

Commission answers questions on student rights

by Gilbert Bouchard
A spokesperson for the Alberta Human Rights Commission addressed a handful of students last Tuesday afternoon, on anti-discrimination laws and the role of the Commission.

Human Rights Education Officer for Northern Alberta, Janet Smith, elaborated on the topic of the individual's rights during job interviews, primarily what an employer can and cannot ask a prospective

employee, and how the applicant can avoid questions which could be discriminatory.

Smith explained that the Commission is a semi-autonomous body that is fully funded by the provincial government and reports to the Cabinet via the Minister of Labor. The commission does not try to eliminate prejudice or bigotry, but rather attempts to "deal with the acts of discrimination," and has a "double mandate to enforce and to provide

education."

On the subject of the proper conduct for employers and employees during job interviews Smith stressed a responsibility for both parties. The applicant must "be aware when he's looking for a job of the skills required, and must assess himself. He must make sure the employer is tying the interview to the job skills, not to stereotypes. The better the student knows what the job demands and can sell himself, the better he is as far as

the tight job market is concerned. It is a time when you don't just walk into a job interview and just wing it. The job applicant must think ahead."

The employer's responsibility towards his employees and/or prospective employees were also discussed. Smith illustrated that "the employers are obligated to reasonably accommodate his employees." The example she gave was an employer refusing to hire a female because he did not have the proper washroom facilities, unless he could prove that providing these facilities would be a hardship it would be an act of discrimination.

The employer must also carefully describe the job in order to match it to an individual with appropriate skills. The employer cannot request information concerning: race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry, or place of origin or refuse employment for the above qualities.

Smith's advice to applicants who would be asked discriminatory questions is not to grace it with an answer, and to try and "force the employer to reword his question." She also mentioned that "photographs (in a job interview) are not permitted under the law." An applicant requested by his employer to have his

photo taken should politely decline.

Union membership and membership to employee organizations also fall under the protection of the law.

If an employee or applicant feels that he has been discriminated against he must file a complaint within six months. The commission would then investigate and try to determine if indeed the law had been breached. Since the laws concerning discrimination are not punitive the commission attempts to forge a fair settlement between the two parties. Typical settlements involve requesting the employer to cease discrimination, change his policies and practices, restore the complainant's rights and dignity, or to compensate the complainant for lost earnings, expenses incurred, and/or damaged due to injury and insult.

An employee is fully protected from retaliation, the employer cannot punish his employees because they have filed a complaint, testified in a board of inquiry, or advocated adherence to the Individual's Rights Protection act.

But unfortunately things are never that simple, or as Smith put it "anti-discrimination laws are difficult to prove. A lot of cases are dismissed due to lack of evidence."

Israel was created illegally (?)

by Cathy McLaughlin
The Arab Student Association marked November 27 as Palestine Solidarity Day with a forum of three University speakers.

Dr. Emile Shiheda, Ms. Marlene Hamden, and Dr. Deeb denounced both the Israeli state's legality and Canadian media coverage of Middle East politics.

"Israel was created illegally and the Israelis themselves know it," Dr. Shiheda, professor of business and commerce at the U of A described the events leading to the creation of Israel as spurred by "a Zionist myth that Palestine was a land without people for a people without land."

"There were people there, too many; They had to get rid of them," he said.

Jewish organizations, said Dr. Shiheda, were created before the first world war to advance the Zionist cause and raise funds to buy Palestinian land.

In 1917, these organizations got a break. England promised a national Jewish homeland in Palestine, with no prejudice to the existing population.

"Britain had no right to such a mandate," said Dr. Shiheda. "They should have consulted the Palestinians first."

According to Shiheda, the Zionists claimed historical rights to Palestinian land. They assigned archeologists to dig for artifacts, to

find "anything of historical value" that would support their claims.

"They used the Bible as a map," complained Shiheda.

