CUS AND STUDENT UNIONISM

Brian Hutchison
Associate Secretary

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Introduction

This paper represents an attempt to examine Canadian student unionism with a view to formulating a program of structural and organizational reform which is consistent with the expressed aims of local, provincial and national unions, and which takes fully into account the institutional and social context in which they must operate.

My approach is selective. That is to say, I have concentrated upon those questions which I regard as particularly significant for the future of Canadian student unionism, avoiding, insofar as possible, minor or peripheral issues. My aim has not been to devise an immutable formula, but rather to suggest a program of reform which is firmly grounded in present realities. I do not mean to suggest, however, that I have ignored the normative question - in other words, what "ought to be". Implicit in my analysis and prescription is a call for greater and more effective involvement of student unions in educational and social change and for the democratization of student unions at all levels of organization - local, provincial or regional and national.

I do not, it should be noted, see these two goals as being in conflict. Rather I regard them as essentially complementary. Certainly the former will not be realized to any significant extent until the latter has been achieved. And inasmuch as top-down structural reform is not in itself sufficient to produce democratization, that goal will only be realized if student unions address questions which are highly relevant to their members' lives, namely - in my view - questions of educational and social significance.

There are in this country two more or less distinct operative conceptions of the student and the student union, one represented in practice by Quebec student syndicalism and the other exemplified by student unions in the nine remaining provinces.[1]

Student syndicalism defines the student as a young intellectual worker, a full and productive member of society. His work is that of "intellectual apprenticeship." What justifies his status as full citizen (aside from his age) is the importance of this work for the future of his society. As a worker the student is entitled to remuneration in a form of a stipend (pré-salaire),

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[1] *I have drawn heavily for my characterization of student syndicalism on a paper prepared for the founding Congress of UGEQ by Serge Joyal. My portrayal of traditional Canadian student unionism has also been influenced, but to a much lesser extent, by Joyal's analysis.*

free education being assumed. As a citizen, he has attendant rights and social responsibilities. The chief instrument for the expression of these rights and the exercise of these responsibilities is his student union, his functionally-defined social group in organized form. Student syndicalism is characterized by a "recognition" that all student problems are merely aspects of national problems, that student problems, particularly the problems of education, are rooted in the existing socio-economic structures and that, as a result, their solution lies in the recasting of these structures in the direction of a more just and humane society. Students' problems and educational problems must always be defined within the total social context.

The more traditional conception, manifested in this country by student unions outside Quebec, is less easy to characterize, if only because it is nowhere applied in practice without some degree of distortion. In its pure form, this "philogophy" defines the student as an unproductive and dependent being whose relation to society is essentially parasitical. His role in education is seen as a passive one. He receives an education at the hands of his teachers. His task is to accumulate facts and qualifications in preparation for a personal, more or less distant, future; his studies are not considered to be socially significant. The student is seen as a citizen-in-training, outside or on the fringes of active society and devoid of social responsibility. He is dependent upon the goodwill of his parents, the state, or both, for financial assistance. Since his activity is not regarded as socially productive, any funds he receives from the state are by way of charity.

The student is seen as possessing certain privileges, largely confined to the non-academic sphere. The role of his student union centres around the defense of these privileges and the servicing of his immediate needs. A rigid line of separation is drawn between student problems and social problems, with only the former being considered a legitimate concern of the student union. Student problems and social problems are, for practical purposes, assumed to be unrelated. Separation of the student's role as student from the student's role as citizen - if indeed the latter role is conceded at all - is thought to be both possible and desirable. In his capacity as citizen the student must act as an individual and not as a member of his functionally-determined social group.

The two conceptions which I have attempted to sketch are reflected in the existence in this country of two organizations defining themselves as national unions of students, the Canadian Union of Students (CUS) and l'Union générale des étudiants du Québec (UGEQ).

UGEQ was founded as a syndicalist student union in November of 1964, following several months of discussion by a "provisional committee". Participating in the founding Congress were: l'Association générale des étudiants de l'Université Laval, l'Association générale des étudiants de l'Université de Montréal, l'Association générale des étudiants de l'Université de Sherbrooke, la Fédération des normaliens du Québec and la Fédération des Associations des étudiants des collèges classiques du Québec; Laval, Sherbrooke and Montreal having withdrawn from CUS during August and September. Although rising Quebec nationalism

was unquestionably an important factor leading to the founding of an independent union of Quebec students, it was perhaps of secondary importance. At the root of UGEQ's formation was its founders' rejection of the theory and practice of student unionism represented by CUS and its local members. They viewed the student not as passive, dependent and unproductive, but as a full and active citizen of society. In light of this view, the activities of CUS and its members appeared to them trivial, self-centred and basically irrelevant. They saw in the syndicalist alternative an effective means whereby students could confront their problems. Inasmuch as their basic conception of the student and student unionism was in fundamental conflict with that expressed by CUS, they saw no further basis for co-operation with student unions in other provinces.

Since its founding UGEQ has grown to include all of Quebec's English-speaking universities but one (Bishop's). CUS has had no Quebec members since 1966.

As indicated above, UGEQ identifies Quebec as a nation and itself as a national union of students. The "nation" is defined geographically by Quebec's provincial boundaries and culturally, socially, economically and linguistically by the national (French) majority. The English-speaking population is seen as a national minority within the nation of Quebec so defined. This concept of nation has not, for the most part, been taken to imply statehood. To this point in time, UGEQ has had no stated policy in regard to the political (constitutional) status of Quebec. During the coming year UGEQ will conduct a referendum on the "national" question among its members. The results of that referendum will presumably serve as the basis for its constitutional policy.

Over the last two or three years, the conceptual gap between UGEQ's member unions and the member unions of CUS has narrowed considerably as the latter have reassessed and modified their basic assumptions. Nevertheless, there remain important theoretical and practical differences.

In view of this situation, I have by and large confined myself in this paper to a discussion of student unionism as it has developed in the nine predominantly English-speaking provinces. My use of the terms Canada, Canadian and national should be understood in this light. Whenever I employ the term "Canadian" in reference to student unions, I am in fact referring to student unions - whether local, provincial or national - outside Quebec.

The Local Union

The nature of student government activity has, during recent years, changed in such a way as to deprive the very term "student government" of its descriptive force. At one time students' councils confined themselves almost entirely to decision-making and action within the sphere of activity in which they have come to be accorded more or less exclusive jurisdiction - the so-called "extra-curricular" sphere. Their activities could therefore be legitimately described as "governmental".[2]

Over the last few years, however, students' councils have gradually assumed a "pressure group" character, attempting to effect change in areas (relating chiefly to education) over which they have no direct control. This is not to say that the governmental role has been abandoned, but rather that a new dimension has been added and that in many cases this new dimension has assumed primacy - although it should be noted that verbal commitment to reform activity has rarely been reflected in a commitment of human and financial resources.

The emergence of pressure group activity as a feature of students' council programming has been accompanied by subtle changes in approach toward the more traditional functions of student government. On many campuses, the students' council has begun to play a less direct role in the organization of "social" activities, this function having taken over by voluntary organizations or by student government at the college, faculty or residence level. Although students' councils continue to devote considerable time to the distribution of funds among various student groups and organizations, this process is becoming increasingly systematized, less ad hoc, and therefore less time-consuming. Moreover, at a number of universities[3] - particularly the larger ones - routine program administration is being turned over to full-time employees, thereby freeing councillors for more creative forms of activity.

On some campuses students have been granted partial or conditional self-government with respect to "social conduct". However, such cases are sufficiently rare as to be insignificant; student government does not play a major role in this area. Even in the few instances where this generalization does

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2 *It should be noted, however, that one of powers normally associated with governmental function, taxation, has always been somewhat circumscribed in the case of student government. As a rule, increases in council fees are subject to Board of Governors (or, rarely, Senate) approval, and collection is dependent upon administrative cooperation.*

3 *As a metter of convenience, the term "university" is used throughout this paper to refer generally to post-secondary educational institutions.*

not apply, students' councils have not generally been given authority to establish or alter regulations, but have served, in effect, as the enforcement and/or judicial arm of the decision-making body vested with that authority.

