

# How the "outside" looks at this university

## "the biggest event . . . . was the Leighton Ford Bible Crusade"

By N. ALAN BELL

N. Alan Bell is a resident of Alberta. Bell was *The Peak* (Simon Fraser student newspaper) editor-in-chief for Fall '67 and Spring '68.

The story of Simon Fraser University that began with the Shell station protest, heightened with the TA incident in the spring of 1967 and reached its climax with the election of Martin Loney and his student power colleagues and the CAUT crisis this summer has now been told enough times in enough ways that the SFU story has become a myth in the rest of Canada and the Burnaby mountain campus has come to symbolize the radical university in Canada.

The truth of this can be argued when one considers exactly what the students did do during the summer, the recent election of a moderate student president and council and the events that have taken place on other campuses in Canada.

So, switching from what has at least been called the most radical campus, here is a look at what is perhaps Canada's most conservative university, the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

A close look at some of the small religious colleges in the Maritimes would probably turn up something closer to the 18th century than the U of A and a part by part look at the other major campuses in the country would probably reveal some features here and there that were more conservative than those in Edmonton.

But, because of the size of the U of A (15,152 students), the fact it is the chief university in Alberta and rated as one of the leading in Canada and because the conservatism is so all-encompassing I have chosen to examine it as the chief conservative university in Canada.

A look now at this blanket conservatism, why it exists and what factors if any might lead to its being threatened or overthrown.

The Alberta legislature, which can be seen from the restaurant atop the new seven storey students' union building, houses 65 members; two Liberals, one independent conservative, six Conservatives and fifty-six Social Crediters. The NDP elected one member in a by-election in 1966 but he was defeated less than a year later in the regular elections.

The 19-man Alberta membership in the federal House of Commons consists of four Liberals and 15 Conservatives. The fact that all of these men were democratically elected, and many of them by margins big enough to cause their opponents to lose their deposits testifies to the solid conservative political basis of the province.

This conservative political atmosphere is matched by a comparatively conservative social atmosphere. Although the laws are no more restrictive than other English Canadian provinces, it is indicative that one of the biggest events in Edmonton in the last year was the two week long Leighton Ford Bible Crusade. Billy Graham's right hand man might have packed them in night after night because all seats were free, but . . .

The administration of the U of A differs little from most other university administrations. It has a patent on the status quo and receives the dividends of such a position.

The faculty have their tenure, their good salaries, their faculty club, graduate and honor students to do the menial tasks and pleasant groups of undergrads who do not question the system.

Three years ago two professors were forced to leave when their contracts were not renewed, allegedly at the insis-

tence of the Social Credit government. Both men were violent critics of Premier E. C. Manning's government.

There was protest, from some students and from some faculty, but it never reached the stage where the administration's decisions were threatened.

After all, the profs are like most guys, they've got homes in the suburbs and payment due on their new cars at the end of the month. So, the faculty here acts as a staunch reinforcement of the prevailing system.

But, the students are in the same bag. Their concern is divided equally between the marks they are going to get in their academic endeavors and the scores they are going to make in their social life.

The biggest protest ever staged in Edmonton came last spring when several hundred student marched to the legislative buildings to protest the raising of tuition fees.

This lack of mass action has not been a force bucking the student leaders. They if anything, have been more conservative than their followers. Two years ago student union president Branny Schepanovich led the U of A out of the Canadian Union of Students. He was followed the next year by the conservatives' conservative Al Anderson.

This year the student council is led by a slightly more progressive Marilyn Pilkington. However, when the Alberta students were given two seats of the Board of Governors Miss Pilkington defended the choosing of the two members by a student council committee rather than by a general vote of the students saying she though appointed representatives were usually more responsible than elected ones.

Aha, you're thinking, they probably have a nasty left wing student paper like McGill University that is giving the right-wingers hell all the time.

Well, not exactly. The paper does act as a kind of opposition to the council but in recent years its slant has ranged from moderate conservative all the way left to moderate moderate. Last year when one of the senior editors felt the call of the books he wrote in a good-bye column that the Gateway had never printed anything that a red blooded Canadian mother would be afraid to read to her five-year-old son. No loud cries of "untrue, untrue" were heard from any quarter.

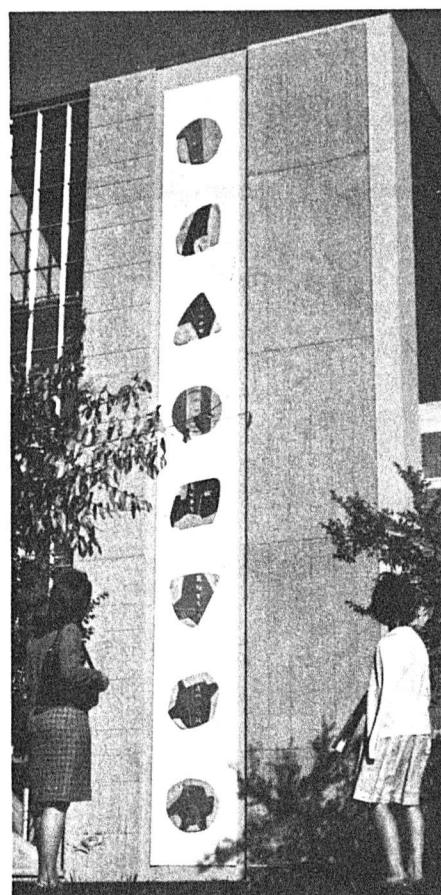
The editors consider student power a farce (Sept. 26 issue carries a huge front page picture of a cute co-ed with a gun and a caption ridiculing student power leaders) and see most of the campuses problems in terms of not enough parking space, not enough classrooms and inadequate cafeteria service.

