

# GST: 'regressive and unreasonable'

by Tina Pannunzio

On Monday, June 25, North Yorkers turned out at York Woods Public Library for an open forum concerning the unwelcome Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Honourable Robert Kaplan, MP for York Centre, spoke against the new tax and answered questions on how the GST will affect the average consumer and small and large business owners. Specifically, he explained who would benefit and suffer most with the new tax reform.

Kaplan, a member of the Liberal Party, firmly labelled the tax, "a mistake, regressive and extremely unreasonable." The federal government, however, has spent an estimated \$22 million producing and distributing promotional literature on the tax, clearly supporting its position. The Tories claim the tax was designed with the primary intention of replacing the existing "outdated" federal sales tax, which they describe as "unfair and economically destructive." Kaplan and the opposition argue that a "fair" tax would have been five per cent.

The new seven per cent GST, effective January 1, 1991, will replace the existing Federal Sales Tax (FST) of 13.5 per cent calculated at the manufacturing or wholesale level. According to Kaplan, the GST will be calculated on goods and services at the retail level; at a point where the merchant can double the cost of the

product and, in effect, cause the overall tax to "double" back to the equivalent of the previous tax. Further, consumers would be unprotected against price hikes as the tax reform does not carry with it any legal obligations for the vendor to lower prices once the FST has been removed from the overall cost.

Regulation of tax violation, such as failure to charge the tax, will be provided by a monitoring agency staffed with six inspectors for the entire country.

The reform is structured to protect families and businesses which earn under \$30,000 in total revenue per year. However, as most Canadians earn more than the specified revenue, the majority will feel the weight of a tax extended to more goods and services than affected by the present FST.

Many residents also expressed their anger at the rise in the Consumer Price Index of 1.25 per cent, which will result as the GST is put

into effect. The opposition suggests that the two major benefactors of the GST would be Ford and GM as the new tax would allow them to raise their prices and claim a greater profit.

Despite the fact that approximately 78 per cent of the population is opposed to the GST, it is now before the Senate and will be passed unless stopped by a majority vote. A long-standing tradition of Senate support for government policies, however, promises the

definite implementation of the tax reform for next January.

With the recent failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the topic at hand, the general climate of the discussion was clearly hostile; most residents expressed their frustration with the present government. Many supported the possibility of a new election.

## Course evaluations and VRES

by Jonathon Chabot  
and Peter Stathis

YFS has made course evaluation results available to returning students as they register for courses using the Voice Response Enrolment System (VRES).

Course evaluations were distributed to eight out of over 30 departments in the faculty of Arts at the end of the 1988/89 school year. The evaluations have been compiled into a booklet so students can find out more about the courses they are taking. Before this booklet was produced, course evaluations were distributed only if departments deemed it necessary. They were not required by the university and students did not see the results.

Caroline Winship, YFS Vice-President (Internal Affairs), said that the course evaluations were as much for professors as for students. Departments used the evaluations in deciding tenure and promotion for professors, but this did not serve any student interests, according to Winship.

**"students can pick up questionnaire results at their departments for use in course selection"**

Winship cited York's powerful bureaucracy as one of the main obstacles to overcoming this problem. She pointed to other universities, such as Queen's and Manitoba, as good examples of student governments that have

effectively mitigated the administration's power. Manitoba has compulsory evaluations "based on mutual respect between the professors and the students," said Winship.

Presently, York does not have any type of legislation to make course evaluations mandatory

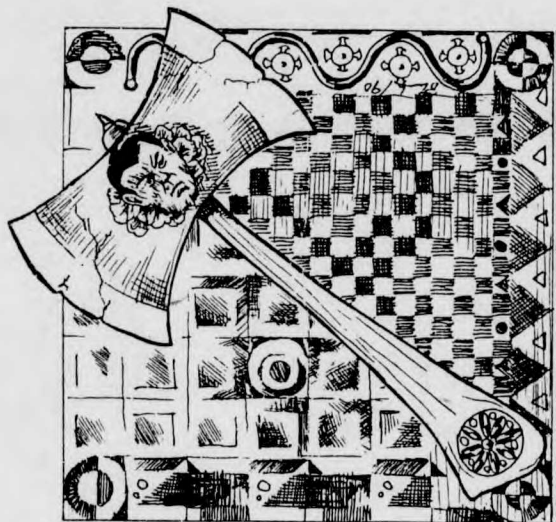
and available to students; however, YFS is planning to push for a written policy in the future.