University administrations have, on a number of campuses, recently begun to assume responsibility for activities and services formerly controlled by student government (e.g., housing registries, counselling services, athletic and cultural programs). This tendency, while perhaps not widespread at the present time, seems likely to gain strength. Its probable effects upon the character and focus of student government activity are obvious.

The following excerpt from a 1964 CUS publication entitled "Your Education Committee - What Can It Do?" bears vivid witness to the manner in which students' councils' perception of their role has changed during the past four years. Significantly, the quoted section appears - almost as an afterthought - following more than eight pages of program suggestions.

> *"H. To Prepare Briefs:*
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> *Some Education Committees see it as their function to attempt to improve the lot of their students by investigating conditions on their own campus, and, having compiled their results, presenting recommendations to the administration. This changes the role of the committee from a strictly discussion forum to a body which stands for a particular group of opinions. This step should be considered carefully for the decision carries definite "political" implications.*
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> *"Areas that might be considered, once you have decided to become a pressure group of this kind, include such things as library services, procedure at the Book Store, cost of meals and the quality of food at the university cafeteria, and so on."*

The Duff-Berdahl report on university government in Canada, following its release in 1966, acted as a potent catalyst in the process of student government re-orientation. Publication of that report induced students, beginning chiefly with students' councillors, to assess critically their role in university decision-making and served for some as a springboard to critical analysis of Canadian educational aims, practices and institutions in general.

Despite the assumption of a pressure group role, students' councils have, for the most part, continued to operate in the elitist fashion which characterized their strictly governmental period. As long as councils acted only with reference to areas in which their authority was more or less final, active student body support for their policies was unnecessary; tacit acceptance, indifference or grudging consent - in short, non-opposition - would do just as well. Moreover, since most council decisions were essentially trivial, the mass of students could hardly be expected to be greatly troubled by remoteness from, and lack of involvement in students' council decision-making. However, the elitist approach, tolerable in a sandbox government, is totally

inappropriate to a body attempting to influence events beyond its direct control. Any pressure group is dependent for its effectiveness upon active and demonstrable membership support for its programs. Elitism and mass support are unlikely bedfellows.

Notwithstanding recent changes in university government, the student remains basically powerless in relation to the university. University administrators have, over the last two or three years, developed an interesting penchant for discussing "the relationship between students and the university." Understandably, this dichotomy has been poorly received by students. Nevertheless its descriptive validity must be conceded. Students are "at" rather than "part of" the university. They are at best consumers of the university's wares and at worst unfinished human goods in the final stages of processing, packaging, inspection and certification for safety.

It has been suggested that the recent addition of students to various decision-making bodies within the university has altered the student's status, that he is no longer without power. I would argue, however, the change is more apparent than real. In numerical terms, the extent of student "participation", is generally insignificant, particularly at the higher levels of decision-making. As a rule, the numerical strength of student representation is inversely related to a given body's position in the decision-making hierarchy, and also, though less perfectly, to the impact of that body's decisions on the lives of students. Consequently, under all but the most unusual circumstances the voting behaviour of student representatives is of no consequence to the decision made. Students have little more than a voice - and a rather weak voice at that.

Voice would, of course, take on considerable importance - and voting strength lose all meaning - if the basic interests of those groups represented in the decision-making process (primarily students, faculty and administrators) were fundamentally the same. Such, however, is not the case. Although group interests will obviously coincide on certain specific questions, it is naive to assume identity of interests as a general phenomenon.

By virtue of their role, administrators tend to attach great importance to order, stability, administrative convenience, institutional prestige and conspicuous growth (physical plant, fields of study, etc.). Any program of reform designed to further ends other than these has little appeal for administrators, and may be perceived as threatening, particularly if the program has administrative implications. Moreover, since administrators have achieved at least some measure of success within the framework of the status quo, they are unlikely to see cause for more than minor change.

While the interests of faculty are less likely than those of administrators to be antagonistic to student interests, there are nevertheless important questions on which fundamental disagreement is to be expected. For example, the development of "academic" programs which transcend specialties and disciplines in an attempt to overcome the increasing "fragmentation of knowledge", will in all likelihood meet with strong faculty resistance. Whatever academic status (and financial security) a faculty member possesses derives, after all, from "achievement" within a particular discipline. A challenge to the disciplinary structure is therefore a challenge to faculty status.

From the reform point of view, "student participation" as we now know it is further rendered ineffective by the existence, for each decision-making body, of certain historically-established terms of reference - either explicit or merely understood - and of a particular role in the operation and maintenance of the university as it is. The terms of reference, although they may include the re-examination of "techniques", are unlikely to extend to the re-examination of basic premises. And to the extent that decision-making bodies are pre-occupied with their routine functions, they are incapable of stepping back and examining in a radical (that is, fundamental) way the institution as a whole and their own place within it.

The nearly universal practice of "closed" decision-making gives rise to a dual problem by isolating student representatives from those they are expected to represent. On the one hand, student representatives cannot be held responsible for their actions, because their "constituents" are denied knowledge of those actions. And on the other hand, the ability of student representatives to influence decisions is limited by their inability to appeal to their "constituents" for support.

My purpose in outlining those factors which limit the impact of "student participation" in its usual form has not been to disparage this development or to suggest that such participation is without value. I have, however, attempted to demonstrate that the essential position of the student within the university has not been fundamentally altered by the advent of "student participation", and that "student participation" as currently conceived cannot, in and of itself, be counted upon to produce major advance in terms of substantive university reform. The student does not yet play a significant role, either directly or through his representatives, in shaping his educational environment. Those few choices which he does make (e.g., courses) continue to be from among alternatives formulated by others.

If "student participation" has failed to yield significant reforms, direct students' council action has been almost equally unproductive. The reform activities of students' councils tend to follow a definite pattern:

1) preparation by an ad hoc (executive-dominated) committee of a brief which outlines a series of proposal and presents supporting evidence and argumentation;

2) council ratification of the resulting brief;

3) presentation of the brief to the appropriate university authorities, usually high-level administrators, but occasionally the university Senate or Board of Governors;

4) meetings between the "authorities" and the president or a small group of councillors (usually members of the executive) for purposes of "discussing" the brief.

This approach is based upon the implicit assumption that administrators (faculty and Board members) are "reasonable", basically disinterested persons, and that their response will therefore be determined on purely rational grounds. This assumption is, of course, untenable. As I have attempted to suggest above, vested interests do, in fact, exist and are, moreover, a potent factor in determining the responses of decision-makers to proposals for change. Every students' council in Canada has no doubt had the experience of presenting to the university administration carefully reasoned, impeccably documented and intentionally "modest" proposals, only to have them rejected on the basis of incredibly flimsy, and obviously ex past facto, rationalizations - if, indeed, "reasons" for the rejection are given at all.

Cavalier responses of this sort are made possible - and encouraged - by the students' council's position of powerlessness vis-à-vis the university administration. What appears at first blush to be a bargaining relationship is, in fact, a relationship between supplicant and master. Such a relationship hardly demands a reasoned response from the master.

Proposals for change carry with them an element of implied criticism directed toward those responsible for the existing state of affairs - all the more so if the proposals are advanced by a body external to the decision-making apparatus. Insofar as decision-makers are sensitive to this implied criticism, their basic inclination will be to reject such proposals, since acceptance would amount to an admission of failure or inadequacy as decision-makers. This phenomenon has obvious bearing upon the extent to which university authorities are receptive to the "humble pleadings" of students' councils.

