

EDITORIAL

Bob looks to the left and right before crossing

After serving time as the outspoken Opposition Leader in the Ontario legislature, Bob Rae has kicked David Peterson out of provincial politics and finally assumed Dave's old "throne." I say throne sarcastically because, as the September 6 election has shown, people are sick of "Premier knows best." Now, Bob and the NDP must try to serve not NDP backers, but all Ontarians as the Party of the People. Socialism? Not quite. Call it a truer shade of democracy.

Along with the votes cast for the NDP on principle, many voters chose Rae to express their dissatisfaction with the establishment (Tory and Grit politician-rulers in general, Mulroney, Peterson and Bourassa specifically), especially in light of the Meech Lake constitutional failure and the handling of native activism in Oka and Chateaugay. Quite simply, the people demand to be heard by their representatives. They are tired of paternalistic assurances that what politicians decide is in their best interest and too complicated to explain or to allow participation. Bob's NDP will certainly be more receptive to public pressure and lobbying, considering many of the new MPPs are former grass-roots social activists, workers and idealists.

Winning a stunning 75 out of 130 provincial seats (including York's Downsview riding), the success of Honest Bob's majority hinges on maintaining the voters' trust while also advocating fiscal responsibility. Rae will become acquainted with the word, "compromise" very intimately. This is the first time the NDP has come to power in Ontario (although they only gained 37 per cent of the popular vote), and it may well be the last unless Bob is able to deliver just enough of his promises to workers without frightening away too many investors and employers.

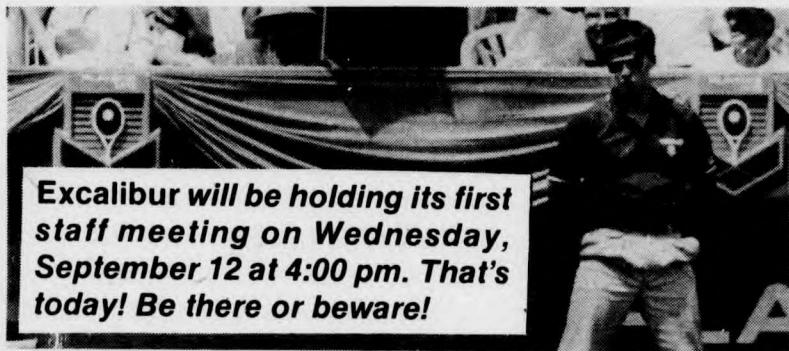
Rae will be engaged in a difficult juggling act trying to preserve the confidence of the almighty Ontario business community. Quebec and Northern U.S. communities may seem much more lucrative to Ontario business if Rae aggravates the current recession climate and cuts too deep into profitability with his proposed minimum tax on corporations. Bob realizes he can't finance NDP social and environmental programmes without big money, so business really doesn't have to worry about a Bolshevik revolution. A healthy economy is a prerequisite for a healthy society.

A point in Rae's favour, however, is that he does not owe allegiance to business for his victory, but rather to the bitter electorate who voted against the political veterans. Therefore, he should be better able to resist the pressure of big blue chips to dictate his economic and social policies. Case in point: the NDP has always sided against the expansion of the nuclear industry; so, when Ontario Hydro comes knocking about Ontario's energy needs, Rae can lend an ear, but he doesn't have to bend over.