This not to say all The Gateway is against progress in all forms. It has supported the increasing democratization of the campus and has campaigned to have General Faculty Council (equivalent to SFU's senate) meetings open.

This promotion of progress and change, however, is tempered by the belief that change if it is to come should come through the established system.

In an editorial that praised SFU students for voting in Rob Walsh and a moderate council the Gateway editor said, "SFU, the university which was born deformed, raised in chaos and which, as its first offspring, chose the once ugly breed called student rebellion, has apparently orphaned its own."

He went on to say that the rejection of Martin Loney's associates was a warning to other Canadian campuses of what would happen if they went too far left



THE CONSERVATIVE MOSAIC  
... will it crack?

and insinuated that SFU's troubles were directly accountable to the student power movement.

He is kind enough though, to acknowledge that the events at SFU set the initiative for student action on many other campuses.

The next day Martin Loney was far from the spotlight and The Gateway ran a five column picture on the front page of a couple holding hands with a caption that read "IT'S FALL, IT'S ALBERTA AND TO HELL WITH REVOLUTION."

The why of this student conservatism is not completely answered by looking at the conservative atmosphere the university exists in as described above. There are other important factors that should be noted by both those who are trying to stop the revolution and by those who are trying to promote it.

A look at most student rebellions across Canada and the U.S. will show that they are most often led by liberal arts students and supported by liberal arts students. Those in such faculties as science, engineering, medicine and other technical or training oriented subjects tend to stay with their studies through thick and thin.

The U of A, with a total student population of over 15,000, about three times SFU's enrolment, registered only 2,710 arts students this fall, less than the number at Simon Fraser.

Despite claims of ardent rightists, liberalism is not a political bedfellow of radical left wing movements. In most cases the correct amount of liberalism well applied, usually is a hindrance to any mass radical action.

The U of A administration, while rarely a leader in university reform, regularly makes liberal reforms in the structure and governing of the university.

While students are beginning to pressure for change in Edmonton and the local chapter of the Students for a Democratic University (still small and inf-

fective it has come from nowhere in the past year and is starting to become very vocal and ideologically well-founded) has presented reform programs similar to those suggested at SFU and on other campuses, the administration has always been and still is a step or two ahead of the majority of the university population.

The provincial government has also maintained a good relationship with the U of A student government and has encouraged the presentation of briefs and every-now-and-then visits with the minister of education.

Of course, the fact that the student leaders who have drafted most of the briefs and gone across the river to the legislative building for chats have been conservatively oriented and presumably on the same wave length as the men they are talking with.

How the discussions would go, however, if the student president were a strong liberal or radical is something only conjecture can answer.

So, whether you consider it reform or tokenism a moderate degree of liberalism seems to keep the natives from becoming too restless.

A non-ideological route to keeping protest down is for the government in charge to send the university regular care packages filled with money. The building expenditures for the next five years have been set at \$11,000,000.

In Alberta this mass expenditure of money on education at the university level has kept the campus from serious overcrowding and provided the building with a degree of luxury unthought of on most Canadian campuses. I mean when was the last time you went into the well-lit student cafeteria at SFU and put your jeans on the padded leatherette chairs and your sandals on the carpeted floors.

The structure that most supports the theory of affluence breeding moderation is the new Students' Union Building. Paid for mostly by the collected student populations of many years, although the provincial government did throw in a few dollars, it is claimed to be the biggest and best in Canada and maybe in the whole of North America.

From the ground floor bowling alleys and pool rooms to the seventh floor lounge that overlooks the North Saskatchewan River every beautiful square foot of the structure goes into reinforcing the students belief that everything is really okay. And to give it that last little touch you should see the stained glass windows in the meditation room!

There are small cracks in the conservative mosaic. The SDU tend toward debating the problems rather than hopscotch, the routine campus problems are there (not enough space for parking, eating and living), the residences are still 1945 style in loco parentis and the administration is not really sure where the students are at (President Walter Johns has distributed instructions to administration building employees on what action to take should the building be taken over by students). But these small cracks merely relieve the boredom of those long winter nights.

So, the conservative campus, whether you are interested in maintaining one or destroying one, from this example can be said to be based on: a conservative political climate, a moderately progressive university structure, students interested primarily in their courses and the jobs to follow and enough money coming in from the government to minimize the problems incurred by the lack of proper physical structures.