

editorial

Leave universities to profs and students

Goaded by chronic economic uncertainties the provincial Tories are prepared to drag their heavy feet through the organizational fabric of our universities, replacing carefully nurtured in-house expertise with bumbling centralized directives.

It's a common maneuver in times of collective social uncertainty: centralize local decision making in a self-indulgent display of 'strong leadership.'

It makes great press. It wins elections for simple men with firm handshakes and uncomplicated views of the world. Unfortunately we have to live with the results of their earnest but harmful tinkering.

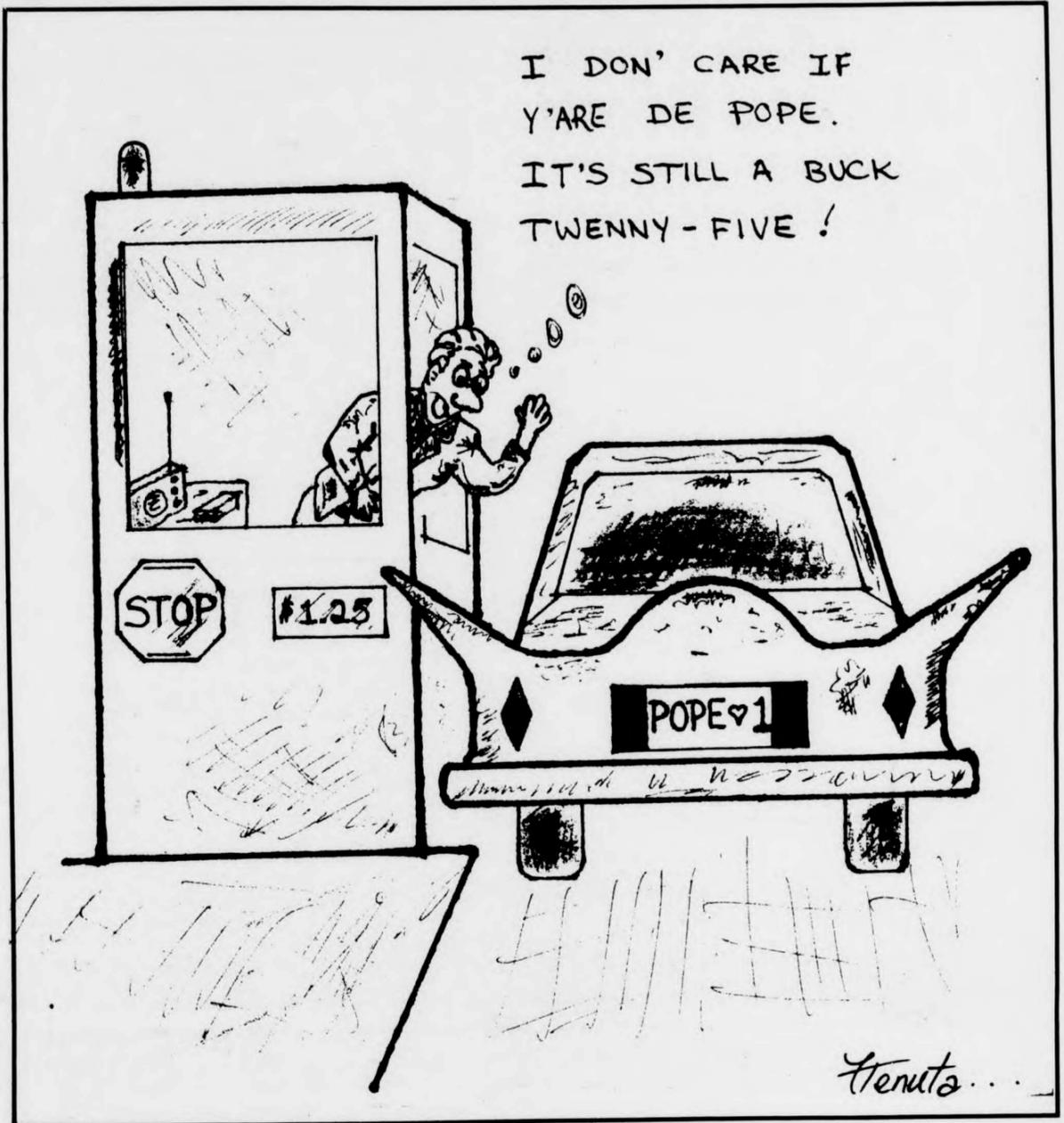
Bill Davis knows what the public wants. We want 'fiscal responsibility,' and he's got a poll to prove it.

Thus, the Tories set up a commission to recommend ways to restructure the university system in Ontario and, hopefully, save us a little money.

To show us all he means business Davis hired professional 'Chairman of the Board' Edmund Bovey to head the commission. As a director of Norcen Energy, Abitibi-Price, Canada Packers and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce nobody doubts that this man knows how to do something. We're just not quite sure he knows a lot about universities.

A case in point. In an *Excalibur* interview in July Bovey imparted his knowledge of the province's university funding formula to an eager listener. Unfortunately, his explanation of the formula left York administrators baffled. They scrambled about and rushed off a letter to Mr. Bovey clarifying the way the formula really works. Bovey also confessed he hadn't yet read one of the reports he had commissioned and had sent out to the universities to help guide them in their responses to the commission's questionnaires. Bovey is also peddling the notion of an 'adjustment fund.' This policy would essentially strip the universities of their control over their academic programmes and the hiring and firing of faculty. If Bovey's knowledge of our academic needs is as extensive as his knowledge of the funding formula I suggest we're in trouble.

Let's leave the complex job of running a university to the people who know how: those working and schooling here.



Letters

Profs overpaid

Dear Editor,
York faculty salaries may be eaves-shaded eight to ten percent by salaries at the University of Toronto, but I think that everyone should be mindful of the fact that most York faculty salaries range between \$30- and \$40-thousand. Moreover, many professors have professional working spouses who earn between \$20,000 and \$40,000. Hence, the majority of combined family incomes range probably between \$50,000 to \$80,000; not exactly the poorhouse, eh?

Faculty members do not return home to dinner with faces reddened by an iron smelter or blackened by a coal digger, nor do they endure stress syndromes associated with survival in the arenas of business and politics. They need not work weekends or night shifts, or 11.5 months

per year—not even 10 months per year! They need not pay out of pocket for the use of professional equipment and premises as do dentists, lawyers and physicians. They need not perform three a.m. emergency surgery at 15 minutes notice, nor do they bear an overwhelming responsibility for human safety.

One argument to support a substantial faculty salary increase could be that professors are, in general, extremely creative and inspired educators, yet York University has not, to the best of my knowledge, generated a single Nobel Prize winner in its entire history.

For the time being it is surely prudent for YUFA to address its financial demands entirely toward the improvement of York's teaching and research facilities. The fact that these items were padding on the strike agenda leads me to speculate whether York's academicians were motivated more by capricious personal greed

than by dedicated professional commitment.

—Dan Raxlof

Building thaw

Editor:
In a report on the new West Office Building in its special summer issue, *Excalibur* noted the absence of construction since the provincial freeze a decade or so ago. It might be worthwhile to note that during that period, and despite the freeze, the University did manage to obtain several major new facilities: the Scott Religious Centre, Track and Field Centre, and the Tennis Centre. Given serious funding constraints, the acquisitions of such facilities was a noteworthy accomplishment for York.

—T.A. Meininger,
Provost

excalibur

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