

175 youth band together

A MERGER OF CHAMPIONS

Two of the best drum and bugle corps in Canada merged on February 8.

The Toronto Optimists, sponsored by The Optimist Club of York Toronto and The Seneca Princemen, sponsored by The Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology.

The Optimists were Canada's most successful drum corps. Between 1958 and 1972 they captured 12 Canadian National championships, four international titles and 10 Ontario championships. They were the only drum corps in North America to win 11 National championships consecutively. They amassed well over 100 major competitive achievements during the 1960's.

The Seneca Princemen, formed in 1961 as the Scarborough Firefighters Boys Trumpet Band, won National titles at three different levels—Novice class in 1965, Junior B class in 1970 and Junior A in 1974. They were also Class A American International Champions in 1974. They became known as The Seneca Princemen in 1973 when Seneca College became their sponsor.

With the merger, the new organization will be known as The Seneca Optimists. They will be jointly sponsored by Seneca College and The Optimist Club of York Toronto.

Rehearsals begin immediately for the 1976 season with 175 members, all under the age of 21.



▲ The Seneca Princemen have joined forces with the Toronto Optimists in what could prove to be another successful Canadian merger. (DCW photo by Peter McCusker)

Because of present economic trends and the soaring costs of operating a competitive drum corps, it became necessary to merge for economic stability. The cost of financing a top ranking drum corps runs from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year.

The merger will form a large talent pool of marching members, instructors and management that will afford the Seneca Optimists the opportunity of competing throughout North America on an equal basis with the best corps in the U.S., something no Canadian corps has ever been able

to do consistently.

Separately, The Optimists and The Seneca Princemen would have been able to remain at their existing level of proficiency. But it would have become increasingly more difficult and costly for each of them to gain international prominence. Together, they stand an excellent chance.

This is the era of drum corps as a business. And in business only the best product survives.

The Seneca Optimists have been born to survive.