Lack of active student support is unquestionably the chief source of students' council weakness in dealings with university decision-makers. Apparently regarding non-opposition as an adequate form of student "support", most councils have consistently failed to seek mass student involvement in the development of proposals, despite compelling grounds, both democratic and strategic, for doing so. University decision-makers are, of course, well aware of this situation and, as one would expect, have taken full advantage of the political isolation of students' councils from their constituents.

It becomes increasingly apparent that traditional forms of student organization and action are inappropriate to present circumstances. Students' councils are, without exception, committed to some measure of educational and social reform, and, as a result, to pressure group activity. However, in playing out this role, they have continued to operate in the manner of a governing elite, thereby condemning themselves to an unending succession of failures interrupted only occasionally by marginal gains. Councils have failed to recognize that whatever bargaining strength they possess derives ultimately from the indispensibility of students to the educational process and from their consequent ability to halt that process by a withdrawal of "services."

Students' councils, by virtue of their political isolation from the mass of students, are thus cut off from their only source of potential strength. This situation will persist until such time as students' council methods become political rather than bureaucratic, until the student association becomes a student union, and until council proposals become student demands. Such a transformation would have profound affects upon the position of students - acting through their union - within the university and society. Negotiations, whether with university or governmental authorities, would take on a significance which they have hitherto lacked. The traditional situation, whereby the students' council addresses hopeful (and often naive) requests to the holders of power, would give way to one in which two parties of at least comparable political strength enter into a bargaining relationship. The bargaining strength of one party would rest upon formal authority and attendant decision-making prerogatives, while that of the other would derive from ability to disrupt a vital social process. As expressed in this formulation, the student union's political situation bears striking resemblance to that of a labour union.

To this point in time few (if any) councils have made significant attempts to break with their elitist past. Initial efforts in this direction must therefore be undertaken essentially without benefit of precedent, suggesting the need for an experimental and adaptable approach.

Any student union aspiring to political potency must seek to engage the whole of its membership in certain union activities which have, until now, remained the more or less exclusive preserve of those involved in, or associated with, "student government." Chief among these activities are study and analysis of educational and other social problems, definition of alternatives to the status quo (or prevailing draft), formulation of specific programs of reform, consideration of strategic and tactical questions, and finally, efforts directed toward the realization of concrete demands. The goal of political effectiveness cannot be reconciled with the incestuous insularity so characteristic of "student government" as it has developed in Canada. A decisive reorientation is required.

Students' councils cannot create a situation of widespread social concern and engagement by simple legislative decree. However, by exposing students to analyses and proposals which represent a fundamental challenge to the status quo and its supporting rhetoric, they can induce students to examine certain features of their educational and social environment which, without conscious reflection, they have gradually come to accept as "natural" and therefore inviolable. The aim of such a program should not be to secure student "identification" with the end-products of council decision-making (although that may be the result), but rather to stimulate discussion of educational and social issues among the greatest possible number of students and to encourage students to come to grips, on an individual and collective basis, with the problems which the share by virtue of a common social role and life situation. An approach designed merely to "sell" council proposals to an unthinking student body is not only questionable on democratic grounds but also potentially disastrous from a strategic and tactical point of view. In presenting a position, councils should attempt to convey not only the final

product of their deliberations but also the thought process underlying and giving rise to that product. Since campus newspapers cannot be relied upon (or expected) to perform this function, councils must develop other mechanisms for "communicating" with students.

Clearly, intense student discussion of educational and social problems should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather as a prelude to action aimed at the solution of such problems. In the absence of an action orientation, analysis, discussion and debate become sterile academic exercises.

The success of council efforts to animate their constituents is by no means assured. In fact, the short term results are likely to be rather discouraging. An individual's response to criticism of the status quo is not determined solely by the objective validity of that criticism, but is influenced, sometimes decisively, by his subjective state. To the extent that his consciousness (appreciation of social and personal reality) is false, to the extent that he has internalized a distorted view of the nature of society and of his situation within it, he will tend to reject precisely that analysis which accurately portrays existing conditions and, moreover, coincides with his objective interests. Inasmuch as the chief instruments of socialization in our society (family, school, communications media) foster allegiance to the status quo (or rather to its essentials) - as distinct from a vision of what could or should be - this situation of "false consciousness" will, in all likelihood, prove to be rather common. It would appear then that any program of social animation which is conceived on the basis of a narrow, short-run perspective, or which fails to take into account "where students are at", runs a high risk of failure.

Possible mechanisms, both direct and indirect, by which issues can be carried to the general student population include the following:

1. Council "Newsletter". Devoted to presentation and explanation of council policy, discussion of specific problems facing the council and students generally, and analysis of a general nature. Provision made for contributions by other than council members. Distributed, insofar as possible, to all union members. Produced on either a regular or an irregular basis.

2. Pamphlets. Addressing issues of major importance. Distributed, preferably by mail, to all students.

3. Campus Newspaper. Purchase of space, perhaps on a regular basis, for purposes of raising and discussing current issues.

4. Documentation Centre. Establishment of an open collection of materials dealing with educational reform and related topics. Might include minutes of various decision-making bodies within the university, reports and other relevant documents of local, national or international origin, periodicals, etc. Accessible to students faculty and staff. Library reading room might be suitable location.

5. Publications List. Distribution to the union membership of a list of publications - chiefly papers devoted to educational and social analysis - available on request from the council.

6. Orientation Programs focussing upon discussion of the nature of the student's educational and social role. Attempts should be made to relate discussion to the student's previous educational experiences and to his expectations concerning the university.

7. Seminars, Symposia, Teach-ins.

8. Weekend Retreats. These events will, in the main, attract persons already concerned with educational and social issues. They should therefore be viewed as a means of developing cadres for future educational and organizing activity on the campus.

9. Continuing Seminar or Study Groups. In addition to serving as cadres, such groups would hopefully become a source of advanced thought..

10. Curriculum Study. Conducting a systematic study of the university curriculum based upon group discussions involving larger numbers of students rather than upon static questionnaire responses.

11. Course Unions. Encouraging the formulation and continued activity of course and faculty unions (e.g. sociology, classics, education) as vehicles of educational reform. It should be remembered however, that such organizations, particularly if they become isolated from the general student union, can serve to reinforce the existing trend toward increasing academic specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge.

12. Council Members. Freeing council members from routine administrative tasks in order that they may undertake educational and organizing activity. Council members should be encouraged to develop formal and informal mechanisms for discussing educational issues with their constituents.

13. Campaign Grants. By providing campaign grants, unions could ensure that each candidate for council possessed the necessary resources to present his platform to the electorate in a technically adequate fashion.

14. Campus Political Parties. It is frequently suggested - not without some justification - that the emergence of independent student political parties would have the effect of establishing council elections as contests based upon political rather than personality distinctions and would produce increased student awareness and understanding of educational and social problems. However, there appear to be few practical means by which students' councils can encourage the development of parties likely to produce the desired results. Certainly the legislative approach has little to recommend it. While councils could ensure the development of a party system merely by requiring that each candidate be identified with a party, the organizations formed in response to such a requirement are as likely

to be based upon personal as ideological affinity and would in many cases amount to little more than slates. Although the introduction of "proportional representation" (whereby seats are distributed among the competing parties in proportion to their share of the popular vote) would tend to reduce such risks, it would also, by eliminating the constituency basis of council representation, militate against effective educational and organizing work on the part of council members. The legislative introduction of a party system (with or without proportional representation) is likely to result in the formation of parties which are politically artificial, characterized more by style than ideological perspective and representing a scatter of political notions rather than a coherent political program. In short, parties formed out of constitutional necessity will almost certainly possess a trivial, sand-box character. Mass-based parties or "political movements" (organizations engaging in several forms of political action, electoral activity being only one of them) representing clearly definable and distinct political orientations will not arise in response to legislative action unless the necessary conditions for their existence are already present - in which case they would have arisen "spontaneously." With this in mind, councils should facilitate the development of political parties (movements) by providing standard grants to such groups, but should not introduce a party system by legislative means. Council grants to student political parties should be contingent only upon their ability to demonstrate a stipulated minimum membership and should provide funds for educational and organizing activity as well as election campaigning.

