

York (Canada) Ltd.

This university is a branch plant of U.S. scholarship

Branch plant—an ugly twisted phrase which we Canadians use to describe our economy on those rare moments when we are feeling courageous (or bored) enough to recognize our Emperor's clothes for what they really are.

Such a daring expose of our not quite virgin areas is usually followed by very liberal doses of "Now-don't-get-me-wrong-I'm-not-anti-american-but-pro-canadian" and "someone-has-to-invest-or-our-standard-of-living-would-drop".

So we continue to drop our pants for Captain America.

Anyway, to make a very long story somewhat shorter, last year two professors at Carleton, Robin Matthews and James Steele, had the hindsight to mention that our universities' clothes were covered with little red, white and blue patches and that the stars in our eyes might soon reach that ancient mystic number of fifty and one.

The great Americanization debate was on—or, perhaps, I should say over. From every part of the country, our liberal academics fell all over each other to do their bit for academic freedom, internationalism, motherhood, the United Nations and THE CANADIAN WAY.

For those of you who missed out on the stampede, try Matthews' and Steele's book, *The Struggle For Canadian Universities and / or* consult the following Jim Dandy Handbook of Useful Americanization Rhetoric.

CHAPTER I: Use Freely On All Irritated Areas (completely safe for children and all child-like adults—do not be discouraged by pungent odor).

1) "Our graduate schools have just not produced enough qualified Canadians". This statement may or may not be used with the qualifier "to meet the tremendous expansion of the university population in the sixties".

In either case, heavy sighs and misty eyes are in order. This statement holds the ultimate argument. After all, who can help but feel humbled by the way that the fates have dealt Canadian nationalism yet another irreversible blow.

It is guaranteed to silence all but the most persistent critics who might still ask that the universities make a commitment to correct the imbalance and to make certain that the foreigners that we do hire are committed to this country.

2) "The whole debate is frivolous as knowledge has no national character." Other useful phrases along the same lines are "intellectuals know no frontiers" and/or the "international community of scholarship".

In extreme cases one might also proclaim proudly that Canada is a nation that has succeeded in breaking down many of the traditional provincial standards. Critics will point out that even in the United States Americans are beginning to wonder if their "value-free" social sciences are anything more than U.S. ideology.

Indeed they might go further and say that certainly Canadian provincialism is being broken down but only to be replaced by a hybrid form of U.S. provincialism. The most effective method for dealing with such criticisms as yet discovered is to hold one hand firmly over your best ear and the other over your best eye, while whistling a happy tune.

3) "Nationality is not a criterion of our recruiting policy—what we look for in a teacher is quality of scholarship". Other appropriate catchwords are "good" and "well qualified".

This is really hitting them where it hurts. After all, who wants to be a dirty old chauvinist bigot? "We Canadians pick 'um by a universal scale".

Unfortunately, the shit disturbers have found a way to throw dirt on even this airtight argument. "Quality of scholarship", "good" and "well qualified" are really only subjective judgements, they point out. Can they really be held by anyone who isn't capable of relating Canadian culture, history and politics to his students?

What is the real meaning of a so-called "universal" standard when an American who has gone to graduate school in the social sciences at Berkeley has a better chance of getting a job than a Canadian who has studied in his own country, because "good" U.S. graduate schools are "better" than any Canadian graduate schools.

CHAPTER II: Use With Some Caution (still relatively safe, but if improperly applied could lead to further irritation)

1) "We must make strenuous efforts to Canadianize our course content."

A lovely sentiment, usually followed by great vacuums of meaningless activities. It often indicates that you are about to coopt the noisy rabble with one more course on CANADIAN VIABILITY and/or THE FRENCH CANADIAN QUESTION.

Do not, upon pain of mass radicalization, take either of the following courses of action:

a) insist that the spirit of every department be one in which developing Canadian studies and a Canadian perspective is seen as its most important objective;

b) give courses which deal with real Canadian problems like "Exploitation of Immigrant Groups", "Historical Development of Indian-White Relations" or "Canada's Position in the U.S. Empire".

2) "It's too bad that there is so little Canadian source material."

When uttering such statements, it is considered good form by many to look wistfully ahead to the time when someone somewhere will do a book from which we can teach and learn Canadian data.

