

National Chairperson's Report  
Canadian Federation of Students (-Services)  
May 1991

As I finish my second term as Chairperson of the Federation, I look back on the past two years with, in some cases, a smile and in other more recent cases, a frown. My report will include my activities since the October 1990 General Meeting.

#### **HIRING OF NEW STAFF**

I participated in the hiring teams for the Government Relations Officer, the Communications Officer, the Alberta Fieldworker, and the Canadian Programming Service Director.

#### **REFERENDA**

Most of February and March was spent out of the office and on the road working at various referenda. In February, I worked with Nini Jones, OFS/CFS Fieldworker at the McMaster Students' Union referendum where 67% of students voted in favour of reaffirming their membership in the Federation. I was in Calgary for almost two weeks helping out at both Mount Royal College Student Association and University of Calgary Students Union. Unfortunately, we lost both referenda. An illegal "NO" side and the fact we had to have a two-thirds majority vote in favour of the Federation stopped us at Mount Royal while an editorial entitled " SU exhumes stinking corpse of CFS " does not do much for your chances of success. While continued membership growth is an important issue in all provinces, membership in Alberta is an issue the Federation must discuss at this meeting. After my Calgary trip, I went to Brock University to help with their referendum. After a few hostile discussions with the "NO" side, I was thrown off campus by the CRO and was not allowed to campaign and correct all the misinformation about the Federation. Students at Brock voted 78% against joining the Federation.

#### **PROVINCIAL/REGIONAL/CAUCUS MEETING**

I attended the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) General Meeting in January at the University of Waterloo. Decisions made included a campaign against the Gulf War and the University of Western Ontario professor, Philip Rushton; the upcoming tuition announcement by the new NDP government; endorsement of the Canadian Federation of Students " Strategy for Change "; and a notice of motion to only accept members if they become members of the OFS and CFS(S) at the same time. ( Congruency may happen yet in Ontario ! ) From the OFS meeting, I travelled to the Students Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) meeting at Saint Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, the SUNS membership decided not to carry through on its commitment to become a component of the Federation. Even though there was common membership in both organizations, the membership accepted a new prospective member who wished to only become a member of SUNS.

In February, I attended the Canadian Federation of Students - Atlantic meeting at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Issues discussed included a workshop on Student Aid with representatives from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, summer employment and what Atlantic students can expect, the creation of a new regional structure for the Canadian Federation of Students (-Services) in the Atlantic and a campaign strategy session.

The National Graduate Council held their February meeting at the University of Waterloo. Topics on the agenda included updates from all graduate associations in attendance, a presentation of the copyright infringement case, and a discussion of research priorities. I felt the meeting was productive and well received as many graduate association were in attendance.

In March, I attended the Newfoundland/Labrador Federation of Students (NLFS) meeting in Gander, Newfoundland with Chair-elect Kelly Lamrock. There were many hostile feelings towards the Federation and much scepticism about what the national student organization is and how it works. Overall, I left the meeting feeling unsure of the working relationship between the two organizations and believe there is much work to be done.

#### **CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS (-SERVICES)/TRAVEL CUTS**

It is often difficult to accomplish all your objectives. With the amount of concern expressed about the Canadian Federation of Students - Services, I wanted to spend as much time as I could in Toronto. To that end, I was able to visit the Toronto office several times since October. I found it important to spend time with each of the Program Directors and keep up to date on the progress being made with each program. I attended the National Health and Dental Plans User Group Meeting in Toronto the weekend of April 19th. While insurance is not one of my interests, it was exciting to hear the positive comments from the administrators of the programs. The feedback was excellent - the message is that students want and need health and dental programs and our program is serving hundreds of thousands of students each year.

StudentSaver looks awesome for the upcoming year - discussion at this General Meeting will centre upon distribution to High School students. SWAP in Eastern European is still in the planning stages. With the recession and the Gulf War, participation in the program is down this year.

The Travel Cuts Board met in early January to discuss directives from the October General Meeting.

#### **LOBBY WORK**

- meeting cancelled with Gerry Weiner, Secretary of State (Nov/90)
- issues on the agenda included the federal government's role

in post-secondary education, Strategy for Change and the 3% tax on Canada Student Loans. His office attempted to re-schedule but obviously didn't try hard enough !!

- meeting with Gail Cook-Bennett, consultant reviewing Canada Student Loans Program (Nov/90)
- meeting with Marcel Danis, Minister of State for Youth (Jan/91)
  - issues covered included planned closures of employment centres on campus and the upcoming Challenge program announcement
- Roundtable on Post-secondary education with Ron Duhamel, Liberal Critic for Secretary of State (Jan/91)
- meeting with Stewart Goodings, head of the Education Support Branch at the Department of Secretary of State (Feb/91)
  - issues discussed included Cook-Bennett study and its release for the public; upcoming federal budget

#### **MEDIA WORK**

The Federation has increase its media profile 100% over the last two years. The National Office continually receives request for information and interviews from print, radio and television media. We have attempted to reach out to campus media and have succeeded with many member schools.

- Challenge '91 announcement - press conference was held with NDP and Liberal MP's; there was television and radio coverage including a segment on CBC Newsworld; print coverage was good
- 1991 Federal Budget announcement - press reception on Parliament Hill was excellent; interviewed live by CBC during budget scrum; print media, including Globe and Mail.
- GST tax credit for people under 19 - I participated in a press conference with several Liberal MP's and Senators concerning GST tax credits for youth. The media response was very good.
- Recent announcement concerning the official opening of Employment Centres for Student Summer Employment - was asked to comment after announcement on CBC Newsworld.

#### **COALITION WORK**

##### **A) Action-Canada network**

The Federation became a member of the Pro-Canada Network, now called Action-Canada Network, last July. The Federation has fully participated in many campaigns and meetings with the members of Action-Canada. Caryn Duncan and I participated in a rountable meeting with the Liberal Senators who were filibustering the passage of the GST bill the day of the vote. Catherine Remus and I attended a meeting with the opposition leader from Mexico to

discuss the upcoming negotiations between Canada-United States-Mexico in regard to the issue of trade. Since October, there have been two General Assemblies of Action-Canada which we have attended. I believe our continued participation in this coalition is essential in order to put post-secondary education on the Network's agenda.

#### **MEMBER VISITS**

Because of referenda work, I was unable to visit as many members as I would have like to :

- Presentation at UPEI Student Union Council Meeting
- Meeting with President at Universite de Moncton (FEUM)
- Presentation at Mount Allison University Student Administrative Council Meeting
- Presentation at UNB Student Union Council Meeting
- Lunch with UNB Graduate Student Association Executive
- Meeting with Councillors from St. Francis Xavier University Students' Union
- Meeting with Dalhousie Student Union Executive
- Presentation to Queen's AMS Assembly meeting
- Meeting with Holland College Executive members

#### **COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS**

I spent some time this term working on the collective agreement negotiations. The collective agreement expired between the National Executive of the Canadian Federation of Students and CUPE 1281 on January 31, 1991.

#### **INTERNATIONAL MEETING HOSTED BY THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS/PARTICIPATION IN IUS**

The Federation-hosted seminar "Educational Reforms and Policies in Industrialized Nations" was a huge success from all feedback thus far. It is amazing to learn the problems facing our education system are the same around the world. Whether it be the lack of public funding or the disastrous commitment to research and development, students are facing similar crises. I believe it is important that we maintain our contacts internationally and work on issues of solidarity. I believe it is important that we become a member of the International Union of Students this year and participate to set the agenda at these meetings. We have much to gain and much to give to the international community.

Jane Arnold  
Chairperson  
Canadian Federation of Students (-Services)