

VOTING STUDENTS - here are the issues

The article below outlines some of the issues involved in the forthcoming provincial election that are of direct concern to the university community.

It is hoped that students will use this article as a reference point for asking themselves and their political representatives questions about our educational system and our society in Ontario.

The following is from a booklet published by the Ontario Union of Students, 'Mr. Politician, tell me please':

STUDENT LOANS

The Province of Ontario Student Award Plan "has been developed to ensure that every person with the ability and desire to pursue a program of education beyond the secondary school level will have sufficient funds to meet the costs of such an undertaking."

These are laudable aims, however, we believe that the means which the Government has adopted do in fact defeat the purposes for which POSAP was created.

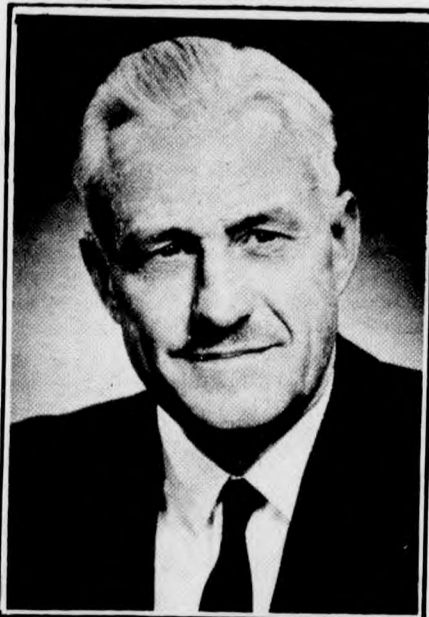
The program declares that the concern for ensuring that there will be no financial barrier to post-secondary education rests primarily with the parent and/or the student, i.e. education is not a right which society ensures for all its members able to undertake higher education but is a privilege for those who can afford the high costs. For those who cannot, it provides a haphazard auto-da-fe to which an individual has to submit as he would do to a charity, in the form of a bursary-loan plan from the Provincial Government.

This method thus divides the student population into three groups. Firstly, those who, with or without the assistance of their family, can afford the high cost of education and secondly those who require some sort of assistance. The third group are those who are denied access to higher education altogether.

Should we adopt an aid program which divides students in this manner?

Considering the requirement in POSAP which stipulates a large parental contribution and the resulting loss of independence for the student, should not the government remove the mandatory parental contribution from POSAP?

Do not the representatives of our political parties recognize the inequality of demanding that some of our citizens of Ontario pay twice for the benefits of higher education --once through their taxes and secondly through the compulsory parental contribution?



Fred Young, N.D.P. member of the Provincial Parliament for Yorkview: 'We have to look on the training of human brains as an investment . . .'

All students applying for a POSAP loan must fill out a means test, in full. A means test smacks of the welfare state concept of charity. People must prove their poverty in order to get POSAP money. This relegates higher education to the status of a privilege rather than a right, if it were a right, the costs of education which a student faces should automatically be covered.

Means tests also reduce education to the consideration of a financial investment. This is against the basic concepts of education--if a price tag can be placed on its value, then students can be equated with economic input units and educational institutions can be considered processing plants.

If education is a right why must students be subjugated to a means test? Why must they prove their poverty rather than being assured that their costs will be covered by the society which is supposed to grant accessibility to education to all who are academically capable?

Is not the provincial legislature obligated to remove the initial costs of higher education and to implement a system of stipends to cover the amount of earnings foregone so that accessibility to higher education can be realized for all capable students in our society?

HOUSING



Joe Gould, Conservative candidate for Yorkview: 'The Conservative Party's main concern is the people - and their needs.'

In the next five years most of the university student housing for the next fifty years will be constructed. This unusual situation is the result of a severe shortage of present housing combined with the need for rapid expansion of the universities.

It is clear, therefore, that students must take forceful action to see that the kind of housing built is planned in accordance with the realities of student life and that the residence is understood both as an academic and a social community.

There is ample evidence that this consideration is not being kept in the forefront by many of those responsible for the planning of student residences. On the part of the university, it is often a simple case of lacking both interest in student housing as an integral part of the university and knowledge of how housing can be sensibly built and operated.

The first evidence of what the Ontario Student Housing Corporation, a new crown corporation responsible for the construction of student residences, is likely to do is not reassuring. OSHC constructs student residences upon request from the university which designates the kind of resi-



From left to right: Fred Young, Prof. Shindeler, a grad, Prof. D. Hoffman, Elvio Delzotto, Joe Gould. The candidates ate a hardy meal?

dence it wants. OSHC does not feel any responsibility to criticize or alter the university plan for the residence even though OSHC is developing much more knowledge about residences than any university has.

What do all Candidates think of the work of OSHC to date and what about who is going to operate these residences?

Residences built (and operating?) by OSHC are going to charge the same or only slightly less in fees than existing residences. That is, these new residences are not going to make University any more accessible than it is at present. Why shouldn't university residences be less expensive than other kinds of accommodation rather than more?

Where do the candidates stand on the question of rebate as it applies to all student housing?

Surveys in many different cities show the university student today needs a variety of accommodation--variety both in the type of units and in the style of operation.

Now is the time for 25% of the housing at each campus to be built and operated either as a co-operative or as a charitable corporation set up by the students or by students' councils. This will come about only through effective political action restricting the otherwise unlimited operation of the university with the OSHC.

The residence problems of the next two generations of Canadian university students are on our hands right now.

THE WESTERN ACT

The University of Western Ontario has been leading the battle for student representation on university administrative boards.

Briefs were drawn up at UWO last year in which both the faculty and students asked for direct representation on the Board of Governors.

The joint committee of the Senate and Board of Governors at Western rejected this idea and substituted the idea of a rector (a member elected by the students, but having been out of the university for at least one year).

The Private Bills Committee at Queens Park, after listening to presentations from all those concerned, changed the clause in question to insure that a student representative on the Board of Governors would be a member of the student body (or of their choosing) elected by the students.

Two days before the second reading of the Bill, Education Minister William Davis made an amendment to delete that clause.

The day of the second reading, Mr. John White (Conservative



Elvio Delzotto, Liberal candidate for Yorkview: 'Education is at the top of our priorities.'

member for London South) introduced a motion to reinstate the clause originally drawn up by the administration of the University of Western Ontario. Mr. White's amendment carried 58-21.

Education Minister Davis said: "A portion of the students with whom this was discussed would prefer, if the position were theirs, to have the matter dealt with by the deletion as suggested."

Why did Mr. Davis not mention that the students preferred the deletion because the alternative of a rector was a worse solution than no representative at all?

Mr. Davis suggested there are more meaningful ways of student participation in university government.

Is the government making any attempt to ensure that the students are permitted to take advantage of these 'more meaningful ways' or would this also be considered an unwarranted intervention even though the administration refused to permit such a step?

Why are the presidents considered the spokesmen and representatives of the university?

If the students and faculty feel differently from the presidents, will their views be given the same priority?

Presumably, in the case of the University of Western Ontario, the university community did endeavour to come up with a definition of the role of the student in university government.

The decisions of the joint committee of the University of Western Ontario fundamentally disagreed with the desires of the faculty and the students.

Does this mean that the government will support the board and the president and ignore the academic community?

How representative is the board, in fact, when its members are not appointed by the community, and when its meetings are closed to the members of that community?