

Referendum November 14

Future of Ontario Federation of Students:

By JULIAN BELTRAME and BONNIE SANDISON

In March of 1972, 50 delegates from post-secondary institutions across Ontario gathered at the University of Toronto, financed by a \$1,000 provincial government grant, and formed what was essentially the beginning of the Ontario Federation of Students.

The basic plan for the provincial student union was to lobby the provincial government on matters which affected Ontario university students, and to keep students informed concerning the effects of governmental decisions on their economic and academic lives as students.

The federation, which had been formed to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of its predecessor, the Ontario Union of Students, was immediately faced with its biggest challenge.

TUITION UP

As a direct result of government policy, in 1972 Ontario students were forced by the universities to pay an extra \$100 yearly in tuition rates. As well as this 20 per cent tuition increase, the loan portion of the OSAP grants was increased from \$600 to \$800. Scholarships given to graduating secondary school students with an 80 per cent average were decreased from \$150 to \$100; a few years earlier they had been \$500.

The Ontario government had originally intended to do away with

the scholarships altogether, and only conceded to grant \$100 scholarships upon hearing the resultant public outcry.

Faced with the possibility of a hostile anti-education provincial government, OFS immediately found themselves with overwhelming student support for their cause — fighting the regressive policies of the provincial government.

OFS's decision to support and organize a fee strike with the help of university student councils was based on the reasoning that their case might best be won with an appeal to the public, vocal demonstrations, and a show of solidarity among students across the province.

Had university students rejected the appeal, the venture might have ended before it began.

CUPE HINTS

Possibly it was coincidental, but the OFS strike stance followed the exact recommendations by a Canadian Union of Public Employees researcher who told the group soon after their inception that "the pressure of people mobilized and shouting in front of Queen's Park is what really brings action."

When referenda were tallied, the OFS received a two thirds majority of the nearly 35,000 students voting in 13 Ontario campuses, all of them supporting the fee strike with the exception of Trent.

At York, some 25 per cent of students cast votes, an unprecedented number for this univer-



Angry students marched on Queen's Park to protest tuition fee increases during the 1972 OFS-sponsored fee strike.

sity. In the Toronto campus, 50 per cent cast votes, most favouring the strike, also the largest turnout for any vote in that university.

"The pressure of people mobilized and shouting in front of Queen's Park" became a reality on November 21, 1972, when 500 students shouted their displeasure until the minister of colleges and universities, John McNie, came out of his sanctuary to respond to the mob's shouts.

But by this time it was no longer a matter for discussion. The tuition increase had been enacted and the loan ceiling augmented.

The fee strike however, was also a reality; all that remained for OFS was a test of its power.

When council presidents voted the following week to call for a province-wide strike in January, already support for the strike seemed to be dwindling. The vote won by a slim majority of eight to five, with four abstaining.

York University council president John Theobald voted against the strike.

CHEQUES

The sore point seemed to be the uncertainty of what would happen to the OSAP cheques when they arrived in January. If the university ad-

ministrations were to hold the cheques, students might not be able to acquire the money they were supposed to with-hold.

Conjectures became reality in York in early January, when York's administration announced it would hold back the OSAP cheques unless students paid their second-term fees.

The jig was up; although the news was greeted by dual occupations of the admissions offices at Glendon and York's main campus, in retrospect the occupations can only be interpreted as the last gasps of a drowning cause.

The government had played its trump card and the student's bluff was over. In February, following an OFS vote, the strike was officially ended.

The publicity the OFS received during the unsuccessful fee strike was indeed a tough act to follow, for having conceded that it could not change the government's mind over fees and OSAP ceiling increases, it could do little more than than oppose further increases.

In 1973, the OFS did little that would bring its name to the attention of most Ontario students, leading Michael Mouritsen, past CYSF president, to remark, "I can't remember one thing they (OFS) did last year for York."

Last week Mclaughlin delegate to CYSF, Rob Wearing, protested the

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Guelph war supplier condemned, resignation from Board demanded

GUELPH (CUP) — The resignation of a recent appointee to the board of governors of Guelph University has been called for, because of his role in supplying war materials destined for Vietnam to the U.S.

Philosophy lecturer John McMurtry says the new member, John Wood, is unfit to serve as a governor of a university, and may even qualify as "an international criminal".

Wood's role in the Vietnam war was revealed in January, 1973, in a

letter to the campus newspaper, the Ontarion.

The letter came from an ex-employee of Wood's firm, W.C. Wood and Co., who quit after discovering he was making shell casings for export to the U.S. He had been told earlier that the company made-refrigerator parts.

McMurtry learned of Wood's appointment in August, 1974 and wrote the university president, W.C. Winegard, demanding action at the September board meeting. McMurtry promised to "make the issue public" unless some action was taken.

On learning the matter had not been discussed at the first board meeting, he met with reporters and made his letter public.

His letter referred to a section of the Nuremberg Principles which defines anyone who takes part in the preparation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties or assurances, as a criminal under international law.

According to McMurtry's letter, there is "obviously a plausible case" for Wood's qualification as such.

The letter went on to characterize a university as "an institution dedicated to resolution of conflict by reasoned discussion rather than the machinery of violence, to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge in peace rather than the self-interested pursuit of profits from war."

McMurtry's letter continued by calling Wood's appointment a "grave violation of this university's basic integrity, moral and intellectual."

Guelph president Winegard flatly refused to comment.

John Wood has been unavailable for comment, as he has been in Detroit on business.

Student Liberals

The York University student Liberals are sponsoring a meeting next Wednesday, October 30, with Bob Kaplan, MP for York Centre, in the Founders College senior common room. Beer is 55 cents per bottle, the coffee is free, and everyone is welcome.



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