

Federation Notes

Since this is the last issue of the 1979 year, I think it is necessary to examine what lies ahead for the Federation in the next four months. Business projects will be the main concern for the Federation. The Federation Typing Service, owned and operated by students, will open up January 7, 1980 in the former Founders College Council office. The Founders Council will be moving into the former sub-branch of the T.D. Bank.

As well, the Winter Conference of the Ontario Federation of Students will occur at York from January 31st to February 3rd. The provincial organization that represents the needs of York students in the area of post-secondary education and employment, will be electing its new Chairperson at the conference. It is a crucial time for the Federation and for students because Bette Stephenson will probably soon be making an announcement concerning increased tuition fees.

And finally, it is my hope that the Administration can come to terms with both the GAA and YUFA, so no disruption of the normal academic activity will occur.

D. Keith Smockum

York Unions

Over the past year the Administration has badly misrepresented the budgetary situation; it has used deficits as a pretext for savage cuts, which make a mockery of academic programmes and plans and have resulted in overcrowded classrooms. It has failed in imagination and creativity in the job which as a bare minimum, it should do well: securing a reasonable share of BIU-related and non-formula grants from the provincial government. It has displayed a sad lack of concerted drive and initiative in securing external funding.

In this context what is the situation of the Faculty Association? Our old contract expired last April 30. In the negotiations we have had a pay offer which will fail to move York from its low position in the salary tables for Ontario professors (yet President Macdonald has often professed concern for the low salaries of our faculty). We have seen a willful flouting of negotiated hiring procedures. We have seen a history of bad faith in the negotiation of tenure and promotion procedures.

But what's new? Isn't this the way the Administration deals (and has always dealt) with groups within the university community? Indeed, and that is why the Faculty Association was led to seek certification and the protection of the Ontario Labour Relations Act four years ago. The immediate impulse for this move was threefold: 1) an earlier budget "crisis" under one of Mr. Macdonald's predecessors, during which various "friends" of the Administration walked around with secret lists of a 100 (or was it 140) faculty members who were to be sacked; 2) Mr. Macdonald's handling of his first negotiations, in which he made it clear that he was Boss and that he would impose (rather than negotiate) a settlement; 3) the decision of the Provincial Government (which Mr. Macdonald had recently served as Deputy Treasurer) to squeeze the universities. These events jolted faculty members out of their isolation. University teachers were no longer a privileged group. They were being run by managers who in no significant sense were of the University. In this situation, the labour legislation which had been developed to safeguard the interests of similarly exposed groups seemed to offer a necessary protection. York faculty were among the first in the province to come to this realization. Nine out of 21 faculty associations in Ontario will soon have certification, therefore others have followed.

