

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity
—Lord Acton

Excalibur founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Newsweb, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications.

News 667-3201

Advertising 667-3800

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Queens Park report hits students hardest

Who's kidding whom?

The report of the Special Program Review, commissioned five months back by the Ontario government to study ways of reducing the whopping government deficit, was tabled last week, and to say the least, the report has caused quite a stir in the media and in the public.

The 402 page report puts forward a total of 184 recommendations, which would save Ontario government \$1.6 billion in the next two years. Unfortunately, the solutions put forward by the report, are not as promising as might first appear.

In effect the report says — to save money, cut jobs, increase tuition and decrease the proportion the government pays in doctor and hospital bills. These are rather simple solutions to a complex problem.

In the area of education, the report singles out post-secondary education as a culprit of needless expenditures. It would have us believe that Ontario spends more on post-secondary education than any other province, hence, it is over-spending.

While it is true that total expenditures is greatest in Ontario, on a per student basis, Ontario ranks sixth. According to government projections, Ontario will soon rank ninth, leaving only one province, Nova Scotia, spending less on a per student basis.

The report recommends that tuition be increased by 65 per cent in the next three or four years, increasing tuition fees from \$588 to approximately \$970, a year. It also recommends that the loan portion of the government aid to students be increased from \$800 to \$1,800 and that the grant portion be similarly decreased.

The alternative to this would be to eliminate 4,000 teaching positions in Ontario, which would make a joke of 'higher' education, in Ontario.

Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough was quoted in the Globe and Mail as saying, "Many will oppose us, and cry for the good old free-spending days. It will be a time for responsible men and women to choose sides."

Not all the recommendations of the Special Program Review will be implemented, but the fact that McKeough, who is generally regarded to be the most influential man in the government, next to the premier, chaired the committee and seems willing to stand behind its recommendations, should give students reason to pause.

Education, especially post-secondary education, is no longer the general public's favourite charity, and while cuts in health care may be unpopular, cuts in education may win the minority conservative government more votes than it will lose.

Philosophically, the report marks a significant step to the right for the Conservative Party of Ontario. There is always a chance that the party will disown the report, but one doubts very much that that will be the case. Already, the media in Toronto has given the report from enthusiastic to rave reviews.

It is an ominous sign for students in this province.

NUS wants your vote

On Wednesday, December 3, York students will be asked to look into their souls and their pockets and see whether they can find \$1.00 to give to the National Union of Students.

While the union has not made its presence felt on this campus, other than at times when they have approached the council for money, the fledgling organization can and may still become a strong student voice for students at the federal level.

The NUS rightfully argues that given its meagre allotment (30 cents per student) it can barely manage to keep its head above water, never mind influence government policies. (By way of comparison, the Ontario Federation of Students receives \$1.50 per student).

While it is doubtful that anyone who casts a vote for or against the NUS, Wednesday, will be directly affected by the existence of the NUS, the interests of students in the future rests with the growth of the union into a strong and viable

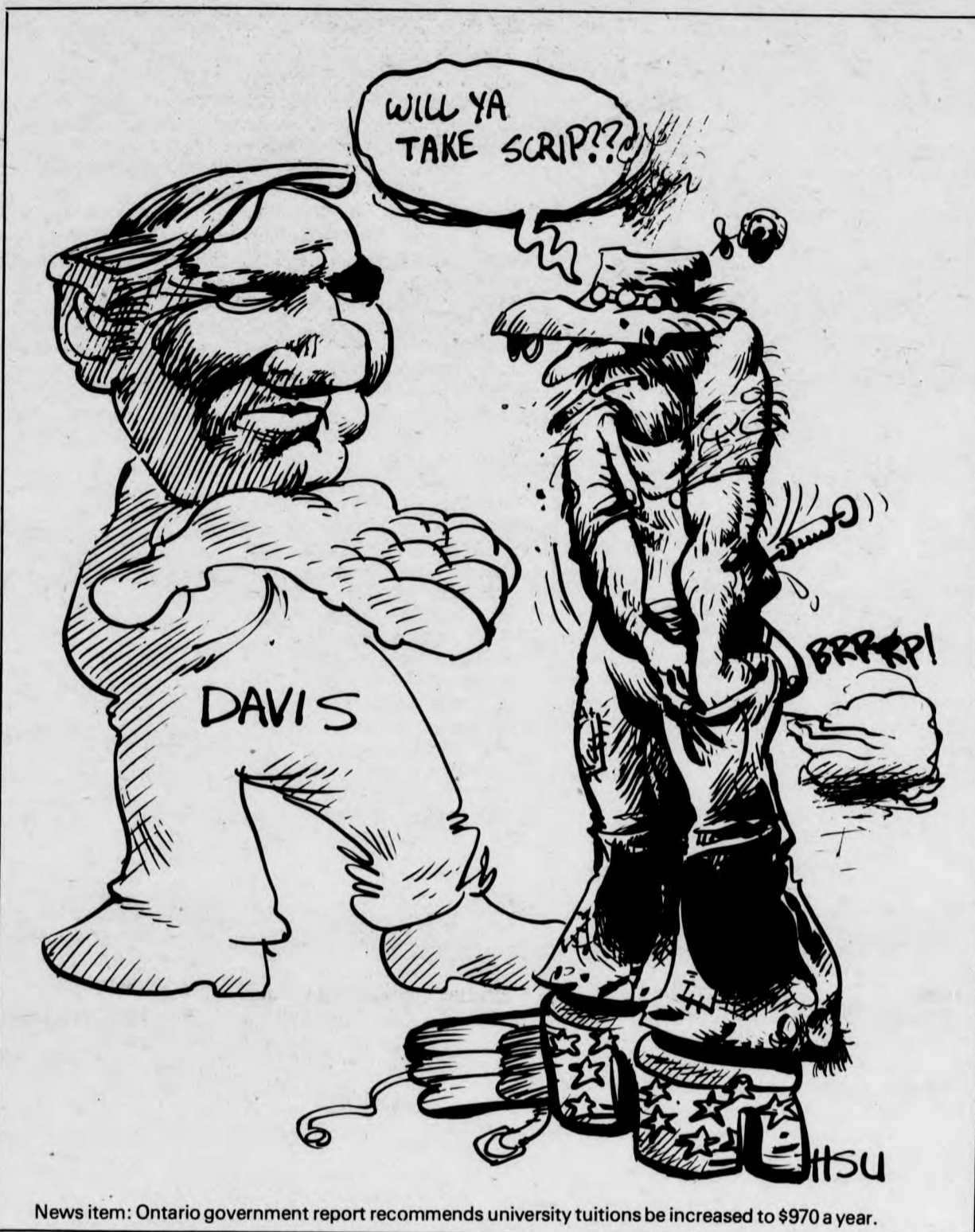
organization.

