

Letters to the Editor

Cottam & Mathews

I wish to disassociate myself entirely from any statements that professor Robin Mathews may have made on Monday, Sept. 13 in connection with my formal complaint against Atkinson College, now under investigation by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. He had not consulted me in order to secure my permission to mention the case in public and, regrettably confronted me with a fait accompli.

Mrs. K. Jean Cottam,
Phd. University of Toronto.

Mathews illogical

The lead story in your Sept. 16th issue struck a responsive chord. As a Canadian who spent three years looking for a position in Canada, I find that I totally disagree with professor Mathews. Not only is his position regarding the necessity to hire Canadians in all phases of university activity illogical, it smacks of a total disregard for the

benefit of the students he is supposed to serve.

Consider his presumably most telling points. Apparently, Miss Cottam had been refused a job in an American university on the grounds of her Canadian citizenship. Having been offered five positions in different American schools within a period of five years, I have a hard time believing that a judgement was made solely on a citizenship basis in regard to Miss Cottam's candidacy. I do not mean to depreciate her either as a person or in terms of her qualifications, but I do know that American schools tend to consider some Canadian graduate degrees suspect in regard to their own requirements.

Usually, an American educational institution in the market for a person with an M.A. is a small state or private college, engaged primarily in teaching as opposed to research, and requiring the ability to teach a range of subjects. They tend to consider a Canadian M.A. as too

narrow and too research oriented for their needs. Even at that, few Canadians are conversant with the very particular type of market for this type of degree in the U.S. This judgement in regard to the narrowness of a Canadian degree might well be wrong, however. By his further statements, professor Mathews himself claims expertise in university administration, personnel administration, and Russian history. And all on a degree in English!

In regard to his statements on the quality of American versus Canadian degrees, there is some indication of perhaps a small area in which his all encompassing expertise may be questioned. While some Canadian universities may be better than some American schools, some American universities are the finest in the world, particularly in my area (economics). If Canadians are to be questioned in their hiring

practices, one might well consider their preference for graduates of Columbia, Cornell, Chicago, and Harvard, relative to better schools with perhaps not the same snob appeal, such as Minnesota, Michigan, or California. One need only consider the academic journals to determine the obvious quality of many American schools, relative to Canadian ones.

What professor Mathews does not realize is that Canadian students

should have the best teachers available and best and Canadian are not always synonymous. Also, where Canada gains one American, it also gains \$50,000 worth of training and upbringing, and this does tend to reduce the cost of Canadian development as well. Against this obvious benefit, we must balance a lack of knowledge of Canadian data, a lack that is usually speedily overcome.

Professor Mathews would have the students get either Canadians or nothing, and if my undergraduate and graduate experience in Canada is an example, too often one is about equal to the other.

Vernon W. Yorgason,
Assist. prof. of Economics,
Atkinson College.

The new year

York is currently discussing possible changes in the length and number of terms in the academic year. I believe that we should expand this discussion to consider two other changes: (1) adoption of a credit system and open withdrawal from courses by the Arts faculty; (2) expansion of the range of courses open to students in the first year.

A credit system would enable students to take fewer than five courses in a year and would thus permit students to work while at-

tending university. The possibility of working while learning would broaden greatly the sorts of students who could apply to university and expand the breadth of experiences available to students during their university years. In addition, such a change would encourage the establishment of many more half courses as well as other useful curricular changes; it would also make failure a less frightening event.

Open withdrawal from any course (up to the last day of classes) would enable a student to avoid a fail mark on his transcript with the penalty being extra work in another term or a longer stay in university. In consequence, students would be encouraged to experiment in course selection and would gain greater control over their university careers.

In the same spirit, I propose for discussion that all courses in the calendar be opened to first year students (if they have the course prerequisites or equivalent knowledge). Presumably it is a "breadth of knowledge" objective that justifies the present first-year package. A student and his advisor should be free to find other ways of reaching this objective which recognize differences in interest and background.

John Buttrick.



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Day Care Centres battle with govt over staff training

By VIVIANE SPIEGELMAN

The needs of working mothers and student mothers have stimulated the rise of day-care centres in communities and on campuses.

The necessity for facilities to provide for the care of pre-school children, has sparked a bitter battle between the Sussex Street Day Care Centre and the Day Nurseries Branch of the Ontario Government, over the question of "qualified" staffing.

Sussex Street asks "Should (nursery) staff be picked by the people who use it or by the government?"

On the other hand, York Day Care Centre's Elody Scholz asks, "Should the government act as an advisory or as a regulatory body in the case of co-operative day-care centres?" (Sussex Street is a co-op).

Scholz compares the running of co-operative day care centres to performing a service like the difference between at-home and restaurant dining. "When you eat out, you want to know that the preparation of food has been regulated by health standards but you wouldn't want that kind of regulation in your own home."

She feels people who want to do it themselves should be able to obtain advice and help, not regulation. The Women's Liberation Movement and groups of interested parents opened the Sussex Street Centre in September 1969 and the Centre at York one year later. Both centres applied for licenses. Both were advised that certain renovations were needed to comply with building, health and fire standards as recommended by the Day Nurseries Act (1966).

Sussex Street, housed in a building owned by the University of Toronto, completed its renovations by the following summer and was refused its license last October. The Sussex Street organizers claim they were refused due to minor things. The main issue is the lack of trained staff. While the Day Nurseries Act does not specify what kind of training supervisory personnel should have, it has been interpreted to include 'nanny' or specific European infant care training or more recently, Mothercraft graduates. According to Sussex Street staffers, the OISE-linked Mothercraft program advocates a high-intellectual input approach which pressures a

child and is incompatible with the needs and interests of parents who choose the Sussex Street Centre.

York, on the other hand, completed the necessary renovations within the first month of operation. They requested a list of candidates from the Day Nurseries Branch and proceeded to interview them. Elody Scholz points out, "training gives a person certain skills, but I think personality helps shape individual philosophies."

European-trained Marianne Weigers came from an authoritarian environment but wanted to get into a centre with a free-school approach. She has been with the centre since last November. Another full-time staffer was Mothercraft-trained but had no experience when she joined York last September. Mrs. Scholz feels she has satisfactorily "grown into the job".

Sussex Street regards Mothercraft philosophy as rigid and inflexible which tend to shut out and prevent them from participating in the care of the children. They hired a Mothercraft supervisor who lasted six weeks. "She didn't like us and we didn't like her." Both York and Sussex Street select staff by parent hiring committees.

York's Centre, housed in the party room of Graduate Residence 3, accommodates 35 to 40 children, most of them pre-school age tots of students.

Not all parents agree with York's free-school approach. Many have taken their children out of the the nursery for individual reasons, said Elody Scholz. Those reasons include dislike of institutional child care, unwillingness to volunteer at least four hours a week at the centre, or because a more traditional approach is favoured. York is now contracting with Metro to assist parents who cannot afford its fees of \$55 a month.

Sussex Street is the first centre to appeal a decision made by the Branch. The centre was reinspected in June and in August heard that the license hearing was to resume. At present, they do not know when the hearing will be or what charges will be brought against their application. Now they are legally allowed to remain open, but are liable to a \$20 per day fine if they lose their appeal.

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