

CFS on Parliament Hill

By **BILL MITCHELL** and **DANIELLE COMEAU**

A lobby on education issues by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) on Parliament Hill failed to sway the Conservatives.

Dalhousie Student Union delegates joined more than 100 other student politicians, in Ottawa for a CFS general meeting, on the Nov. 8 lobby day.

Caroline Zayid, DSU vice-president external, attending the meeting with DSU president Alex Gigeroff, vice-president Rusty James and treasurer Neil Ferguson, said the response from the Conservatives was mixed. Flora MacDonald, Employment and Immigration Minister seemed positive when talking to the student leaders.

"But when she spoke in the House she hedged her bets a bit," says Zayid. MacDonald announced an \$85 million cut to Summer Works, a summer job creation programme for students.

CFS Pacific chair Tami Roberts says she was not impressed with the answers given by the Conservatives in the lobby session.

"I don't think the Progressive Conservatives said anything today that could be considered a commitment to post-secondary education," said Roberts. "I am cynical about lobbying the PCs," she added.

Her cynicism proved to be justified since the cut in Summer Works could lead to a loss of 20,000 to 30,000 jobs for students next summer, says CFS chair Beth Olley.

Zayid also says she is concerned about the cuts.

"This may have a very serious effect on students being able to get back into school next year," she says. Zayid says that the decision was not definite and at the CFS general meeting held to coincide with the lobby week time, CFS decided to protest the cuts.

The CFS decided that each union should be encouraged to lobby their local MPs," says Zayid.

She says she was equally unimpressed with the response from the Liberals, who included failed leadership candidate Donald Johnston, former cabinet minister Warren

Allmen and newcomer Sheila Copps.

"They didn't want to answer questions," said Zayid.

Copps said she came to the meeting to begin a dialogue on student concerns, not to answer questions or make promises.

"If you want us to stand here and make a bunch of promises to you, we'll say 'Yes, yes, yes'. But it would be better to get your input instead," she says.

"Though the purpose of today's meeting was to pick your brains about post-secondary education issues," Copps said, adding she was once involved in the Canadian Union of Students, a precursor to the CFS.

Olley says the Liberals knew about her question and answer format prior to the meeting. "We weren't looking for them to make promises—we're looking for what their stands are now that they are out of government."

At one point during the meeting with the Liberals, one heckler suggested the Liberals did not have any policies on post-secondary education.

Roberts says the Liberals seemed "really disorganised" at the meeting and acted as though "they weren't responsible for what the education situation is like now."

"They seemed reluctant to accept our agenda [for the meeting]," she said. "They wanted to hear our concerns but not to respond to them. It seemed like they were expecting us to provide them with answers."

The federation did not believe their lobbying was totally in vain. Zayid called the lobby a success because student related questions dominated question period the afternoon after the lobby session.

This is the third time in as many years that CFS delegates have lobbied MPs, but the first time they lobbied a whole caucus of politicians as a group instead of individually.

"I'm not sure if it's an inferior or superior way of lobbying," says Olley, adding the three year old student group is gaining credibility on Parliament Hill.

"I think the longer you stay around, the more credibility you have." □

Danielle Comeau is the national features writer for Canadian University Press in Ottawa.

Student union on faculty dispute

By **MICHAEL DANIELS**

Geoff Martin, student representative on the Board of Governors, says the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) must decide its position on the dispute between the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and the Board

of Governors before it is too late.

"It's too late [to take a position] after job action has been taken," said Martin at a Nov. 13 meeting of the student council. He told the council that a new environment of conciliation necessitates a defined position by the DSU.

The DFA officially broke off

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Anti-Sandinista pamphlet on campus

By **ERIN STEUTER**

From the page of the yellow flyer a forlorn youngster focuses her liquid gaze upon you. She has her finger perched tenuously on her lip. The caption above reads, "Escape from Nicaragua's Genocide."

The latest in a series of anti-Sandinista pamphlets that have found their way to local University campuses, the flyer goes on to say,

"Daily, Nicaraguans are victimized by Sandinistas who burn family homes, persecute minorities, rape and torture innocent citizens..."

Directed against Nicaragua's recently elected Sandinista party, the flyer has caused concern among local academics.

"There isn't a grain of truth in this," says Dalhousie professor of Spanish John Kirk. "They portray this child as a victim of the Nicaraguan genocide when it is the Sandinistas who are the victims of this

negotiations with the administration on Nov. 13. Among items left outstanding are grievance procedures, changes to the pension plan, copyright and patent proposals, and salaries. The university is now awaiting the appointment of a conciliator by the Labour Minister.

Martin says it probably will be mid-February before the DFA takes strike action. Before that time a conciliator must be appointed to attempt to conciliate an agreement and file a report. After the report is filed there is a two-week "cooling off" period. The DFA is then in a legal strike position.

He told council that the DSU

should sponsor a forum to discuss possible strike action so the students may have some input. "I would like to see something done about this by the end of the month."

"Ideally, I think Geoff is right," said DSU president Alex Gigeroff. "What is best for the students is to have an open discussion between both parties."

He says having representatives from both the DFA and the Board of Governors speak at an open forum would help the DSU define its position.

"So far we have only heard bits and pieces, mainly from one side."

U.S.-sponsored campaign against them."

Kirk believes that such literature is an example of the principle of selective indignation and a complete turning around of the truth.

"What we have here are terrorists of Somoza depicted as freedom fighters, and the people who have made tremendous social improvements in Nicaragua—the Sandinistas—depicted as dictators.

"How can the Sandinistas be brutal dictators," Kirk asks, "when within a week of taking over from Somoza they abolished the death penalty."

It was the powerful Somoza family who maintained a dictatorship in Nicaragua for over 40 years until they were ousted by the revolutionary Sandinista party in 1979.

"It's outrageous, given the reality and the facts. Not only does it deny the truth of what is going on in Nicaragua, but it is totally unsubstantiated," says Oxfam staffer Geoff Clare. "We would classify this as right wing smut."

The pamphlet was put out by an American group calling itself, 'The Coalition for Jobs, Peace and Freedom in the Americas.' Though the group lists a Washington address, they were unable to be contacted by phone. The organization does not appear to have a local chapter and so far it appears that the flyers are being distributed by a lone male student.

Kirk suggests that the organization and its supporters are likely a fringe of people who are pro-Reagan.

"Reagan opposes the Sandinista regime because it offers the opportunity for a Catholic-Marxist revolution," he says. "As far as the U.S. is concerned, it's got to be destroyed."

"Nicaragua is no more harmful to the U.S. than Denmark is to the Soviet Union," observed Noam Chomsky on his visit to Saint Mary's University Nov. 12. When asked for a response to the flyer, the noted academic replied cryptically, "if there is a genocide going on in Nicaragua it's been kept pretty secret."

Though Kirk feels the distribution of such literature is dangerous, he says, "it will also convince anyone with a smattering of intelligence and the slightest awareness of Nicaragua, that not only do these people mean business, but that the pro-Somoza lobby in Washington and in Canada is growing."

"This new wave of conservatism means bad news," he says. □

Gigeroff says the position the DSU took earlier was fine at that time, but they must now change their position as the situation changes.

DFA president Sandy Young says he would be in support of the DFA and administration giving a forum before the students, but it is a decision the DFA negotiating team must make as a collective.

"Our position is defensible enough," he said. But it is the question of making the negotiations public which the negotiating team would have to decide upon.

"The damn thing is so open and complicated; there is still so damn much on the table," said Young. □