

EDITORIAL

A Rae of hope for unity

Ever since the Meech Lake Accord was trashed, Ottawa has been obsessed with the Quebec problem.

And the press has fallen into the trap of covering the issue as if the rest of the country didn't exist.

What a breath of fresh air, then, to hear Ontario Premier Bob Rae articulate our province's view of the issue and how it might be resolved.

There was little fanfare or advance notice for the impassioned speech given at Queen's Park last Wednesday.

But it showed clearly, that at least one of the country's provincial leaders isn't willing to stand idly by while Ottawa and Quebec decide what's best for that "other" entity called Canada.

Rae's comments were particularly timely, coming on the heels of the recommendations of the Belanger-Campeau commission which is calling for a referendum on Quebec sovereignty by October of next year.

One of the main concerns about the Constitution, is that it has not addressed other issues, aside from Quebec's continuing paranoia over its existence and future development.

The premier stated the case clearly in saying that it makes no sense to grant Quebec control over issues now mostly within the purview of Ottawa.

To do so, Rae argued, would mean that the rest of the Canadian provinces would have nothing to lose in going it alone and that would be the end of Canada.

Better to re-examine the powers of Ottawa and all provinces and then come up with a consensus on a new power-sharing arrangement within all of the country, not just Quebec.

Rae's best idea, perhaps, and one that has to be endorsed by the federal government, is that amendments to the Constitution should no longer require unanimous approval of all provinces. However, Rae left the door open for more debate on the issue in suggesting that each region could be given veto power.

That veto power is one fraught with peril and could be yet another albatross around the neck of Constitutional change.

Finally, we hear from a premier who isn't afraid to tell Ottawa and Quebec that Ontario has an identity too and our goals and aspirations must also be dealt with in the coming months.

We're also sure that Rae's view on Senate reform are shared by the majority of Canadians.

Rae said his New Democratic Party government opposes an equal and elected Senate that would see equal representation from all provinces.

The only reform we'd like to see in the Senate is its abolition.

One of the reasons the Meech Lake Accord failed was the lack of consensus on entrenching the rights of aboriginal people and women into the Constitution.

Rae wants these rights entrenched in the Constitution. That's an enlightened view and one that's long overdue in coming.

Ottawa's response to this issue has always been "wait and you'll get your turn."

Native people showed Canadians last summer, that they're tired of waiting... and who can blame them?

The difficulties in provincial-federal relations have never been more strongly felt than in this current recession.

Ottawa wants its books to look good so it cuts transfer payments to the provinces which are then forced to eat the difference or pass the shortfall down to the regional and municipal levels.

Certainly, the entire system must be looked at as a whole and not in isolation.

In making his speech, Rae has stated the case for the survival of not only Ontario but also Canada.

We wonder if such a view is even possible now in Quebec.



LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Excalibur staff or directors. However, we will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

P.E.I. sports joke stirs indignant response

To the editor,

Let me thank your sports editor, Josh Rubin, for giving me the opportunity to address a key problem of attitude at York University and Toronto, as a whole.

I am a native of Prince Edward Island and a graduate of the University of PEI (UPEI). (Now, obviously, I am studying at York.) With this background, I feel compelled to reply to "Rubin's Ravings" of the March 27 issue of Excalibur.

To start with the least of Rubin's gaffes, he accuses the UPEI hockey team (as well as the UQTR team) of having ugly uniforms.

UQTR can defend itself. For those who are unfamiliar with the UPEI uniform, it is green and white with a large black panther on the front of the jersey. (Panthers being the nickname of the UPEI sports teams.)

Does Rubin really find these color combinations offensive? Does he cling to the traditional and over-represented colors of red, white and blue as the only good-looking sports colors? I think the Boston Celtics, New York Jets and Saskatchewan Roughriders certainly see nothing wrong with a little variety.

Finally, and most abhorrently, Rubin quips, "Why do potato farmers act so stupid when they've been given a couple of beers?"

While there probably are people who grow potatoes in the areas of Trois-Rivières, Edmonton and Waterloo (home cities of the other teams at the tournament), PEI is known for its potatoes, and Rubin's remark can only be taken as a shot against the Panther's fans and the people of PEI.

If Rubin is such a sports connoisseur, he might know that people, when cheering for a team, are often excited and care little whether their behavior is viewed as stupid. Isn't that why people watch sports — to lose themselves in the "heat of the action;" for a release from the constraints of working society?

I know that many of us were not drinking, but most of us did after the game. (By way of digression, it takes more than a couple of beers for most Island hockey fans or potato farmers to be considered drunk. Some of the

Panther supporters had more rum and moonshine than Rubin's dreamt of in one night. Drinking is a fine and beloved pastime on PEI.)

Asking if potato farmers act stupid when they are drunk makes about as much sense as asking if feminists get horny when they watch Arnold Schwarzenegger movies or if rabbis stand on their heads when they perform a circumcision or if sports editors come across like assholes when they put pen to paper.

The difference is that the people indicated above have a greater opportunity for response at York than do PEI potato farmers.

My point is that Rubin thought he could get away with a put down of a group of people that most York students know little about; he thought he could get a cheap laugh at the expense of UPEI hockey fans by virtue of the ignorance of himself and his readers.

In so doing, he displayed the common attitude alluded to in the first paragraph. I call it "regio-

centrism," whereby its purveyors believe that the sun rises and sets in the ass of Ontario.

Rubin's article is a classic example of mockery and contempt for anything not originating in this soulless city.

Perhaps, if he loosened up and took a drink now and then, he might see the richness existing in PEI and elsewhere.

Hans Connor

Dear Hans,

I really do apologize for offending you and all the other reasonable Maritimers who I know are out there, but you didn't have to suffer through threats of physical violence and beer being spilled on your notepad during an otherwise enjoyable hockey game.

Thanks for the letter,
Josh Rubin

P.S. We should discuss this further over some mugs of draft and a shot of screech.

Response to Litner piece

To the editor,

In response to the letter "Time to Take Responsibility for our Wastes" from Anita Litner, I would like to inform her that, yes, things are being done and these things take time along with a considerable amount of effort on the part of students, faculty and staff.

When the new Student Centre opens up you will be able to find the familiar Blue Boxes and will be able to recycle your bottles, cans and cutlery. At about the same time Physical Plant will be starting a fine paper recycling project in the Ross Building and multi-material recycling in the colleges.

The introduction of these programs did not happen overnight. In fact they took a concerted amount of energy and cooperation from groups like the Waste Reduction Advisory Committee, last year's York-U-Can-Recycle, Physical Plant and this year's Envision York, to name only a few. And this is just the beginning.

Summer research will be conducted in conjunction with Physical Plant to further determine the

excesses of York's community and to develop solutions to the growing garbage problem.

As well, committees have been set up to look into alternatives to polystyrene use; the university's up until now insensitive land use and further, other areas in need of recycling. Again, these are not just mystical fairy-land committees but real people working hard to find an answer. Of course we're always in the market for even more dedicated, performance-minded people.

Take your pick; there's the Waste Reduction Advisory Committee which combines the efforts of Physical Plant, CUPE, FES students, faculty, Glendon College, Food Services, etc. with a mandate to reduce campus wastes.

You can help us out at Envision York, which is a coalition of all these forces on campus. As our next meeting will have already taken place by the time this letter is published please contact Mitch Blass at the YFS/FEY office. Other concerned groups include the York Greens, the Hoards

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