

# **Board Rep Report**

"It is the duty of governments and of individuals to form the truest opinions they can and to form them carefully and never impose them on others unless they can be quite sure of being right."

-J.S. Mill-

How does the University differ from the work place? How does the decision-making process differ? How are labor negotiations conducted? Given that the men who sit on the Boards of the higher ranks of international industry and finance also sit on York's Board of Governors, the questions above are interesting ones.

On the question of labor negotiations, the President of Ford Motor Company of Canada offered an interesting thought at Monday's Board meeting when he said that "if you stop bargaining before the eleventh hour, then your side thinks that you haven't bargained hard enough." Hopefully, this is the reasoning behind negotiations at York between the administration and YUFA and GAA which have been effectively going on for about eight months. On the other hand, the University diverges from the work place when the question of a strike enters into the picture. Undoubtedly the University is different insofar as there are many sectors that are affected. Quite notably, students pay a price that they should not have to pay.

In the University, and particularly York, there is a stress on "collegiality" in the decision-making process; decisions are meant to be the end product of a long process of discussion and interaction between various sectors of the University. In a corporation, decisions are dictated from top to bottom, in real and metaphorical terms. The University aspires to adhere to John Stuart Mill's ideal of a livelier impression of truth that is produced through the interaction and exchange of opinions. Theoretically, committees representing various departments, faculties, colleges and sectors of the University channel information up to the ninth floor where a "friendly hand will sift and keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of comfort blow the rest away."

At Monday's board meeting, one board member commented that it is precisely the spirit of collegiality that holds up the decisionmaking process at York. A time-consuming process? Yes. Moreover, when finances are tight, different sectors tend to vie for the same piece of the economic pie; a lot of the real information simply gets "blown away." Nevertheless, despite its deficiencies, the University still does contain the mechanisms whereby people of different interests might "TALK" to one another. The fact that YUFA and GAA were accepted to speak at Monday's board meeting during their labor negotiation process and, furthermore, the fact that students, alumni, and faculty, have seats on the managing board of York University, are two ideas that demonstrate a significant and encouraging point about the university. Quite simply, the University remains as an example to the "real working place." I would point to the recent event that took place in the board rooms of Chrysler Corporation; for the first time in North American history, a trade union leader will join the board of directors of a major corporation. In a time of relative pessimism in the University, there are still somethings that prove promising, and indeed encouraging, for those of us who would like to see real democratization in all sectors of society.

**Andrea Doucet** 

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6 EXCALIBUR, January 17, 1980