

Students must join others

Pitman calls rally the 'new student movement'

Continued from page 1 Pitman expressed a thought that was echoed throughout the afternoon. "This could be the start

of a new student movement, especially if students relate themselves to other members and factors of society.

"Don't put yourself in the position of battling welfare, hospitals, etc. Join them!"

He finished off to enthusiastic applause by saying, "We're concerned with education as a whole. Don't get caught in trying to fight for the 18 to 24 year old student, fight for all those who want to learn."

Gord Barnes, president of U of T's Student Administrative Council (SAC) rose to speak but was negatively received. Barnes offered passive words to a crowd that seemed more interested in action, especially following Pitman's speech. Moreover, SAC is currently involved in a strike by its own workers (members of CUPE 1222) and the union seemed to have the sympathy of those in attendance. In fact, placard-bearing members of the union were in the crowd.

Jay Draddick of U of T's Graduate Student Union (GSU) followed Barnes and he thanked the CUPE workers for not picketing the rally. He said the CUPE workers felt the rally was very important and therefore did not form a picket line which many students may have refused to cross.

Draddick said he had little faith in a committee of provincial university presidents formed to consider cutbacks and of which York president Macdonald is a member.

"The only thing they discuss on that committee is how to use a knife. York has already begun to cut freely at Atkinson College," he stated.

"Students in this province are faced with administrations that are more skilled at carrying out cutbacks than fighting them" he added.

John Young from London's Fanshawe Community College rose to the enthusiastic cheers of his college's large contingent and gave a fiery speech.

"We're here to show that there is a student movement in Ontario," he said.

"The government of this province says that people should stay in their class and go to community College and only people with lots of money should go to university if they can afford it," Young pointed out.

As the applause subsided, the students formed a line four abreast and began the march on Queen's Park.

There were chants of "They say cutback, we say fight back" and "Education is a right, fight fight fight" as the line of over 2,000 students headed towards Queen's Park.



University and college students marching on Queen's Park.

After the demonstrators had waited for almost 20 minutes, Harry Parrott, Minister of Colleges and Universities emerged from the building to address the crowd.

Parrott tried to be jovial but was not well received. Greeting the demonstrators as "fellow students" Parrott said, "Sick as it might be, I hope to again be associated with a university someday."

Parrott called on the students to look at the facts of the Ontario economy and to look at the percentage increases other ministries have received this year in their budgets.

"No increase has exceeded the percentage given to students," he said.

Parrott promised no tuition increase for the 1976-77 academic year. The students responded by chanting "77-78".

Parrott was followed by NDP MPP James Renwick who delivered a confusing speech. He emphasized that the Henderson report was really the responsibility of Provincial Treasurer, Darcy McKeough.

Renwick said, "If I was Henderson, I would disown the report."

"The province is in financial difficulty because of fiscal budget mismanagement," he said.

"The NDP rejects the principle that education benefits only the students. We reject the concept that the costs of education must be absorbed by tuition. We reject the limitation of accessibility of education."

John Sweeney of the Liberal Party then spoke to the crowd. He called the Henderson Report a "sick document".

Sweeney was critical of the Conservative Party but did not outline an alternative Liberal programme. Sweeney was booed and heckled for his non-committed approach.

He concluded with the statement, "This is not the Soviet Union, the purpose of education is for the individual as well as the state."

The last speaker of the afternoon was an animated CYSF president, Dale Ritch. He concluded the demonstration by saying, "There are 2,000 of us here, but there are 150,000 back on the campuses. Now we must go back to our campuses and rally the strength of students, faculty and staff all over the province."

"We must link up with all those who oppose reactionary measures such as those outlined in the McKeough-Henderson report."

With this thought the crowd dispersed and many boarded buses to return to their various campuses.

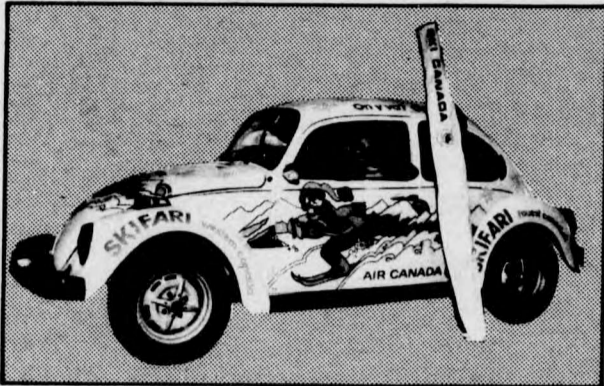
Contacted after the demonstration, Ritch termed the demonstration a tremendous success.

"This is a big step forward for the student movement in this province," Ritch said. "The success of this action is a vindication of the people who called for a demonstration and it supports the idea of further actions of this sort."

York student Donna Mobbs said the day's activities were "inspiring".

Mary Lochhead, CYSF vice-president of university affairs, had sobering thought in the midst of the post-demonstration enthusiasm: "The demonstration was just the first step. Now the real work begins."

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