

# McGill scandal hits courts



MONTREAL (CUP)—An invention that may be worth millions of dollars has blown up a major scandal at McGill University.

And the university faces public humiliation this week as the scandal, which involves the new chancellor, the chair of the microbiology department and two other professors, goes before the courts.

The complex controversy started quietly one year ago, when microbiology department chair Irving DeVoe and associate professor Bruce Holbein rented private laboratory space from McGill so they could research market uses of an invention that can apparently recover radioactive material from nuclear waste.

Their quiet world was shattered suddenly in late October, when the Montreal Gazette ran an article claiming the professors were using government research grants for private purposes.

The article also said DeVoe neglected his duties as department chair to spend time in Europe handling interests of the company DeVoe-Holbein, Inc., while Holbein neglected his graduate and undergraduate students to work in the laboratory.

The controversy soon expanded when the student newspaper, the McGill Daily, started a deeper investigation into DeVoe-Holbein. The first issue that carried a story on the scandal was promptly slapped with a court injunction sought by the two irate professors.

The injunction also applied to chemist Chun Fai Yam, a former employee of the two professors who claims he is the real inventor.

DeVoe and Holbein took the issue to court Jan. 23 to extend the injunction to six months. Should they win, all information on the invention will be muzzled.

Both Yam and the Daily are appealing.

William Miller, Yam's lawyer, says the real motive of the injunction is to seize Yam's documents on the invention. Without this data, says Miller, Yam will not have the "hard evidence" he requires to challenge DeVoe and Holbein's claim that they are the sole inventors.

Yam also plans to file his own patent applications for the invention and sue DeVoe-Holbein Inc. for a half million dollars.

Yam says he was first employed using DeVoe and Holbein's grant money, which a federal government granting agency intended to go toward meningitis research. Later he was switched to the payroll of DeVoe-Holbein Inc.

According to Yam's appeal, DeVoe and Holbein want to use the injunction to gain an "illegal advantage over Yam ... by paralyzing Yam's right to deal with his invention."

Meanwhile, the McGill community reacted with outrage to the Daily injunction. Although McGill's senate rejected calls for a public enquiry into the affair, university vice-president Samuel Freedman told senate "It is personally repugnant to me that a member of our academic staff, for commercial reasons, should attempt to stifle freedom of expression by a student publication."

McGill principal David Johnston has hired lawyers to investigate the affair, but the investigation will not be public.

Aside from the embarrassment of having two professors make questionable use of research grants, the McGill administration has no explanation for why it violated its own patent policy to purchase shares in DeVoe-Holbein Inc. The situation is touchy because A. Jean Grandpre, McGill's new chancellor, has connections to the invention.

Grandpre is a director of Stelco Inc., which owns Torcan Inc., a Toronto based corporation with a contract to build the first prototype of the controversial invention.

And as the story continues to unfold, reporters for both the McGill Daily and the Montreal Gazette claim they have received threats to stop writing about the issue. The Gazette reporter claims he was told his job was at stake, while Daily reporters say they have received vague anonymous warnings.

# Rich students get more aid

TORONTO (CUP)—Students from Ontario's wealthier families are receiving grants from the province's \$135 million student aid program at a rate of 30 times greater than five years ago, according to an unreleased government report.

The report also finds the percentage of students from the province's less affluent families has decreased over the same five year period.

The 1982-83 report of the Ontario Student Assistance Program to be released in March, shows grant recipients from families with gross incomes of more than \$40,000 a year have increased to 3,772 in 1983 from 113 in 1979.

But the percentage of grant recipients from families whose income was below the Ontario median decreased over the same period to 78 per cent in 1982-83 from 85 per cent in 1981-82. From 1979 to 1982, there had been a six per cent increase in the number of students from lower income families receiving grants.

Raj Rajogopal, a policy analyst for OSAP, said the increase of

richer students receiving grants was a result of students from larger families and families with more than one member enrolled in post secondary education applying for grants. The increase was not "alarming" and did not mean poorer students were being deprived of financing for a university education, he said.

But Sean Conway, universities and colleges critic for the Ontario Liberal party, said the statistics on the OSAP report were evi-

dence of serious structural problems with the program.

"Poorer and disadvantaged people in Ontario are not getting their fair share of the grant money," he said.

NDP Leader Robert Rae said the OSAP report demonstrates some serious problems with university accessibility. Rae said the results of the report may mean there is a "major problem" with Ontario's student aid program.

# The great flag caper

CHARLOTTETOWN (CUP)—Campus security at the University of Prince Edward Island are coming under criticism for raiding a student residence over the Christmas holidays.

Security force members entered the building to look for flags stolen from the Charlottetown area in the last four months. According to Director of Security Allan J. MacLeod, they acted on complaints passed on by the RCMP. University students are often prime suspects in such

cases. Security confiscated 30 flags, but returned them the next day at the request of Jim Griffith, the Director of Student Services.

Rooms have traditionally been inspected for damages over Christmas, according to head resident Mary Ross, but with at least one resident official present. Griffith said security members were "presumptuous in the way they handled it" but said they "were acting in good faith."



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