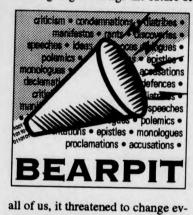
# **Referendum was one expensive joke**

by Winston Abernethy

A few weeks ago, there was a gigantic media event — what was it again? It was going to change the future of



erything, including our blessed and holy personal incomes. Oh yes, the

On the Saturday before the vote,

Brian Mulroney made a speech in a

rural Alberta gymnasium that almost

brought me to tears - it did bring

him to tears. He spoke of the great

constitution - the referendum.

traditions of compromise and powersharing that are the hallmark of Canadian politics, and of the need for the recognition of aboriginal peoples. He was not intentionally being ironic.

Irony aside, I think it's important that we remember it. Not the quavering heart-rending appeals of various notables or the dire threats by the Royal Bank economists, but the structure of the event itself, as an excellent example of government and media working together to occupy the public mind — your mind and mine. You may recall (I barely can), for several months this issue, was the feature television news story and the dominant source of newspaper headlines. But did the public have any power while they exercised their leg muscles and right to vote on that far-off October 26, 1992? I think not.

I think the very fact we were invited to 'participate' means our participation was meaningless. If the government and the few owners of the major mass media outlets wanted us to participate, to share in the process of decision-making, they could have had a dozen questions on the referendum and the results would have been clearly understood. A choice of 'Yes' or 'No' to a twenty page, multidimensional question was ludicrous and that's what the results show. If the men with power wanted us to have a say in important processes then the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would be written in intelligible language and be a front-page issue. Instead, it's being coded in deceptive legalese and discussed and ratified by men in expensive suits behind closed doors.

All that time and energy and buckets of allegedly-precious money wasted — on what? Meanwhile Canada still clears more forest than Brazil, the disparity between the rich and the poor continues to grow, cops are pissed because they don't want to have to think before they pull out their guns, the genocide of aboriginals continues — in short, not one problem has even begun to be alleviated. bearpit

november 18, 1992

Public Enemy said it — don't believe the hype. Better yet, look around the headlines, which are used to blind us like a pair of rapidly approaching headlights.

Winston Abernethy attends classes at York and loves Noam Chomsky.

## 'Pay my way' whiners should talk less, work more

by Gordon Smith

We live in a mobile society. It goes almost without saying that if you are going to achieve anything, you need wheels. Those who choose to do the bus thing, bear with me. After you research the market, it becomes plain that the cost of the vehicle you want is more than you can afford. Someone then offersto help you out, so that the cost is now somewhere around 40% of what was the original price? What options are left to you if you still don't have all the money? You could try to get a loan, but your credit is not yet established. How about asking the dealer to just give you the car free? Ya, sure! You could ask Mom and Dad. Maybe. Or you could get a job and earn it yourself.

Now, what would most people pick? Get a job. If this car is such a deal, then it could not be that painful to pay for it yourself.

In the past few weeks, there has been no lack of whining from various sources about finances, funding, education, tuition. This phenomenon is not localized to our hallowed halls, nor university papers in general. The same cryptic message has appeared in the national press. Indeed, every time there is talk concerning budgets and university tuition, the university students rally to the socialist cry of "Give Me Free" or "Pay My Way!"

I wonder if any of the geniuses out there understood the first lesson in this matter. Remember when the profs brought to your attention the fact that it is against school policy to plagiarize and cheat on your assignments and tests? The practical lesson here, kids, is that anything worthwhile and worth owning (whether car or education) is going to cost you time, energy and money (usually your own). That requires work, that 4 letter word. So why is the government not going to pay your bills?

Well, first I noticed via an article in excalibur ("Women Still do the Dirty Work"), that some of the salaries our profs are pulling in are not that shabby. The unions have been very good to this province's professors. I will not take away from the fact they are skilled and have invested a lot of time and money to become relative experts in their fields. This has the shadow of a professional athlete-big bucks, nice contracts, perks, all for what seems to be a limited appearance of work and marginal loyalty to the fans (that's us). My father (not unlike many of your fathers) works over 45 hours a week with limited pay and no perks. He is no idiot. Rather he is considered a relative expert in his field of composite art in a major newspaper. He's saved his money, but his retirement is a concern now because our Old Age Security seems to be eroding due to government spending. Where is this money going? Perhaps the Student Finance Board might have some answers, especially concerning the area of delinquent accounts. When will people take responsibility for themselves? Our society is great at letting everyone else know what they should do for the environment, the homeless, the poor, the immigrants, the minority which is quickly becoming the WASP male.