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The chief structural barrier to mass involvement in student union affairs lies in the large base units of student organization - generally colleges or faculties. Participatory forms of decision-making are inconceivable within this framework. Moreover, the alternatives are not promising. Organizational units based upon place of residence would be impossible to create since many students - often a substantial majority - do not live in "communal" residences. As a basis for student organization, academic program or departmental affiliation, despite certain attractions, is deficient in at least two respects: 1) intellectual narrowing and academic professionalism may be promoted by an accentuation of divisions along disciplinary lines; 2) first year students are not generally committed to an academic specialty and, as a result, could not be organized within a departmental framework. Decision-making by referendum cannot be regarded as a substitute for decentralized structures based upon small organizational units. Referenda do record student opinion, but inasmuch as they provide no mechanism for direct student involvement in study, discussion and debate of the issue at hand, that opinion is as likely to be based upon ignorance as understanding. It would appear than, that adequate student union structures cannot be developed under present conditions, and that future possibilities in this regard will be defined largely by the structural and organizational evolution of the university <u>per se</u>.

The ultimate goal of student union efforts with respect to internal reorganization should be a situation in which students (that is, all students) are organized for purposes of studying their problems, determining their needs, formulating demands and, as necessary, manifesting their dissatisfaction with the status quo or their support for specific demands. Immediate demands would presumably be formulated in reference to long-range objectives and their realization would be seen as but one step in a continuing struggle toward eventual realization of those objectives. Demands should be negotiable without being formless, since negotiation will play a central role in student union efforts to effect change. Only when negotiations are hopelessly deadlocked, when differences are irreconcilable, should manifestations in general, and strike action in particular, be considered. At that point, however, they become the only recourse apart, that is, from an acceptance of defeat.

Insofar as student unions are dependent for their very existence upon the continued willingness of university administrations to collect union fees, they remain vulnerable to administrative pressures. In view of this source of weakness, student unions should perhaps consider seeking government legislation which would provide for a guaranteed "check-off" arrangement.

Provincial and National Unions

During the period prior to 1967, CUS was organized - at least formally - on a regional basis. The four regions - Ontario, the Maritimes, Quebec and the West - remained, throughout their existence, rather obscure appendages to the CUS decision-making and programming apparatus. Their role within the union was at all times ambiguous and ill-defined. As a result, they never became substantially more than forums for rambling discussion and somewhat pointless debate. In effecting their dissolution, the 1967 Congress merely gave official recognition to what had, in fact, already taken place. The Western Region was more or less abandoned following the 1966 Congress. The Quebec Region, which had been steadily shrinking since the formation of UGEQ in 1964, ceased to exist when the remaining two members, Bishop's and McGill, withdrew from CUS in the fall of 1966. The Atlantic Region was also showing signs of decay.

Collapse of the Regions coincided with, and to some extent impelled, the emergence of independent provincial unions. In November 1966, the British Columbia Assembly of Students was formed. During the course of 1966-67, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick followed suit. Finally, in March, 1967 the Ontario Region reconstituted itself as the Ontario Union of Students, severing its formal ties with the national union.

Since CUS had neither planned nor anticipated the formation of provincial unions, no possibility existed for their development within a national framework. They were, by definition, structurally independent of CUS. And so they remain, the desirability of this arrangement never having been seriously questioned but, on the contrary, quietly and uncritically assumed. The question of structural relationships between national and provincial unions was ignored (and therefore begged) by the 1967 Congress and by the 1966-67 Board of Directors in its report on the membership, structure and financing of CUS. Both were content merely to recommend that CUS "do everything in its power to support their (the provincial unions') speedy development" - presumably through moral support and technical assistance.

Although justification is rarely considered necessary, the rationale for independent provincial organizations generally takes the following form:

1) In terms of the development of Canadian student unionism, membership of a given university in a provincial union is preferable to isolation.

2) The recently-established universities are basically provincial in orientation and their students are therefore much more favourably disposed toward provincial unions than they would be toward a national-provincial package.

3) Local unions at the smaller institutions, many of them newly-established, are hard-pressed financially due to the high fixed costs involved in providing certain essential programs (e.g., a campus newspaper). Although membership in a provincial union is almost certainly within their financial means, membership in a national union or dual, national-provincial membership may not be. Given a choice between dual membership and isolation they might therefore be inclined to choose the latter.

4) Members of provincial unions, as a result of exposure to schools with dual membership, will be almost certain to join the national union "when they become ready for it" - financially and otherwise.

Despite a certain superficial appeal, the case for independent provincial unions is basically weak. Even if it is true that the orientation of certain local unions is essentially provincial, surely that does not in itself justify an arrangement which can only serve to perpetuate provincial (that is, narrow) attitudes and outlooks. Unless parochialism is in some way perceived as laudable or virtuous, its prevalence indicates, on the contrary, a need to create conditions which facilitate rather than inhibit the broadening of conceptual horizons. Small local unions are undoubtedly subject to severe financial constraints as a direct result of limited size and consequent inability to achieve economies of scale.[4] Inasmuch as these constraints may effectively preclude their membership in provincial and/or national organizations, this problem (to which I shall return later) must be recognized and dealt with by those organizations. For the present it is sufficient to note that the establishment and maintenance of independent provincial unions is but one possible approach to this problem - and a rather unsatisfactory approach at that. Finally, it is difficult to conceive of conditions - other than financial - under which a local union is "ready" for membership in a provincial union but somehow unfit for membership in a national organization.

The case for independent provincial unions would be much more convincing were provincial and national organizations simply performing identical functions on different scales. Such however is not the case. In fact, a division of labour has been established - not altogether consciously - between the national and provincial levels of organization. For example, the burden of research

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[4] *The term "economies of scale" gives expression to the fact that in certain operations costs do not increase in proportion to the level of "output" or activity; in other words, that per "unit" costs decrease as the scale of operation increases. This phenomenon is in part attributable to the existence of certain costs which are constant or "fixed", whatever the scale of operation. Economies of scale explain, for example, why the cost of producing 5000 copies of a campus newspaper is <u>not</u> ten times greater than the cost of producing 500.*

and information has fallen to the national union, while provincial unions - to the extent that they have become organizationally and financially viable - have concentrated their efforts upon influencing the policies and actions of provincial governments. Although allocation of resources and functions between the two levels has not been fully rationalized, they have nevertheless come to complement rather than compete against each other, with provincial unions being in large measure parasitical upon the national union.

Advocates of provincial union independence base their position upon the questionable, usually unstated, assumption that strong provincial unions can develop under conditions of structural isolation from each other and from a national organization. But organizational and hence political strength require financial solvency for their development. In provinces with a large student population (e.g. Ontario and British Columbia) a modest per capita levy is sufficient to provide the necessary funds. This is not true however of unions with a small potential membership (e.g. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Unless these unions are willing to rely upon government largesse or corporate generosity as the financial basis of their existence - realizing the political limitations such dependence might entail - they are condemned to perpetual weakness. Clearly, the development of strong provincial unions as a general phenomenon requires redistribution of resources such as can be achieved only through the medium of a national organization.

It can be argued - although rather unconvincingly - that the increasing provincialization of education has eliminated the need for a national student organization or, at the very least, markedly reduced its significance. This view has the effect of 1) extracting educational institutions from their social context, 2) ignoring problems which transcend provincial boundaries, and 3) assuming the basic immutability of present constitutional arrangements.

