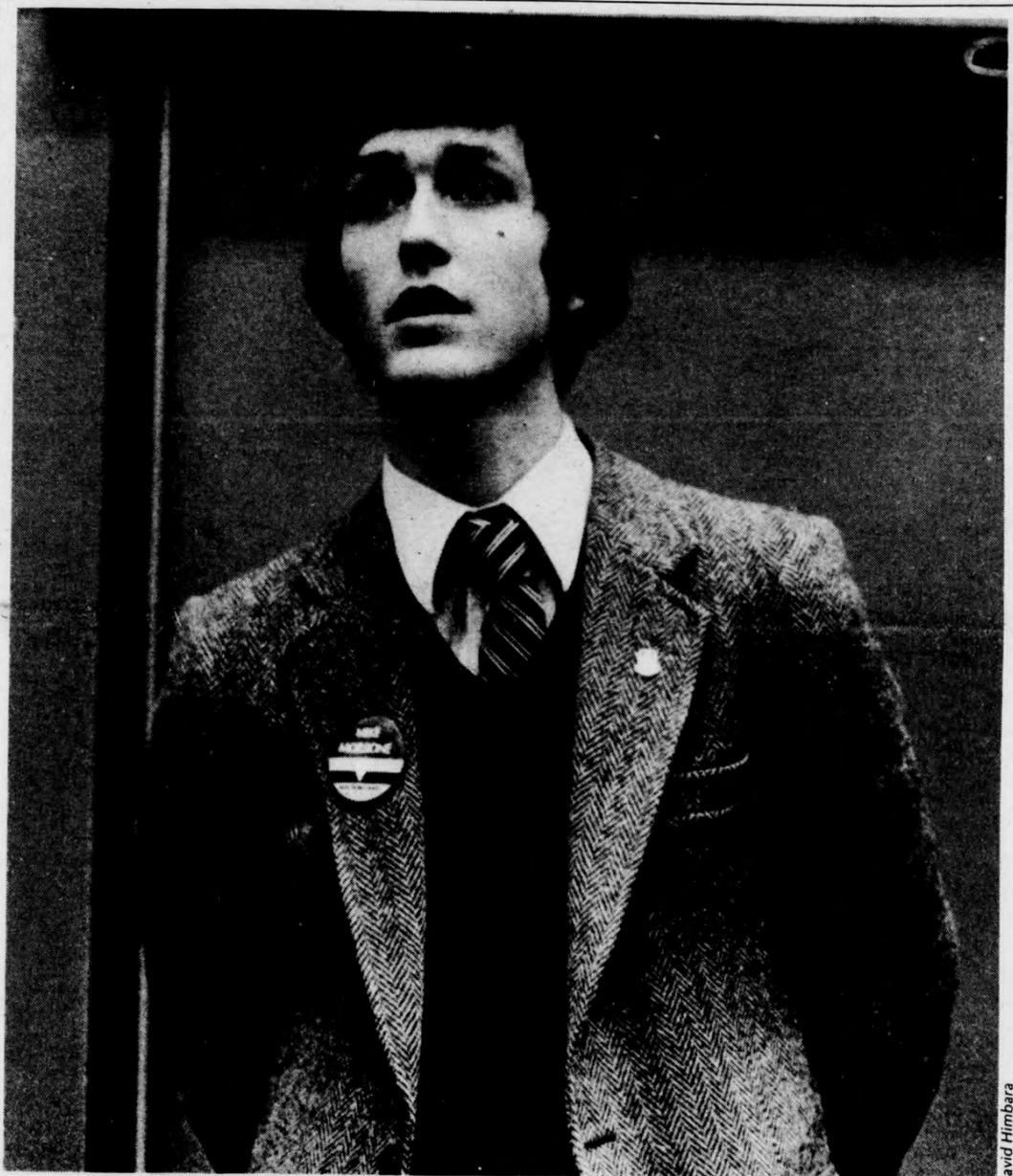
"There is now a very broadbased coalition of civil-libertarians pressuring to be heard," explained Liz White, Vice Chairman of the Minority Group on Police Relations. The grievances of the groups center around the conduct and motives of the police force during the raids.

Angered by the actions of several officers who removed their badges so as not to be identified, White said, "We want to see police officers wearing their badge numbers as well as their names so that they are easily identifiable."

"We also find it unnerving," explained White, "that civilian complaints of police harassment are taken by a police review board and followed up by police investigators. If their claims cannot be substantiated, they can also be brought to court under charges of misinformation. We would like to see an independent group of investigators and an independent civilian review board."

Those charged are in a pretty good legal position, in the opinion of Campbell. In each case, the Crown attorney must prove that the premises was indeed a common bawdy house, and that an indecent act did in fact take place. Says Campbell, "there are good defenses to be made in all cases."

It is likely, he said, that those charged will face at the most a \$50 fine.



David Himbara

NDP Justice Critic Svend Robinson spoke at Osgoode Hall Wednesday afternoon.

'Bring it home': NDP

Neil Wiberg

Svend Robinson, a New Democratic Party Member of Parliament from British Columbia, announced yesterday that he will move an amendment to entrench rights for Ontario's French minority. This announcement came during Robinson's appearance before an audience of less than 25 people at York's Osgoode Hall.

Robinson, the NDP justice critic, represents the constituency of Burnaby in the House of Commons. He was one of two NDP members of the now-defunct Senate-Commons Constitution Committee.

Robinson emphasized that he would be making the amendment as an independent, not as an NDP

member. At the urging of Ontario NDP leader Michael Cassidy the federal NDP are not going to press for Franco-Ontarian rights.

The BC New Democrat admitted that his amendment might not be moved for three to four weeks. In this event, the amendment would not come up until after the Ontario election campaign was concluded.

"I know Mike Cassidy will be disappointed," Robinson remarked sarcastically to an Excalibur reporter.

The Burnaby MP believes that his amendment will likely be defeated.

Robinson was the only NDP MP who voted against sending the proposed constitutional resolution to the joint House-Senate

Committee. However, he will now vote in favour of the package.

One reason for Robinson's switch is that the new resolution has a stronger Charter of Rights. He is particularly impressed by the recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights in the Charter. Strengthened rights dealing with search and seizure, bail and detention also affected his decision.

The young MP's second reason involved party stability. The other NDP member on the Constitution Committee, Lorne Nystrom, announced last week that he was breaking party ranks and would

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