

CUPE to fight non-union labor

By MARILYN SMITH

"We're only exploring possible means of keeping costs down," said physical plant head John Armour of York's recent move to consider non-union cleaning firms for maintenance in new on-campus buildings.

But Canadian Union of Public Employees' spokesman Arthur Riseley said Tuesday CUPE will resist any private contractor coming into York. CUPE represents the 250 cleaners at York.

The physical plant budget has been cut from \$4,639,000 to \$4,000,000 for next year. Armour said Tuesday if an outside group could do the same quality maintenance at a lower cost than York would contract out to an independent cleaning firm.

Most cleaning firms hire non-union, part-time labor at the minimum wage, \$1.65 an hour. Under the present contract CUPE cannot protest any York move to contract out for new buildings. Terms of the York-CUPE contract only cover existing buildings. Violation of the contract would cost the union \$1,000 each day and every worker \$500 per day.

Administration vice president Bill Small said management and union representatives have had several meetings to discuss labor-management views at York. He said York had not yet put out tenders for the job and that short-term savings were not the only consideration.

"We're looking the field over. But there's nothing to say that having tendered, we're automatically going to accept the lowest bidder. There's other factors to consider. Long range preventive maintenance is important," Small continued.

CUPE representative Jack Bird said if York did contract out, the cleaning standard would be lower.

"Generally, these cleaning crews are on nights, with one person during the day. Consequently there's no provision for emergencies and the standard is lowered. Long term projects are not maintained properly," Bird said.

He added York has its own supervisory and administrative staff which would be duplicated by supervisory and administrative staff in the cleaning firm. He said government projects do not pay federal and provincial sales tax on supplies. The cleaning firms do, he said, so York would compound its expenses.

Personnel director Don Mitchell informed Walter Zampolin, CUPE local 1356 president here at York about York's consideration of alternative maintenance. The notice came two weeks ago. Small said the cutbacks in physical plant spending put academics as York's priorities.

Riseley disagreed saying, "if employers are efficient, they should be able to administer their program without exploiting the workers. Public bodies will not take the time or trouble to become efficient. Look at the private sector where the profit motive is involved. They always manage to operate efficiently within their budgets because they have to."

Meanwhile, the new budget is in, and Armour says housekeeping standards are being revised to meet the figures. Whether or not York contracts out to cleaning firms involves bureaucratic studies and assessments. The final decision will be made mid-April.

CYSF manager ignored

Despite a \$9,200 a year business manager in the Council of the York Student Federation office, president Michael Fletcher and social affairs commissioner Neil Staff refused to use him for the winter carnival.

Fletcher promised a budget by March 22 but it never came. Fletcher said he felt more confident handling the funds without business manager Doug Wise's help. Fletcher and Staff had already begun the carnival when Wise was hired. He said he had received \$134 to cover expenses and Staff, \$150 for his work.

Workers were paid in straight cash and sometimes cheques. No complete records were kept on monies paid out.

Sources say the carnival losses may total over \$1,500.



QUEEN'S PARK DEMONSTRATION; FEES UP \$100

Nearly 1,000 demonstrators marched on Queen's Park Tuesday afternoon to protest higher tuition fees, cuts in graduate grants, and loan scheme changes. The government budget an-

nounced Tuesday night in the legislature revealed a \$100 fee hike for undergraduate students next year. Earlier in the day, demonstrators were allowed into the legislature galleries. The mass

rally began with a teach-in earlier in the afternoon on the changes and their effects on students and then moved to the legislature buildings at Queen's Park. Photo by David Lloyd — Varsity.

Ridpath dropped because easily disposable, says prof

Psychology professor Irwin Silverman has charged that Soc.Sci. 175 and professor John Ridpath were dropped by the Social Science department because Ridpath was an easily disposable graduate level instructor instead of a full professor.

In a letter to Excalibur, Silverman states there seems to be a serious problem of academic freedom and administrative contrivance and irresponsibility in Soc.Sci. which he feels has begun to corrupt the educational enterprise at York. (See below.)

