

# Tories laying on the lip-service to students

BY DANIEL CLARK  
PRESIDENT DALHOUSIE  
PC YOUTH

The Nova Scotia Progressive Conservatives kicked off their quest to dethrone Liberal Premier Russell MacLellan, with a 'rally the troops' convention, two weeks ago.

The conference allowed Progressive Conservatives (PC) from across Nova Scotia to gather, discuss issues, reminisce, and get excited about last week's election call. PCs used the meeting to develop policy, especially on student oriented issues. Both federal leader Jean Charest and provincial leader John Hamm talked about the importance of reducing student debt.

"One of the crying shames is that we have university students graduating with \$30-40,000 in debt. If [federal party whip] Sheila Copps deserves a raise then don't students deserve a break? If students are going to have a chance to compete then we have to give them a helping hand," Charest said.

Hamm elaborated.

"There is nothing worse than a recent University graduate who cannot find a job, and is being hounded by bill collectors, and their only recourse is bankruptcy. Our young people are our best resource. If we had spent more time on our young people then we wouldn't be in such trouble," he

said.

Hamm was impressed by student advocates but condemned the Canadian Federation of Students for protesting for protest's sake.

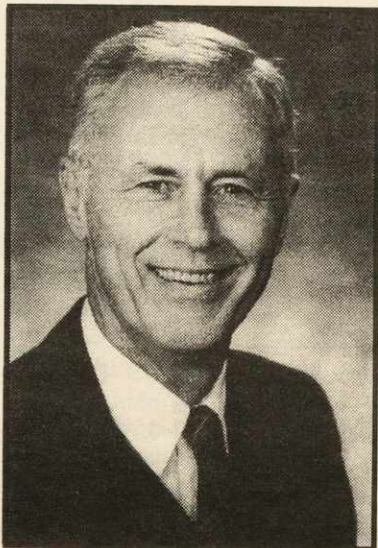
"I think [advocacy] is a two part process. First there is lobbying and awareness, but when that fails and all avenues had been exhausted protest may be the only alternative. Awareness is the most important part of advocacy.

"Politicians assume that if they don't hear from their constituents then there is nothing wrong. But nowadays, students are far more involved than they were when I went to school. I know it is because the issues have become that much more compelling. You now need 17 years of preparation to get a job; there is just no time to waste." Hamm warned.

The Dalhousie PC Youth used the conference to reintroduce themselves to the party faithful after several years dormancy, and announce their commitment to the election.

"We admittedly had some hard

times. Our finances were a mess, and members were few and far between. We were decimated by 1993. But we've gotten our house back in order, we have new members, new energy and a whole new outlook," says Drew Campbell, Dal PC Youth treasurer.



Provincial PC leader John Hamm.

federal back-bencher.

"Since 1993 we have had a Liberal government in Ottawa and one in Halifax. In that time we have not had the advantage Russell MacLellan promises," Hamm said.

"He has not stood up for the rights of Nova Scotians since 1993. How can he think he will have more influence on [PM] Jean Chretien now that its a long distance phone call instead of the local one he had in Ottawa?"

Oddly enough, MacLellan and

Hamm first met when they studied together at King's College and later Dalhousie. They became friends and despite 40 years, remain that way. Hamm made it clear that friendship would not get in the way of a hard fought election.

Charest continued Hamm's assault on Premier MacLellan's record.

"Did Russell MacLellan stand up for Nova Scotia when Ottawa cut health care, education, ACOA [Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency], and built a toll highway in your back yard?"

"Does anyone remember anything he has said in 18 years in Ottawa? I know I don't. Despite having just three per cent of the [Canadian] population, Nova Scotia has taken 17 per cent of the Federal cuts. Where was Russell MacLellan then?" questioned Charest.

The PCs now have to keep an eye on Robert Chisholm and the New Democratic Party (NDP) who will undoubtedly be a force in this campaign.

"We consider them a threat," Hamm said.

"For the first time in Nova Scotia's history, we are engaged in a true three-way election race. There has to be more to campaigning than just promising a change. The problem is that, other than being critical, they [NDP] have offered no alternatives." Said Hamm.

Hamm makes the comparison

between Chisholm and Bob Rae in Ontario, "He could wake up one morning to find himself Premier. Rae managed to destroy the biggest economy in the country; our's is much more fragile.

"Nova Scotia can't handle a huge NDP government; it would destroy our entire business infrastructure. Take Michelin for example. They came to three towns in rural Nova Scotia under a Tory government because we offered them tax breaks and a friendly business environment. Rural Nova Scotia is stronger because of companies like Michelin. I promise you that if the NDP are elected Michelin will leave."

However, the conference was not just about rallying the troops and preparing for Thursday's election call. During his Saturday luncheon address, Charest thanked Nova Scotians for their aid during the Quebec ice storms.

"My area of Eastern Quebec was one of the hardest hit by last month's ice storms. I cannot tell you how gratifying was to see boxes of aid coming from all across Canada, but especially Nova Scotia. And I want to thank every Nova Scotian for their assistance in that difficult time."

The current campaign strategy and philosophy can best be summed up by Dr. Hamm.

"Conservatives know that they cannot solve all the world's problems. The Liberals, however, are determined to prove that they can't either."

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## Admin's strategies

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### possible strike?

I do know that they get paid very little for very good work. Often, in fact, there are PhD graduates who are as every bit as capable as the members of the department...making only a fraction of the salary with no benefits. This is another way the university is stretching a little a long way.

It is part of the move to reduce full faculty and replace them with part-time people [who] you don't have to promise any future...don't have to pay any benefits,[and] you only have to pay them for eight months, leaving them looking for four months employment every year.

It is a way of exploiting the labour force and getting as much as you can possibly squeeze [while] spending as little as possible. It is not fair and it is not good for the university.

**How do you feel about the possible DFA strike? How will it affect students?**

I hope we do go on strike.

Naturally what I really hope for is a good settlement but, if we don't get that then we will have to strike.

Personally, my morale over the last couple of years has sunk to such a state, because of all the over-time and frustration that has built up, that I would look upon the opportunity to strike and demonstrate my anger and frustration with glee. I would feel jubilant and wonderful to let people see what I think of this place. I hope we go on strike, I need the rest.

In the long run, students won't lose. Students will benefit because of smaller class sizes, there will be more student individual attention and they will be getting more for their money.

Professors worry about their students...above everything else. All of us will do whatever it takes to see that our students aren't hurt in any way. We would look to cutting corners without cutting quality after the strike. We would work extra hard so that students wouldn't lose their summer opportunities.

OH SWEETIE, I DO WISH  
YOU WOULD WRITE  
MORE OFTEN...