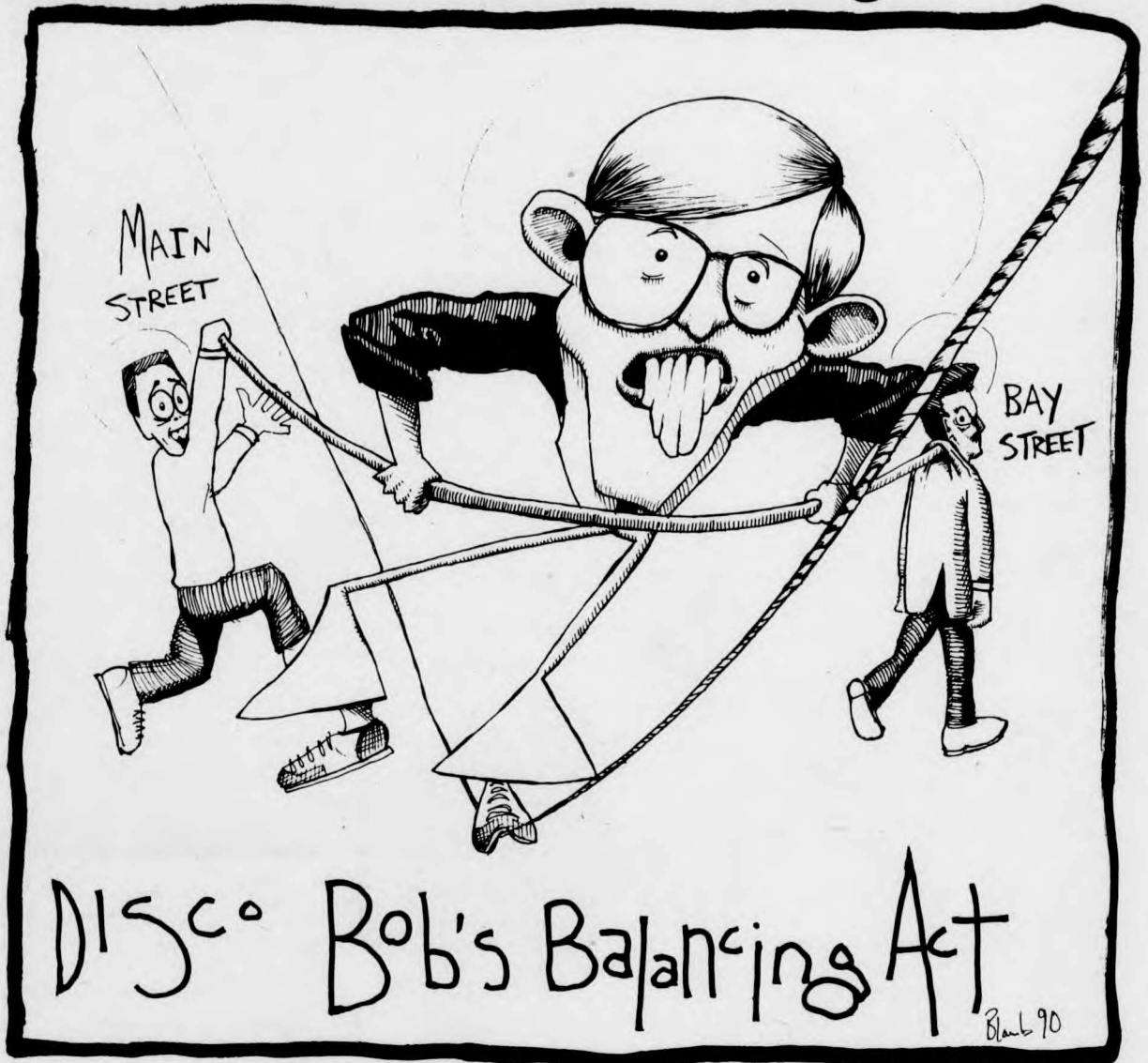
As Rae moves into Queen's Park for the next four years we can expect his first trip down the yellow brick road to include:

- redesigning and refining environmental policies
- an alternative to no-fault automobile insurance
- employment assistance for those adversely affected by the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement
- a mediators role between the Western provincial bloc and a "sovereign" Quebec
- a much higher priority for women's issues
- and, inevitably, more taxes.

Peter Stathis



Excalibur will be holding its first staff meeting on Wednesday, September 12 at 4:00 pm. That's today! Be there or beware!



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, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Strikers had no platform

To the editor,
Re: Renegade hunger strike divides OFS (Excalibur, Aug 29, 1990)

Thanks to a discussion with YFS president Jean Ghomeshi, I am better informed as to the reason why many student leaders and the Ontario Federation of Students were opposed to this event. Although I appreciate the fact that it is necessary for universities and colleges to agree to a basic agenda for action in order to present a united position to politicians, I am concerned about the ramifications of what I see as a bureaucratic approach to student activism.

As I understand it, OFS and other opposition to the hunger strike stemmed largely from the fact that the strikers had no platform to present to the provincial leaders had they attended; that the propriety of using a hunger strike to draw attention to underfunding was questioned; and that it was done in an elitist and secretive way — elitist because participation was not extended to all, secretive because OFS was not made aware of the strikers' intentions. The fact that the participants presented themselves as representatives of their institutions was also problematic; had they staged the event, not as student leaders but as individuals, there would not have been a

problem.

Well, I have a problem. Specifically, I am worried about what I interpret as a "consultation is necessary before any action can be taken" attitude on the part of the OFS. If every single action requires OFS approval, especially if student leaders wish to represent themselves as such and especially if there's a chance that the position presented differs from that of official OFS policy, then I think it is time OFS rethinks its approach. Not every student leader (or student, for that matter) is going to agree with the manner in which OFS handles a particular issue, and they ought to be able to actively dissent within their capacity as student leaders, and not just as individuals. In short one bureaucracy may not necessarily be the way to get our needs met.

Equally important is the fact that students need to know that our leaders are willing and able to address our concerns. If there's a chance that their hands may be tied by "policy," then where does that leave us? Most students don't need another reason to question our leaders' ability to change things. The OFS may be presenting one.

The Ontario Federation of Students does not, and should not, have a monopoly on student activism. I hope that York students will receive a great deal more information on how OFS operates, since we are considering rejoining it.

Sincerely,
Valerie Connell

Negotiation not sanctions against Iraq

To the editor,

I believe the present policy regarding Iraq, i.e. sanctions until it withdraws from Kuwait, and containment of further expansion, is correct. But these sanctions carry a danger of suffering among innocent people, such as foreign hostages in Iraq as well as Kuwaiti nationals. Moreover there is a risk of a major war breaking out, which will kill thousands of people on both sides. So it would be much better if a negotiated settlement could be obtained.

President Hussein stated, soon after his invasion of Kuwait, that he would withdraw from that country if Israel would withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. It is understandable that this offer was rejected by the Israelis and their allies, as it would probably soon place hostile Arab armies on the borders of Israel. But I believe that with some extra conditions it could be a basis for settlement. That is, the Israeli army of occupation should be replaced by an equally strong United Nations Force, not including Arab nationals, and the Palestinians should be forbidden to form their own army or invite any others in (except the U.N. force).

J.M. McNamee

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