

INTERVIEW: PHALEN and ROSS

Interview by

Jim Hornby and Dennis MacKay

CADRE: What do you think were some of the shortcomings of last year's council?

Phalen: I feel council could have made a greater effort to involve students. This council did attempt to involve students to some extent, but I would like to see the council meetings as a forum for discussions, so students would determine what happens, instead of it being decided by council.

Ross: I thought almost the opposite. I suppose one of the big shortcoming was the lack of communication between students and council. After late October it broke down and council lost the student body.

Students were just so fed up with the way things were being done in the organization. Council left the door open but there was a severe lack of communication — the direction at times was not what the students wanted.

CADRE: What direction do you think next year's union should take?

Ross: From my observations I really think that the most vital thing is that council turn its direction internally. Unless we clean up our own backyard, we will not be able to operate externally as well as we should. We must strengthen our union from the inside and then we can move outside. This includes representation on board, senate, etc.

Phalen: In a direction which will involve many more students in making decisions. In a direction that would help students decide course content of courses, etc. All of this requires organization; only through organization can I see meaningful change taking place.

CADRE: Specifically, how do you hope to increase student involvement in the union?

Phalen: Council will have to work more as a focus or catalyst for involvement. To do this it will require many more programs like teach-ins, seminars, and outside speakers. I feel that council should play a greater role in helping students set up course unions. Here students, working within their departments, will find on which they can relate to. This I hope will increase the involvement of students. Also, involvement does not necessarily mean being directly involved within the union. Involvement in the community is also very very important.

We must also have plenty of literature dealing with student and community problems, thus allowing students to be informed about what is going on at other places and show methods of solving problems.

Ross: I suppose, like anything, if you want to start anything you must start with things directly related to the people concerned.

I think the first thing would be to increase the participation in the different societies, business, engineering, psychology, etc. because I feel that this is where the people will become interested, because this is something that is directly related to them. This I see as the first step because now we have students interested in their major areas and from here I hope that interest will increase in all other facets of the university.

I think in the past too much emphasis was put on things of little or no interest to the students, and consequently a lot of the educational programs were dropped. The teach-in was a very good example of one that didn't attract students.

Things like that can be very informative if we can get people interested in them. I think we have to promote a program across the board of in-

terest to all students. I don't think I'm being naive that if we give them something they want that is going to improve their social condition here at university, they'll want to continue it.

CADRE: Do you think the union should be chiefly political or chiefly a service organization?

Ross: I think that the union should play a part in both — somewhat political and somewhat service. A union which is totally service or totally political would cease to function on this campus.

Such services as health services are a basic requirement for any campus, and I think services have to be provided for the union. However, the political aspects of a union, — i.e. involvement in the community, politicizing students — which in itself are important parts of education, are also required, and I if elected will strive to find the complementary element which will satisfy both these needs.

Phalen: I don't think that the union can help but be politically oriented if the council and students are interested in the quality of education and how it affects them. This means they are going to have to become involved in order to make change and decide what direction the change should take. The question of residences early last fall was definitely a political act. Students took certain action in order that they would be able to determine the rules of the residences in which they lived. However I feel that services also are important, but what services will be provided comes as a result of a political process by which students decide what services they wish to have.

CADRE: What experience and background do you have, and do you feel that your personality can take the awkward hours, personal attacks, interaction with other people, and the job of being spokesman for the union?

Ross: Since I came to University, I have been involved in student government, and affairs to a rather extreme amount in all aspects, i.e. committees, student government, etc.

This year I have been involved in a number of so-called academic committees such as the admissions and scholarship committees, and being a representative on the senate.

I feel that the experience that I have received over the last four years, in all aspects of the university community, as well as the severe criticisms and personal attacks, have given me the necessary foundation to head the students of UPEI as president of the student union.

I am well aware of what I am getting into—I think any candidate must be aware of what he is committing himself to before he would ever submit his name for such an important position.

I feel that if I am elected and have the support of the students that I can handle the job in an adequate manner; but, like any representative, things become extremely difficult if the students do not show support for their representatives.

Phalen: I feel I have the experience necessary for this job. I have been involved in university affairs since I began university. I have served on the executive of council before, as Internal VP at PWC, and on the executive of UPEISU during the fall of 1969.

I feel also that my involvement for the last three or four months has given me the experience.

In this situation I would accomplish nothing by myself but everything would involve the efforts of what a greater number of students decide. In this I hope to get away from an elitist position, i.e. deciding for students what their needs are instead of the students being able to be involved and deciding for themselves issues that affect them.

CADRE: What sort of political orientation do

you have and how would it effect your job if elected?

Phalen: My political orientation is socialist and I will be striving for us as students to determine the direction of the university at all levels.

Ross: Well to be quite honest about the whole thing, I feel that I am a follower of no one in political philosophy, etc., and I think it is this factor alone that should help me to lead the students of this university. To some extent I feel that the person who becomes overly committed to a political philosophy, jeopardizes the fate of the student union.

In terms of degrees I suppose I would be termed a moderate in relation to some of the other elements on this campus.

I don't think that it is going to effect the job in any negative way. If it is going to effect it at all, it would effect it in a positive way. By this I refer to the fact that I will have them with me not against me.

CADRE: Reg, how would you go about moving from an elitist position?

Phalen: As top priority I would see as president working with the students, not spending most of my time with administration and other officials.

CADRE: How would you work with students, and to what end?

Phalen: Working with students so that we will be able to discuss and debate, and come up with our solution to what we see as the problems. This will involve mass student body meetings where everybody participates and has an equal say in what is decided.

It will involve organizing at the departmental level where things hit students at a more direct level — the courses they participate in every day.

In acting in a collective way such as this to solve our problems I believe true leadership will develop.

CADRE: Jim, what reason do you have for feeling that "I will have the students with me, not against me."

Ross: Students are looking for leadership, and I think this is a factor that most seriously should be considered. I don't agree that the leadership is one of an elitist position. I think that this is a factor which has been seriously over emphasized.

When I said that I would have the students with me, I said this in reference to the fact that we are all interested in the quality of education we are receiving, and together through student representatives on board, senate, departmental committees, your student union can co-ordinate our quest for a better education.

CADRE: You're not explaining why when you say that you would be united with the union in improving the quality of education. Presumably anyone who ran for President would at least be interested in improving the quality of education. But why are students especially behind you?

Ross: I feel that the type of person that the students are now seeking is someone who will express student's opinions in all aspects of education, i.e. expressing our opinions on senate, etc., and also that that person be able to deal with situations on a realistic basis — I think people must be able to sit down and discuss things rationally and with some deal of respect for the people you are dealing with.

This type of thing would be the fact that several things have been attained for students this year by rational negotiation, and I think this factor has been seriously overlooked by a lot of students in the last year. I feel I have the ability to accomplish the above, and I sincerely feel that this is the type of leadership that students of UPEI desire.