

# Provincial student lobby readies for Bovey protests

By GARY SYMONS

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) hammered out details for their campaign against the implementation of the Bovey Commission's recommendations at last weekend's conference, which will culminate with a province-wide protests march and rally on March 15.

In Toronto, the protest march will begin at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and end with a rally at Queen's Park. Regional demonstrations will be organized by local institutions and the OFS Campaign Committee.

The campaign report also cites other strategies, including postcard and petition campaigns, community forums to elicit public support, a lobby day to be held in conjunction with the March 15 protest, and protests on the related issue of high summer employment "and the death of the Canada Summer Works program."

CYSF Director of Finance Valance Ellies, who sat on the OFS Campaign Committee over the weekend, said he would bring several proposals to the next council meeting on Wednesday, which would include holding a public forum at York with the OFS, opposition and government MPs, York administrators and the press, and setting aside money to pay for busing students to the March 15 protest.

Ellies said he would like to see even more drastic tactics employed by university students.

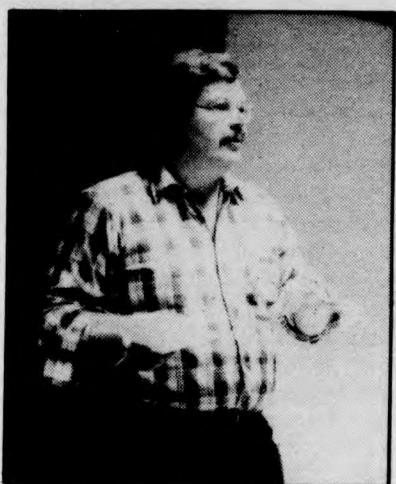
"I would like to call a day of general strike for students," Ellies said, "a day when all classes are cancelled as far as students are concerned. That may seem radical, but I think we have to make people see we're serious about what's happening to post-secondary education in this province."

OFS researchers Richard Balsin and Janet Maher, who briefed delegates on their analysis of the Bovey Report, said the federation's main concern is with the Commission's recommendations for increased tuition fees, reduced accessibility over the short term, and the restructuring of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

Balsin's analysis of the suggested tuition fee increases showed actual tuition fees for basic Arts programs will rise from \$1,157 this year to \$1,292 in 1985-86, and will continue to rise steadily until 1989-90 when fees will amount to \$1,978. At that point, Balsin said, students will be paying 25 percent of their educational costs as recommended by the Bovey Commission.

While Balsin noted the provincial government has not yet announced any plans to implement the commission's recommendations, he added, "They'll pick and choose among the recommendations, and I think it's likely tuition fees will go up."

"By around February 15 we should know what universities are getting next year," Balsin said, "and what the tuition increases will be."



OFS researcher Richard Balsin

Balsin also criticized recommendations he felt would force universities to choose between reducing accessibility or facing cutbacks of their funding.

The OFS analysis of the report claims up to 11,000 students may be refused access to Ontario universities if the recommendations are implemented.

Maher concentrated on the proposed changes in the OSAP program, which was referred to in the report as "mortgaging the future." Maher was primarily concerned with changes in OSAP loan repayment arrangement, which would see "the mechanism for collection... made in effect as an income tax surcharge above a certain income floor."

Maher said she felt that this and other proposals to change OSAP "may aggravate the debt load" for graduates from lower income situations.

"This program has such bad implications," Maher said, "we shouldn't even think of negotiating on it."

The OFS conference was also addressed by Cres Paslucci, National Vice President of the Canada Employment and Immigration Union, on the proposed federal funding cuts for summer job creation from \$200-million to \$140-million.

