

Excalibur

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

Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Daison's, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications.

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Government funding policy ensures decay

The minister of colleges and universities, James Auld, has announced levels of support for universities for 1975-76 that are just sufficient to keep hope alive while supporting a lingering, painful death of the province's university system.

The government's action has made it impossible for Ontario universities to retain any academic flexibility, to adapt physical resources to meet changing needs, or even to provide staff and faculty with basic cost of living salary increases, without running up huge operating deficits.

DIMINISHING RETURNS

In the 1973-74 year of operation, York faculty received an increase of four per cent; in 1974-75 the increase was 10.5 per cent.

Both of these were less than the cost of living increase for the same period. In real money terms, the faculty have thus had salary decreases over the past two years with respect to inflation.

Clearly, they will be unwilling to see this continue. But if the pace of inflation does not abate, or if no additional money is forthcoming from the government, the only alternative is to decrease the faculty — either through ruthless termination of non-tenured members, or through a gradual process of attrition and decay.

Neither of these possibilities is acceptable.

Obviously, it is unreasonable to expect faculty to allow budget stringency to erode their paychecks with each successive year. The remaining alternative is no better.

No matter how a faculty reduction is accomplished, it would have disastrous effects on the morale of the university; it would lead to overcrowding in lectures and tutorials (or to the



"That concludes today's lecture — but before you leave, we will be passing around a small collection plate..."

abolition of tutorials altogether); it would decrease the quality and variety of programmes available to students.

The plight of the non-academic support staff is even worse. Though their increases of the past two years have been comparable — in percentage terms — to those of the faculty, in terms of buying power they are falling further behind. Virtually all levels of support staff salaries lie well below community and provincial averages for comparable work.

If faculty and staff are to be given a minimal 15 per cent increase next year, the university will have to go over \$3 million into debt (in addition to the \$1.6 million debt already accumulated). At the present time there is nothing to indicate that York would ever recover from

this debt — certainly the government has given no hint of a willingness to help out.

It is unquestionably true that the government's policy of forcing universities into rapid and unrestrained expansion throughout the 60s was impru-

dent.

It is unquestionably true that cutbacks in university funding were due, and that these are supported by the public.

But it is unconscionable for the ministry of colleges and universities to require the current staff

faculty and students of the province's universities to do penance for the government's historical mistakes.

MCU must make available sufficient funds to ease the university's transition from favourite son to orphan.

Notes from the radiator

The secret of iambic tetrameter

By WARREN CLEMENTS

The creative writing class was hushed. Shirley Backrub, pacing nervously in front of fifteen restless classmates, began to recite her latest work.

"My lover walks in paths of silk,
His grinning teeth are white as milk,
He greets the dawn with aspen eye..."

Her recital was greeted by the pronounced retching of a red-headed girl in the back, who unceremoniously left the room. The teacher smiled encouragingly at Shirley.

"Go on, go on," he urged. "It's very good."
"Are you sure...?" questioned Shirley.

The class settled back to listen. Shirley uncrumpled her paper and continued her recital.

"And dons his cloak with murmured sigh,
While I who weary doth repose
In sleep as sweet as dew-tipped rose..."

A mustachioed member of the class laughed so hard at this point that he peed in his trousers and was forced to make his way to the nearest washroom. Shirley started to cry, but the teacher convinced her to carry on.

"Do lift my head from slumber's roost
And..."

Shirley stopped in time to see six classmates rolling around on the floor, convulsed in laughter. One member was beating his head against the leg of his desk, while two professors who had been passing by in the hallway were flailing about helplessly in merriment.

"What's the matter, Shirley?" the teacher asked solicitously. "Why did you stop?"

"I couldn't find a rhyme for 'roost,'" said Shirley.
"How about 'goosed'?" suggested a class

member.

"Shut up!" screamed the teacher, leaping to his feet and turning on the smirking classroom with a vengeance. "How dare you mock the creative soul? What gives you the right to pass judgment on another poet's work?"

A blonde in khaki made a rude sucking sound with her palms. The teacher's face became livid. He leapt to the front of the classroom and snatched Shirley's poetry.

"This," he screamed, "is art! Better than you morons could ever hope to churn out. And what's more, I'm going to see that it gets printed in York's poetry periodical, none other than Waves!"
"Why?" choked a giggling student. "Is it that bad?"

"Why?" spat the teacher, waving the poetry like a manifesto. "Because I'm a bleeding contributor to Waves, that's bleeding why! This girl's got more talent in her little finger..."

"So that's where she's hiding it," guffawed a dark-haired student as he slipped from the room. Three others swept out holding their stomachs in glee.

The teacher turned from the empty classroom to face a tearful Shirley. She smiled bravely at him. "Kahlil Gibran would have liked it," he whispered.

"Oh," she cried happily, dissolving in his arms. "Do you really think so?"

With his free arm, the teacher lifted the crumpled sheets to eye level and began to read aloud in a trembling voice.

"The morning sun has been and gone,
The ducks do quack in distant pond,
And I my tattered remnants seek,
Prepared at length to greet the week."

Staff meeting 4 p.m. today
Room III Central Square.
Everyone welcome.

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