Like many mature students, I had to wait 10 years to earn what it would take to pay for this investment to my future. Part of that required upgrading and college courses which were not subsidized, so it cost me close to \$10,000 just to get here. I had to sell my home and drag my family cross-country to do this. I still hold down a job to continue my venture. I have the resources by my sweat, not anyone else's.

If you think your education is worth something, is it too much to ask you to be responsible enough to pay for it? If you are expecting me to pay for your education, and then stand by and watch you lay claim to it, that's the same type of fraud as stealing someone's thought, their energy and effort and calling it your own in a paper. The best thing this government could hand out to the next generation of public "sucky tits" is to challenge them to get with the program of life and pull theirown load, to contribute to the growth and economy of Canada, not its indebtedness. This would free up money to take care of the more needy causes like health care, unemployment, the homeless, the environment.

I agree with the argument that education should be a right. Everyone needs to have the opportunity to attend a university. Seems like a pretty good deal to get an education worth an estimated \$40 to \$50 thousand dollars for \$10 to \$15 grand. I've waited too long for this deal to let it pass me by.

Gordon Smith is a First Year Political Science major.

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mutual benefit of their members and the York community. I would like to thank those at YFS, YASA and JSF, who made this evening possible.

Even though these clubs still have their differences, they have proved that JSF and YASA can work together. I look forward to attending future co-sponsored events.

Jonathan Zion

#### Macedonian political rift

In the Nov.4 issue of *Excalibur*, the article "Macedonian, Greek students in cultural tug-of-war on campus" ended by stating, "the dispute between the two groups extends back over 2000 years."

This does not help one to understand today's political clashes. Macedonia is a nation lying within the borders of Greece, what was Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. However, the Greek state denies the existence of Macedonia and the Macedonian language. It, and the other states of the region, oppress the Macedonians by preventing them from exercising their right to self-determination. For several years, Greek workers

and students have carried out militant strikes and protests against cutbacks and other attacks. Recently, the Greek government has been mounting an anti-Macedonian campaign in an attempt to deflect the anger from itself and onto an innocent minority.

It is important to stress that not all Greeks support official chauvinism. The Greek state has responded to opposition by sentencing ten people to prison terms ranging from six to 19 months for 'crimes', like putting up posters with the slogan "Recognize independent Slav-Macedonia". Five members of the Greek socialist group OSE have been charged with treason for writing and distributing a pamphlet defending Macedonian rights, although an international defense campaign seems to be succeeding in pressuring the government to back down.

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### Question unreasonable rise in health care premiums

by Bill Vados and Lori Sears

Tuition is the single largest, and the most commonly debated, expense to the university student. However, there are several other costs, which do not command as much attention. The average student forgoes as much as \$100,000 on his/her journey through higher education. This includes possible wage earnings, as well as the living expenses of attending a university. There is a payoff, of course, for those who successfully complete their degrees and possibly land a good job. However, as jobs become more scarce, the \$100,000 begin to look more attractive then a B. A., or a Masters degree.

labour and capital, there are no hard goods that we are paying for, and, in fact, we may never collect health care anywhere near the premiums we pay. The fact that wages were down in Canada last year and the inflation rate was the lowest in forty years, makes it even more difficult to understand the increase.

Is it not the student council's responsibility to serve us, to do everything possible in the students' best interests? With the increase in Blue Cross premiums, the interests of the students were not taken into account. The spineless leadership at York can be compared to our beloved Federal they don't give a damn, or at least have trouble showing it. York has 45,000 students, all potential users of health care. Our student council should have realized that the student body holds all the aces in this card game. Instead of accepting Blue Cross' premium hikes, they could've threatened to take our business elsewhere. When I tried to discuss this issue with a student council member, I was rudely dismissed. It is truly unfortunate that in these tough times, people are only looking after themselves, and fail to consider the hardships of others. It's too late now to change what has already been done, but let's be prepared for next time.

So what is to be done?

Let us take last year, for example. We at York were faced with a real issue, our own referendum. We were required to vote 'yes' or 'no' to the question of whether we wanted mandatory health care through Blue Cross. This was, in fact, a two part question. The second part dealt with the price increase from \$60 to \$132.

It's understandable to ask whether or not we want mandatory health care, as some of us are not subscribers to any health plan. But, why wasn't there a separate question on whether or not we wanted to accept the increase?

It is hard to understand the motives behind Blue Cross' premium increase. In the health insurance business, there are no 'inputs'. Other then

Bill Vados is a Third Year Economics major. Lori Sears is a Third Year Sociology major. Like other "ethnic" conflicts, the conflict over Macedonia only makes sense when looked at politically. Talk of "ancient quarrels" does not help.

> David Camfield York International Socialists

