

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

A reply to the president: too little, too late

In his campaign for the Tory leadership, education minister Bill Davis sent a letter to Ontario universities that amounted to: "Wouldn't it be nice if you hired a few more Canadians."

One pronouncement leads to another and finally, in one great May day speech, York president David Slater left from the great clear waters of academic excellence only to flounder in the muddy shallows of liberal nationalism that neither kept him clean nor brought him the relief he sought.

We agree: there is no really Canadian mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy or cellular biology. But has it ever been a source of contention? The sciences have rarely played a part of the Americanization dilemma except in the sphere of U.S. military contracts in Canadian universities.

As Slater correctly points out, the pleas for more post graduates in the humanities and social sciences to meet

the demands of the 1960's went unheeded by government. But the assumption that ordinary good standards of professional competence require faculty to know Canadian data is only valid if it were being followed through.

Unfortunately, past experience has shown that faculty do not operate on such principles: they study what interests them, not what is around them. Furthermore, it is equally false that the longer foreign faculty stay, the more enmeshed in Canadian society they become. They merely adapt to new conditions relating them to the familiar ones they left behind.

It is quite true: there are now excellent Canadian teachers and scholars. But their effect is minimal when faculties and especially department heads are non-Canadian: John O'Neill of Sociology, Harold Kaplan of political science, Malcolm Westcott of psychology.

But Canadian scholars were

available two years ago and yet patterns of hiring did not substantially change. The old boy system of picking one's colleagues continues and non-Canadian numbers spiralled even higher.

The solutions are pitifully weak. As universities say, they must seek Canadians. But the restated preference for a Canadian "unless another candidate is clearly superior" is nothing but a continued rationale to hire Americans with degrees from "The Big Six", with excellent specialization in American material.

The insinuation that Canadian nationalism is parochial draws visions of petty slander. High professional competence is assumed for any job, but the a priori assumption that faculty know Canadian data is false: had it been true, the lack of Canadian course content would never have arisen.

Robin Mathews and James Steele in their book, *The Struggle For Canadian Universities*, argued several years ago

for the advertising of all available positions. This is a laudable move, but now inadequate.

Tariff walls are nothing new to Canada where protection from the rolling elephant to the south has always required wedges and blocs of some sort or another. Are Canadian intellectuals — unlike other segments of Canadian society — truly immune from U.S. viruses?

Slater rightly predicts no miracles for York. Until departments are 85 per cent Canadian, professors will always be vulnerable to the steamrolling use of American data. Fifteen per cent non-Canadian faculty ensures breaths of fresh air — but not so much as to leave faculties prostrate with influenza.

David Slater's history at York has been short yet indicative of things to come. On April 1, Slater hired Terry Olson, an American, as his right hand man on academic affairs; on May 29, he made a speech which ostensibly told others to "Hire Canadian".

Take a close look at York's colleges

"One of the distinguishing features of York University is that it is developing a 'college system'... York's planners decided that, if the basic ideal of closest possible relationship between teacher and student was to be achieved, one of the ways would be to build the university on the basis of smaller units — that is colleges.

"Every first-year student enrolling in the university is assigned to a

college. During their undergraduate years, students are associated with their college for some of their formal studies and many of their extra-curricular studies."

So reads the York calendar.

In the coming weeks, think about those statements. How close are you to your professor or lecturer? Have you really broken the teacher-student or master-slave roles? Or have you merely come to an extended version of high school with the same educational game of how to beat the system and score the highest marks. Are you really expanding your horizons or merely educating yourself with new rules the same way monkeys learn new tricks?

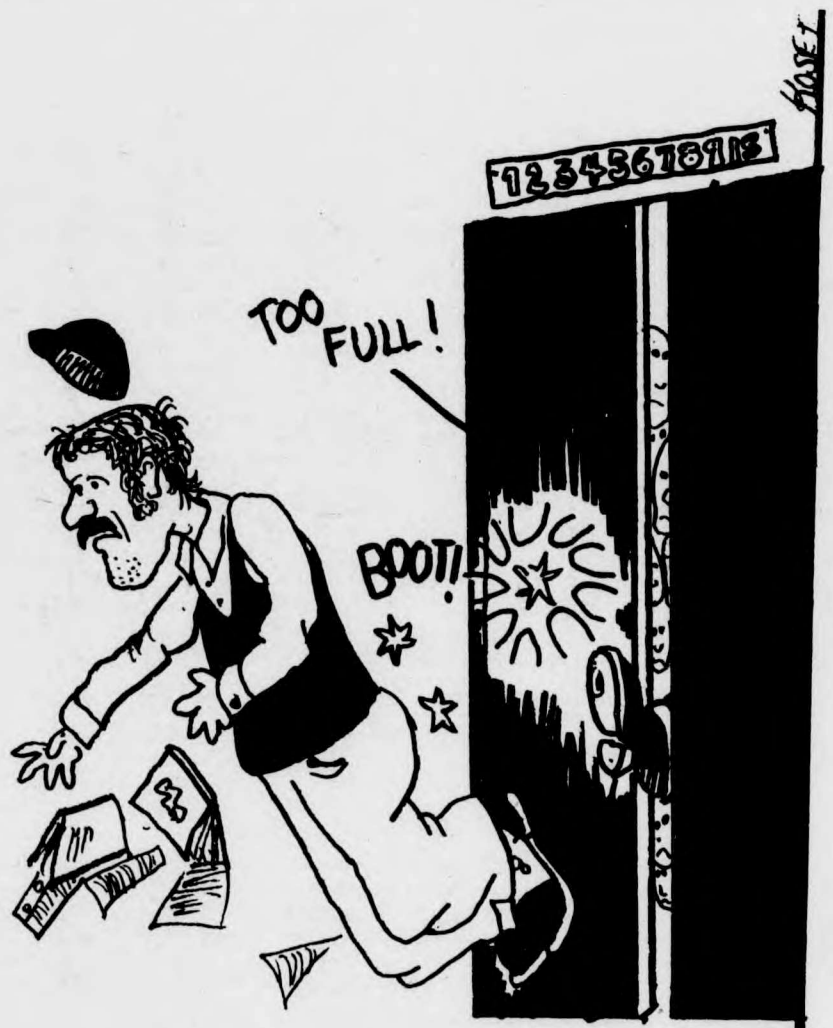
And the colleges — just how much time do you spend there? Do you really feel a part of that environment? Do they provide that base for extra-curricular activities or do they merely show what fun a few resident students can have getting together?

These are some questions you might ask yourself.

York suffers from the same problems that strikes every multiversity: too many students surrounded by too much concrete intermixed with too little thought.

The time for action is now. Go to your college councils and the Council of York Student Federation. Talk to them analyze the answers they give you about York's college structure. Just how effective is it for you? How responsive is the York administrative machine?

We suspect you'll find a cold grey structure clamped on a cold grey mass. But good luck anyway.



"If this is the Humanities Building, why is it so inhumane?"

More confusion

By this time, most students have had their fill of red tape. But try this one on York's nomenclature.

Last fall, College E became Stong College while College F kept its headquarters on the first floor of Steacie Science Library. When the students of College F were told they had to keep the same college structural planning as Stong, they decided to plan College G and F on a more philosophical level.

In the meantime, College F's

organization became Calumet College. They are now located at Atkinson College until their facilities are built to the southwest of Stong College.

This summer, College G came into existence with offices on the first floor of Steacie Library. Their permanent facilities are now under construction north of stong College to be completed by September of 1972.

Calumet's facilities will not be finished for another two or three years because of their innovative design.

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