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C.Y.S.F.

BY-ELECTIONS

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Nomination forms & information -

C.Y.S.F. N111 Ross

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Opinion

OFS needs student support

By PAUL AXELROD

The upcoming referendum on the Ontario Federation of Students is one of those issues about which York students are likely to say, "Who cares?" Given the chequered history of student politics in Ontario, this attitude is understandable; its

rationale is not.

Item: Last year, the Report of the Commission on Post Secondary Education in Ontario recommended that tuition fees for all Ontario students be substantially raised. The exact "price" of a higher education would vary from course to course, but an honours science student,

receiving no parental aid, for example, could very well have to borrow more than \$12,000 for tuition and living costs, to finance an undergraduate degree. The cost would be slightly less for arts students and much more for professional and graduate students.

Item: In September, 1974, Toronto newspapers reported that the student housing shortage had reached crisis proportions across the province. Pictures showed tents erected on various campuses to accommodate homeless students. In February, 1974, an Ontario government study recommended that no new student residences be built in Ontario. The study found that Ontario universities "did not identify a need for additional student housing for the next few years."

Item: The regulations of the Ontario Graduate Fellowship Program were changed this year, limiting the number of awards to 1,000 (there are over 13,000 graduate students in the province), and allowing only high "A" students to qualify. But the academic qualifications were so discriminatory that as of September 1, only 800 students satisfied the requirements. The government has decided not to distribute the remaining 200 awards (totalling \$700,000). 12,200 graduate students, many of whom receive little or no financial support, would like to know why.

Though not all of these rather startling facts are well known, it is largely due to the efforts of the Ontario Federation of Students that they have been unearthed at all. Recognizing the multiplicity of issues affecting the lives of Ontario students; recognizing that all other major constituencies in higher education (administrators, faculty and workers) have organizations to represent their interests; and restrained by its own limited facilities, OFS/FEO has embarked on a programme to expand its personnel and resources. That's what the referendum on October 30 is all about. Students at seven other Ontario universities have already voted to increase their per capita OFS/FEO fees.

Only two and a half years old, OFS/FEO is growing, learning and improving. It tends, for example, to engage in more research and less rhetoric than the student organizations which preceded it.

Indeed, in two separate meetings, it thoroughly embarrassed two successive ministers of Colleges and Universities by being better informed about educational issues than the ministers were. (This evaluation came from one of the minister's own advisors.)

In the end, however, all the research, knowledge, and debating skills in the world mean nothing unless OFS/FEO is backed by the students it attempts to represent. It doesn't promise utopia - it may very well lose the fight against the possible tripling or quadrupling of tuition fees. But given these pressures, the simple truth is that for Ontario students, OFS/FEO is the only game in town.

Paul Axelrod, a former president of the CYSF, was research coordinator for OFS/FEO last year. He is currently doing a PhD in history at York University.

York Briefs

Encounter our publishing industry

Encounter, a symposium on Canadian Literature sponsored by Vanier's college council, presents a panel discussion tonight on the question: "Is there an indigenous Canadian publishing industry?" Ramsey Cook is moderating an exciting panel including: Shirley Gibson of Anansi, Victor Coleman from Coachouse, Ann Porter from McLelland and Stewart, and James Lorrimer from James, Lewis and Samuel. What should be a stimulating evening starts at 8 p.m. in Vanier's dining hall and is open to all free of charge.

Tomorrow evening Eli Mandel and Ron Bloore, both of York's faculty, will wrap up the week's activities with a slide show and informal discussion at 8:30 p.m. in the dining hall as well.

Grad association gets new head

"The task which lies before this year's G.S.A. is not and will not be an easy one," according to Chris Bart, newly elected president of York's Graduate Student Association. In his policy and position paper Bart said that the new Executive Committee is already at work on the reorganization of the G.S.A. office and its information system, the improvement of social activities for G.S.A. members and the establishment of new ways of cooperation between the G.S.A. and the Graduate Assistants' Association.

The new executive committee of the G.S.A. was elected on October 15.

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