

May 18, 1971

On May 7, 1971, the publication L.U. Week, a house organ of the Lakehead University administration, ran an article entitled Senate Action, which contains blatantly untruthful propaganda (in a supposedly factual newsletter type of publication).

The article consists of distortions seemingly aimed at discrediting Professor V. Wightman and the Students for Arbitration Committee. Some of the errors and distortions will be outlined here.

The statement in paragraph one that all new faculty members are hired on a probationary basis is false. Some are hired on term contracts. Others are hired with immediate tenure (e.g. Dr. C. French). The letter of employment from Mr. Tamblin to Mr. Wightman himself stated he was being hired "on a permanent basis". While the intended meaning may have been "on a full-time basis", the actual wording may have granted Wightman tenure. This is a matter of contract interpretation to be decided by a court, and is irrelevant to the main issue, which is that an appeals procedure is needed for untenured faculty in order to protect academic freedom.

Formal requests for a review have been made prior to March 16th (see A.M.S. motion of March 14, 1971, and Mr. Wightman's letter to the chairman of his department January 18, 1971).

The "small group of individuals" actually numbered nearly one hundred people. The group was indeed composed of students and non-students, since faculty members, employees of the university, former L.U. students including alumni, labor leaders, factory workers, housewives, and other local citizens actively participated in the sit-in, or visited it to express their support. The primary duty of a Canadian university is to serve the interests of the Canadian people, particularly the local community; surely the general populace of Northwestern Ontario has the right to demonstrate peacefully for necessary reform in their university.

The Executive Committee of A.M.S. violated the constitution in that they did not hold a formal meeting, and no minutes were taken. Even if they had met in a proper manner, they had no authority to speak for the student government. In the 3½ weeks following, the A.M.S. Council as a whole made no attempt to withdraw their support "of any peaceful demonstration arising out of the general meeting of all students on March 16".

We are unable to decipher the meaning of the hopelessly garbled fourth paragraph.

The real breakdown of the four faculty members referred to in paragraph five is: one stated that he would not return to Lakehead University for double the salary; another felt that he could settle his grievance at the departmental level; the remaining two indicated by letter their willingness to appeal, long before the ad hoc review committees were proposed.

At the Senate meeting of May 1, Mr. Wightman did not "speak out and answer questions for approximately twenty-five minutes". In

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actuality, he was limited strictly to fifteen minutes, which he employed solely for the purpose of answering questions.

The Senate has not indicated by motion or vote that the present review committees would preclude any consideration of the appellants' cases by a permanent appeal board.

The group of picketers outside the Senate Chamber did not "accost" senators any more than the senators "accosted" them.

Subsequent to the Senate meeting, the S.F.A.C. was shocked that the Senate had not appointed three members to the Senate Committee which they had set up a month before to discuss a permanent appeals board. The President, as Chairman of the Senate, had not directed the Senate's attention to this important matter. It was then decided to picket on the boulevard facing President Tamblyn's home. The police visited the demonstration and found that the demonstrators were behaving in a lawful manner. They then left. Sometime later, the S.F.A.C. requested its chairman, John Sculthorpe, to speak to President Tamblyn and tell him why they felt constrained to take the action they were taking. President Tamblyn, although approached civilly and respectfully by a single person, lost his temper and ejected the S.F.A.C. spokesman, threatening to arrest him for trespassing. Eleven members of the group were so upset by the President's attitude that they elected at this juncture to sit on his front porch. The arrival of the police coincided with this gesture of protest, and the eleven were arrested. It is important, however, to note that at no time during the entire demonstration was the entrance to Mr. Tamblyn's home ever blocked by anyone.

At this time the S.F.A.C. members would like to express their thanks to every person who co-operated with them to make the ad hoc review committees possible.

The S.F.A.C. will continue, however, to press for an effective permanent appeals board.

Students for Arbitration
Committee.