

Ronning relates revolutionary advances

by Kevin Gillese

Dr. Chester Ronning is now an old man. A respected Canadian diplomat, born and raised in central China, Ronning has long been a distinguished commentator on life in China, both before and after the 1949 revolution. He spoke to a crowd of about 300 people in an Education Centre theatre a week and a half ago supposedly on the topic of "Education in the Maoist Strategy for Development" but the talk actually turned into a series of anecdotes about life in Communist China. Dr. Ronning is a vivid, colorful public speaker even now at the age of 83 - using voice, eye contact and expressive gestures to make a very personal contact in an impersonal situation. He related one story to the audience about the time he was running for a seat in the Alberta legislature (which he subsequently won) and was accused by his opponents of having been brought up on Chinese milk. His political aide said to him, "They say you've been brought up on Chinese milk and because of that, you're part Chinese." He told his university audience that he used to relate this story at his political rallies, and add, "Well, I have it on pretty good authority that my opponents were brought up on cow's milk. That must mean they're part cow." Having lightened the



Chester Ronning on Mao's China:
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audience's biases with this story, he then told the crowd that the himself came to the seminar biased: "I'm prejudiced, certainly. I'm in favor of the people who have benefited from the thought of Mao Tse-tung. I'm in strong agreement with Dewey's thought about the function of education - 'the society of tomorrow is determined in the classroom of today.'"
"I believe that and Mao believed that, too."
Ronning said that during the last two decades, China has been catapulted "out of a feudal, decadent, cruel society in which 90 per cent were illiterate and a privileged 10 per cent were literate to a position where all the people have been given the opportunity to become literate."
"The argument has been, 'yes, they've become literate, but they've become literate on Communist propaganda.' Well, that's probably true. But propaganda does not have a pejorative connotation in Chinese."
Ronning said the word "propaganda" in Chinese meant a number of things, among them "wisdom," "thought," and "literary expression."
And he said, regardless of whether the people became literate on "Communist propaganda" or not, they became liberated through their literacy.
"In the old China, you could not become a citizen if you were not literate - Moa made the majority of Chinese literate and all of them citizens."
"Mao eliminated the scholarly class by elevating the peasants into the scholarly class."
"He emphasized working with your hands as well as with your mind, something we do not do. He understood the value of

hard physical work, because he began life as a peasant."
Ronning said in primary schools in China at least once each week is set aside for physical work and the university professors are also sent to work in the fields one day each week.
"Graduates from middle schools must take two years out to work in an agricultural district before being admitted to university."
"And before they gain admittance to university they must have the approval from the local people in their work area. So you can bet they jolly well work!"
Ronning said he believed education was absolutely essential for modification of the old China. "The conflict in China was, and still is, between those who champion the old and those who champion the new."
Mao, according to Ronning, took into the new organization many of the good but old aspects of China.
Some of the old aspects of China which have disappeared have nothing to do with education. For example, said Ronning, women in China used to be treated like furniture.
"Women in China had bound feet and they were less than good possessions in the household. I remember once a man took his wife by the scruff of the neck and held her under the water - he drowned her."
Did he lose face because of his actions?
"No, not at all. If good furniture has become bad furniture, you throw it away."
"But all that has changed in Mao Tse-tung's China...Women have become liberated. They now study and are citizens and are regarded as people."

"Edmonton 61" becomes "58"

Three members of the "Edmonton 61" have had the charges against them dropped when the arresting police officers couldn't identify them in court. The trial now involves 58 members of the Free Southern Africa Committee (FSAC) who were arrested Sept. 18 in anti-apartheid demonstrations at Victoria Park. They tried to disrupt a cricket match between an Edmonton

team and a British team by squatting in the playing field during the lunch break. The original 61 were arrested and charged with assault by trespass and obstruction of a police officer. FSAC protested the appearance of the Derrick Robins X1 cricket team because they felt the game gave a diplomatic face to and helped support the racist system of apartheid. Apparently the Robins team played a number of South African teams in February and March of this year. Only 21 members are on trial so far with two more groups scheduled to go on trial later this week. Defense argued that there is

only assault by trespass if the police had reason to remove the demonstrators from the sidelines after first removing them from the field. They also argued that there can't be obstruction if there's no need for the police to be there in the first place. Defense lawyers called the court's attention to cases where passive resistance hadn't been interpreted as obstruction. Legal fees for the group have been estimated to amount from \$6-10,000. Outside the court building FSAC supports sold newsletters and protested Canada's economic complicity with apartheid nations. Sentencing of the first 18 FSAC members begins Dec. 9.

Dr. Bert makes up his mind

Alberta's minister of advanced education has made his mind up on the question of higher tuition fees for foreign students at Alberta post-secondary institutions. Dr. Bert Hohol told the legislature Wed. he was not prepared to delay implementation of the two-tier fee system, planned for next Sept. But he admitted to the House there is hardly anyone in Alberta universities who is in favor of this proposed change, which he announced this summer and which will likely raise tuition fees for foreign students by 300 or 400 per cent. "I don't believe any board of governors has gone on record as supporting this (two-tier fee system)..." Hohol said. But he added that he expected no trouble in enforcing such a system at post-secondary education institutions. "I anticipate the same kind of relationship, though probably a little more strenuous," he said, "than we had last year when we worked on the matter of increasing student fees."

EXHILARATING

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STAGE BAND

IN PERFORMANCE - DIRECTED BY FORDYCE PIER
8PM WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27
TICKETS \$3 - SU BOX OFFICE
ALL WOODWARD'S OUTLETS
COLISEUM, BONNIE DOON AND MIKE'S
HEAR THE MUSIC OF
THAD JONES, STAN KENTON
MAYNARD FERGUSON
AND OTHERS

IS
BABYSITTING
A PROBLEM?

The Dean of Students' Office is collecting the names of people both requiring and willing to provide **babysitting services**. A list will be compiled and distributed to all interested parents. The intention of this list is to facilitate reciprocal babysitting arrangements. Those parents interested in participating are asked to phone **432-3483**.

**SPRING SESSION
CO-ORDINATOR**

No. of Positions: 1 or 2

DUTIES: Work part-time throughout the winter and for the duration of Spring Session in the following areas:

- set up a newsletter/newspaper type of publication to be distributed to students attending Spring Session
- attempt to determine what courses are not being offered in Spring Session that students want to take
- give the Physical Education Department input as to what recreational and athletic programs should be offered for students during May and June
- look into getting ID cards for students attending Spring Session
- sponsor extra-curricular activities
- prepare a budget in conjunction with the Vice-President, Finance and Administration setting forth the ways in which Spring Session student fees are to be disbursed
- the the like

QUALIFICATIONS: Self-initiative, organizational abilities and prior attendance at either Spring or Summer Session (not necessary).

SALARY: Negotiable.

APPLY TO: Eileen Gillese, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, Room 259 Students' Union Building.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Wednesday, November 3rd, 4:30 p.m.