

Canadian
University
Employees

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November 1, 1985

The Editor
The Ubysey
Student Union Bldg.
UBC

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to reply to the letter from Steve McJannet published in the Ubysey, Tues. Oct. 29, 1985.

Your position appears to be one of narrow self-interest and fundamental contradiction. You state you are very concerned about the lack of funds made available to the University by the Social Credit Government, and the erosion of services this policy of restraint has brought about, and will continue to bring about. Massive lay-offs will not, I assure you, cause any improvement in the servicing of students, or to use your phrase, the 'raison d'etre' of the education system. (I will ignore your rather trite remark about the nature of 'union work' — 'three men on a hoe', etc. — as this perhaps is rooted in an unwillingness or inability to deal with the world outside the safe confines of banal cliché and simple prejudice.)

Although at some point you do seem to recognize the true source of the problem, you have chosen to place the blame on a specific group which, alone, hasn't the power to fundamentally change the situation. This, I think, is a very convenient (and somewhat cowardly) way of letting yourself off the hook. I applaud my fellow CUE members the courage of their convictions in working to rule and bringing this intolerable state of affairs out into the open.

Our union has made an attempt to cooperate with the University Administration with regards to the 'efficiency study' now being conducted by the American company Ritchie and Associates since that company first set foot on this campus. We have been hoodwinked as to the purpose of the study, and the methods employed in carrying it out. We view this exercise as not only an isolated problem that we must address, but one which we recognize as a symptom of a much more far-reaching and dehumanized system of control. I will not go into greater detail here, as this has been covered at some length in this newspaper — but, we find difficulty with the fact that the University Administration has cited 'inability to pay' under the Compensation Stabilization Program guidelines when we demand payment of already agreed upon incremental increases, when what could amount to \$4 million can be found to pay Ritchie and Associates. The Administration has told us that this study will not necessarily cause layoffs, and if jobs must go, they will attempt to accomplish it through

attrition, etc. We have asked that this be guaranteed in writing. The University has refused. The Administration has already cut back staff (both through attrition and non-filling of funded positions) however, the volume of work has not decreased, as is abundantly clear, for example, in the Payroll Dept. - there are two reasons why people (particularly students) are not being paid on time - staff cutbacks, and now, the 'efficiency' study being conducted in that area. The greatly increased workload - and the consequent amount of overtime worked - coupled with the barbaric and archaic nature of the study have literally made the employees ill. Is this necessary? Is this productive?

Would it not be better for us all to perhaps use our collective energies to combat the Socred's education policies - rather than passively accepting it, as both the University Administration and students seem to be doing? As stated in an article The Sun (Friday, Oct.25/85 pg. 1) there is now a great deal of public support for criticism and change. Why is the UBC Student Body so silent?- Even junior high school students are actively protesting the Government's policies. As you stated "the quality of our education is suffering here and now" - the reduction in services that will result from the apparent direction the University Administration has chosen to take will not lead to better quality education in the Province. Quite the opposite - my fear is that this University will be downsized to such an extent that the level of scholarship now available to students will disappear entirely and that university education will be nothing more than 'job training'. Is that what university level education is? Is that what we want it to be? Do we want education made available to the narrow segment of society who can 'pay their own way'? That is a frightening prospect indeed! Believe it or not, 'union people', as you call us, have children too and want them to have a future in this province - let's be very clear about what the real issues are here.

In closing, may I say I welcome an open forum in which one can freely express one's opinion. However, I do feel it is one's responsibility to base those opinions upon complete and unbiased information. In that spirit, if you should need any further information, please feel free to contact me or the CUE office.

Yours truly,

Kitty Byrne
President
Canadian University Employees