

# Dal's delegates meet with MP's

by Cathy McDonald

The week of October 14-19 was an historical one for the Canadian student. Dalhousie student union President John Logan, council member Kathy Hagen and former councillor Peter Rans represented Dalhousie at the founding conference of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in Ottawa, to replace NUS (National Union of Students) and AOSC (Association of Student Councils) with one organization. They returned to Dal with insights into the new Canadian student movement.

"It was great," said Logan, referring to the founding conference. "I expected to find a lot of pinko types. I looked under beds, in the cafeteria and downtown, but they were nowhere to be found."

Logan was impressed by the critical, intelligent and dedicated delegates from across the country.

Kathy Hagen was slightly less enthusiastic with the conference, saying, "There was a lot of foolishness that I don't agree with, however, it's a good experience for student leaders to participate in the conference and the parliamentary lobbying forming ideas which they can bring back to their campuses for local organizing."

Hagen felt there was a lot of resistance on the part of the western delegates in planning active protest campaigns. She felt that the West should follow the Atlantic example, where a highly successful march was organized last September.

"If people from the West could come down off their high horses and deal with the East, it would make cooperation a lot easier," she said. Hagen said Dal students should support CFS, in the coming referendum, "It has a lot of potential."

Peter Rans warned the West against taking a "Holier Than Thou" approach to the other Canadian provinces, and creating factions in a national

organization.

Equally important to action he said is the building of coalitions with students and other interest groups in the fight against the federal cutbacks in higher education. In discussing strategy and tactics, the central and western regions tended to emphasize the importance of building coalitions with other groups, and were more cautious of launching into active protests as a means of political effectiveness.

Rans described the three part goal of CFS as, allowing Education to be more accessible, of a higher quality and planned at a national level.

"The CFS wishes to see the provinces retain overall responsibility for higher education, but a great deal of wastage in higher education is the result of a lack of a federal plan. The CFS calls for an inquiry into Canadian education that would include the participation of all interest groups directly or indirectly affected by Canada's higher education," he said.

He elaborated on the goal of greater accessibility, referring to studies that show a decrease in the participation of students from lower income groups over the last few years. Women welfare recipients, ethnic minorities, foreign students, status and non-status Indians, single parents, the disabled and handicapped, and part-time students, are people who have both social and financial barriers to overcome in accessing post secondary education according to Rans, "we have a responsibility to these people."

Rans was pleased with the consensus reached among delegates as the conference concluded.

"Disagreements between regions were solved in the interests of the student movement," Rans said. "The time wastage in the workshops and plenaries are expected, an unfortunate but necessary part of the democratic process."



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## Secretary of State Gerald Regan leaves students worried

OTTAWA (CUP) -- After meeting with Halifax Citadel MP Gerald Regan, the newly-appointed Secretary of State, student leaders have heightened fears about coming reductions in federal funding for higher education.

Representatives of the central committee of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) met with Regan as part of a series of meetings during the CFS lobby day October 19. The minister's responsibilities cover any federal involvement in post-secondary education, which is administered mainly by the provinces and includes the Canada Student Loans program.

Dalhousie CFS delegates were Peter Rans, Kathy Hagen and student union president John Logan.

Student leaders spent about 45 minutes in the meeting with Regan, which aide Brad Mann later described as "very open and frank". "Everyone seemed to think the meeting went well," he said.

Not everyone.

"I think the overall thing we'd like to get across is the disappointment in our meeting with the Honourable Gerald Regan, Secretary of State," said Mike McNeil, chairperson of CFS and St. Mary's student union president. McNeil said the recent Trudeau cabinet shuffle which moved Regan to his new post placed the secretary in the job at too late a stage for him to be effective in opposing cutbacks in social services. The federal

cabinet is planning major reductions in payments to the provinces for post-secondary education, according to Finance Minister Allan MacEachen.

Kathie Cram, a member of the CFS executive who attended the Regan meeting, said "We can't say it went well. It definitely didn't." She said Regan denied knowing anything of sweeping cuts and he expected any adjustments in funding to be "minimal". But he did admit that post-secondary institutions

would be hurt badly if cutbacks were to be made, according to Cram.

John Logan and Peter Rans met with Gerald Regan and Dartmouth Progressive Conservative MP Forrestal.

"Logan asked Regan what his definition of accessibility was," said Cram. "He hesitated and looked like he hadn't thought about it before."

"Regan came across like he didn't know very much," Logan said. "He's in a really bad position. I think Trudeau doesn't like him and gave him the portfolio to bear the brunt of the criticism over the EPF cutbacks."

Greg McElligott, Ontario representative on the CFS executive, said the minister "couldn't guarantee" the cutbacks will not happen. "This man is supposed to be guarding post-secondary education for Canadians and Canadian society, and essentially he doesn't know what's going on," said McElligott.

## Society leaders introduced to campus resources

by Bruce Galloway

Introducing student society leaders to campus resources was the main theme behind last Saturday's Student Leadership Conference.

The conference, sponsored by the Dalhousie Alumni Association consisted of a series of sessions designed to inform student leaders of the services on campus which can help in improving their societies. The sessions conducted by various members of the student council and student union staff covered a wide range of topics. Sessions were conducted on such subjects as finances, promotion, S.U.B. operations and student federations.

Colleen Khattar-Ernest, assistant director of the Alumni

Association and the conference's chief organizer, felt the sessions were well conducted an informative. "We received very positive feedback from the majority of the students", she said.

Some participants said that the sessions were beneficial.

Perhaps the most disappointing feature of this year's conference was the poor attendance. The two previous conferences had an average of over seventy participants, while this year only thirty people bothered to register. Khattar-Ernest blamed the poor turnout on the small number of student societies which have registered this year with the student union.

"We receive our mailing list

explained Khattar-Ernest, "and because there is a marked decrease in the number of registered societies this year we mailed out far fewer invitations." Khattar-Ernest added that she was not disappointed by the poor attendance and that the conference would be held next year.

Others however did not share this viewpoint. Caroline Zayid, councillor, and a speaker at one of the sessions, called the turnout "a disappointment". John Logan agreed with Zayid and noted that perhaps compulsory attendance should be a requirement for societies receiving funds from the student union.

