



## FIRE!

TWO YEARS almost to the day UPEI has suffered another near disaster. In 1985 it was a leaking propane truck, and this year a fire in the service tunnels.

The fire began on Friday at approximately 2:00. It

was caused when a welder's torch set off flammable insulation on pipes being installed in a service tunnel directly behind Dalton Hall. The burning insulation ignited other materials in the tunnel, emitting a very thick black smoke.



### DALTON HALL COOKS

Because of an entrance to the tunnels in the basement of Dalton Hall, the building quickly filled with the smoke. Most people in the building managed to leave before the smoke became too thick but about 10 people had to get out via fire escapes.

"We smelled the smoke but thought it was coming from the kitchens", said one student.

Fire trucks began arriving on campus shortly after an alarm was pulled. Once people were helped down from the escapes and it was determined that no one remained in the building, fire fighting efforts began.

It took approximately one hour to extinguish the fire. According to Don Coles, Physical Plant manager for the university, a 34 foot section of the service tunnel was damaged, knocking out electricity, phone, and walkway lights.

"It didn't burn fast," said Coles, "but the heat was intense."

### TOXIC SMOKE

The biggest problem, though, was the smoke. The service tunnels link all buildings on campus except the gymnasium, the Barn, and Blanchard Hall. Smoke leaked through the tunnel system into all other campus buildings and by 3:30 all buildings connected, except AVC, were evacuated.

Marian and Bernardine residences were closed and occupants were told to go to the Barn until it could be established that the air quality was safe. However, this was not until smoke had been seeping into these buildings for some time.

According to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital 14 people came in between Friday and Saturday with complaints resulting from the smoke. However, there were no serious injuries and all were treated and released.

An inspector with the Provincial department of Health was on the scene to certify the air quality of the buildings. He recommended that buildings be closed until

the smoke had time to dissipate.

There were fears that the burning insulation that caused the smoke was urea formaldehyde, a substance that caused controversy a few years ago when it was discovered to be carcinogenic. However, the foam insulation turned out to be another, non-carcinogenic insulation.

A source from the health department stated that there are no long-term worries about the smoke.

### THE DAMAGE

The section of the service tunnel damaged by the blaze contained electrical connections that powered the entire eastern side of the campus. Don Coles of the Physical Plant said that there was also phone lines, heating control lines, fire alarm, campus walkway lighting and CIMN radio connections. All were destroyed but work crews from Maritime electric and Island Tel began work in the tunnels almost immediately after the fire to splice power

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