Educational institutions are shaped by both internal and external forces, the latter being in the long run vastly more important than the former. The nature of our schools and universities has been in large measure determined by the requirements of business and industry (hardly respecters of provincial boundaries) with government frequently acting as their agent. The educational system serves corporate interests not only by providing skilled manpower but also by inculcating - for the most part indirectly - values, attitudes and a view of man in society which are appropriate to the corporate milieu. In view of this situation, a provincial orientation stands condemned as altogether too narrow. Similarly, the financing of education cannot be dealt with on a purely provincial basis. Rather, educational financing must be considered in light of general social priorities, for which purpose a national perspective is required.

The feasibility of cooperative effort is determined by the extent to which the potential cooperators face common problems under more or less identical social, political and economic conditions. The objective basis for a strong national union of students within English Canada - that is, embracing the nine English-speaking provinces - becomes immediately apparent when this criterion is applied. Although distinctive regional, provincial and local characteristics cannot be denied or discounted, the points of divergence tend to be super-

ficial whereas the similarities tend to be basic.[5] For example, educational objectives and practices do not vary substantially - at least in their essential aspects - from one region or province to another. On the contrary, a Nova Scotia education is, in terms of both form and content, virtually indistinguishable from an Ontario, a Saskatchewan or a British Columbia education. That is to say, the situation of a student in one province is not qualitatively different from that of a student in any other province. This fundamental sameness, in education as in other fields, does not, however, extend to Quebec. Returning to the education example, Quebec possesses an educational system which, having developed under the influence of certain historical forces not present in English-Canada, is, in many respects, distinctive.

The basically uniform situation of students throughout English Canada permits extensive pooling of resources at the national level - with the result that projects beyond the capabilities of any one local (or provincial) union can be readily undertaken. Although unions at very large universities could undoubtedly carry out research and education programs of major proportions on the basis of their own resources, this is certainly not true of most local unions. The national and, to a lesser extent, provincial organizations therefore have the effect of reducing resource disparities between local unions of differing sizes and, in the case of the national union, between large and small provincial associations. It follows that the benefits of membership in a national (or provincial) organization are proportionately greater for the small schools than for the large. The former area, in effect, being subsidized by the latter. Which is as it should be. The size of a given local union is, after all, a matter of historical accident rather than a reflection of its members' virtues or failings. Resource equalization is essential if Canadian students are to move together in the struggle for educational and social reform. And failure to move together may, in the end, mean failure to move at all.

Organization on a national basis substantially reduces duplication of activity and, in doing so, promotes the efficient use of total resources. This effect is particularly marked in the fields of theoretical development, research, information and membership education. For example, research or analysis carried out on one campus and disseminated through the national union can render unnecessary, or at least simplify, parallel work elsewhere. Similarly, a study conducted at the national level can in effect replace several provincial or numerous local studies. Obviously, however, division of labour along these *lines can be extensive only if all members of the national union operate* within a rather homogeneous educational and social environment.

The thesis that while the national union has a definite role to play in such areas as research, communications, and policy development, the actual achievement of educational and social objectives is dependent solely upon local and

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[5] *At the provincial and regional level one such similarity is the presence of a French-speaking minority.*

provincial efforts, has, over the past two years, come to be treated as virtually a self-evident truth. Although the claim is not without some objective basis, it nevertheless represents a dangerous oversimplication. The increasing incidence of constitutional buck-passing between the federal and provincial levels of government indicates its inadequacy as a strategic assumption. The fate of recent efforts to reduce or prevent increases in tuition and residence fees illustrates the problem: the federal government disclaims responsibility, while provincial authorities decry federal hoarding of tax revenues.

The situation is equally confused with respect to other aspects of educational financing and in such fields as housing, "social welfare" and economic planning. It becomes increasingly clear that political effectiveness in these and other areas presupposes a simultaneous assault upon both levels of government involving the presentation of concrete proposals for joint federal-provincial action. Such proposals must obviously be made in light of a closely-defined position on the status of Quebec and on constitutional arrangements in general - questions which, in the past, CUS has shown great reluctance to address in a systematic and comprehensive way. So much so, that one might well ask whether the eagerness with which CUS and its member unions have "recognized" the de facto pre-eminence of provincial authority does not reflect a desire to avoid such questions by minimizing the importance of federal decision-making insofar as the union's political objectives are concerned. As long as we can achieve our goals by action at the provincial level, - or so the argument goes - we needn't concern ourselves with the "Quebec problem" or such constitutional niceties as the federal-provincial "division of powers."

Over the years, CUS has consistently allowed itself to be carried along in the constitutional drift, - regardless of the direction that drift appears to be taking - implicitly accepting - if we are to judge by its actions - both the existing provisions of the British North America Act and whatever interpretation of the Act is currently in vogue. This "non-position" must not be maintained - not only because the constitutional question is of fundamental importance to the country's future development but also because, as I have suggested above, our ostrich posture has crippled Canadian student unionism as a political force. We must attempt to define the character of Canada and of Quebec and to establish a clear policy in light of that analysis. We must ask ourselves whether Canada is not, in fact, a bi-national state, and, if it is, whether that bi-national character should not be translated into political and constitutional reality; indeed, whether our constitution should not be re-negotiated as between two nations. We must ask whether the development not only of Quebec, but also of English-Canada, is not being stunted by quixotic efforts to preserve the illusion of Quebec as a province "comme les autres"; whether the fragmentation of English-Canada which these efforts have produced - and will apparently continue to produce - will not, in effect, guarantee the maintenance and further progression of our economic, political and cultural subservience to the United States.

Three concrete proposals emerge from the foregoing analysis:

1) *That CUS and the provincial unions be brought together within the framework of a single organization such that membership in the appropriate provincial organization follows from membership in the national union and is not possible on any other basis. Members would pay a single levy to the national union and the provincial organizations would be financed with funds obtained in this manner, the provincial unions having the smallest student population base (and therefore fewest members) receiving, on a per capita basis a greater amount than the large unions. Special arrangements would have to be made for members located in provinces where a provincial union remains for the present unnecessary (e.g. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island).*

(The alternative approach to integration - transformation of CUS into a federation of provincial unions - has little to recommend it. Such a structure would, by its very nature, militate against concerted national action, since, for example, provincial representatives would almost certainly have to refer proposals for political action back to their respective memberships before a final decision could be taken. Moreover, the national body would be controlled by provincial chieftains whose understandable inclination would be to attach primary importance to the provincial, as against the national, organization. This tendency would merely serve to reinforce an inherent feature - and basic principle - of federated organizations: supremacy of the constituent units - in this case, provincial unions. By comparison, the structure proposed above is highly flexible, permitting decisive action on either a provincial or a national basis, whichever is appropriate to the situation at hand.

Unquestionably the most damning feature of federations is their characteristic remoteness from individual members. As a federation of local unions, CUS has been plagued by this problem. As a federation of federations (provincial unions), its position would be hopeless. Decision-making and the election of officials would be at least twice removed from the general membership, a situation hardly designed to promote individual identification with the national union.

The "federation" approach stands condemned on both democratic and strategic grounds.)

2) *That CUS membership fees be based upon a formula which prescribes a lower per capita levy for small unions than for those of larger size.*

(This recommendation should not be interpreted as a resurrection of the once common proposal for establishing an "associate" form of CUS membership, whereby certain unions would, if they so desired, be exempt from the "political" aspects of CUS activity and subject to reduced fees and general benefits. On the contrary, full participation would be expected of each member. Each would receive identical benefits and assume identical responsibilities, the differential levy merely reflecting recognition of the financial limitations which invariably accompany smallness and of the significant economies which conversely accompany size.

Considerable variation is possible insofar as the precise nature of the formula is concerned. It might, for example, prescribe two standard levies, one applicable to unions having fewer than, say, 500 members, and another for unions with a membership of 500 or more. Alternatively, several gradations might be established to correspond with certain specified ranges in membership.)

3) *That a majority vote of the local union's general membership be made a constitutional requirement for affiliation with CUS, and, similarly, that a disaffiliation vote be required for withdrawal.*

(These requirements are intended to further the goal of making CUS less a federation of students' councils than a union of students. It should be obvious, however, that in the absence of other measures directed toward the same end, they are utterly without value in that regard. They assume significance only in the context of a general and concerted effort at all levels - local, provincial and national - to achieve mass participation and involvement.)

