

City hall - yes, UIC - no

You can't beat a government bureaucracy

By DAVID PHILIPS

But what about fighting a government agency like the Unemployment Insurance Commission or the Workmen's Compensation Board?

According to Osgoode professor William Angus the chances are not very great. Speaking on the theme the individual and the bureaucracy, Angus pointed out that in less than

half of the administrative law cases in Toronto during the past year where an individual has taken a government agency to the courts has the individual won the case. And even if he should win the court battle his grievance may still not be redressed by the agency. In several instances, the government merely amended the statute to conform with its own interests against the individual's claim.

Angus questioned the effectiveness of allowing the courts to review decisions made by administrative agencies. Not only were the odds stacked against an individual from winning his case, but also the percentage of cases reaching the courts in comparison to the immense volume of governmental decision-making was extremely small. Furthermore, the

cases which did come before the courts were generally restricted to a narrow field of administrative activity involving chiefly disputes over land-use, labour relations and licensing matters where the litigants were more able to bear the high court costs.

He suggested that legal services be made more available to individuals in their dealings with bureaucracies. He saw the possibility of specialized administrative law practices evolving from the storefront legal aid clinics such as the Parkdale office run by the Osgoode Hall law school.

Angus also wondered why Ontario had lagged behind other provinces in Canada in not establishing an ombudsman. The experience in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec, he felt, would seem to indicate that this would be a valuable reform to the Ontario system. Thirdly, Angus suggested the

establishment of some specialized review process — an administrative review body that would act as a type of "administrative court".

The thrust of these reforms, Angus felt, would be to give the individual a more effective forum for airing and

arbitrating his grievances with a governmental agency. And the established courts would not have to deal with these kinds of cases except in the extraordinary instance where fundamental human rights issues were involved.

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Dr. E. J. Pamerter
Dr. Jack Stein FRCP (C)
Mr. Antoine Helewa M.C.S.P.
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Moderator:
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An unexpected water bill for \$31,980.03 has thrown the physical plant budget for a double flip.

Occasional comments by physical plant official William Dale to a North York water department official lead recently to the discovery of an additional water meter on campus.

The meter, installed on an eight inch main coming from Keele Street has been quietly ticking off the gallons for the past two or three years. But North York meter readers were not aware of it because it was purchased directly from the Neptune water meter company rather than from the borough as is the usual practice. A check with Neptune by North York verified the meter started at zero.

North York has agreed to take payment in instalments as officials feel partly to blame for the oversight. York's annual water budget is \$70,000.

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