Emphasis on religious rights to the area grew in the late thirties. Zionist lobby groups formed in the U.S.; lecture tours, said Shiheda, stressing religious values.

In 1948, with UN approval and U.S. backing, the Zionists moved in to Palestine. The Arabs, said Dr. Shiheda, "were expelled."

"The Palestinians did not leave of their own free will. I saw the armoured cars, the loudspeakers telling people to get out."

Dr. Shiheda called to Zionist supporters to stop funding the Israelis, to cease backing Defense Minister Sharon's "expansionist policies." He appealed also to the Canadian government "to recognize the PLO and the rights of the Palestinians as a nation."

The other two speakers in the forum blasted the Canadian media for "misrepresentation of the Palestinian cause."

Marlene Hamden, of Concerned Canadians for Lebanon, said the press seems "almost an extension of the Israeli Defense Ministry." She pledged her organization's support for the Arabs' cause and denied that such support is based in anti-Semitism.

"I don't know where people get that idea," said Hamden.

Dr. Deeb, of the University's Department of Classics, centered his attack on the CBC and their attempts "to enforce Western guilt over the holocaust." He cited an Arab item on the CBC's nightly "Journal" that was wedged between a story on neo-Nazism in the U.S. and a feature on the holocaust.

"I think it was intentional," explained Deeb.

Dr. Deeb called for a "humane and even-sided policy towards the Arabs and the Palestinian nation."

There were no questions from the audience.

SU election promises "premature"

by Richard Watts

The promises by this year's Students' Union (SU) executive to build more club space in SUB may have been premature.

Originally the executive planned to build offices for clubs inside the curling rink in SUB's basement.

However, to convert the curling rink into club space is estimated to cost a prohibitive \$200,000.

The entire executive is agreed that the SU just can not afford such an amount of money.

Says SU President, Robert Greenhill, "To spend that much money would eliminate all the surplus we will have made this year and it is just not feasible."

Another plan is going to the SU Building Services Board tonight for approval in principle, which will have to be later ratified by Students' Council.

New plans for club space call for converting another room in SUB's basement, the Bear Pit, into 19 ten-foot-square offices.

The Bear Pit is currently being used by the U of A bookstore as a storage room. Renovations to convert the room into club space could not take place until the University completes the renovations to extend the bookstore into the space now occupied by the Games Room.

Displacing the Games Room into the curling rink, the Bookstore will take all the space up to the divider which separates the games room from the bowling lanes.

Ray Conway, SU VP Internal, thinks this will not be done until at least the spring.

The new plan is still very much in the planning stage and even if

approved, eventually by Students' Council, would have to be approved by the Board of Governors under the agreement the SU has with the University.

This agreement states the SU must have all their major expenditure and yearly budgets approved until the debt of \$500,000 is erased, which must be done by January, 1985.

Conway says the new plans for conferring the Bear Pit into club space at a cost of \$110,000 will be approved by the Board of Governors.

"If they are made aware of the urgent need for club space, I think they will approve the expenditure (of \$100,000)," he says.

Tom Wright, SU business manager, however was not so optimistic.

"I don't think the Board of Governors will approve such an expenditure and could not see it (club space being built) happening before a

year from March," says Wright.

Wright continues, "I would much rather they (the SU) wait to see if the fee increase goes through."

The SU will be holding a referendum in February to ask students to approve a \$5.00 increase in student membership fees.

Greenhill was more emphatic about the need for club space. "It is absolutely essential that we get that club space built and if the Board of Governors failed to approve the expenditure I would be very angry," said Greenhill.

Dave Norwood, assistant VP Finance to the Board of Governors was less willing to commit himself.

"My first reaction is fine but I would really want to talk to them (the SU) about where they're going to get the money from," said Norwood.

Norwood continues, "It is really important that the Students' Union get that overdraft down."

Rent strike over

The rent strike at a University of Calgary student residence is over and although hefty increases are still expected, the strike has been deemed a success by its organizers.