Be especially careful not to relate this problem with the above-mentioned emphasis in staff research, because academic-freedom-is-a-very-precious-thing-and-you-can't-have-people-running-around-telling-you-what-sort-of-things-you-should-be-researching.

Besides, what's good for Bobbs-Merill is good for the country!

3) "Advertising in Canada is not a way of attracting good Canadian faculty. The people who answer ads are losers."

This is a particularly sensitive area and any further discussion should be avoided at all costs. After all, if people began to consider how much we depend on word-of-mouth to do our recruiting they might become seriously disturbed. If people found out that who-you-know is often more important than what-you-do, THEY MIGHT WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

4) Although it may contain a germ of truth, people tend to laugh when you bring up the name of a University of Windsor biology professor who supports Americanization as it is "a massive infusion of a variety of highly desirable genes."

CHAPTER III: WARNING, under no circumstances, if the debate is to be carried to its liberal conclusion, should you mention any of the following...

1) "We will recruit foreigners only when no qualified Canadian is available." (Don't be silly—refer back to chapter one).

2) "The prime function of any Canadian university is relevance to the Canadian fact." (How terribly provincial your attitudes are!)

3) "The Americanization of the Canadian universities is related to a larger more significant world-wide phenomenon known as U.S. Imperialism." (Pinko freak!)

York is a branch plant of U.S. scholarship. After three weeks of talking to people all over York the conclusion is inescapable.

This year the statistics indicate it even more strongly than they did last January when EXCALIBUR published a similar list from arts and science dean Jack Saywell's office. There are simply more U.S. bodies and relatively fewer Canadians.

I cannot swear that Saywell's figures are



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

ARTS WING — 1969-70

NATIONALITIES OF PERSONNEL — BY DEPARTMENTS

DEPARTMENT	CANADA	U.S.	U.K.	COMMONWEALTH	FOREIGN
COMPUTER SCI.	100 %				
ECONOMICS	40 %				
ENGLISH	37.8%	29.7%	15 %	15 %	30 %
FOREIGN LIT.	36.4%	18.2%	24.3%	5.4%	2.7%
FRENCH LIT.	50 %	21.4%	9.1%		36.4%
GEOGRAPHY	31.3%	12.5%	14.3%	6.3%	14.3%
HISTORY	55.6%	37 %	43.8%		6.3%
HUMANITIES	36.6%	51.2%	7.4%		
MATHEMATICS	36.4%	51.2%	7.3%	2.4%	2.4%
PHILOSOPHY	23.5%	40.9%	13.6%	23.5%	9.1%
POLITICAL SCI.	34.8%	41.2%	23.5%	11.8%	
PSYCHOLOGY	37.1%	52.8%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
SOCIAL SCIENCE	25 %	40 %	2.9%	2.9%	17.1%
SOIOLOGY	10.7%	46.4%	10 %	5 %	15 %
LINGUISTICS	19.2%	26.9%	21.4%	7.1%	14.3%
			7.7%		46.2%

accurate down to the last decimal point, because I was twice refused permission to check his sources. These figures, however do show an alarming trend.

In arts and sciences, seven major departments are over 40 per cent American while only three major departments are over 40 per cent Canadian and only one of these three is over 51 per cent Canadian. None of these three departments are in the politically-sensitive social sciences.

Indeed, in the social sciences the trend toward Americanization is more serious than anywhere else. For example, sociology, Saywell's figures tell us that 46.4 per cent of the teaching staff in this department are American. In itself this figure may be accurate.

However, it must also be noted that only four of the 29-member staff do not have a U.S. degree, either first or higher, and that these four were trained in Great Britain. The comparable figure in political science is six of 24.

Even more disturbing has been the hiring policies of these two departments over the last two years. In sociology, 16 people were hired but only three of these held Canadian first degrees and no one held a Canadian higher degree. In the last two years in political science, it was one Canadian for seven Americans.

As we learned from the Jim Dandy Handbook, the problem of Americanization goes much deeper than percentages of nationals filling Canadian academic positions. Statistics can only indicate directions—they do not by themselves a branch plant make. It is the relevance of the university to the Canadian fact which is of crucial importance.

Why, then, do I call York a branch plant extension of U.S. scholarship? Because it is not really a university which is working and thinking in a Canadian context. It was born in Toronto, is financed by the workers of Ontario, and is growing up intellectually in the United States.

