

# Bid to speak sparks free speech hassle

By BOB WALLER

An attempt by Glendon student union president Bob McGaw to make an unscheduled speech at the college's first graduation ceremonies on May 31 sparked a brief free speech controversy.

A bid by Principal Escott Reid to prosecute McGaw was refuted by an investigating committee when it recommended that people be allowed to make unscheduled "statements of opinions" at future Glendon functions.

Although the Council on Student Affairs (COSA) ruled on June 23 that McGaw's actions were "discourteous", the advisory body of

seven students and five faculty members recommended that "channels be created for all future Glendon College functions to allow the statements of opinions in a courteous manner for a limited period by those in attendance."

By doing so, the committee endorsed the stand taken by McGaw in a statement circulated at the meeting which said: "It is my hope that COSA will recommend that future formal gatherings provide for the recognition of speakers from the audience."

McGaw said "this follows upon the assumption that all members of the community have the right to make their beliefs known at any formal gathering which concerns the quality or direction of life at Glendon College."

There were no formal charges against McGaw, who did not appear before the committee. The convocation incident was discussed at the request of Reid who asked COSA in a memorandum "to consider what penalties should be imposed on Mr. McGaw."

Reid was reported to have been very angry after McGaw attempted to answer the turgid rhetoric of university orator Edgar McInnis' convocation address. Although

McGaw did cause an unscheduled break in the ceremony, he waited until McInnis had finished speaking.

At that point senate and board secretary William Farr cut off the sound system and called a premature end to the ceremonies.

The recommendation of the committee to ask that steps be taken in the future to allow unscheduled speeches was felt by some members to be in opposition to the wishes of York President Murray Ross' offices.

History lecturer, I. M. Abella, chairman, mentioned that between May 31 and June 23, he had received "frantic phone calls" from the president's office that "urged action in case this incident opens the way for students to speak at other university functions."

Abella said regarding McGaw's actions: "We are supposedly an experimental college, yet our convocation ceremony was the most tradition-bound thing . . . deep down, I feel there is justification for what McGaw did."

Abella also told the committee that he and other faculty members had asked members of the Glen-

don graduating class if they were angry or offended enough to lodge a formal complaint against McGaw with COSA. All asked refused to do so, he said.

While the formal committee was meeting, 10 Glendon students formed an ad hoc board of inquiry into the incident and drew up a statement which "condemned and censured Principal Reid and President Ross for their reaction to Mr. McGaw's attempt to speak to the Glendon College convocation."

The student statement said that "the repression of freedom of speech in this instance can only be seen as an indication that Glendon College, like Canadian society, will only accept dissent on its terms, and will not tolerate challenges to its established ideas and structures."

It went on to say: "Not only do Ross' and Reid's actions show that they do not accept the principle of free speech in the university, it also shows that there is no qualitative difference between the suppression of legitimate non-violent protest and the use of police against demonstrators at Simon Fraser University last fall. In each case an effort was made to

single out and punish individual leaders."

Three other Glendon students who distributed water-melon slices among the graduates when McGaw attempted his unscheduled speech were not discussed by the committee or mentioned in Reid's memorandum to COSA.

Reid said the student union did not ask for a speaker at the convocation and that neither of the two student members on the sub-committee responsible for the ceremonies had recommended a student should be invited to speak.

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## Congress votes opposition to northern corridor plan

PORT ARTHUR (CUP) — The Canadian Union of Students pledged itself to a fight against the concept of the Mid-Canada Corridor as "the legitimized theft and rape of Canada's natural resources," at its Port Arthur congress.

The corridor concept is backed by several provincial governments, universities and large corporations, and would create an urbanized, industrial strip of land just south of the Arctic Regions.

The congress noted the plan would, in effect, be another tentacle of American control of Canada, and added "any nation which values its independence and sovereignty must have control of the development and dispensation of its natural resources."

The corridor concept also ignores ecological parameters, the delegates said, and is "structurally committed to exploiting the Canadian land, people and re-

sources for corporate profit."

"The founders (of the concept) want to turn the north into another urbanized, polluted jungle of insanity," said Jim Harding, a teaching assistant at Simon Fraser University.

"They want to create capital wealth — and we know that has little to do with the fulfillment of being a human being, with human liberation."

He urged CUS to make fighting the corridor concept its major priority in the coming year because "this has a reality, unlike many of the resolutions that have come out of the conference."

"They know what they want to do. We don't, because we are afraid of committing ourselves."

CUS will help purchase and distribute prints of an anti-Corridor film prepared by a group opposed to the concept, and act as a clearinghouse and distribution centre for related research and information.

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