

EXCALIBUR

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

Editor-in-Chief Andrew Michalski
 Managing Editor Tim Clark
 News Editor Marilyn Smith
 Cultural Editor John Oughton
 Sports Editor Phil Cranley
 Cartoonist John Rose
 Business and Advertising Rolly Stroeter
 Advertising Manager Jackie Stroeter
 editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202
 advertising phone: 635-3800

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 under the auspices of the Council of the York Student Federation.
 controlled circulation: 13,000

Student back-biting might end

Last week, it would have been very difficult to imagine the college councils and Council of the York Student Federation sitting down together around one table, in one room, and talking in rational tones.

On Thursday the two sides miraculously sat down and agreed that the present political situation needed changing. For once, the York students' needs were considered.

And it was a welcome change to see the perennial back-biting and political bickering swept aside. At last, some concrete steps were made to find out what York students wanted with an opinion poll. The simplistic referendum with its shoddy campaign was put aside for a more constructive approach to York politics.

It was no real miracle that got both sides together: rather just some hard-nosed politics that was getting everybody, including York's administration rather upset.

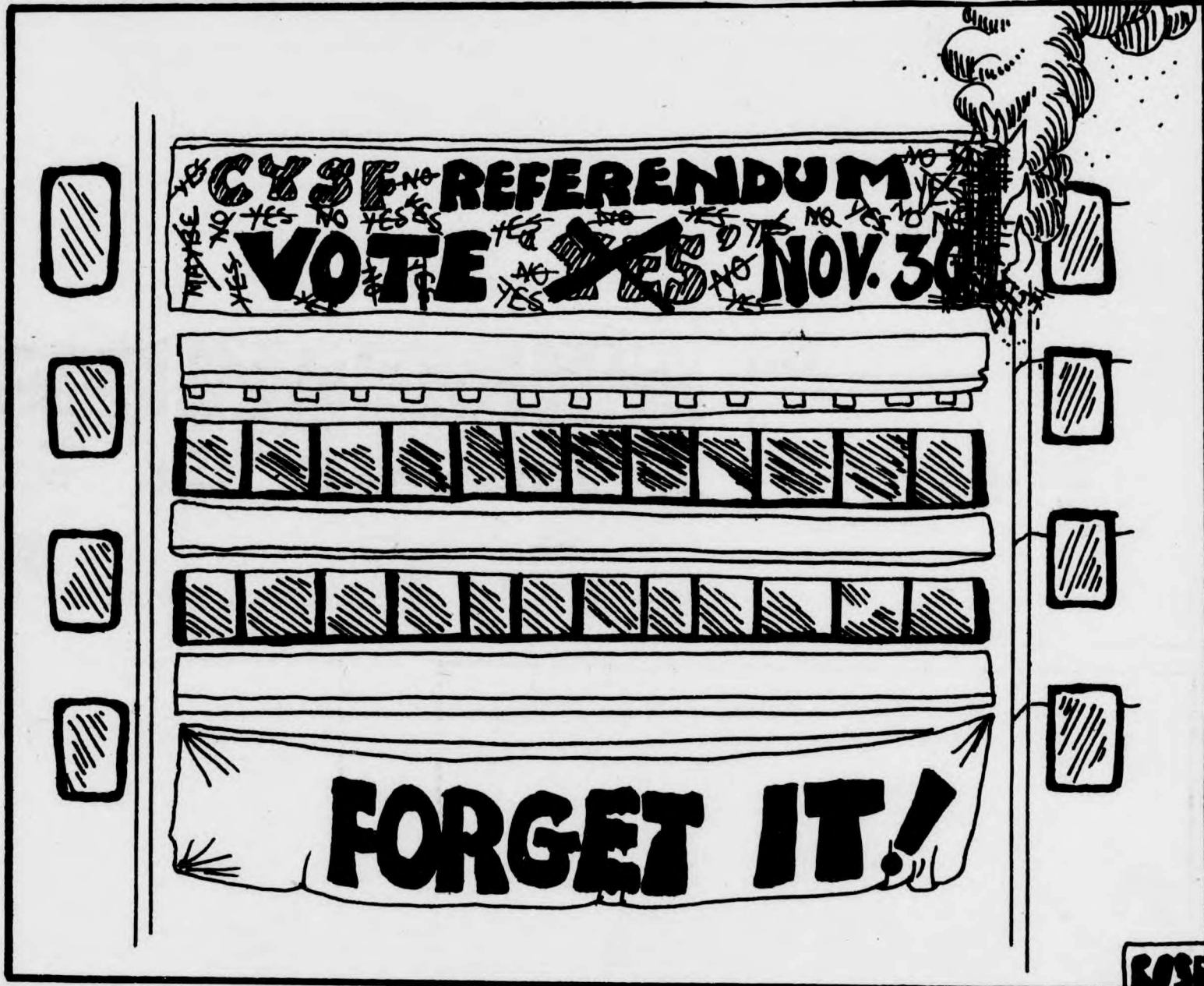
The colleges said the referendum was illegal. After all, it was the colleges that gave birth to CYSF and not the students. CYSF, the colleges said, had no right to change the constitution without getting their approval. Legally they were right and it was clear to see that the colleges would refuse to allow CYSF more powers than it had now. There was no external threat to join the colleges behind CYSF. But morally, the colleges were wrong, because they knew CYSF could never operate with its budget tied to the colleges.