The fiscal crunch imposed on universities by both federal and provincial governments is not likely to abate in the foreseeable future. It is only a matter of time, before the universities begin to pass on its budgetary problems to its students in the form of tuition increases.

Ontario has already begun to talk of tuition increases for the 1976-77 year, and an influential committee report recently tabled in Queens Park, has recommended tuition increases of 65 per cent in the next three or four years.

Media and public attention have drifted away from the need of open-access to post-secondary education and centred on the costs of education.

With these and other trends opposing student interests, it would be foolhardy for York students to reject the concept of national unionization by voting against the NUS referendum.



News item: Ontario government report recommends university tuitions be increased to \$970 a year.

Fleeing from the jaws of doom

David hangs up the receiver of the pay-phone in Founders College; his face is downcast. A single tear slithers down his cheek. With one hand, he brushes it away while, with the other, he reaches into his pocket and fingers his dwindling change.

"Damn mail strike!" he curses. "What a hell of a time for my love life to go on the rocks!"

And with a single, angry motion, he drives his fist through the nearest window...

It seems that everybody at York this year is putting his figurative fist through windows. The mood is more up-tight, more frustrated and angry than we can remember.

Why? Perhaps the mail strike, with its attendant deserted mail boxes and inflated phone bills, is getting on people's nerves. Perhaps Dale Ritch has polarized the political right and left. Perhaps it's the cutbacks; perhaps, inflation; perhaps, the prospect of winter. Whatever it is, it's rattling our nerves more and more everyday.

Throughout York and almost everywhere in the outside world, people are getting "organized". Women are organizing; leftists are organizing; gays are organizing; professors are organizing; egg farmers are organizing.

It could be our liberated imagination, but it suddenly seems that the more people organize, the more chaotic things become.

Perhaps because its offices are conveniently located, Excalibur

comes in for a giant's share of anger and insults. Every Thursday, as soon as the new edition hits the stands, the same disorderly procession of grievances, veiled threats, accusations and runaway tempers stomps through the newsroom.

And, lately, we've found ourselves not only yelling back, but picking fights as well.

Even George Dunn, York's normally unflappable director of security services, seems to be clutching his pipe more tightly than usual. It's the worst year ever for violent crime on campus, he says, But who knows why?

Last week, while out jogging, a Winters student was set upon by four of five thugs armed with clubs. They left him lying by the road. He managed to escape. The assailants were captured later — they were trying to buy a beer in Complex 1. Just out for a night of clubbing and pubbing. Several weeks ago, a man at the Bethune Tap 'n' Kég had a

broken-off beer bottle inserted in his face. And the Open End in Vanier has had more than its traditional quota of angry moments.

Obviously, such incidents are few and far between, but they're getting less so. They're the sharpest edge of an impersonal, often brutal desperation that seems to be enveloping York, Toronto and the world beyond.

People just don't seem as friendly as they used to be. What with dizzying inflation, soaring unemployment, mail strikes, essay deadlines and concern about the future of Zionism—our general paranoia and occasional panic is understandable.

But our increasing isolationism is not. Unions may be necessary, "movements" may be necessary; coalitions, associations and special interest groups may be necessary.

On the other hand, the winter is just beginning and we should stick together for warmth.

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