

Macdonald cool on tuition hikes for foreign students

continued from page 9

MACDONALD: I personally don't like artificial barriers between the movements of people and the traditional concept of the university as the universal institution which readily brought people together in a common interest in their academic work and transcending national boundaries and so on. On the other hand there is really no way the university can ignore the current policy without really punishing itself. My own preference would be to say we accept the current policy but if we want, through our national student policy or through our university policy, to encourage overseas students from certain areas or certain disciplines because we want to enrich university life in that way, we should be prepared to make financial assistance available to help them compensate. There does seem to be a very strong current in the country at the moment about people from outside. Personally it is not something that appeals to me very much, I think we have to find ways around living with it.

EXCALIBUR: Have you agreed to cancel classes for National Student Day?

MACDONALD: The request was made originally to me but subsequently Mr. Edson advised me CYSF has decided not to go ahead with the idea.

EXCALIBUR: How do you feel about the sectors of the University who have felt it now necessary to organize and unionize?

MACDONALD: We had three unions and we now have six, and of the three, we now have signed collective agreements with two of them. I think we are making good

progress in negotiations with the faculty at the present time. The real issue is the overall allocation of the budget and the share within it. I think in the instance of the staff association we have a very good collective agreement within the university which deals with a lot of the issues I feel had to be dealt with and had to be improved and tidied up under any circumstances. As long as we can retain a sense of community and common concerns with a certain amount of good humour at work to gather things together outside the formal context of labour relations process, it will be fine and I'm quite satisfied myself with the point which we have reached.

EXCALIBUR: Do you have any thoughts on why these groups felt it necessary to unionize now since they hadn't previously?

MACDONALD: There has been a general movement in this direction within universities in recent years, a general movement within the public sector. I think in the public generally there is a feeling of unease and concern because of the fundamental change in economic conditions at present particularly in contrast to all the boom and vitality of the sixties. In the university sector in particular, it's a recognition that universities are having a harder time in impressing themselves on the public mind. The prospects of enrollment decline in the future, the struggle for a share of public funds and in turn a certain amount of unease about security for the future and I think those are the main reasons that these factors, which have been in the works for a long time, have come together.

EXCALIBUR: The unionization of the GAA and YUSA went

smoother than the faculty. How do you feel about professionals unionizing?

MACDONALD: As one would expect, within the faculty you got a lot of individual opinions. There were strong disagreements within the faculty about unionization but one should remember 67 per cent voted in favour of the union, I think this is a normal situation. The executive of the faculty association itself is always trying to find ways to accommodate the various viewpoints.

EXCALIBUR: The Independent Faculty Members are now pursuing legal action, challenging YUFA. Do you think they have much hope of success or would you say YUFA is here to stay?

MACDONALD: It is a matter before the courts and there is certainly no injunction so our position is we are bargaining in good faith and proceeding according to the Labour Relations Act, we will cross that bridge when we come to it.

EXCALIBUR: What do you see as the role of the Board of Governors? Would you say it is the power in the university?

MACDONALD: I don't think it's power. Many people share a degree of power if power means having the ability to make things happen. I think the role is much more important than that, it gives an outside perspective which can be helpful to those of us who are responsible daily for the university. It's having sympathetic people who are able to understand and defend the university outside. It's people who have other expertise that they can inject into university discussions and be helpful. I think the, so to speak, power, is so fractured after all that no one

is really calling all the shots. I think the job of the president is to try and reconcile all these power bases in some way that tries to keep the university moving in the best general interests of all. I don't think in any sort of traditional sense that the Board is some kind of power.

EXCALIBUR: So you don't see the Board as a kind of Parliament for the university?

MACDONALD: No, and I don't think they see themselves this way.

EXCALIBUR: Do you think the two faculty and student members on the Board are enough?

MACDONALD: The real stuff of the university is its academic programs and that's the responsibility of the Senate. On the Senate you have a mix of faculty, students, support staff and so on. I don't know if the numbers are as critical as the way the Board conducts itself and it takes a fairly broad view.

EXCALIBUR: Do you feel it is necessary for the Board's meetings and its minutes to be secret?

MACDONALD: I think there is a difference between meetings being held in private and full disclosure of decisions. We will be coming out within a week of Board meetings with a resume of discussion and decision from the meeting. The Board certainly seems to feel satisfied with that.

EXCALIBUR: What would you say is the difference between students in 1976 and those in 1967?

MACDONALD: I was involved in universities from 1955 to 1965 and out of them from 1965 to 1974 so I don't have a good idea what the late sixties were like in the tur-



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