

BOG Rep Report

Monday's board meeting was another yawner. We went through the Audit, Finance Investment committee reports then got a promise of a report from the Fund Raising Committee at the next meeting. After that the meeting turned to an open session on Labour Relations.

STRIKES—THIS MONTH?

President H. Ian Macdonald's thought was "...it may snow tomorrow..." It is almost certain to snow before Christmas and at this rate a strike is just as likely.

President Macdonald outlined Ontario's financial policy citing many examples of the decline in funding, in particular the fact that Ontario has slipped from the 3rd highest amount of government money spent per student to the lowest amongst all of Canada's provinces. His conclusion was that "...current government policy is unacceptable..."

The Issue

Is budgetary flexibility. The administration is not dealing with the possibility of strikes as an issue of quality in education; it is posing them as purely an issue of money.

I have yet to hear the administration dispute the academic validity of fifteen students in a seminar. Similarly none of the other major academic issues surrounding a potential Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW formerly the Graduate Assistants Association) strike have been dealt with in any comprehensive way.

Policy Unacceptable

President Macdonald calls the government funding policy unacceptable. The Board of Governors passed a series of detailed motions calling for better funding last spring. What have they done with those motions? They have written a letter to Dr. Bette Stephenson, Minister of Colleges and Universities and received from her one obtuse reply.

Nothing more has been done. No strong public stand has been taken. The highly influential members of the Board have not used that influence to improve university funding or if they have they are being unusually reticent about saying so.

Strikes Again

So once again we students at York face the prospect of strikes disrupting our education. The demands by the Staff Association (YUSA) for their wages to at least keep up with inflation, to protect their seniority and the demands by CUEW for decent wages, job security and academically acceptable class sizes are according to the administration going to drive this University into an unacceptable financial situation.

The administration seems prepared to go to a strike to decide these issues. This is the administration which last year told seminar leaders that they had worked their allotted hours for the year and should

stop teaching. This is the same administration which has done little or nothing to secure better funding from the Ontario Government.

Funding Must Improve

If the administration is not prepared to fight for adequate Ontario Government funding of education then clearly we must help any group that is willing to fight for a quality education system. CUEW is demanding a size of class in which it is possible to learn.

That would be reason enough to back them but there is also the question of the students' best interests. Everyone will agree that the shorter a strike is the better for everyone. Thus far, the administration has given every

indication that it is prepared to take a long strike by CUEW.

Shorten a Strike

We students can shorten the strike by honouring the picket line. My suggestion to the students of this University is to find out now which of your professors will not teach during a strike and what you can do off-campus to keep up with your studies. Then stay away until a negotiated settlement is reached.

Peter Brickwood is a Student Representative on the Board of Governors. The above column represents his personal opinion and in no way reflects the opinions of Excalibur or its advertisers.



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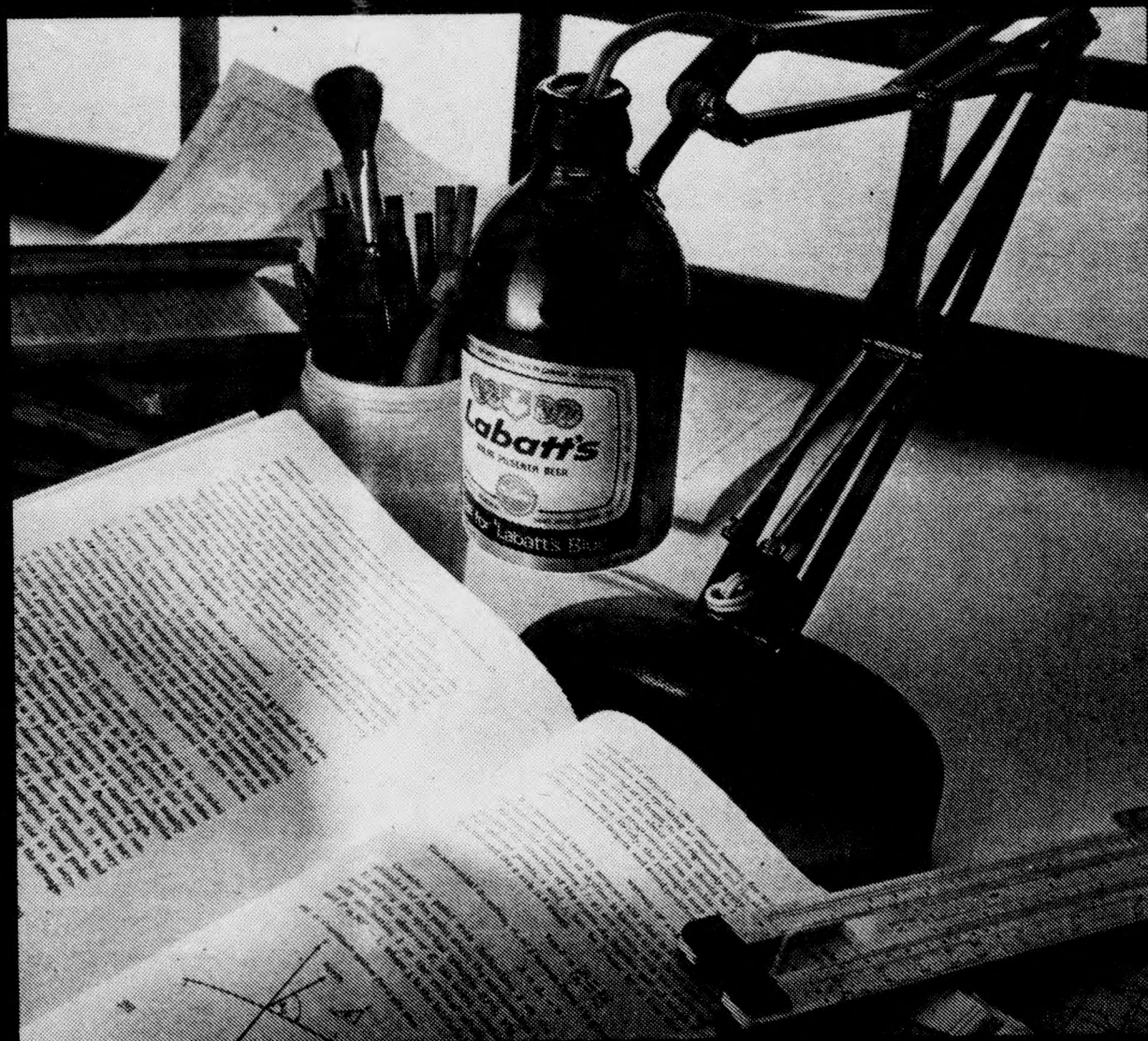
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