

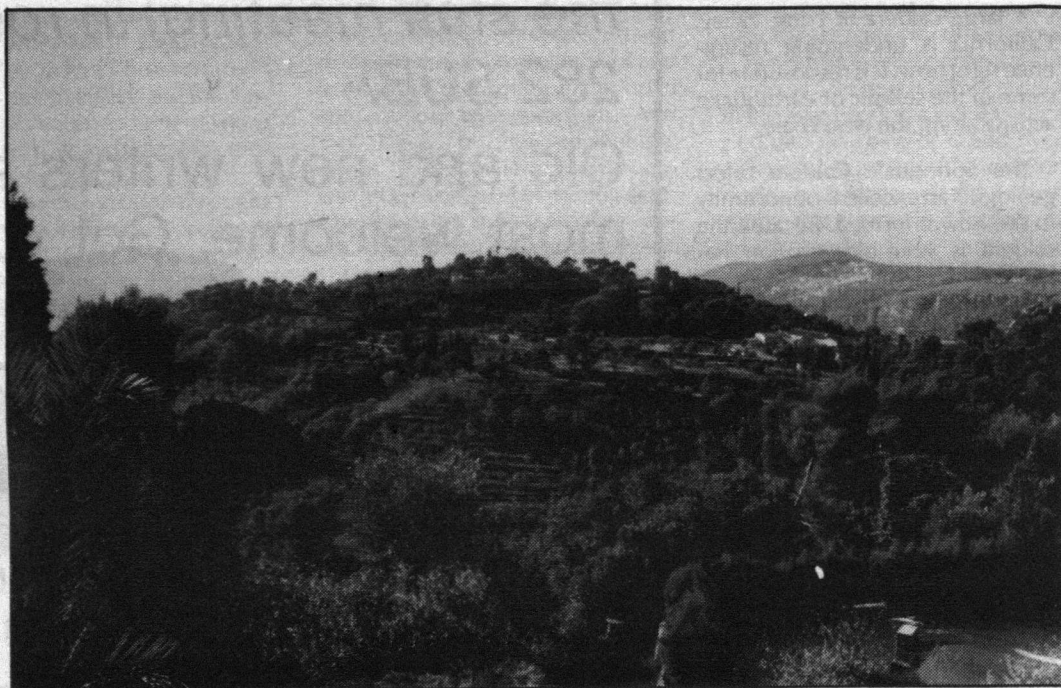
Class on t

Are you bored with the same old grind? Are Edmonton winters getting you down? Need a change of scenery, a new experience? Now you have that opportunity. Laurentian University and Blythe & Company have joined forces to create the *first* Canadian university in Europe.

Universite Canadienne en France is located just outside a town of about 5000 people, Villefranche Sur Mer, in the south of France. The campus itself is located on the coast of the Riviera. It was once owned by an eccentric Parisienne and was the largest estate between Nice and Monaco. Now it has been purchased by Blythe & Company and it is presently being turned into a place of higher education.

“We believe that not just marks are indicative of a student’s ability.”

“More and more students these days see the European experience as a necessary part of any education. More and more people, especially employers, view bilingualism as a prerequisite for employment,” pointed out Patrick Shaw, Educational Coordinator for Blythe & Company. He went on to explain that while most universities have exchange programs with the same purpose, they are restricted to higher year students in certain disciplines. “Whereas this program is open to all Canadians, in any discipline, in any year,” he said.



The picturesque area around Villefranche

The University Canadienne en France was the idea of Sam Blythe, president of Blythe & Company. The company specializes in various treks and excursions throughout Europe and Asia, but according to Shaw, their strengths lie in France with the various bike tours and immersion programs they run.

“We recently opened a school called the Lycee Canadienne en France, a grade thirteen private school in St. Jean Cap Ferrat,” said Shaw. It was the great success of that initial school that prompted the company to create the Universite. However, Blythe & Company are a private organization and cannot open a university, which is where

Laurentian University and its president John Daniel came in.

“They have tried all sorts of immersion programs for their students,” explained Shaw, “but for one reason or another they have not been a success.” The marriage of Laurentian and Blythe & Company is a good example of private and public industry working together to overcome obstacles. “Neither organization could have done this without the other,” said Shaw. “Especially the way university monies are being handled these days.”

Blythe & Company had all the contacts in France necessary to get the project off the



A main building at the estate

ground. “They could buy the property, they had the offices to deal with the French authorities and set up the Universite,” said Shaw. “They will manage the property, the residences, and take care of the initial orientation.” The existing buildings on the property will be converted to offices and classrooms, while the residences and library are presently under construction.

The residence facilities will be small chalets that will house from 8 to 12 people. There will be two students to a room, and a common kitchen area. The buildings will be spread throughout the forty acre property of trees and fields. Said Shaw, “with only 250 students and a small campus, we hope a real community spirit will develop.”

The library will take a few years to compile its resources, but the University of Nice library is available for the use of the Canadian students. Nice is also opening up its athletic facilities to the Universite students although there is a swimming pool and tennis courts on campus.

Of course, the Universite is not all work (How could it be when you are in the south of France?). There is a sailing club and a ski