Decision-Making at the National Level

During the past year, the Board of Officers has made provision for basic changes in the structure and organization of the Congress, primarily with a view to increasing its decision-making effectiveness. Time and resource limitations have prevented the immediate implementation of several key elements in the Board's program of Congress reform -- notably those relating to Congress preparation and to the general field of membership education. As a result, the program's full impact will not be felt until the 1969 Congress.

In view of the critical attention which the Congress has recently received, I will focus in this section upon decision-making as it occurs during inter-Congress period, touching only peripherally upon the Congress itself.[6]

Over the years, CUS decision-making in the period between Congresses has shown a consistent tendency to be chaotic, crisis-oriented and, at the best of times, only semi-democratic in character.

Despite constitutional authority second only to that of the Congress, the Board of Officers has, in actual practice, been more an appendage than an integral component of the CUS decision-making apparatus. Lacking detailed and comprehensive knowledge of developments within the national office and on member campuses, it has generally been unable to form independent judgements, being substantially reduced to accepting or rejecting propositions put to it by the president or vice-president. The Board is thus utterly dependent upon the executive and, as a consequence, subject to a considerable degree of manipulation. Within certain limits, the executive is free to determine which questions will receive consideration by the Board and which, on the other hand, will be dealt with by the executive or Secretariat. In all likelihood, a decision to by-pass the Board on a question of some importance could be taken only with the unanimous consent of the program staff (executive and associate secretaries), since otherwise the Board would almost certainly be alerted by the dissenter(s). Quite obviously, however, this does not, in itself, represent an adequate safeguard against manipulation.

During the past year, this picture has changed appreciably as a result of efforts designed to overcome the Board's chronic lack of information -- chief source of its long-standing impotence. The Board and Secretariat have attempted over the year to establish procedures for the systematic planning, reporting, evaluation and review of national office activity -- to bring order out chaos and, in doing so, to create a situation in which the Board is capable of effective decision-making. The attempt has been only partially successful.

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[6] *The following documents contain basic material relevant to Congress reform: XXXI Congress: An Assessment, November 1967, Project Plant: Congress 1968, November 1967, Project Report: Congress 1968, May, 1968.*

The Board has become a reasonably effective critic of the Secretariat, but has failed almost entirely to perform a creative role with respect to overall direction of the national office and the development of CUS policy and programs. Several immediate factors can be identified as having contributed to this failing; all reflect, directly or indirectly, an overcommitment of Secretariat resources:

1) Planning and reporting were carried out on a piecemeal, program-by-program basis. No attempt was made to prepare an integrated plan based upon the individual project outlines or to provide the Board with a coherent overview of Secretariat activity.

2) Much of the material presented to the Board showed the effects of hasty preparation, tending to be analytically superficial and intellectually sloppy.

3) Material was not distributed sufficiently in advance of Board meetings to permit careful scrutiny, much less thorough consideration.

The experience of the past year has, for all its shortcomings and frustrations, demonstrated that the Board need not be forever ineffective, that with not-unreasonable effort -- including an attempt by the Congress to relate program proposals to Secretariat resources -- the Board can become an effective decision-making force. The year's experience has also shown that annual policy-making with only caretaking in the interim, is no longer appropriate -- assuming it once was -- to the Union's situation. Policy and program development cannot continue to be held in virtual abeyance between Congresses. Decisive redirection of effort must be possible in response to concrete experience or changing conditions.

As long as the Board seemed condemned to perpetual impotence, and minor administrative decisions seemed to be all that was required between Congresses, the Board's composition was of little consequence. However, as both the Board's effectiveness and the importance of inter-Congress decision-making increase, the question takes on a new significance. A narrowly-constituted body can no longer be tolerated; the Board (or its equivalent) must be broadly-based, responsive to, and in close contact with, the Union's membership. The present Board, composed of eight provincial representatives, the finance and program commissioners, president, vice-president, president-elect and past president, meets none on these criteria. Clearly, a body of much broader composition is essential. Such a body might even provide CUS with a meaningful existence outside the Secretariat during the period between Congresses.

Within the national office, all formal decision-making authority is in the hands of the president and vice-president. In actual practice, most decisions of consequence are made on a collective basis by the entire program staff (president, vice-president and associate secretaries). However, this arrangement is an unstable one, subject to instant dissolution by the exe-

cutive. Where decision-making is concerned, the president and vice-president can by-pass the associate secretaries more or less at will -- although not without producing serious antagonisms if the practice becomes routine.

As presidential appointees, associate secretaries have no independent mandate on which to base a demand for collective decision-making. Consequently, they cannot become a significant check on arbitrary or ill-considered executive action as long as they continue to be appointed by the president. In view of this situation, and of the considerable number of decisions -- not all of them minor -- which must of necessity be made at the Secretariat level, a transfer of responsibility for program staff appointments from the president to the Board or Congress would seem to be desirable.

Presidential selection of associate secretaries can be further criticized as providing a means through which individuals who do not command the union's confidence may be introduced into its organizational "hierarchy". The present oligarchic method of program staff selection undoubtedly contributes to the suspicion in which Secretariat members are often held by local unions. Understandably -- but not, I think justifiably -- the latter are inclined to regard associate secretaries as presidential factotums rather than agents of the Union and thus its members. The prevalence of this view cannot help but impair the Secretariat's effectiveness.

Recommendations:

1) *That associate secretaries and fieldworkers be appointed by the National Council (see below), and that procedures be established which provide for the dismissal of any associate secretary or fieldworker by a majority vote of the National Council or "general" membership (in a plenary session of the Congress or by mail vote).*

   (Election of associate secretaries and field-workers by the Congress would unquestionably be preferable to appointment by the National Council. However, barring a major shift in Congress timing[7], the former

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7 *The question of Congress timing is discussed as follows in A Shape for Things to Come, a report on CUS membership structure and financing prepared by the 1966-67 Board of Directors:*

"When should the Congress be held? Much time has been spent in trying to work out a better time of year than September. Student governments are generally elected in February/March, and take office soon after. The active part of the school year is over and the September Congress is too often the first official activity of the incoming President and delegates. CUS resolutions are passed too often without having been worked out in local council debates and educational programs...

(cont'd.)

does not seem possible, since it is likely that many prospective candidates would be in no position to guarantee their availability in ten month's time when they would be expected to take office.

2) *That, before taking office, the vice-president serve a one-year term as vice-president-elect.*

(This would introduce simultaneous election of the president and vice-president with both serving as officers-elect for one year. Under existing arrangements, the vice-president assumes office immediately upon election. This means that vice-presidential candidates can make no advance plans for the year and that certain alternatives may be irrevocably lost to them as a result of the need to remain uncommitted.

"Two other possible times of year are the Christmas holidays and May. (The amount of work which surrounds Congress preparations makes it unwise to consider planning a Congress during either fall or winter term.)

"Delegates to a Christmas Congress would have the benefit of three months of campus program experience behind them.... The serious drawback to a December Congress is that council members elected in January/February would not participate in a Congress until near the end of their term, and would be dealing with a CUS program they did not participate in creating....

"A May Congress would bring together all the new councils and provide them with a national experience to get their thoughts going, and then give them the whole summer to work on plans for the campus in the fall. Yet one of the criticisms of the September Congress is that it does not afford delegations adequate time to prepare locally, and a May Congress would obviously be worse in this regard....

"Congress dates are primarily dependent upon the dates of campus elections. Thus, if these elections were in October/November, a Christmas Congress would be excellent. The Board is of the opinion that February/March remains the best time for local elections, with new officers taking over in March or during the late spring. This, in turn, restricts the Congress to late summer or early fall...."

