

gateway features — SEMINAR EVALUATIONS

U of A sent eight delegates to the NFCUS Seminar at Carleton University. Each one gathered different impressions and thus formed different opinions about the seminar. Whether or not the seminar resulted in anything useful is too abstract for us to judge. However, two of the delegates have tried to articulate their predominant impressions, leaving the question of the seminar's value up to you, as NFCUS members, to answer. C.A.

AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE

By Bob Pounder

It is difficult to concisely record one's impressions of a conference such as the recent NFCUS Seminar at Carleton University because each person takes away with him such an extremely mixed conglomeration of thoughts, ideas and feelings. But it is not difficult to generalize on an overall impression of the Seminar, and I would term it an almost unqualified success. It provided a challenging, exciting and fascinating look at various aspects of the University in Canadian life as seen through the eyes of students, faculty members, administrators and persons from outside the university community.

The Seminar was generally well-organized except for a lack of emphasis on small study and discussion groups. It was literally impossible

OPINIONS TOO FEW

in the large lecture theatre for everyone's opinion to be voiced, and small groups, which were employed to some extent when a UBC delegate requested them, should have been one of the primary aspects of the conference. Another drawback was the simultaneous translation system, or perhaps more basic than that, the fact that two language-groups were present. The transistorized "sticks" used to obtain a translation of what was being said in either French or English did their job. But a great deal was lost en route. It became an effort to follow the translators after the first half-hour of holding the instrument to the ear and even more difficult to take notes. The voice of the actual speaker became an intrusion. The solution, of course, is a bi-lingual audience, and it is to the detriment of those of us present who were not able to speak English and French equally well. If we wish to be Canadians, these languages should be mastered by each of us. "A little" French, which many of us claim to speak, is not enough.

Apart from these flaws, the Seminar was an enriching experience. One of the inherent purposes of NFCUS is the promotion in every way possible of a better understanding among Canadian students. I feel that the Seminar provided a means whereby this purpose was executed. It is impossible to know how and what a student from, say, Loyola, thinks about the university and its role unless one talks directly with him. For the first time, I began to realize how French-speaking students feel and live and think. This French part of our culture we have neglected too long, and it is about time we woke up to the fact. The confrontation on a personal level, then, was possibly the highlight of the Seminar. Informal arguments and discussions were rife, even "after hours" at the parties.

The complaint is immediately raised that merely a handful of people benefited when only 130 delegates were present. But it must be realiz-

ed that every member of NFCUS, i.e. every member of the Students' Union, is eligible to apply for the Seminar. It is disappointing to note that only 15 on this campus did so, and it is hoped that if there are future Seminars, the number of Alberta applicants will be much greater. However, despite its limited range, the Seminar at least did something, however small, toward uniting Canada's vast student population.

We delved into a varied list of topics in the course of our stay at Carleton, from the development of



BOB POUNDER

Canadian universities and an examination of methods of instruction to the industrial view of education and problems of academic freedom. None of the problems arising from these discussions were solved, but they were certainly talked about and thought through, which is indeed a step in the right direction. The speakers were often put on the spot by questions from the floor, and this, too, was good, for it got them really thinking as well. No one was permitted to present his views and leave it at that, and the question periods were usually longer than the lectures. This exchange of ideas and opinions is the foundation upon which knowledge is built.

Future Seminars might benefit from more controversy and less conventionalism in the speakers selected. Only a few of the speakers said anything which really ruffled feathers and furrowed brows. Even if the views of a speaker are not considered sound or valid, his expression of them does much good if it raises the hackles of those listening. It seems that Canadian students today have just about lost all the hackles they may ever have had.

In conclusion, the Carleton NFCUS Seminar must be termed successful, for its good points greatly outweighed its drawbacks. It was a vigorous and stimulating event, and I am grateful to have been a delegate to it.

PIOUS INTELLECTUALISM

By Kathy Showalter

Students of a university generally regard themselves as a superior group in society. Judging from the majority of delegates to the recent NFCUS Seminar, I could personally see no reason for this opinion.

The speakers at the seminar displayed an optimism in the powers of youth which the students themselves could not arouse. One speaker advocated the attempt to develop an "idealism without illusions" and a "realism without cynicism". Most of the students present displayed a remarkable degree of naivety coupled with an even greater taste for cynicism. It has become fashionable to downgrade everything not within our precious university sphere, yet we expect society to get down on its knees and wait on us.

Any attempts at intelligent discussion broke down because of this lack of a realistic attitude. Students cry for the right to an education, yet wish to make an "ivory tower" of the university. They want society and government to pay their expenses, yet would turn away all fields of education that smell faintly of technical training. This pious intellectualism will not win the love and support of the general public. Opinions of the speakers ranged from "let everyone in" to "throw most of them out". Despite student disapproval of these two extreme views, it was weakly suggested in any case, that, to truly appreciate his education, the student should expect to make sacrifices.

We decry the attitude of the general public toward the university yet we, as students, are largely responsible for it. A university education is

SOCIAL PRESTIGE

regarded by us as a prestige symbol and a degree as a ticket to a comfortable job. The average student must relearn many things before he can become a responsible and useful citizen.

At the present time, society makes its greatest demands for university-trained technicians. This is where financial support is concentrated. If we wish support in the arts and humanities we must convince society that we also are being trained and not merely having a good time.

The seminar topic proved one thing for me—that university students today have no responsible conception of their role in Canadian life. It is impossible to see how this can be accomplished when young people even fail to understand the problems of other parts of the country and, in addition, show little or no interest in them.

Students of today have lost their social-consciousness. Instead of feeling concern for the world they will inherit, they can only feel excited about their financial condition or imaginary infringements on their liberties.

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