The decision on who was right for the university, unfortunately lay with York president David Slater. Not one to stick out his neck politically, Slater told his student liaison man John Becker to do his job. If anyone had kept the college-CYSF back-biting and bickering so successfully for so long, it was Becker. It's not that he openly conspired to foment the split, it's just that he never seriously tried to end it.

So long as the system remained, he would remain chief judge over student funds. There'd never be any student organization strong enough to challenge his job.

But Slater didn't want to rule on what was right for the university. And quite correctly. This is a student, not an administration matter.

Becker arranged Thursday's meeting.



It was only fitting. Quite probably, he was the only supposedly neutral party capable of joining the two student sides together.

But for a total of 15 hours between Thursday and Saturday, they were together. And they arrived at three basic premises:

- i) student government not only needs a look, it needs an overhaul;
- ii) York students need to participate in guiding their elected representatives in what students feel they need;

iii) unless great dissatisfaction is voiced, York will keep a federal structure of student government.

These are no mean achievements. For politicians to finally realize that they are not doing the job they should be doing is a real breakthrough at York. For too long, York politicians have blithely gone on and on with their hopelessly divided powers at the expense of the York student. And for them to finally realize that their power lies with the student, and not with politicians as custodian, is manifested in their decision to hold an opinion poll on Tuesday, Dec. 7 where

students can vote on individual proposals.

Whether York should keep the federal structure is another question. But since it is quite clear that the colleges did not come into this bargain to help with their own demise, there is now no point to belabor the point that this newspaper does not believe in federalism but in a strong central government. The mere fact that a more efficient distribution and deployment of student funds is on the way is a step forward. And we welcome it.

Letters to the Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor and sent to Excalibur, Central Square, Ross Building, York University, Downsview, Ontario. Excalibur reserves the right to edit all letters more than 500 words long. Unsigned letters are the responsibility of the editors. All letters will be published however due to space limitations letters may not be published the week they are received.

Mary Nat. Sci. students dissatisfied

In reply to your article "Nat. sci. questions unresolved" a number of students from four Nat. sci. courses have been discussing the situation. It seems that many students are dissatisfied with their individual courses. Complaints range from misrepresentation in course outlines and a feeling of inflexibility, disorganization, immaterial course content right up to a widespread feeling that there should be no compulsory Nat. Sci. AT ALL. People have approached us from various courses with similar complaints since the initial criticisms arose in 177A. Because of all these reactions we have posted a list in room N105 Ross for all concerned students from any courses who wish to be contacted for further discussions.

Jennifer Ritchie
 Jim Brown

Ethnic representation impossible at present

The Black People's Movement of York University has in the past received very little help and recognition from the colleges, CYSF (or Excalibur) despite the fact that the number of Black students in the York Community has been steadily increasing. It is now close to (if not more than 300) persons, many of them landed immigrants and Canadian Blacks.

This year, after we presented a detailed budget asking for a large sum of money, the council voted us the ridiculous sum of \$200 — falsely stating that we had made no request for funds. When we pointed out that we had submitted a budget and that the sum of money allocated to us was insultingly inadequate, the fellow in charge blandly answered that he had 'lost' our budget and grudgingly recommended that we be given \$300 instead.

Only after having read the constitution in

Excalibur were we made aware of the issues in the referendum. We tried on several occasions to obtain copies but could not. Club members should be involved in the making of these decisions and not have to rely on posters asking Why?

The present system does not meet the needs of the ethnic (especially non-white) groups on campus and it is doubtful whether the new constitution will contribute much to their welfare. People who come from different countries are in the position where they may not only benefit from but also enrich university life. This potential is being wasted at York because of mismanagement and misallocation of funds. The colleges in the planning of events and orientation fail to take stock of the situation. They do what they want to do, instead of finding out and catering to the wishes of their would-be participants. So they fail. If orientation week and the Concerts of a few mediocre rock bands are so unattractive to Canadians, how can Africans or Chinese enjoy them?

The University of Toronto has an entire centre for foreign students. That may not be

possible here but more consideration can be given to their needs. Last year the Black People's Movement planned to familiarize students coming from our parts of the World with the York and Toronto situations in order to minimize cultural shock. We could not do a very good job because of lack of funds and information.

The Black People's Movement will be in favour of any system that provides for just and speedy distribution of the students' money. CYSF control of its budget, provided higher level checks are instituted, would be beneficial in that it would mean quicker disbursement of whatever funds are allocated to the Movement. From past experience however, we cannot be sure that it will be equitable.

The executive of the Black People's Movement would be more than willing to meet with representatives of CYSF, the college councils and the representatives of other ethnic groups in order to seek workable solutions to these and other problems.

Arnold F. Ward
 Chairman Black People's Movement