

Moderate students divided on national union concepts

Should a national body be "political"?

By RICH VIVONE
Gateway Editor

WATERLOO, Ont.—An attempt to form a new national union met instant death here Dec. 30 and the Waterloo Lutheran Congress on National Student Unionism illustrated simply that even the moderate element in Canadian universities are seriously divided on the concept of what a national student union should be.

A brief was presented to the 25 universities attending the congress which outlined the structure of a national student association "based on a regional/provincial structure".

The brief read that on the national level, the association would

"exist as a service bureau organization and as a thinker's conference organizing body to effect national inter-regional communication".

The new structure would eliminate the office of president and the "associated dangers such as the president representing minority opinion and supposedly speaking for all Canadian students".

It was drawn up by a group under the chairmanship of William Houston of the Queen's University of Kingston, Ont., delegation. The reaction was quick and deadly.

Rob Walsh, Simon Fraser student president, threw up his hands and said "if they want a pre-

ature death, they'll get it with this proposal."

Allan Dubeck of the University of Winnipeg was harsh in his criticism of the brief. "This is the most narrowminded thing I've ever seen. We're moving backwards by at least 20 years," he said.

Fraser Hodge, representing The University of British Columbia, was equally opposed to the brief.

"This brief is an incredible crock of shit," he said. "Some parts of this are so unreal that I can't believe it. I almost laughed when I read it."

"If this is the total outcome of this organization, then I feel I've wasted my time coming here," he said.

"I didn't think I would ever find myself agreeing with the Canadian Union of Students, but if this is what we are doing, then I would suggest that if we don't like what is said by an organization (CUS) then you sit there and try to make them change it. Leaving is childish," he said.

The plenary agreed with these people and threw the document out. Instead they adopted a watered-down version also drawn up by a group chaired by Houston.

The final resolution, approved in principle "the theme that decentralization is an effective context in which to consider achievement of the goal of representivity and relevancy in student association."

It is expected that a spring meeting will be called for Dalhousie University to deal with the resolution on a detailed basis.

The Waterloo congress was called jointly by Queen's, Carleton and Waterloo Lutheran Universities because these schools were particularly disenchanted with the political utterings and composition of the Canadian Union of Students.

A number of schools have withdrawn from CUS and this congress was primarily intended to air the precise reasons for the discontent.

All western schools were represented except for Alberta, Victoria, Manitoba and Regina.

If anything, the three-day meeting proved there were serious divisions in political thought amongst the moderate group. They experienced deep trouble in determining whether a national union should make political statements. And frequently, the plenary broke down into arguments in definition of terms. The terms democracy and political were the chief victims.

Walsh, the alleged "moderate" president of SFU, held little hope for the group unless they improved their political methods.

"These people can't hope to confront radicals and win," he said after the congress. "Radicals practice and debate politics 24 hours a day, 364 days a year while these people practice politics only during conferences."

"Unless they get strong leadership at the next CUS congress, things are not going to change," he said.

Would Walsh attempt to provide this leadership?

"Not likely," he said. "I plan to enter a law school, possibly in Montreal, and will have to give up my presidency in the spring."

President Walter H. Johns retires after 31 years

President Walter Johns announced his retirement after serving the university for 31 years, more than half the life of the university.

Dr. Johns who is almost 61 says his retirement, effective August, 1969, is a question of health and strength. He has been president for 10 years, and has worked without a sabbatical for 35 years.

"It is a tremendously demanding position involving one almost completely," he said of the presidency.

Since his heart attack two and a half years ago, Dr. Johns says he has felt the pressures building up.

"I am very tired. I cannot keep up the pace I used to," he said.

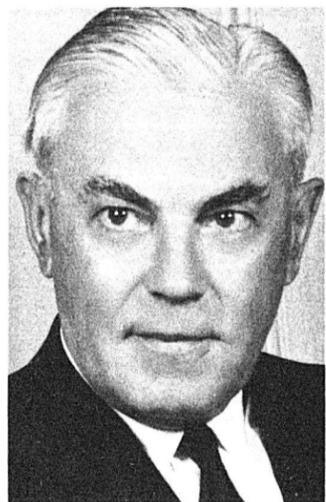
Dr. Johns will take a year's sabbatical leave to catch up on classical studies and hopes to make a start on a history of the university. He will remain at U of A taking a position teaching classics the following year.

"To teach and study has always been my first interest," said Dr. Johns.

He says his decision to retire wasn't all that sudden. "You make it and there it is."

He would like to return to teaching, and thinks someone younger should take over the presidency.

An advisory selection committee has been appointed to find a successor. It will consist of representa-



DR. WALTER H. JOHNS

tives of the Board of Governors, the faculty, the staff association, and students.

There are certain advantages in the successor coming from the university, said Dr. Johns; but it is just as likely to be one from outside the university.

Dr. Johns is looking forward to having time to read the many books he has collected in the past ten years.

"The chance has never come but it is coming the first of September this year," he said.

"The U of A is a great university made great by the people in it," he said. "I consider myself very fortunate indeed to be associated with it."

"In fact I fell in love with it. It's a grand place. It really is."



—Al Yackulic photo

IT'S NOT REALLY—a practical joke and no, it's not a leftover from an engineering project. In fact, it is an outdoor sculpture by Robert Murray, "Dyad", which was exhibited at Expo '67 and "Man in his World" in Montreal. The sculpture is a gift to the university from the House of Seagram Limited and is the first in the University's Centennial Sculpture Collection. The puzzled looking viewer is Diane Love, ed 1.

Waterloo conference:

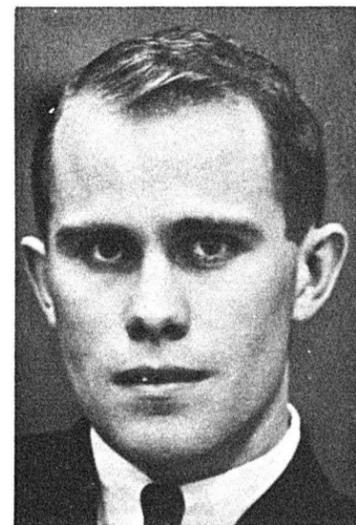
National unionism expressed

WATERLOO, Ont.—Phil Ponting, president of the Alberta Association of Students and treasurer of The University of Alberta Students' Union in 1967-68, attended the Waterloo Lutheran Congress on National Student Unionism held here Dec. 28-30 and these are some of his observations:

"The congress was extremely useful in my opinion because a lot of universities had been harboring on what a national union should or should not be. Here they were given a chance to express their ideas on national unionism."

"Queen's University and Waterloo Lutheran University have not been impressed with the Canadian Union of Students. They want to operate a service station on a national level. Meanwhile, schools such as Simon Fraser and Carleton felt that a national union had more than a service station function. And The Maritime schools come to the conference and have their own little ideas of a national union. It is good to hear all these ideas."

"Many of the student councils were represented here. They all are willing to sacrifice some of their local concessions to the overall



PHIL PONTING

idea of what a national union could do.

"This conference was not intended to be a legislative body—

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