The president-elect and most incoming associate secretaries join the Secretariat during June or July and spend the pre-Congress period assessing the past year, considering possible approaches to their work, making preparations for the Congress and familiarizing themselves with the workings of the national office. The character of the new Secretariat is in large measure determined by the discussions which take place during this period. It would therefore seem desirable to ensure vice-presidential participation.)

3) *That the Board of Officers be replaced by a National Council constituted along the following lines:*

- *president and vice-president*
- *president-elect and vice-president-elect*
- *presidents of provincial unions (currently ?)*
- *10-12 campus representatives elected at large by the Congress*
- *associate secretaries and fieldworkers*

(In order to avoid undue size on the one hand and domination by full-time employees on the other, associate secretaries and fieldworkers should be made non-voting members of the Council. It may also be advisable to deny voting status to the president, vice-president, president-elect and vice-president-elect, rather than encourage invidious distinctions between executive members and associate secretaries and fieldworkers.

Chief among the Council's responsibilities would be the following:

(a) to develop and refine CUS policies and programs within the basic framework of Congress legislation;

(b) to supervise and direct (or redirect) the activity of the national office;

(c) to conduct a continuous review of CUS policies, programs and priorities in light of changing conditions and concrete experiences at the local, provincial and national levels;

(d) to initiate and develop appropriate programs of national action - that is, programs involving coordinated local, provincial and national effort.)

Fieldwork

An analysis of any program must quite obviously be carried out in reference to an explicit set of goals and expectations. It therefore seems appropriate to begin this assessment with a discussion of the functions and intermediate objectives of fieldwork, it being understood that the program's ultimate goal is the implementation and development of the Union's policies.

Of the five functions which I will attempt to delineate and define, three might be termed "lesser" or secondary functions. These are the "peacekeeping", membership recruitment and, for lack of a better term, "feedback" functions of fieldwork. In labelling them "lesser" I do not mean to brand them unnecessary or illegitimate. Rather, I simply wish to indicate that I do not regard them as primary functions; they do not constitute a raison d'être for fieldwork.

Peacekeeping. CUS fieldworkers frequently find themselves cast in the role of ambassador or professional apologist whose primary functions are mending political fences and responding to the perennial "What do I get for my 'x' cents?". Unfortunately, this sterile form of fieldwork, the programmatic equivalent of treading water, has been, and continues to be, all too necessary. Except in those cases where criticism of CUS is ideologically-based, dissatisfaction reflects CUS failings in regard to communication, policy development or program activity. Major efforts must be made to elimiante these causes of criticism and discontent, thereby reducing the need for a mopping-up operation in the form of peacekeeping fieldwork.

Membership Recruitment. Fieldwork must be regarded as but one element in an overall program of recruitment. Conversely, we must recognize that membership recruitment is only one objective - and a rather minor one at that - of the total fieldwork program.

Feedback. By virtue of knowledge gained through fieldwork, the activity of the national office can, at least in theory, be redirected in response to changing conditions on member campuses. However, the existing lack of systematic review procedures and the chronic overcommitment of Secretariat resources militate against this kind of flexible response during the inter-Congress period. The feedback function (more accurately, by-product) of fieldwork assumes importance under conditions of flexible and realistic resource commitment and only then if sound evaluative procedures exist.

Having briefly discussed the lesser objectives of fieldwork, I will now move to a consideration of those functions which constitute the essential justification, the raison d'être of fieldwork - namely the provision of a student government "consulting service" and the promotion of campus activity relating to the policies and programs of the national union. Obviously these functions cannot be clearly separated. Depending upon the nature and priorities of student government, they may be either complementary or antagonistic, approaching mutual exclusiveness on one campus and identity on another.

Consulting. The questions towards which the fieldworker-as-consultant directs his attention are determined to a considerable extent by the current concerns, problems and programs of the students' council with which he is working. His role is that of advising the council with respect to their priorities on the basis of whatever knowledge and experience he may possess. Over and above this, however, he should attempt to analyse, in a manner which is both penetrating and comprehensive, the current state of student government and student government programming and offer detailed recommendations based upon that analysis. Under normal circumstances a fieldworker should not be expected to assume direct responsibility for a students' council project or program (e.g. the preparation of a brief or organization of a Seminar).

There will, of course, be occasions when "consulting" activity proves essentially sterile in terms of CUS policies and programs, as in the case of a students' council which is inflexible and self-satisfied and whose priorities differ radically from those of CUS. Despite this inevitability, I would nevertheless establish "consulting" as an absolute requirement of fieldwork. Any student government, no matter how irrelevant or inept, at least deserves thoughtful criticism and advice.

Program Development. As I have already suggested, fieldwork directed toward the promotion of local activity in accord with CUS priorities and general policy may, on some campuses, take place largely within the context of student government, while on others, student government may be essentially irrelevant to the process. In any event, fieldwork of the "program development" type involves meeting with students - individuals, informal groups and organizations - in order to share analysis, discuss alternatives to the status quo, and consider questions of organization, strategy and tactics. The fieldworker's role is that of "social animator"; his major objective is the formation of cadres. These cadres may operate within, in support of, or in opposition to student government.

Experience over the past two years has revealed serious deficiencies in our standard approach to fieldwork. The "consulting" and "program development" functions of fieldwork cannot be adequately performed in the two to five days traditionally allocated to each campus. An analysis of student government and student government programming, if it is to be anything but superficial and hence of dubious value, requires a degree of familiarity with the campus situation which cannot be obtained in the course of a brief stopover. The situation is similar as regards program development: a considerable period of time is needed to ferret out and animate potentially active students and student groups. Under the present arrangement total failure, or only partial success, is likely, if not assured.

If the gains made in the course of fieldwork are to be consolidated, the fieldworker must maintain uninterrupted contact with the campus following his visit. The geographical remoteness of the national office from most member schools and the pressure on associate secretaries of non-fieldwork responsibilities militate against the maintenance of such contact.

Competing demands upon associate secretaries' time tend also to limit the amount of fieldwork preparation which is undertaken, although the value of reading reports, scanning back issues of campus newspapers and thumbing through correspondence files is obvious.

By the same token, student governments too are often inadequately prepared for fieldwork - partly because they have only a vague conception of fieldwork objectives and potential, and partly because fieldwork schedules are frequently established without reference to the needs, wishes or program of the members concerned. On both counts, responsibility for this situation rests with the national office.

Geographic and financial considerations seriously limit the ability of CUS to deploy fieldworkers in response to crisis situations on member campuses, particularly in the case of Western and Maritime schools.

Current fieldwork policy dictates that under normal circumstances no fieldworker will visit the same campus more than once. This policy was established in order to maximize student government exposure to differing perspectives, insights and ideas. Its adoption appears, in retrospect, to have been a serious error. Contacts, rapport and a basic understanding of an institution's idiosyncrasies are developed only after a considerable expenditure of time and effort. Moreover, they are not transferable from one fieldworker to another - comprehensive reporting and extensive consultation notwithstanding. In establishing a non-repeating system of fieldwork, insufficient weight was attached to these considerations. The value of pluralism in fieldwork is not so great as to compensate for the inefficiency of the present system.

The above obstacles to effective fieldwork can be surmounted only with the introduction of a system of full-time, regionally-based fieldworkers. Such a system would enable the fieldworker to spend extended periods of time (2-3 weeks) on individual campuses, to remain in constant touch with developments in his area, and to respond rapidly in the case of a crisis situation on any one campus. His geographical proximity would facilitate continuing communication with the campus subsequent to a period of fieldwork and would permit follow-up fieldwork whenever necessary.

The fieldworker could be expected to work closely with the provincial union(s) in his region, assisting in the development of regional or provincial programs and strategies (as, for example, in the case of a province-wide fee increase).

A "training" program and periodic conferences which brought fieldworkers (and Secretariat program staff) together for purposes of exchanging information and discussing mutual concerns would be essential in the context of a scheme of this type.

