

FEDERATION NOTES

OFS rally to aim at lower tuition fees

The federal government's proposed reductions in transfers to the provinces of between 1.5 and 11 billion dollars will have a drastic effect on post-secondary education throughout Canada. Both the NUS and many politicians feel that, like health, post-secondary education should have national guidelines, therefore the need for a national student voice.

Not that the provinces are entirely blameless in the funding of post-secondary education. In fact, one of the Ontario government's own committees (The Committee on the Future Role of Universities) concluded that if funding from the provinces continues at the present rate, several universities would have to close and only a handful of those that remain open would be able to provide a balanced curriculum. This, combined with the federal reductions makes for a very bleak future.

It is fairly easy to say that York would never close, or that the government would never close any universities at all—but these are assumptions which are not based on fact. It is fact, though, that for the past decade or so

universities, due to a severe lack of funds, have had to reduce the quality and accessibility of education through higher tuition fees, reduced faculty and inadequate student aid.

It is imperative that you, as a student, are made aware of these problems and act on them. Even though you may be able to afford university now, or are in a program which the government defines as a return on its investment, who is to say what will happen three, five, twenty years from now. There is a glut of engineers and computer science students and your children may not be able to attend university due to the high cost involved.

CYSF will be participating in attempts to convince the province that money invested in education will result in a greater return than money invested in fledgling auto or airplane manufacturers and anyone interested in helping is urged to contact CYSF in Room 105, Central Square.

It is important that the government see all education as an investment in the future and not, as Bette Stephenson says, "a viable alternative to unemployment."

As you are reading this, student leaders from across the province are meeting in Toronto for the fall conference of the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS).

It is here that discussion of problems encountered by students will take place and where solutions will hopefully be worked out. During the conference workshops, which reflect the major concerns of students will deal with issues such as rationalization, accessibility, course evaluations, disabled students and housing.

Representatives from CYSF and other student groups at York will be attending the conference and any York student is invited to visit the Carlton Inn as an observer and see how the OFS works.

For those who are not aware, OFS is an organization composed of and representing students in Ontario. It is a federation of thirty-two colleges and universities and has a membership of approximately a quarter of a million students. They have, in the past, had fairly good success in articulating the issues concerning students and have been instrumental in

causing the government to change direction on certain policies.

However, in October, a new national student organization called the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) will be founded as a coalition of the two existing national groups, the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Association of Student Councils (AOSC).

OFS will become the Ontario division of the CFS and will be known, of course, as CFS (Ontario). Consequently the national student movement and the provincial movements will be more closely aligned and significantly more effective.

The question you are probably asking is why we need a national student organization when education is a provincial responsibility.

This may be the case according to the B.N.A., but the federal government presently funds post-secondary education in Ontario to the tune of roughly 65%. The provincial government pays about 20%, while students pay the rest. This is true to varying degrees in all of the provinces.

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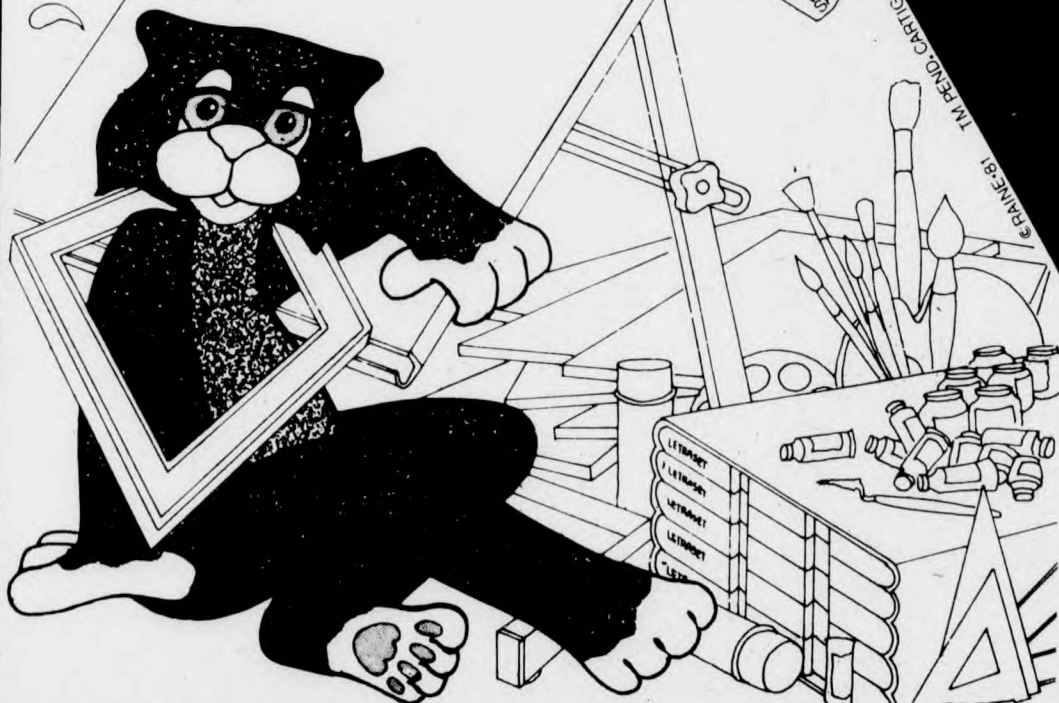
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