

Rational inquiry must decide York's future

Presumably it is an occupational hazard for a university president to read in an Excalibur editorial one day that he is accepting financial threats to the survival of the institution, and in the Globe and Mail the next day that he is reluctant to "root out waste, and discipline budgets".

Can both newspapers be referring to the same person?

The proper course for universities to follow under current conditions is an issue on which there are a number of opinions. However, there can be no disagreement that we require an objective, rational, logical and fair-minded approach to our problems.

Because such an approach is the cornerstone of all academic enquiry, I am confident that we will achieve

—Ralph Ashford—

Carving up the cars

Last Thursday night, some misbegotten sonuvabitch used my father's car, parked behind Stong, to display his artistic abilities with a knife. (Inspired, perhaps, by Van Gogh?)

Consistent technique was illustrated by puncturing not one, but all four tires. Versatility was achieved by breaking off both the

improvements consistent with the retention of academic quality while convincing governments and the public of the true importance of universities for social progress and free inquiry.

I am not certain whether Excalibur is recommending that universities simply hide their heads in the sand and pretend that the challenges to universities around the world do not exist, or whether they truly believe that no effort is being made by a variety of university people to convince the Ontario Government and their constituents that undue constraint of universities will be short-sighted.

On the first point, the Council of Ontario Universities established a Special Committee to Assess Univer-

sity Policies and Plans in order to undertake a systematic analysis of the options available to us and the potential consequences of following them.

It seems to me unfortunate that a desire to take advantage of a "news leak" should result in misrepresentation of both facts and process. As I endeavoured to explain at some length to Excalibur the report referred to was an early draft that had undergone considerable modification and is doubtless destined for further revision.

Moreover, it was a task of analysis undertaken for COU and it is a long step between any analysis and eventual adoption of policy. Nor does it follow that any of the analysts would suggest that all alternatives are necessarily good or to be recommended.

It seems to be a contemporary attitude toward analysis of public policy that to note the existence of a situation is to approve: "I saw the Abominable Snowman standing at the corner of King and Yonge Streets last evening" becomes, "It is a good thing for the Abominable Snowman

to be standing at King and Yonge Streets."

As a point of factual accuracy, may I note that I was not "one of four authors of a COU sub-committee report", but one of a sub-committee of nine university members which included the president of the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations. As you would expect, there is a diversity of opinion in the group and the analysis should not be equated with the aims and objectives of any one individual.

On the question of convincing the government and the public to change their policies and attitudes, respectively, I have tried to suggest that we have a difficult task and that we will not be more admired simply by refusing to meet public criticism head on. In recent months, I have devoted a great deal of effort to urging the university case on politicians and the public in a variety of meetings, speeches and interviews.

The fact remains, whether we like it or not, that we do not rate high on the scale of public priorities in the minds of Northern Ontario hard-rock miners, assembly-line workers in

Oshawa, and marginal farmers in Eastern Ontario, most of whom do not expect to be touched by universities in their lifetime. But then, this is the return to a normal situation for universities after the halcyon days of the 1960s.

It is for this reason that I have argued that we require a major public discussion on educational philosophy and an open examination of our aims, objectives, and modus operandi in order to move the discussion to a rational plane and out of the world of political expediency as practiced by particular groups.

Because I believe in the abiding value and importance of the university — an institution that has withstood onslaughts for over 700 years — I do not fear open, critical and reasoned discussion of the university and its operations. Nor do I fear radical change provided we can assure maintaining academic quality and merit.

I would like to see much more attention to discussion of means of enhancing our strengths and an unapologetic drive for excellence.

However, a real threat to the university today is not only from without, but also from within; a gathering mood of conservatism, collectivism and protectionism could diminish our willingness and capacity to adjust and to reason positively about the direction we wish to pursue. Until we know that direction, it will be hard work satisfying the public.

H. Ian Macdonald
President

Tobacco Road

In what has been seen as an attempt to gauge Arab influence over an oil-thirsty USA, a delegation from the eastern oil producing nations has called on the H. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company of Winston, North Carolina to change the name of its Camel brand cigarettes.

The Arabs claim that the label perpetuates the myth originated by such films as Lawrence of Arabia and The Charge of the Light Brigade that the Arab nations are backward and camel-bound societies.

A spokesman for the Reynolds company admitted that the company is, indeed, contemplating dropping the Camel label. Suggestions for a new name include Frog, Bulldog and Beaver.

windshield wipers and the radio antenna.

Innovation in design engraving was accomplished by squiggle-like gouges in the paint on the front hood. Further skill was demonstrated by a series of slashes across the convertible roof.

(Thanks, pal, but if my father wanted air conditioning, he would have put the roof down.)

Needless to say, should I discover the identity of this muckerfuther, no time will be lost encompassing his face within his bowels. And if this return to his natural state does not deter him from further antisocial artwork, perhaps the involuntary circumcision of his testicles will (the skin of which will be used to patch the roof of the car).

And while I'm on the topic of malicious morons, some inconsiderate fece has been removing the posters of the York Motorcycle Owners Assoc. from various locations around the campus. My hate list is not complete without this joker.

I would have thought that vandalism was below university students; the police I spoke to on Thursday night don't think so.

Unfortunately, I too have my doubts now.

Strange ruins grace wilderness

An archaeological survey team from the University of Ontario has stumbled across what may turn out to be the biggest anthropological discovery of the century.

While exploring some of the still uncharted areas of the province, the team uncovered the skeletal remnants of what appears to have been a small, self-contained city, in the north-western area of what was once known as "Toronto".

The purpose of the large concrete structures (which were apparently quite popular) has not been determined.

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