

EDITORIAL

Recessionary blues

We have long rallied against the lack of leadership at the federal government level and recent developments in Ottawa give us no hope that this situation will change under the Mulroney regime.

Marcel Masse, the Federal Communication Minister, has just gift-wrapped a \$45-million present to Quebec.

It came in the form of the Institute for Research and Cultural Enterprises.

The money will be spent over the next five years to set up shop in the minister's home province in the city of Montreal.

It is beyond belief that such an inane concept even sees the light of day, let alone be approved by the Federal Cabinet.

At a time when the country is reeling from a deep recession and the government is telling everyone else to tighten belts, this announcement shows the Mulroney gang for what they are, a hypocritical group of hacks who have no concept of how to govern.

It is not as if arts groups lobbied the feds for such an institute. In fact, arts groups throughout Canada are shocked that a government that has frozen Canada Council grants (the lifeblood of artistic groups in the country) for five years, could so easily come up with \$45-million for a cultural think-tank.

This is the same government that has slashed the CBC budgets and all but destroyed VIA and passenger rail service in Canada.

It is also the same government that instituted the Goods and Services Tax so that all Canadians could have a fairer tax system that would be "revenue neutral."

What a surprise then, a couple weeks ago to hear the government announce that the GST will apparently generate more money than expected. No kidding.

Aside from the massive waste of public money on this project, there are other issues that make such a project the height of folly.

Quebec's future is very much clouded, but regardless of what happens in the coming months, one thing is clear: the federal government will be making changes in the kind of programs controlled by Quebec.

Quebec wants full control of these sectors and given Ottawa's penchant for caving in on issues relating to Quebec, we see no reason why the province won't get control of this institute funded by the rest of Canada.

Further, Masse isn't even a federalist, so he's making decisions from a biased position.

When questioned by reporters about his motive for making such an announcement, Masse said Quebec wasn't getting its fair share of cultural research facilities.

He didn't mention anything about various arts groups wanting grants but being turned down by a financially-strapped Canada Council.

It's these same groups that the institute will be studying. No doubt some of that research will report that the number of arts-related activities is on the decline due to reduced government involvement. It doesn't take \$45-million to draw this conclusion.

Then there's Masse's view on the country as a whole and Quebec in particular. He won't even say how he'd vote in a Quebec referendum for sovereignty.

For all of you out there who have been touched by the recession through job losses or layoffs, we give you the staffing numbers of Masse's new institute. Some 50 full-time bureaucrats will be hired along with another 50 from across the country and a further 80 part-time consultants.

What will many Canadians do about this? Probably continue collecting their pogy.



LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Excalibur staff or directors. However, we will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief, Room 111, Central Square.

YFS Executive supports Lex demonstration

To Sarah Payne
President, Bethune College Council

I am writing to inform you that the York Federation of Students (YFS) Executive has voted to endorse and support the demonstration-aimed at Bethune College Council-sponsored by the *Lexicon* staff, scheduled for Monday, March 11. We are most concerned with the preservation of autonomy and complete control for the staff of the *Lexicon* and freedom for the campus press in general.

As you may be aware, the other campus-wide newspaper at York, *Excalibur*, was originally tied to the YFS (then the CYSF).

Achieving complete autonomy was an important step for *Excalibur* and the whole York community. Clearly we need a campus press that will be critical and informative without being impeded or restricted by student government — at any level.

The *Lexicon* has consistently proven itself to be a significant alternative to *Excalibur* across the York campus. In our view, Bethune students should take pride in hosting a widely distributed newspaper of such quality.

We have been told that Bethune College Council wishes to see more "Bethune coverage" in the *Lexicon*. First, we may question how issues such as tuition or racism may not be considered concerns that are relevant to Bethune students. Second, it is clear that if Bethune students wish to write about "Bethune issues" (say, torch-league sports scores, or College Council), they are welcome, and indeed, encouraged to do so. In our experience the *Lexicon* editors have never discouraged anyone from writing for the newspaper.

Further, we are very concerned with the right of the *Lexicon* staff to be able to elect their own editor. This

must remain a fundamental tenet of 'freedom of the campus press' at York. (Another fundamental tenet may, of course, be considered the issue of student newspaper accountability to the student body. Thus, ultimately the *Lexicon* should receive a direct levy from the York student body, and in the interim, Bethune students should elect an independent board of directors that would act as the mediator between students and the staff of the *Lexicon*.)

I should note that because that YFS does not have specific policy in the area of campus press, we acceded to Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) policy, of which we are members. The OFS supports Cana-

dian University Press' Statement of Principles which affirms that: (1) the staff has the right to elect, impeach or censor its editors, co-ordinators, or other staff positions; and (2) that the staff democratically determines the newspaper's editorial policy and internal structure.

We urge Bethune College Council to make every attempt (within its mandate) to immediately recognize independence and editorial autonomy for the *Lexicon*, and to ensure the maintenance of a vital and exciting press alternative for Bethune and students across the York campus.

In solidarity,
Jean Ghomeshi,
President, YFS

Lexicon is part of Bethune

To the editor,

On behalf of Bethune College, our college council and our Board of Publications, I wish to inform and clarify the ever present "*Lexicon* newspaper situation."

I want the students of my college to understand that the *Lexicon* is a college newspaper and that the council, on behalf of its students has been requesting for the past eight months that Bethune College news be reported. It's that simple; I have no covert agenda.

Is it wrong that Bethune students expect to read about what's happening in their own college? I say no!

The *Lexicon* has the editorial autonomy to write about the college from any angle that the editor or its staff choose; that is none of council's business. But what is the council's business, is to ensure that the *Lexicon* report about the college, the good, the bad and the ugly. I can't understand the protest and the prob-

lem? Come on *Lexicon* you are part of Bethune, like it or not.

I welcome all responses. I need feedback Bethune.

Sincerely,
Sarah Payne
President, Bethune College Council

Overlooked aspects

To the editor,

Re: Safe sex, a way of life (Mar.4)

I was pleased to see Sue Pennypacker address the issues of AIDS and sexual assault in her column "The dissent of (wo)man." However, I feel the article overlooks some important aspects of these topics.

The exclusive focus on condoms in the discussion of safe sex unfortunately ignores the reality of lesbian women's experience. Safe sex for some women may involve carrying

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EXCALIBUR

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Excalibur is York University's community newspaper. We publish twice-weekly, and distribute across York and Glendon campuses and various locations within the North York community.

Excalibur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in *Excalibur* belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other *Excalibur* staff or board member.

Final editorial responsibility is retained by the Editor-in-chief.

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