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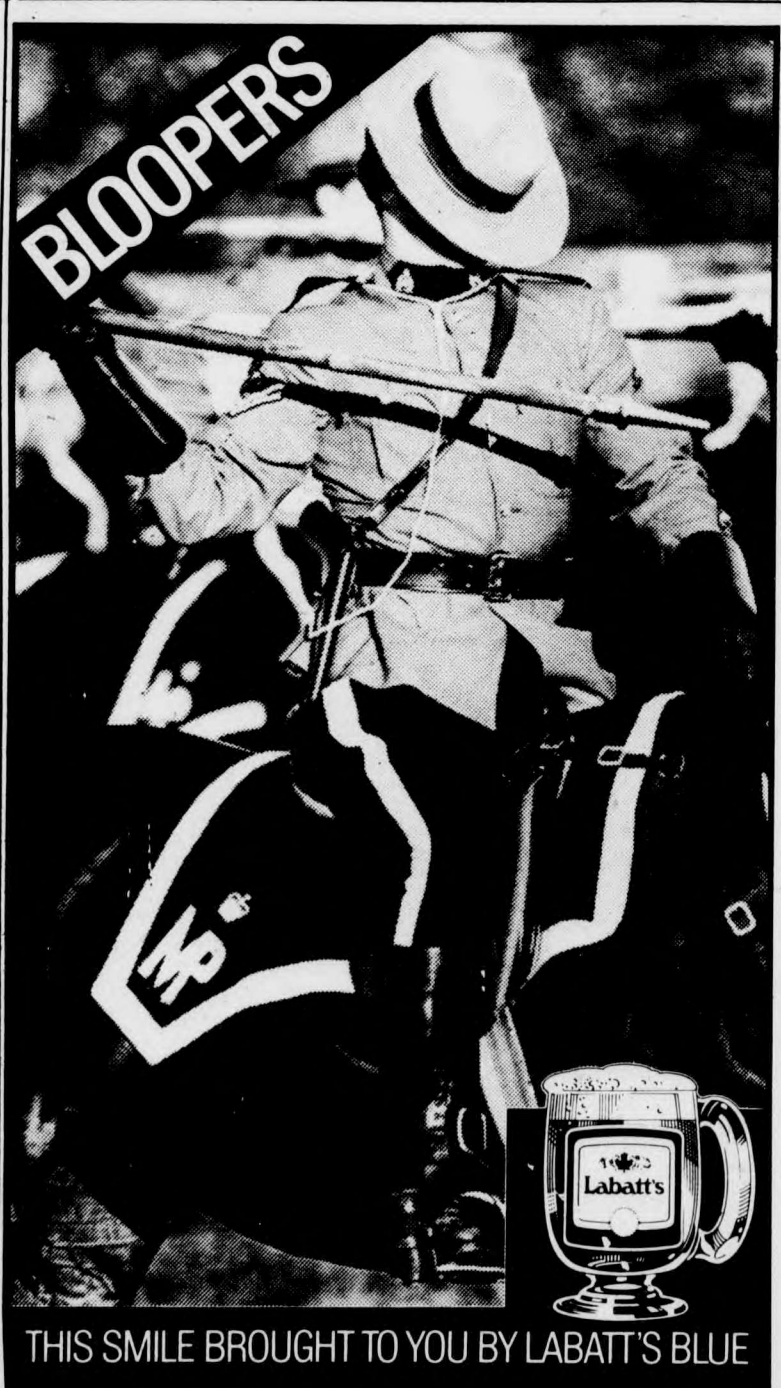


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EDITORIAL

YUSA clams up on settlement

Don't call us, we'll call you

It always amazes those of us who put out this paper how gregarious and wordy different groups on campus can be when they feel that it serves their purpose or when they sense that we can or will be supportive of them.

By the same token they can be just as tight-lipped and unfriendly when what we do does not please them. They forget that it is our job to report the news and that it can often be a tough and thankless job.

Yet, in the interests of good reporting and the spirit of making the truth known, many groups and individuals on campus are able to find it within themselves to overlook our shortcomings and take the time to co-operate with us in informing the York community and getting the new out.

Last week we felt it was our obligation to get the facts in print concerning the recent YUSA settlement. In good faith an Excalibur reporter approached YUSA president Karen

Harrell who refused to discuss the issue with Excalibur because she did not approve of our previous coverage of the story.

Adding insult to injury Ms. Harrell had the audacity to send us a story which she felt best reflected the struggle of deliberating unioners. In short, what she admired as the best account of what happened was simply a piece of union propaganda that would have made Stalin blush.

In the past, YUSA and other campus unions have complained about a lack of coverage, yet when we offer them coverage they reject it on the grounds that we are not, in their opinion, doing a satisfactory job. We wonder if the Globe and Mail or the Toronto Star would have gotten a similar response. Yet YUSA feels that we are not worthy of that kind of professional respect and, in a child-like manner, they try to censor us through silence or pander us with partisan pap.

If YUSA does not want to talk with and communicate through us, they will find that we will be reluctant to deal with them. If reprinting union propaganda and playing footsie with the union is what they expected of us, Ms. Harrell can forget it.

Ultimately it was not Excalibur that was hurt by the lack of co-operation — it was the York student who did not have access to all the facts. What was slapped in the face was good journalism and freedom of the press.

