

Crisis of confidence

It looks like a rough year ahead. Already January hasn't been much of a month. In this, the first two weeks after the dawning of the new decade we are faced with the looming probability of a strike by the teaching assistants and another strike by the faculty. Tuition fees are going up this year and enrolment is plummeting; York's enrolment decline is greater than that of any other university in the province.

The long-term picture isn't much better. The Ontario Council on University Affairs predicts, "a future of precipitous decline and turbulence" for Ontario universities. Comforting words.

There can be no doubt that York is experiencing a grave financial crisis, however, *Excalibur* does not believe that to be the root of our most serious problems.

From the students point of view, the lack of new books in the library, larger class sizes and the limiting of the number of courses offered are disturbing manifestations of this period of penury.

These problems pale into insignificance next to the disruption caused by a strike. We may have two different strikes in the same month. That must be some kind of record—the worst kind.

It is a truism that everyone loses in a strike. We can be certain that the students will lose. If no one wants a strike then why do we have them?

Let's look at the GAA. Negotiations for a new contract began last May 15. Serious bargaining started in late August. There was no resolution by December so conciliation meetings were held. They broke down without a settlement. Yesterday the GAA began its strike vote. At the same time, through a special edition of the daily bulletin, the medium by which concert and movie times are usually announced, the

administration made a new offer to the union.

Does this scenario sound familiar? It all happened before (except for the novel use of the bulletin—nobody ever thought of that before). Just last September the YUSA dispute was settled on the day of the strike vote.

Why does it take so long to reach a settlement? Leslie Sanders, negotiator for GAA has an answer. Describing the university negotiators she commented, "Their stupidity is often amazing,"—not exactly an expression of mutual goodwill and respect.

During these difficult financial times serious and painful cuts must be made in all areas. Programmes are curtailed and salaries will not keep up with the cost of living.

In any large institution this can be borne only if everyone is convinced that the cuts are necessary and if they are perceived to be fairly and equitably distributed. There must be strong faith in the leaders and planners.

At York there is no such faith. Every labour dispute sounds like a United Farmworkers crusade.

At this time *Excalibur* will not take a side in the labour disputes. However, we recognize that on this issue as in the YUSA strike last year, a siege mentality is taking hold on the ninth floor. No real dialogue with the community is taking place. Communication is by carefully worded press release or well-rehearsed policy statement.

On the other hand the union negotiators have been too bellicose in presenting their case.

Only one thing is certain—if we don't all realize that we are on the same side and that we all have to give something up then our situation can only get worse... and enrolment will just keep on going down.



Jingo journalism

Whoever said the camera never lies wasn't tuned in the night CTV's public affairs program, *W5*, aired "The Campus Giveaway". One of several news features shown during the program, "Giveaway" purported to reveal that large numbers of foreign students, mostly Hong Kong Chinese, are crowding out Canadian students in professional university faculties like pharmacy and medicine. The reaction was immediate, and sadly, largely favourable to *W5*'s case.

On further inspection, it was revealed that the facts presented were mostly false or misleading. For example, 85, not 400 foreign students, are enrolled in Canadian med schools. Hardly a giveaway.

When the factual content of a

television news feature is as questionable as that in "The Campus Giveaway" it suggests that the producers' concerns lie outside responsible journalism. One viewing of the program confirms this. To cover their flimsy premise, the producers used sensational techniques to stir up fears of yellow peril. From beginning to end the camera focussed relentlessly on Chinese students (many of whom were actually Canadian students and landed immigrants): registering for medical school, walking together across campus, sitting in lecture halls, attending a theatre performance. (The students in the theatre cooperated with *W5*, unaware of the film footage's eventual use.) Not once was a member of any group interviewed, allowed to appear as an

individual rather than as a nameless face in a crowd. To cap it off, the voice over narration was delivered by reporter Helen Hutchinson in her best aggressive, ersatz-Mike Wallace manner. There was no hesitation in her hard, determined tone.

"The Campus Giveaway" was not a measured analysis based on well-researched facts, but quite the opposite: a racist impulse in search of superficial observations, embellished by visual innuendo designed to excite rather than inform. Calculated sensationalism.

Until it attempts to rectify the thoughtless damage that's been done with a thoroughly investigated report on foreign students, *W5* should not be entitled to belong to the tradition for which its name stands.

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Application and additional information available through campus Placement Office.

Deadline for your applications to be returned to the Placement Office by February 1st, 1980.

Orientation: February 11, 1980. 9:00-10:00 A.M.
Room North 108 Ross, York University.

Interviews: February 11, 1980.
Contact: Mrs. Karen Fischer,
Student Placement Office,
Room North 108 Ross (667-3761)

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