The U of C Board of Governors agreed to re-examine the budget of the Varsity Courts residence after students living there withheld their rent for two weeks.

The rent strike was in response to rent increases of 74 to 97 per cent to take effect next September.

Varsity Courts General Council Chairperson, Paul Egan, said that while he is far from satisfied, "the rent strike has already accomplished what it set out to do. There wouldn't be that much gained by continuing it."

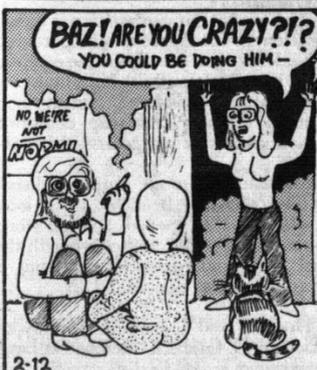
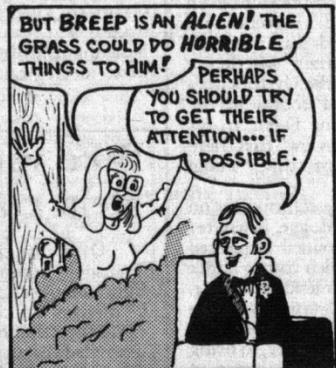
Although the presentation of a revised budget is expected at the December 16th Board of Governors meeting, the Board has already stated that the "Pooling policy" responsible for the large increases will remain.

Under the pooling policy all U of C student residences will operate on a single break-even budget. Under the original proposal, the apartments at Varsity Courts (a residence for couples similar to the U of A's Mitchner Park residence) would generate a profit of \$150 per month to offset the cost of residences for single students.

Egan said he expects any increase in rent to come from the reduction in interest rates.

BAB

by SKEET and Nielsen



Olivia Butti's Diary

December 1 Well diary, life is settling down. After the Grey Cup weekend and all that kerfuffle at Council yesterday it feels so good to settle back into the daily routine.

Mind you, there are still a lot of odds and ends to clean up. Yesterday, Paul Norris told me I picked up one of his suitcases at the airport when we returned from the football game. I'm afraid I had not even begun to unpack until this morning but sure enough there was Paul's bag. Petey must have carried it because if I'd ever lifted something that heavy I'm sure I'd have an injury to remember it by. From the way it clinked I'd thought Paul had goofed and brought home all his empties but it turned out that a dozen of the ashtrays had come unwrapped from the towels.

Well if Paul wants his 100 pounds of souvenirs from the Royal York (and I'll be dratted if I know why he brought 5 Gideon Bibles) he can send over somebody from parks and rec to get them. I put our clothes in the laundry hamper— except for the pants Petey was wearing when he slipped during the Calgary breakfast and fell in the horse muffins— and came over to the office.

First of all diary, remind me to give Allie, my secretary, a special Christmas bonus. I was stunned to come back from Toronto to find our ding dong mayor had

decided to lay off 1,000 people. Now I'm as much for austerity as the next person but laying off policemen and firemen seemed like going a little too far from me. I was all set to vote against it until Allie told me that she had fixed it so none of the people being laid off were in ward two. That shows real initiative on the girl's part and it is not going to go unrewarded. Maybe I'll give her an afternoon off.

Now that that crisis is averted I can work effectively to ensure that further austerity measures will not hurt the needy of our city. For example, the streetlights in these new neighborhoods just aren't as bright as those in the city core and those neighborhoods should not suffer any reduction in police patrols. After all, these neighborhoods are already in danger simply because there is so much more to steal.

With this reduction in manpower, the city is going to need a whole new set of priorities for public services. I'll have to get Allie working on that right away.

And now I'm going to get working on that laundry, diary. The beer and coffee stains I'm used to but some of the stuff on Petey's clothes I've never seen before. I should have never let him and Paul go off on their own to Yonge Street.