

EXCALIBUR

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First to the polls

then to the ski slopes

Vote today



CUPE workers threaten strike, talks to begin



Workers at York voted Sunday night for a strike after Feb. 26 unless a contract settlement is

made. Wages, benefits and job security are the issues. A walk-out could cripple the campus.

Loud applause, desk thumping and victory signs by York workers greeted the results of a strike vote Sunday night that will allow 238 workers to walk off their jobs after Feb. 26 unless a settlement is made before then.

The workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, local 1356, look after the maintenance of the campus, both inside and outside.

The strike vote followed on the heels of a no-board report from the ministry of labour Friday which gives the union the legal right to strike.

Don Mitchell, director of York's personnel, said yesterday talks will begin "sometime next week" with a labour board mediator. The union and management met three times from October to January and then met twice with a labour conciliator before calling off the talks.

Both Mitchell and Jack Bird, a CUPE representative, said the strike vote would get the talks moving. Both sides are deadlocked over 33 bargaining points.

The union is asking for a \$1 across the board wage hike and 100 per cent paid benefits, parity with Toronto school board workers. Male cleaners get \$3.50 an hour, women get \$3 an hour, and tradespeople between \$4 and \$5.90 an hour.

The university is offering a six per cent increase to cover both wage and benefit increases. Mitchell said the "total package" has been reviewed by management, but would not comment on any changes.

The union is also seeking plant-wide seniority to protect job security. Management wants classification seniority to give them lee-way to lay-off the junior people in any job category they declare overstaffed.

A further demand would prohibit the use of non-union labour in any campus buildings. The old contract covered existing campus buildings, but not new ones. Mitchell said he was prepared to continue that arrangement.

But new buildings, like fine arts, could conceivably have a maintenance staff of non-union workers. Last year, management tried to contract out for the new administrative studies building but later backed down.

Three more jobs gone

Three more jobs for workers at York have been wiped out. That makes 12 jobs declared redundant in the last month.

Unlike the first nine redundancies, the latest cutbacks did not lay off workers. Nine cleaners were laid off Jan. 11, and on Jan. 29, three new job postings, two of them for cleaners, went up on union notice boards around campus.

Don Mitchell, director of York's personnel, said the three jobs were created by voluntary resignations. Physical plant spokesperson said Wednesday there were no plans to bring any of the laid-off workers back on staff. The jobs have been filled through an internal shuffle of workers, and the jobs they dropped to fill the new posts have been declared redundant, physical plant said.

Since April 1972 building space increased by 16 per cent while the number of salaried inside and outside workers has gone from 261 down to 238.

Presidential candidates clash in Bear Pit debate

By ALAN RISEN

"Under no circumstances would I support or condone the forceable occupation of the university offices," said CYSF presidential candidate Michael Mouritsen at a forum debate Tuesday in the Bear Pit in York's Central Square.

The candidate further stated that he would do his best to thwart such action. Mouritsen was replying to a statement by United Left Slate presidential candidate Dale Ritch that the occupation of the York offices was successful because it secured the release of the grant cheques.

Ritch said that the occupation was not "forceable" because the office employees were glad to see the students.

"It gave them the afternoon off," said Ritch.

Mouritsen complained that Ritch was not addressing himself to the more important issues such as the quality of education at York, curriculum changes, course loads, and so on. He further stated that if Ritch was elected president he wouldn't do anything about these issues because "He (Ritch) would be down at Queen's Park picketing the government buildings."

The third presidential candidate, Robert Ashton, said that action other than occupation of the offices was needed. He said he would look for an alternate approach and that "negotiations should come first."

All three candidates agreed that the fee hike was unfortunate.

The candidates were also asked how they stood on the question of a university daycare center. Ritch said that next to the fee hike this was the most crucial question.

"The opportunity for women to work and get an education is very limited because of the daycare problem," said Ritch. The York daycare centre is using what he termed "totally inadequate services in the grad residences" because of government cutbacks.

He said that CYSF should organise a committee to fight for governmental financial support to provide low cost facilities so women can be free to go to work or school.

The administration should finance the daycare centre and the people using it should run it, he said. But the government "has its priorities all screwed up" by subsidizing businesses and corporations.

Mouritsen agreed that daycare is a crucial issue in this election. He said that he doesn't feel that undergraduate students who have no use for it should have to support a daycare centre financially. He then said that this is not as important to this election as other issues such as the quality of education.

Ashton said "the right of a woman to have an abortion is her own. The right to have a baby is also her own." He further explained that the university should provide a daycare centre for all who want to use it.

On the question of campus media Mouritsen said that Excalibur should be run by a 3 student board instead of a "clique of 20 or 30 people on the staff."

"The students finance the paper so they should run it," he said. The editor would still run the editorial policy as long as it doesn't interfere with fair news coverage, he added.

As for Radio York, Mouritsen said he feels CYSF should not donate any money to "support a hobby for 20 or 30 students."

"The university is not a job training centre," he said.

Ashton disagreed with him on this issue. Anybody has the chance to work for Excalibur, so it is not "an elite clique", he said. Excalibur and Radio York should be given a set fee.



Presidential candidate Bob Ashton spoke in a debate yesterday.

Faculty association rejects wage freeze

Crisis or no crisis the faculty association is not about accept a wage freeze this year.

It was with a refreshing sense of outrage that faculty negotiator George Eaton told president John Yolton and the co-ordinating committee Tuesday they were involved in a "totally fraudulent exercise," trying to cutback spending unrealistically.

He said the university should determine how large a budget it will need to operate and then tell the government it is facing a deficit.

"It's up to the government to decide if it will close an institution," he said. Eaton told Excalibur Tuesday night that salaries should not be seen as a residual or a way to save money in a time of crisis. Faculty should not be expected to forgo their career expectations, he said. Money lost in one year will never be made up when such a rapidly rising cost of living prevails.

He criticized the co-ordinating committee for passively accepting government policy in education. "The government is trying to shift the issue of the political consequences of education onto the university... but the university is not the arbiter of public policy," he said; "the university can not be left high and dry."

The co-ordinating committee has been trying to cut all university budgets to the bone in order to account for an enrolment shortfall and to hold next year's deficit to about \$1 million. They feel the board of governors would not accept a larger deficit.

But Eaton says there is no concept of "fiscal responsibility" in a public institution. "Such a principle is not even applied to government agencies."

He stated that if the university is actually going to experience a continuing decline in enrolment it will be necessary to reshape it. "But it's a question of time horizon, he said. "We cannot be expected to cope with a significant shift in two years."

Michiel Horn head of the faculty association, said Tuesday, he has learned University of Toronto and University of Waterloo have signed contracts recently with pay raises. York faculty are asking for a five per cent cost of living increase plus two per cent for progress through the ranks.

Yolton said Tuesday he has the impression the faculty might be willing to co-operate by sacrificing if everyone in the university was, but the problem is they do not trust the administration. "They are afraid they might get the short end of the stick."

In the meantime the budget planners will continue trying to prepare a budget by the Feb. 26 deadline set by the board of governors.