He states that Soc.Sci. 184 was not dropped like Soc.Sci. 175 for that very reason.

Soc.Sci. chairman Melvyn Hill said last week that the course was dropped because several of the Soc.Sci. 175 faculty had voiced dissatisfaction with the course's organization and wanted to leave. The course was labelled as superficial with faculty unable to cooperate and share common views.

Silverman said the Soc.Sci. 184 faculty told the Soc. Sci. first year arts committee that unless there was gross evidence of incompetence and irresponsibility, the course

and its future was a matter between the professors and students. When the committee still voted to drop the course, Hill decided to keep it.

Students Susan Heyes and Brenda Engelhardt saw Hill on Friday and he explained why Soc.Sci. 175 was dropped but refused to talk about Ridpath's contract. He said he didn't have Ridpath's consent to do that and he felt the case did not come under his jurisdiction. Although six students came to see him, Hill would only see two.

"I really believe that it is important to know what students are thinking, especially students who are concerned," he told them.

Ridpath's contract with the Economics department is also being terminated because he hasn't done enough research. 142 out of 145 students attending a Economics 201 class signed a petition asking that his contract be renewed.

The petition was being passed around the class when Ridpath entered to rather loud applause. He later said he was rather surprised and pleased at the student action to try and keep him as a lecturer. Thursday was the first time he'd seen any of the demands as he had been out of town.

Economics chairman Graeme McKechnie said the economics tenure and promotion committee had reached its decision in March and had no relation to the Soc.Sci. move in the fall. He said it was up to Ridpath to appeal to dean of arts John Saywell, to York president David Slater or to the department. Ridpath saw Saywell who promised to look into the matter this week.

Two students sit on the economics tenure and promotion committee. Council of the York Student Federation's counter-calendar lists the course as very demanding but highly rated because of an excellent professor (John Ridpath).

Silverman was not alone in his charges of a lack of academic freedom at York. Psychology professor David Bakan said on Thursday that some very definite guarantees are needed to protect weaker professors from the York political scene.

In last week's Excalibur, the article describing the termination of Social Science 175 and John Ridpath's contract states:

"Although a first year course committee had asked that Soc. Sci. 184 and Soc. Sci. 175 be dropped, Soc. Sci. department chairman Melvyn Hill decided to keep Soc. Sci. 184. Hill refused to make public a copy of the report although he said the meetings and documents used were public. The counter-calendar lists 184 as only slightly better than 175."

I think it is advisable that the York community at large be advised of the events of this year regarding Soc. Sci. 184, because they seem to be very precise parallels of the circumstances surrounding the fate of John Ridpath and his course.

During the year we, as Ridpath, were asked by the First Year Course Committee to restructure our course along certain prescribed lines to be submitted for division approval. As Ridpath, we did not comply. We informed the committee that we considered that the conduct of an ongoing course, unless there was gross evidence of incompetence or irresponsibility, was solely a matter between professors and students. We felt simply and so stated, that the persons most qualified to administer a course were the faculty hired for their scholarship in that area and not an externally composed committee of any sort. We regarded this as the most basic tenet of academic freedom.

Immediately thereafter we received notice from the committee that they had recommended that our course be dropped. We lodged a written protest to the committee, with a copy to dean of arts John Saywell. This resulted in a meeting of the course faculty and the committee which, as the article described Ridpath's meetings, resolved nothing at all and was probably equally "acrimonious" and "vitriolic". Our course however, was mysteriously retained by Hill while Ridpath's was not.

The most obvious reason to my mind, is that our course faculty consists entirely of professorial level personnel, while John Ridpath is an easily disposable graduate level instructor. It would seem that your editorial of March 23 was right on target.— It was purely a matter of politics and not education.

It would seem also that there are serious problems of academic freedom and administrative contrivance and irresponsibility in the Social Science division; serious enough that they have begun to corrupt the educational enterprise at York.

Irwin Silverman
Professor of Psychology.