

YORKSCIENCE

U OF T SCIENCE

Toronto (CUP) The radiation poisoning of a University of Toronto lab technician has brought to light numerous violations of security and safety regulations at the institution.

Last summer it was discovered lab technician Winnifred Asico had an abnormally radiated thyroid. Shortly afterwards radioactive iodine was discovered in Asico's jar of Coffeemate, which was stored in a lab containing radioactive substances.

"Safety at U of T is not good at all. They are very lax," said Asico.

She cited a number of violations of safety and security regulations in the research labs at U of T:

- eating and drinking in labs containing radioactive substance.
- food put in refrigerators

containing radioactive substances.

● labs left unlocked.
Bill Ridge, director of the University of Toronto Radiation Protection Authority (UTRPA), agrees there are serious safety problems at U of T.

After so many years you tend to become complacent and you need a jolt like (the Asico case) to shake you up," Ridge said.

To improve safety, Ridge said, the UTRPA has hired three employees to "check that doors are properly locked and to collect some radioactive waste." the UTRPA has also produced a "Manual of Safety Operations" and a memorandum noting particular regulations which have been violated.

News of the Asico incident only became known when a memo from Ken McNeill, Chairperson of the UTRPA, was leaked to the media. The memo requested information on

workers handling radioactive materials. The information requested was for the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) and states "two incidents have occurred within the last year: one, the ingestion by a technician of significant quantities of radioactive iodine and the other, theft of radioisotopes in the Medical Sciences Building."

"They worked hard for me personally," Asico said, "but not so much over the hazards of occupational health and safety at U of T."

Currently, atomic radiation workers at the University are protected only by the guidelines set by the AECB and UTRPA since atomic radiation workers are not protected by the provincial occupational health and safety act. This act would allow workers to refuse unsafe working conditions.

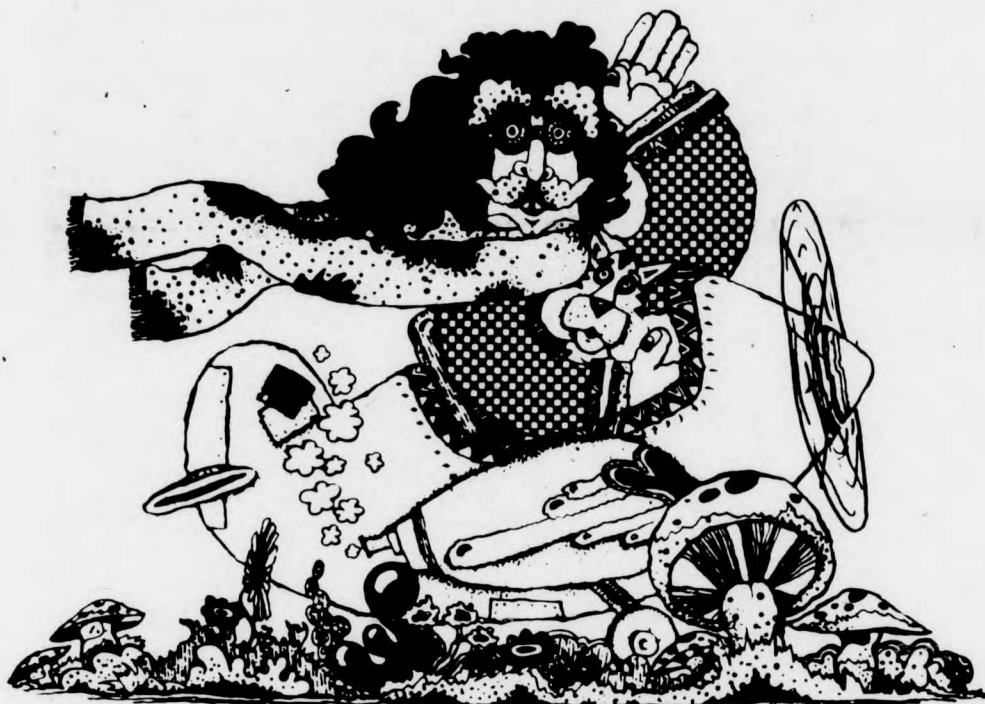
Asico's poisoning caused AECB officials to delay the

renewal of the University's materials. The licence was licence to use radioactive renewed in August.



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