

•National Deputy Chairperson Report•

Canadian Federation of Students (-Services)

National General Meeting

Lethbridge, Alberta, 1991

With this report I am essentially trying to meet three objectives: a.) give an account of my activities since the last general meeting, b.) offer some analysis on ongoing issues, both within the Federation and externally, and c.) since this is the end of my involvement with the Federation, offer some general recommendations for the future.

a.) Activities since the last general meeting:

Lobby activities:

Employment Centres Closures: A lobby was organized with Marcel Danis, former Minister of State for Youth, who is responsible for student employment. This endeavour, together with the individual actions of the affected member locals who organized rallies, letter writing campaigns and other actions, helped us win extensions on some campuses. If these extensions could be dragged out until the next federal election, they could become an election issue, and thus there might be hope in saving them. The membership at this meeting should decide what priority the threat to these centres should take in our campaigns for next year. The planned closures of Canada Employment Centres is not the only problem in the current government employment strategy; there is also the continual underfunding of the Challenge programme, which makes it almost unworkable.

Other activities: much government lobbying went on around the following issues: opposition to the cuts to the CBC with the "100 Days of Action Network"; with the Pro-Canada network, the federal budget and its effects on students ; summer employment for students; presentation to the Liberal Task Force on the recession; together with the Canadian Peace Alliance opposition to Canada's involvement in the Gulf war;

International activity:

In December of last year, I had a chance to attend two meetings. One organized by a coalition called C.O.O.L, Campus Outreach Opportunity League, held in Washington D.C., and one organized by the national student organization of Cuba together with the International Union of Students, where national student organizations from across the Americas and Europe were invited to attend the fourth conference of FEU Cuba, since its foundations in the fifties.(For a more detailed account please see executive minutes of January).

Concrete proposals have come out of both these meetings. The Cuban student organization is very interested in becoming a part of our Student Work Abroad Programme and also expressed its interest in hosting a delegation of Canadian students to come to Cuba over Newyears, if we are willing to host Cuban students visiting Canada either in the fall of this year, or in spring of next year. The SWAP proposal will be dealt with at Programmes committee and the question of reciprocal delegations visiting each others country should be dealt with by the new executive.

Also, C.O.O.L is inviting us to become involved in their coalition; this we can do as a national organization, or as individual member associations. More detailed information will be given to Campaigns committee.

We also participated in the Extra-ordinary congress of the International Union of Students which was held in Prague, in the spring of this year. A more detailed report on this meeting and the whole question of Federation membership in the International Union of Students will come to you at opening plenary.

I also participated in the Legislative Conference of the United States Student Association. This conference was the equivalent of our "Lobby Day". CFS and USSA are very much alike. Politically speaking, we share similar policies and structurally speaking we are both based on referenda for membership. Both organizations have different strengths, however. We are more sophisticated in the services we provide to our members, they seem to be much better in teaching their membership organizational skills. In any case, I believe it is worthwhile for us to cooperate more with U.S.S.A. on areas of common interest. One step in this direction could be to waive each others delegate fees, and to encourage our member locals to participate in organizational skills conferences held by U.S.S.A. "components" across the United States.

Membership Development:

Membership Drives: Spring was heavy on membership drives. The chairperson and I split up the work. Here are the ones that I was primarily involved in. Queen's Alma Mater Society was one of the first to hold a referendum; unfortunately they lost. Reason's? Above all, not enough pre-referenda work (almost none) was done before we got there. Then, once we got to the campus, there were only a very few people who wanted to help out. When in the last days of the campaign the young Tories came out in full force, spreading misinformation about the Federation, we knew the whole thing was doomed. University of Calgary was a similar situation. Apart from a few very committed people, there was little on-campus help. None of the candidates running for executive positions were willing to take a clear pro-CFS stand. Most of them actually took a stand against the Federation. So the University of Calgary lost too; they too did not become part of Canada's national student organization. At Mount Royal College student union, we needed two thirds (or 66%) in order to win a referendum. We got 54%. Finally, the referendum scheduled for Trent University Students' Union had to be postponed to the fall of this year due to a faculty strike. There were other referenda, some we lost, others we won. You will probably be able to read about them in the Chairperson's and the executive report.

Potential new members: The student association at Cité Collégial, Ottawa's newly opened all francophone college, is interested in becoming a member of CFS. They attended a Press Conference held by the University of Ottawa Students' Federation together with CFS, and were quite eager to find out more about this "national student organization". They also participated strongly in the anti-war work that was done out of the national office. The importance of adding another francophone member to our organization cannot be stated enough and follow up work will have to be done since their organizational structure is still very transient.

Toronto office activities:

Location: the CFS-S is now in a new and bigger office space; the location is just a couple of blocks down from the old office, and the telephone number has remained the same. The old office is now entirely occupied by Travel Cuts and Canadian

Wilderness Trips. Travel Cuts' accounting department and ticket processing have been moved into the new office space, together with all other CFS-S functions. There is quite a bit of free space in both offices.