Nonsense, you say? Well, consider carefully some of the incidents which happened to me as I was researching this article and see for yourself the great ass-licking machine in operation.

Consider first an interview which I and other members of the EXCALIBUR staff had with Jack Saywell, dean of arts and science, General Manager of the Branch Plant and a strong candidate to be the next president of York (Canada) Ltd.

Saywell is almost a stereotype of the colonial Uncle Tom. "No, sir, we shouldn't advertise." "Yes, sir, a degree from Berkeley in the social sciences is worth more than a degree from any Canadian university" and "No, sir, relevance to the Canadian fact should not be the chief criterion for judging Canadian schools." (Holy Cow! - ed.)

As if all this was not damning enough, the interview ended on a variation of a somehow familiar theme: "Ask not what country you are in, but rather how big the library is."

That a man of these qualities would be considered as president of a major university in any other country in the world is, to be very kind, laughable. Ah well, it's THE CANADIAN WAY.

Consider next the hassle I was given by John Yoltan, chairman of the philosophy department. I came to him with what I thought was a perfectly reasonable request, that being a list of full time staff recruited in the last two years by his department.

"Absolutely no chance," I was told. Further, not only he but his whole department thought that the issue of Americanization was irrelevant and he couldn't possibly release such information without approval from a full staff meeting.

I kept telling myself that no one could be that foolish in a university supposedly dedicated to the spirit of free inquiry, but things got even more surrealistic. I was asked what the philosophy department could do about Canadianization of its course content.

Scarcely had I got out the suggestion that one

might start researching the philosophy of Canada's native peoples, when it was rudely rammed back down my throat with the retort: "They have no philosophy. That is more ridiculous than the black students in the States wanting to study Bantu philosophy."

Enough. Consider the interviews I conducted with two Americans, born and educated in the United States, who are now spending their first year in Canada teaching at York.

These interviews make the point very forcefully that the answer to the Americanization problem cannot be found entirely in the statistical approach. These gentlemen are quite obviously sensitive to our major problems and are more disturbed than many Canadian academics by the threat of U.S. Imperialism.

At the same time, these interviews clearly reflect the operation of the York branch plant.

B's interview gives a personal picture of the workings of the word-of-mouth recruitment pattern. Of special importance is his treatment of the research priorities of the Sociology Department and his frightening description of the Canamerican students he is teaching.

A's interview deals particularly with the underlying assumptions of our recruitment policies, the myth of the "best man" and the threat of the U.S. "proconsuls."

Consider the non-issue that Americanization has been at York, in spite of the fact that we have one of the highest overall percentages of foreign appointments in Canada. During the past year, the controversy raged from one end of the country to the other, but somehow York academics were able to quietly ignore any unpleasant disruptions from the Real World Outside.

To this point, only one department, political science, has shown any sort of sensitivity to the problem. Through a decision taken before the Christmas break, they instituted what might be called the two file recruiting policy.

Under this plan, all applications for openings in the department will be separated into two files, Canadian and foreign. The Canadian file will be searched first. Only if the position cannot be filled from this file will the foreign file be opened.

Other departments told me that when two applications were received for a position, one Canadian and one foreign, and both candidates were "equally well qualified" (an extremely improbable occurrence, but true back to Jim Dandy for a look at the real nature of "well qualified") that the Canadian would be chosen. Big Deal! Did they suppose anyone expected that the foreign application would receive preference?

The chairmen of sociology and psychology, when I contacted them by telephone, refused to go even this far. As incredible as it may seem, both of these men said that their departments did not view Americanization as "an important problem."

I can offer sympathy only for the chairman of the humanities department, (over 50 per cent American) who refused to comment on whether it was "an important problem" because he was afraid of offending U.S. members of his department.

The decision which was taken by the political science department is significant as a symbol that they are concerned about the problem. However, it contains in no way the final solution; it is only a hesitant first step.

The real solution to the problem of York (Canada) Ltd. will be found in our course content.

Consider finally the list of courses which Excalibur has printed on Page 6. These courses are a basic preliminary examination of the realities which Canada must confront in the next 10 years if she is to remain a nation state.

Ask yourself why we have to ask for these courses in a Canadian university, why they are not being taught to us as part of our "General Education" AND THEN TRY TO TELL ME THAT YORK IS NOT A BRANCH PLANT.