

Welfare faces off with city

by Tim MacIntyre

The Halifax Welfare Rights Committee have made arrangements with social planner, Mr. H. Crowell, to hold a public meeting in the city of Halifax to discuss welfare. The HWRC is hoping that people from all segments of society will use the opportunity presented by this meeting to present their views.

This will be the first time in Halifax when hopefully, poor people will be able to thrash it out with the Aldermen, the Mayor, social planners and social workers, as well as the premier of Nova Scotia. It is hoped that all those interested in seeing a change in the poor community will attend.

On November 23, the HWRC met with 30 students from St. Mary's University to explain the need for this organization, as well as its function and the philosophy of its members.

These students have shown great concern for the community, and will be using HWRC assistance for their help line, when needed. It is hoped that these students, along with all other interested parties from the Universities will attend the meeting on welfare.

The time and place of the meeting is not yet finalized, but will be released when it is confirmed.

Would you believe . . .

We have student power

by Brian Smith

Brian Smith is the new SUB Affairs Secretary.

On November 5-8, I had the pleasure of attending the AUC-I, (Associated College Unions — International) conference at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass., the Dalhousie delegation, drawn from the Student Union and SUB Operations Board.

I suppose I left Halifax with apprehension of what I would learn at the forthcoming conference. Well, I learned! Just what I learned I will tell in a moment, but first, a little about the conference and what goes on.

The conference is made up of delegations of students and staff from colleges in New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Atlantic Canada (only delegations from Dal and Acadia were there).

The conference consisted of dinner meetings with guest speakers and a series of informal rap sessions on relevant topics.

At the opening dinner, we were treated to a speech by a Dr. George Taylor, reputed to be one of America's leading educators. He struck me as a man for all seasons, with a little for everyone and nothing concrete for anyone. His speech, discussed at a rap session later set the unofficial

topic for the rest of the conference — Student Helplessness.

The sessions covered topics like entertainment on campus, the alienated student, theft, the financing of Student Unions, etc. and always returned to the question — "what can we do about it, we have nothing to say."

Now to return to what I learned. I learned that we (at least the students of this university, as well as Acadia), do not have to take a back seat from anyone as far as student power is concerned. I learned that in fact, we are so far ahead of our American

neighbours that they can't even see our dust, so to speak. I learned that before we criticize our own system, to take a good look at others, and maybe, just maybe, we may be struck with the realization that our system isn't so bad after all.

A good example is the situation at the host school, U. of Mass. They have a campus centre, a beautiful structure reaching 11 stories, housing, among other things, a hotel, bar and restaurant, auditorium, college shop and cafeterias. Although this college is sponsored by the

State of Mass., the building was built with student fees, dating back to the 1930's. However, the Board of Trustees, the governing body on campus, decided that this beautiful structure was much too nice to turn over to students. So they didn't.

Another instance: The President of the Union, a student, is invited to attend the Trustee's meeting. He is allowed to speak on any issue he desires, during the final fifteen minutes of the meeting, providing the trustees don't use his time. Isn't that great? The topping on the cake is that there has been a filibuster to prevent him from speaking about the use of the Campus Centre, or in fact, anything else, for 2 1/2 semesters.

And again. Students had reserved meeting rooms for a conference through proper channels, only to find, when they arrived, that the rooms had been given to The Fruitsprayers Association of America for their annual convention. Reason — the FA of A were revenue producers and students were not.

As for the student areas of this building; the building consists of 11 floors, two of which are open to students. One of them contains a coffee shop, called the Concrete Coffee Pot, and the other the Auditorium.

The aforementioned situations were reiterated constantly by the students attending the conference. Only the scene and characters were changed to protect the Board of Trustees. In most cases, the Student Council and elected officers of that body were nothing more than the equivalent of our junior high school councils. They decided on whether to charge \$1 in coin, or \$1 in paper for a dance, and many other important issues, concerning the masses of students.

All in all, the conference presented a rather disheartening insight into Student Union government, American-style.

I could not help feeling a sense of pride in the sophistication of our Student Union, compared with those south of the border.

Even more satisfying is the knowledge that this sophistication has been the result of student decisions and student leadership, as opposed to total university control. Our reception by the other participating universities was a recognition of our status as a leader in Student Union government.

It's nice to be a part of that inheritance.

NOTE: I would like to add that these are my own impressions and comments of the AUC-I Region I conference, and do not represent the collective views of the Dalhousie delegation.



Steve Wright Photo

At School for the Blind

Student-staff solidarity needed

by Martin Dalley

"What is needed is more awareness in the problem in the education of the blind, and a more concerted effort of all Atlantic Provinces to make amends for a hundred years of neglect," said Christopher Stark, a member of the Blind Rights Action Movement.

"I think the school has been honestly trying to make the government respond for over a decade and, if they become frustrated and disappointed from time to time, no one can really blame them."

When BRAM drew up their brief, they too were trying to get not only the government to respond, but also the staff and administration of the school. However, as a result of the brief, which deals with the improvement of the blind educational system at the Blind School, many of the staff members appear to be taking their frustrations out on BRAM, when they should be presenting the needs to all who will listen.

"We are not questioning the

sincerity of any present or former staff member," said Stark, "but they should double their effort for what they want. They are doing with what they have, which is an old army cliché, "If you don't have it and need it, crochet it."

The staff members are not in agreement with the method approach, said Stark. They are in rough agreement with the overall objectives presented by BRAM, but disagree in tactics. The Board of Governors appear to be concerned, but there is a lack of communication between the government and the Board. "We are trying to get the staff to come out and fight for what they want," he added.

It is hoped that courses be set up on the local level, geared to training of special teachers to teach the blind and the deaf and mute. Members of BRAM also feel that courses should be set up to train houseparents. "We are not trying to tear the school down," said Stark, "but improve it."

Meetings have been planned

with both the Minister of Education and Premier Gerald Regan in January. In the near future, BRAM will take their case to the other three Maritime governments and it is hoped that a real examination of the educational system for the blind will be accomplished.

Negotiations are also underway with the CYC to explore the possibilities of having a member of BRAM trained as a CYC volunteer.

BRAM is not an exclusive club

although, "we are not out soliciting members, because at the present time, a small group can operate more efficiently than a large group." However, we would welcome any people who would like to work with us.

"We do not claim, and never have claimed to speak for the blind community, we are only offering our comments and suggestions in an effort to help, and anyone who wants to disagree, can and should do so", concluded Stark.

Sociology splits . . .

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mediately. Four more candidates are coming in the next ten days.

Professor Herb Gamberg suggested that there was a possibility of a financial cutoff on hiring and that we should proceed with all haste.

Students and several faculty said this only substantiated their position. If only a few posts were open, they said, the department

should be especially careful to hire the strongest candidates.

The faculty then voted to end discussion and exclude the assembled students. They hired Clark and narrowly voted 5-4 against also hiring Metzoff.

Both sides wish to avoid further polarization and the issue will again be debated at Tuesday's departmental meeting.