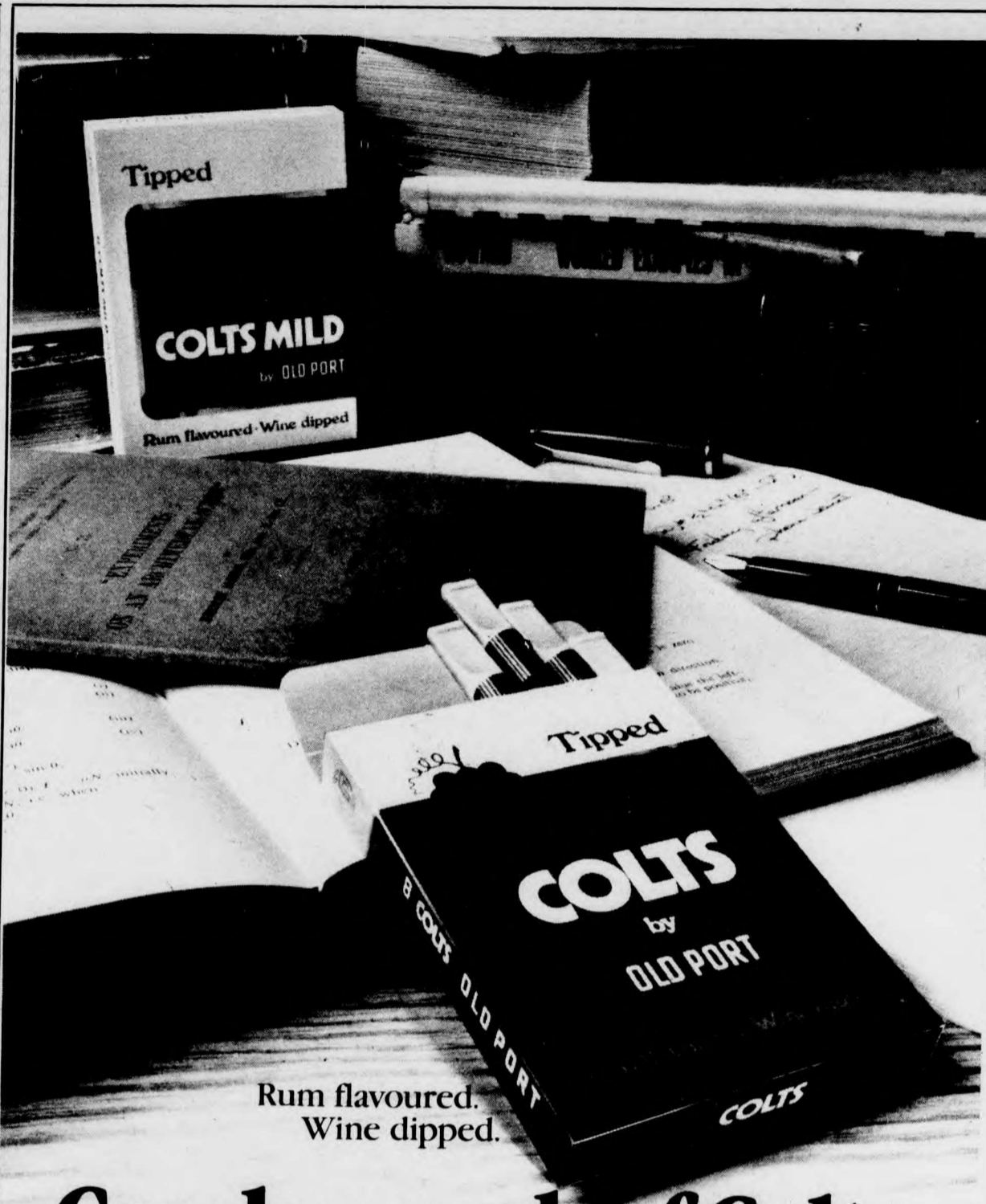
The results of unionization at York have been somewhat peculiar. The Faculty Association has become actively involved with students and with groups outside the university who are striving to change government policies in the educational and public sector. But within the university it has continued to behave like a professional association and has assumed that the Administration is actually willing to reason and negotiate. In contrast, the Administration has modelled itself more and more on industrial management. It can "afford" to spend "its" (the University's) money on full-time negotiators (Messrs. Farr & Co.) and to trade on our good will. Moreover the Administration has seemed only too willing to comply with (or even to serve) the wish of the Provincial Government to squeeze the universities.

What has now happened is that the faculty have decided that they have no more time for Management's games and that they can no longer afford to subsidize an inefficient Administration which is in danger of discrediting York's good name. Since the Administration has failed to move to meet our demands in negotiating, YUFA has decided to ask for the appointment of a conciliator, through whom negotiations will proceed. Under the Labour Relations Act, a conciliator must be appointed and a new attempt to reach an agreement must be made before job action can be considered. We are hopeful that conciliation will lead to a settlement. Our demands are reasonable (in the past we have never been afraid to submit them to arbitration, but the Administration has always refused). A conciliator cannot impose a settlement, but he has powers of persuasion.

If no agreement is reached and the conciliator files a "no board" report, a strike vote will be taken. YUFA has a Special Action Committee which is considering a series of escalating job actions. In these actions students can offer the faculty great assistance in reaching a settlement long before any effect in the classroom is felt.

Faculty and students cannot force the Administration to be creative and imaginative. But they can force the Administration to be reasonable and to agree to be bound by a set of procedures. We look forward to an agreement on hiring practices, on arbitration, and on tenure and promotion. We look forward to a salary settlement which will remove a university with a national and international reputation from the tail-end of provincial salary leagues. And beyond that we look forward to the day when the Administration will turn from hatchet exercises and join with faculty and students in moves to fight the Provincial Government policies. That is the fight in which Mr. Macdonald should get a bloody nose--not a fight which will divide the Administration from the University.

Nicky Lary
Al Stauffer
York University Faculty Association



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