Staff: hirings took place for the positions of CPS director. The position of Communication Director will remain open for now, since we're in the process of re-evaluating its function within the Federation. Our thanks to Peter Block and Larry Hansen for all the good work they have done!

Student saver: even though Programmes Committee Report never made it to closing plenary, the national executive adopted most of its recommendations for this year's student saver kit.

For more information on how our programmes have developed over the last half year, please consult with the Canadian Federation of Students-Services Report on Activities.

Provincial Meetings, other meetings:

I attended a number of provincial meetings in the spring of this year: the general meeting of the Ontario Federation of Students, the Prairie's Regional Meeting held at the University of Calgary and the general meeting of our British Columbia component. In our ongoing attempt to develop clear policy on our financial and political expectations towards Travel Cuts, and as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Travel Cuts, I also attended a Cuts managers meeting in Quebec.

Activity on the Gulf war:

Most of you are aware that the national executive of the Federation took a stand on the war in the Gulf (see executive report, item "M"). The national office being busy on a variety of other campaigns at that time, we relied on the help of many volunteers to launch the "War is not the answer" campaign. Also, we participated in the activities organized by the Canadian Peace Alliance and in various local rallies that were held in Ottawa.

Travel Cuts:

The Deputy Chairperson of your Federation traditionally becomes the chairperson of the Board of Directors of Travel Cuts. The year started out quite well for us. Then the war happened, and students became less reluctant to travel abroad. On some days, some offices experienced more cancellations than bookings. By the time the Cuts managers meeting happened early this year, a hiring freeze had been implemented and every effort was made to not lay people off. After the war had finished, we had to face the recession. Summa sumarum, it is at this point difficult to tell what kind of year Travel Cuts will have. January, February and March certainly didn't look very good. April looked much better and we're all keeping our fingers crossed for the remaining months.

b.) Ongoing Issues:

The question of democracy:

At our last general meeting, a good part of our membership isolated the issue of "democracy" within the Federation as a problem area. Some members felt that there should be equal levels of democracy between the Canadian Federation of Students and the Canadian Federation of Students-Services. The national executive committed itself to dealing with this issue. As Deputy Chairperson, I've taken on the task of dealing with this issue. A report with recommendations is forthcoming to the national executive, and Organizational Development Committee will also have to deal with it.

The withholding of Canadian Federation of Students-Services membership fees by placing them in trust funds:

There are currently nine member locals in British Columbia that have decided to put their Canadian Federation of Students-Services membership fees into various trust funds. As far as we know these are Capilano College Student Society, Cariboo College Student Society, Douglas College Student Society, Emily Carr Students' Association, Langara Students' Union, Malaspina College Students' Society, Selkirk College Student Society and the University of Victoria Students' Society. Within the last few months, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, University of Ottawa Students Federation and Lakehead Student Union have released the fees that they too had withheld since the fall of last year. (Note here: some people don't like the term "withholding". I believe however that as long as a member local has the control to decide when and if they are going to pass these fees on the term "withholding" is justified.) The B.C. component has now established its own trust fund, and all member locals in British Columbia are encouraged to move the fees that they hold in their trust funds into the trust fund of the component. So far, University of Victoria Students Union, Emily Carr Students' Union and Selkirk College Student Society have done so. What should the Federation do? I believe that while the act of "withholding" or "putting in trust" of membership fees is in this instance not legitimate, the underlying problem that these member locals want to draw attention to is in fact a valid one. I have communicated numerous times to these member locals that the Federation views this action as illegitimate. The membership has to decide now what it wants to do. Regardless of this particular measure, there is need for our Federation to seriously review the question of "democracy" and accountability within our Federation(s).

c.) The Future.....

This is probably the last Deputy Chairperson report I'll ever write, and this is probably the last general meeting of this Federation that I'll ever attend, so please allow me to give you some of my perspectives on what needs to be done in the future.

We've seen a number of referenda this year, a good number of which we have lost. Some people may argue that the reason we have lost these referenda is because we hold "unrealistic" policies or do not have a voting structure that appeals to all. In the real-life situation, however, it becomes apparent that referenda are not won or lost on these points. Referenda are won and lost on the level of commitment that the leadership at a given campus is willing to show. Without local support, for the Federation to "invade" from the outside is senseless. This was the case at University of Calgary and at Queen's.

Rather than looking outward, we should look inward and make sure that we serve our membership better. This means above all communication. Be it a magazine, or a newsletter going regularly to all members on council, we have to make sure that our communication lines go beyond the V.P. External. We also have to make sure that we teach our membership more organizing skills. Running campaigns takes skills that not all "freshly" elected executive members necessarily have. The Federation has a role to play in teaching its membership these skills. As we become stronger internally, non-member associations would want to become a member, and the burden would clearly be on them, not us, to go through the necessary efforts of winning referenda. Rather than the Federation apologizing to non-members why we haven't become more "acceptable" to them, non-members should point out to us why they haven't had the political guts of aligning themselves to Canada's only national (and sometimes provincial) student organization.

I could go on and on talking about how we can improve our Federation. But for now let this be my main message.

Good bye.

Christoph

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)