

Seminar on higher learning

Changes recommended in university planning

By J.W. BELTRAME

The formation of a joint committee representing the Ontario government and Ontario universities to study and make proposals on future university planning, was one of the recommendations made by a recent seminar on higher learning sponsored by York and University of Toronto professors.

Attending the seminar were professors from other Ontario universities as well as "knowledgeable" persons from the public sphere.

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The study group recommended that a committee be set up to bridge the separate research and planning organizations representing the universities and the government.

The report, handed down Feb. 14, states that the proposed committee "should facilitate and encourage co-operation and planning by the Council of Ontario Universities and the Ministry. It should be empowered to

require that policies for the system are respected and implemented by the universities." It also states that governments must have power over the universities.

Dr. McCormack Smyth, secretary-treasurer of the seminar, told Excalibur that the report doesn't give the government any more control than it already has. He said that this power only affects the planning of universities and not their operation.

"It is the university that should decide who should teach in it, what

qualifications teachers must have, and what should be taught," he said.

Smyth said he did not believe the Ontario government deliberately set out to sabotage the quality of education in the province. "The fact is simply that when governments reach a certain point in expenditures, they must do one of three things — increase taxes, borrow money, or cut down on spending."

"It was not appropriate to do the first two things," he said.

Smyth said universities are now in

the process of re-evaluating their non-academic role to cut down on costs. He suggested that Ontario universities should follow the example of European universities, where students are responsible for buying sporting equipment.

Although the report did not give specific recommendations for improving the quality of education it did criticize universities for not "differentiating sufficiently between students of ability and students with marginal interests in academic work."

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