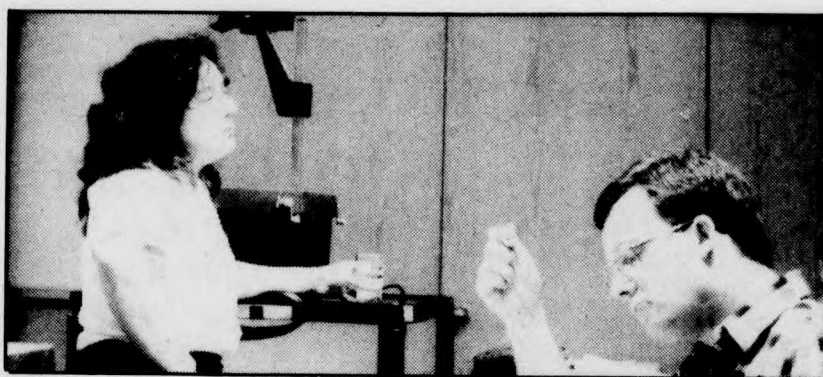
"OFS should take advantage of the present political instability in the (federal) government," Paslucci said. "The Conservatives may have 211 seats, but most of those MPs have never been there before."

"An example of that instability," Paslucci said, "is that when the government came in they wanted to get rid of social programs but even with all those seats they had to back off. I think that's what you've got to work on."

Emphasizing that new job creation is to be announced shortly, Paslucci said, "The time is right. It's important to begin your lobbying with your MPs and writing directly to (Employment and Immigration Minister) Flora MacDonald."

When one delegate at the conference asked what the OFS could do with its limited funds to make a large impact on MacDonald, who she said "responds better to a personal approach," Paslucci replied, "You could park five or six busloads of students on Flora's front lawn and lobby from there. How much more personal can you get?"

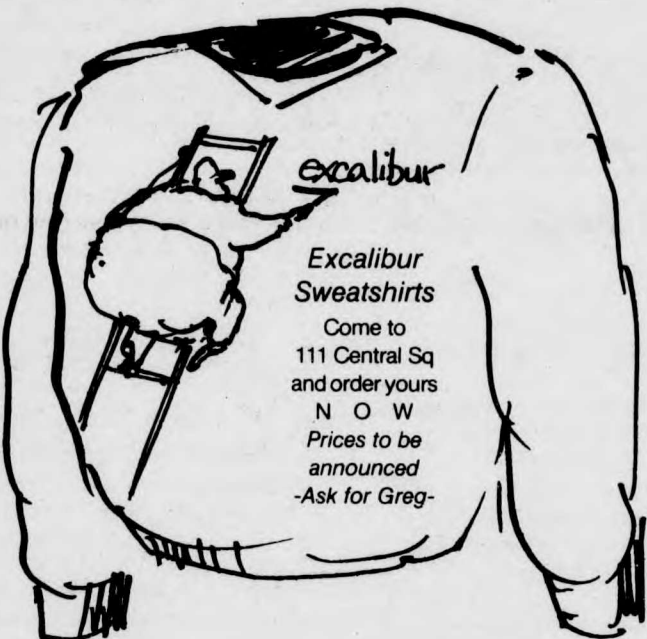
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Researcher Janet Maher and confused delegate.

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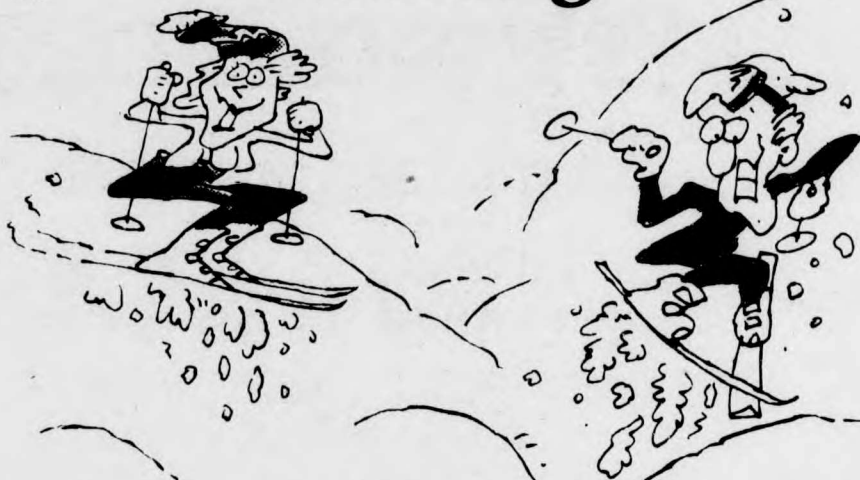
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