If everyone responded as immaturely and irresponsibly as YUSA has we would have damn little paper to put out. If, on the other hand, we had acquiesced and printed the story YUSA wanted us to we would have no newspaper to put out — just a propaganda vehicle. Unfortunately for YUSA we are not yet ready to turn from a newspaper to an advertising agency.

Maybe in subsequent years that will change — but we hope not. Until then, YUSA, don't call us, we'll call you!

Commentary

Underfunding a major threat

Dean Andrew Effrat & Frank McIntyre

The work of the Committee on the Future Role of Universities in Ontario constitutes a major step in increasing awareness in the province of the disastrous results of university underfunding over the past decade.

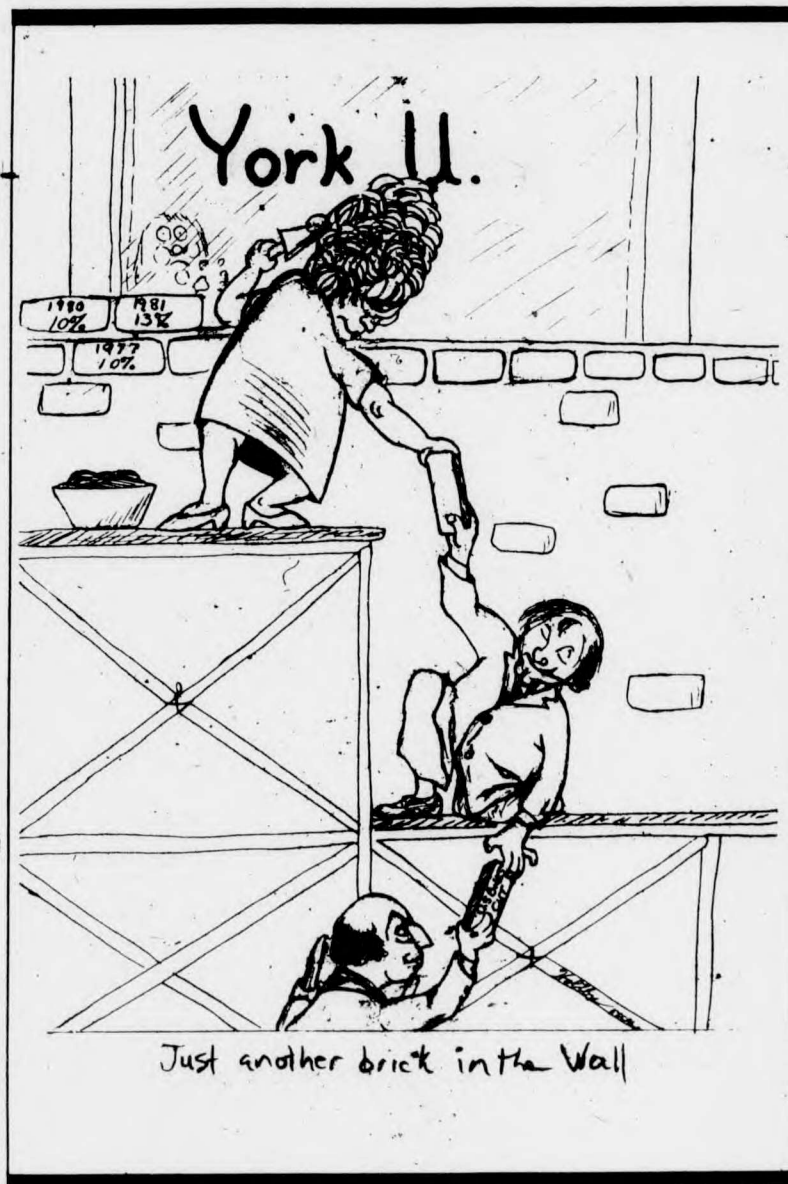
Ten years of losses to inflation have plummeted Ontario to near the bottom in provincial support of universities — 8th or 9th in operating grants per student, per capita and per unit of provincial personal income and 8th in percentage of gross provincial product spent on universities. We now have a report to the Premier from a prestigious committee of representatives of the public, universities and the provincial administration, which says: "Enough! The fat is long gone; our universities are in dire straits and can no longer manage to do the job we expect from them without full inflationary increases and a

unconscionable class sizes, dated equipment.

renewal of capital funds."

Although the report of the Committee does add to our now comprehensive statistical information on participation rates, financing, capital grants and academic salaries, it might have gone further in conveying to the public and to the legislature the dismal reality which is our everyday experience — unconscionable class sizes, outdated equipment, a deteriorating plant, excellent faculty leaving for positions elsewhere in the public sector and to business and industry, shortages of graduates in certain areas, and so forth.

In examining the efficiency level of the university system, sabbaticals are discussed and given the nod as necessary — but there is again no attempt to communicate with the lay person through concrete accounts of research and



development breakthroughs and other scholarly achievements of faculty on sabbatical. Nor is the role of sabbatical leave set in the context of Ontario's grossly inadequate level of expenditure in research and development.

The Committee's alternative future, the highly rationalized, cheaper university system of fewer, more specialized universities, presents a most unsettling prospect. Although recognizing that this is not the preferred future recommended by the Committee, now that it

has been raised at this time of continued retrenchment and of federal-provincial negotiations on post-secondary financing, it must be put to rest. The drastic implications of this centrally controlled system include a serious retreat from the goal of accessibility to university for all qualified individuals, the loss of the diversity and plurality which constitute a major strength of the Ontario university system, and the massive administrative and supply problems associated with strategic, centralized planning.