Recommendation:

That a full-time CUS fieldworker be permanently located in each of the following regions:

1) *British Columbia (4 local unions, 26,000 members)*

2) *the Prairies (7 local unions, 33,500 members)*

3) *Ontario (18 local unions, 75,250 members)*

4) *the Maritimes (22 local unions, 15,000 members)*

(Taken by themselves, the Ontario membership figures suggest that at least two CUS fieldworkers should be based in the Ontario region. However, in view of the strong position of OUS relative to the remaining provincial unions, no more than one Ontario fieldworker can be justified at the present time (see discussion under "Provincial and National Unions). As a temporary expedient, pending unification of CUS and the provincial unions, OUS fieldworkers should be encouraged to attend all gatherings of CUS fieldworkers. In addition, the CUS national office should attempt to maintain constant communication with the OUS fieldwork staff.

Fieldwork conferences could be held during the two or three days following each National Council meeting. A fieldwork seminar, involving national office personnel as well as outgoing and incoming fieldworkers, should be held during June or early July.)

The National Office

As I have suggested twice previously in this paper, the CUS national office suffers from chronic and debilitating overextension. Its meager resources are spread thinly over a broad range of activities; it does a great many things, but does none of them well. Short-run or recurring commitments, and general bureaucratic responsibilities inevitably take precedence over, and interfere with, long-term development work - that is, the important gives way to the urgent.

The present diffusion and overcommitment of Secretariat resources is directly traceable to failure on the part of the Congress to consider the implicit demands of various policies and programs upon the national office. Certainly no attempt has ever been made to systematically relate program proposals to Secretariat resources. The consequences of this failing would not be particularly serious were it possible, within the national office, to allocate resources on the basis of priorities established by the Congress.

Such, however, is not the case.

Certain programs - often of low priority - require a considerable expenditure of effort merely in order to become operational. These programs might be said to have a characteristic "work threshold"[8] - which may be high or low. ISEP is an excellent example of a program with a high work threshold. Certain other programs are, in contrast, highly elastic. These programs have no definable work threshold. For example, whether two or 200 hours are expended on research activity, a research program can be considered to exist. It may be unimpressive, but it is nonetheless a research program. The upshot of all this is that, in a situation of overcommitment, elastic programs receive short shrift regardless of priority, while certain inelastic (work threshold) programs receive a degree of attention - and account for an expenditure of effort - which is totally inappropriate to their priority as defined by the Congress. Although I have been discussing elasticity and work threshold only in relation to human resources, the distinction can be applied with equal validity in the case of financial resources.

Clearly, the Congress must begin to assess CUS programs in light of the phenomenon described above. Low priority programs which unavoidably entail large resource expenditures - for example, ISEP and the Fédération internationale du sport universitaire (FISU) - must be eliminated. The affiliations which CUS has developed with numerous national and international

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8 *The "work threshold" for any given program is the amount of work without which the program would collapse.*

organizations should be individually reviewed. If an organization's relevance to the Union's chief concerns proves insufficient to justify the costs (both human and financial) of continued membership, CUS participation should be terminated. The introduction of new programs should be considered in the same light.

The Congress must make concerted efforts to ensure that demands imposed upon the national office do not outstrip available resources. This requires on the one hand, a more explicit definition of the Secretariat's role in any given program than has been traditional, and, on the other, a realization of the considerable time, money and effort expended by the national office in carrying out various routine, somewhat mundane, but nonetheless essential, operations - for example, Congress and Seminar preparations, routine correspondence (collectively, members of the national office staff write several thousand letters annually) and fundraising. Faced with a situation in which the requirements of its policies and programs are beyond the capacities of the Secretariat, the Congress must either cut back or make provision for a larger staff. It cannot have its cake and eat it too.

The problem of Secretariat ineffectiveness - largely attributable to overcommitment and diffusion of resources - has been aggravated by a clumsy and inappropriate division of labour within the Secretariat itself. At the program staff level, functional specialization has been held to an absolute minimum. Associate secretaries have each been expected to do some fieldwork, some research, some administrative work, and so on. They tend as a result to be jacks-of-all-trades, masters of none.

Certain functions - fieldwork and research among them - demand more or less uninterrupted effort and are therefore profoundly unsuited to combination with other activities. In the preceding section of this paper, I suggested that the mixing of fieldwork and national office responsibilities was detrimental to both and should therefore be avoided. While the combination of research activity with other functions is not so obviously inadvisable, it is nonetheless clear that the research efforts of CUS must be given a continuing focus in the form of at least one associate secretary whose attention would be devoted exclusively to research, in the broadest sense of that term. The present position of associate secretary for SGRS falls far short of this description since SGRS is first and foremost an information service, and only secondarily a research operation.

Until the program staff loses its aversion to functional specialization the national office will fail to achieve maximum effectiveness. However, it should be understood that in advocating increasing specialization, I am not by any means suggesting the wholesale dispersion of decision-making prerogatives. On the contrary, I would recommend that, within the national office, the practice of collective decision-making be maintained and strengthened.

Perhaps the most important, and, paradoxically, the most neglected, functions of the national office are research and information on the one hand, and communications and membership education on the other. In the past research activity has generally been carried out on a catch-as-catch-can basis, while the surface has barely been scratched insofar as membership education is concerned.

Research and information may be considered to include the following specific functions:

1) systematic and continuous review of current research and writing in fields relevant to CUS programs;

2) selective acquisition of basic resource and reference materials;

3) maintenance of contact with persons doing research or theoretical work relating to CUS programs;

4) solicitation of original papers on topics of particular concern to the Union;

5) editing of original material;

6) selection of pertinent articles, papers, etc. for purposes of reprinting;

7) preparation of annotated bibliographies, film lists and directories of resource persons;

8) answering requests for information;

9) consolidation of material from "SGRS" files and other sources;

10) systematic acquisition of material for "SGRS" files.

The above functions could readily absorb the efforts of a three-man research department. Moreover, if original research were contemplated, an even larger staff would be required. Taken together, functions 8, 9 and 10 correspond more or less to the present SGRS position, and represent a full-time job in themselves. Similarly, functions 1, 2 and 6 could keep an associate secretary fully occupied. A marginally acceptable research program could perhaps be developed on the basis of a two-man staff. A staff of one would mean maintenance of the status quo in terms of research and information.

A comprehensive communications and membership education program might comprise the following elements:

1) production of a series of pamphlets for mass distribution to the Union's membership;[9]

2) distribution of tapes and films relating to major CUS programs;

3) preparation of publications lists to facilitate the "on-request" distribution of selected papers, reports and reprints;

4) publication of a newsletter (on a non-regular basis) announcing fieldwork schedules, events of possible interest, and so on.

5) publication, whenever suitable material becomes available, of a "student action bulletin" containing discussion and analysis of major student actions on Canadian campuses.

The associate secretary for communications and membership education would presumably assume general responsibility for the technical aspects of CUS publications.

National Office experience over the past year suggests a need for the following program staff positions in addition to those already mentioned:

(1) Associate secretary for housing (co-op fieldworker).

(2) Projects co-ordinator - Congress and Seminar organization; fundraising; tours and exchanges; possibly supervision of travel department.

(3) Program officer - liaison with fieldworkers; organization of fieldwork conference and annual fieldwork seminar; planning and coordination of national programs; special responsibilities for review and evaluation of program activity and for reporting to National Council on fieldwork and Secretariat operations.

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9 *Possible themes include: Vietnam, social (in)justice, Canada and Quebec, student scabbing and Canadian independence. A pamphlet outlining the CUS "program" on education, should almost certainly be produced.*

Given a research and information department composed of two rather than three associate secretaries, this brings the suggested total to six, exclusive of regional fieldworkers and the editor of Issue. It should be remembered that international programming has not been accounted for, and that the elimination of certain traditional programs has been assumed.