

university autonomy endangered?

Minister of advanced education Jim Foster and U of A President Max Wyman will be grilled tonight at a special general meeting of the academic staff association on the government's proposed reorganization of the department of advanced education.

The reorganization plan came under fire earlier this week in a discussion by the GFC executive of a letter from English department chairman E. J. Rose.

In the letter, Rose urged that the GFC "call upon the Premier of Alberta to restore confidence in the government's educational policy by entering into serious discussions with the institutions concerned about the reorganization..."

It also urged that the government postpone legislative action until it "learns in detail the opinions of its major post-secondary institutions."

The proposed resolution was similar to one adopted several weeks ago by the GFC at the University of Calgary.

As a result of the Calgary resolution, Foster announced in the Legislature last Thursday that he had given his assurance to the U of C Board of Governors that the reorganization was "not designed to invade the autonomy of the university."

"Specifically, there is no intention to interfere with the powers and duties of the Board of Governors or the General faculties council," he said.

Assurances from the minister "although they have all the good will in the world, still provide no continuing constitutional commitment," Rose said yesterday. "They're not binding on the next minister or the next government."

In addition to the lack of safeguards, Rose said that he was disturbed by the fact that the university community had not been given the opportunity to consider the proposal before implementation.

"Why doesn't the University want to discuss this?" he asked. "Why the reluctance on the part of the Board of Governors, the president, and the GFC to discuss it?"

Admission decisions and transferability of credits, both jealously guarded prerogatives of the individual institutions, are among the functions to be centralized under the reorganized department of advanced education.

The reorganization scheme, approved by the Cabinet January 30, also proposes the "coordination" of what it called "student services" such as

housing, fees, counselling and student assistance.

Approvals for new programmes and termination of old ones are among the powers which the department will take over from the recently scrapped Universities and Colleges Commissions. Funding for the universities will also be directly handled by the minister.

The plan provides for advisory committees to deal with university affairs, college affairs, vocational education, among other areas of responsibility.

The universities "may expect substantial representation on the Advisory Committee on University Affairs," Foster said last week.



Aggies celebrate the coming of spring with outside square-dancing Wednesday on a terrace of CAB. The boisterous demonstrations are erupting all over campus this week, as agriculture students prepare for Bar None, their annual old-time Western dance, Saturday night in Kinsman Field House. Free buses will be provided from campus to the fieldhouse.

'protect CKUA' protest launched

CKUA's fans should let the government know that they want the station's programming to retain its present character.

What was supposed to be a phone-in show with Keith Ashwell on Tuesday evening's "Speak Your Mind" turned into a testimonial session, as listeners declared their liking for the fare on CKUA which may be threatened by the imminent incorporation of the station into a provincial education communications corporation.

During the programme, someone suggested an impromptu "write-in" campaign to the Minister of Education Lou Hyndman to urge that CKUA remain unchanged by inclusion into the new structure.

CKUA's listeners have been crusading to keep the station alive ever since last July, when the federal Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) ruled that government run radio stations would no longer be eligible for licenses. CKUA is presently financed by Alberta Government Telephones although the university still officially holds the licence and it's already living on borrowed time.

NECESSITY AND WORTH

The solution which has been found for other stations in a similar position (Radio-Campus Laval and CJUS-FM, Saskatoon) is an independent corporation which is partly financed and run by the "community".

In Alberta, the government plans to include not only the beleaguered radio station, but also MEETA and CARET, the province's two educational television stations in the independent corporation—a marriage of necessity with the Worth Commission Report's emphasis on "accessible" education.

In a brief presented to the University Senate at their winter meeting in Camrose, the U of A's Academic Staff Association proposed that CKUA should have a corporation all of its own.

The report noted that there are "distinct differences in the educational values of radio and television. In

consequence any organization of educational broadcasting must recognize this separation by function."

"Without such separation it is likely that radio broadcasting will become secondary to television broadcasting because television broadcasting must necessarily dominate funds available for educational broadcasting."

INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY

The report also observes that while television "can be effective in a relatively formal educational sense, radio is better at providing a general community interest, meeting the needs of the community in the broad spectrum of activities which we call culture."

The manager of CKUA, J.W. Haggerman, does not share the fears that CKUA would "become curriculum oriented" and "educational in the dullest sense of the word", nor that it would lose its independence.

"I suppose the place of continued independence is eternal vigilance," he said in an interview yesterday. The present "independence" of CKUA is really "a bit of a myth" anyway, he claimed, because it depends upon "the fact that a lot of people like what we are doing."

The new corporation, which would put the station under the supervision of an advisory board including the two ministers of education would not, in Haggerman's opinion, present new threats of control from "above."

CURRICULUM ORIENTED

In response, the Senate passed a motion expressing "strong concern for future integrity and independence of CKUA" and established a fact-finding committee. The committee, which has already met with CKUA management, will discuss the changes with the government and with CKUA staff this week.

According to Senate executive assistant Bill Thorsell, the changes are imminent, "within weeks", so the committee will report "at the earliest

opportunity", perhaps at a special meeting called for April 9 to discuss the reorganization of the department of Advanced Education.

"That threat is present right now," he observed. "At any time, direction could be laid down from the top."

But he is confident that, just as external control now is minimal, so will it be under the new scheme.

He emphasized that the organization is experimental and still vague. "The rules will be hammered out after a number of years of negotiation and operation, he said, without changes to CKUA's internal organization.

He admitted that some members of the staff were "probably" upset by the incorporation, but added that "The guy who knows what his freedoms are and uses them doesn't worry. It's the guy who knows he has abdicated them who worries."

UNION CONCERNED

The executive of the union which represents workers at CKUA, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, however, has questioned the effects of the changes. Will they not infringe on the freedom of individual programmers and of the station itself to do things which are not "educational"?

The CRTC regulations which required the incorporation of CKUA also require that its programming be "designed to be presented in such a context as to provide a continuity of learning opportunity aimed at the acquisition or improvement of knowledge or the enlargement of understanding of members of the audience..." and that the "educational" content of the programming be "subject to the supervision or assessment" of some "provincial authority", in this case probably the "advisory board."

Unfortunately, membership of the advisory board has still not been specified. According to the office of

continued on page 2

Work Permit Meeting

At the meeting in Tory Lecture Theatre last night, the change of immigration laws preventing many students from working here was explained. As many students are affected (and a number may still be unaware that they are), a call was made for all those planning to work this summer to attend a meeting to hear proposed action tonight at 8:00 p.m. Room 104 S.U.B.

'public plan cheaper'

Yesterday, the Debating Society hosted a meeting of Gordon Wright, Treasurer of the Alberta N.D.P., and Howard Irving, a prominent insurance lawyer. That issue was a proposal to have the Provincial Gov't set-up a public auto insurance scheme similar to those in the other three Western Provinces.

Wright, also a noted Edmonton lawyer, provided many comparisons to show that a "minimum insurance cover" would be cheaper to Albertans.

In Edmonton, a 30 year old with no accident in the past three years driving an average car (a 1971 Chev Bel Air V-8) would pay \$130 for minimum coverage. In Regina, the same man would pay \$85 on the Sask. gov't plan.

"If you are younger" he said, "things get far worse." A 23 year old driving the same car pays \$264 against the Regina price of \$87, a whopping 203% increase!

continued on page 2