This year's YFS project is a first step in making York classroom/ professor evaluations universally accessible. Students can pick up

the questionnaire results at their departments for use in course selection with VRES.

YFS' course evaluations project will cost \$3000 for 1000 copies, all coming from YFS funds. Winship admitted this was a staggering amount of money, considering York's undergrad population was approximately 30,000 students, but she was optimistic that if evaluations became mandatory, departments could help pay for the costs. "It's not fair that they [departments] ask to use our information for their tenure purposes without paying anything," said Winship.

Up to this year, York students had to rely on course descriptions in calendars and on word of mouth when selecting courses.



I WRITE  
WITH AN  
AXE

*Mini-golfers*

by Brett Gellert

A friend and I went to play mini-golf a few days ago. For those of you, if it's possible, who haven't heard of mini-golf, it can be described as a game more exciting than real golf with less tiresome clubs to lug around. It also has that small amount of danger we all look for: like being hit in the head by the blades of a miniature windmill or being struck in the ankle by your opponent's over-eager swings.

I'm trying for the life of me to figure out golf in general, never mind mini-golf. Who would think about hitting small balls around a large field, trying to get them into one particularly undersized hole, you ask? Well, the answer is simple. The fine people of Scotland.

There's a very simple reason why, too. It's called Haggis. Your average Scot eats this with as much enthusiasm as someone who meets a politician canvassing for re-election. Why do Scots eat haggis? Aren't you happy I came along to answer all of these questions? Scots eat haggis because they have a reputation to maintain: people think you're tough if you can hold down gross food. You want people to think you're tough if you wear a skirt. But a guy named Angus Fairway couldn't stand haggis, so he went out and invented an extremely long, time-consuming game that enabled him to avoid dinner.

But, not even the people in Scotland had the ability to create and perfect pointless activities like the Americans; thus, mini-golf was created. It

takes the creative genius of a country that invented monster-truck racing and the even more grueling super tractor-pull to turn a nice, relatively simple game like golf into something to which parents can take screaming children.

To kids, mini-golf is just one of those stupid things that parents make you do, like eating brussel sprouts without any sugar to hide the taste. Screaming children add a new facet to hitting balls through small obstacles. The only thing that could add more difficulty to the game is perhaps someone firing live ammunition at you while you try to sink a putt, or maybe land mines placed randomly around the hole.

Yet, the enjoyment never ceases. You have security in knowing that no real injury can befall you. Yunno, like at the beginning of Wide World of Sports when that skier goes flying off the job on his rear end and his body travels in five different directions.

Mini-golf is easier than normal-sized golf because club selection is kept to a minimum. Professional golfers spend hours during play trying to figure out which club to use just because they have so damn many of them. Mini-golf also does away with golf-fashions. There's nothing worse than what pros or amateurs wear when they golf. Even an average group of golfers can look like a kaleidoscope seen through the eyes of Keith Richards. At least mini-golf is easy on the eyes.

Mini-golf's unofficial motto: the least amount of exercise for the most money. Fore!

### Space University continued from page 3

will help to replace the chauvinistic and competitive nature of space exploration that has dominated the last generation.

Not surprisingly, ISU students use the 10-week programme to build a network of contacts which they try to maintain around the world. And although they are sponsored by academic, industrial and political interests, their loyalties are shared between the "world-space community" as well as their companies or countries. ISU students all speak more than one language (usually English), show an interest in space, and are selected based on their marks and leadership ability.

Two York students are among the 13 Canadian students attending the Space University this year. Bob Cheung, a PhD in vestibular physiology, is enrolled in ISU's life

sciences department; and Marianna Shepherd, currently studying earth and space sciences, is enrolled in the physical sciences section.

ISU intends to have a permanent campus built by 1992 and change its focus from summer sessions to a full-time university. Plans include a two-year Masters programme in space studies. The first year of such a degree would be done at the international branch campuses.

The first ISU session was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1988. The second session in 1989 was held at l'Universite Louis Pasteur in Strasbourg, France. The 1991 session will be held in Moscow and the 1992 session is scheduled for Japan.

Excalibur will carry a larger news feature on the human elements of ISU, its faculty and students, in our August 29 Orientation issue. Look for it, mates!

**The Muslim Student Federation of York University is currently accepting donations on behalf of the victims of the Iranian Earthquake. Cash donations and cheques (payable to the Iranian Earthquake Relief Fund) may be left at the YFS and Student Affairs offices. Thank you for your support and God bless you.**