



TWO OF THE HEATING pipes involved in last October's service tunnel fire showing the insulation that burned and filled campus buildings with dangerous fumes. The pipes were removed last week as repairs to the tunnels are completed

HEATED DEBATE OVER SMOKING IN THE PIT

Tuesday's General Meeting for UPEI students began with a heated debate over whether or not to make the Robertson Library Lounge a non-smoking area.

The meeting was called as an opportunity for candidates in the SU election to give speeches. However, SU President Steven Wynne opened the meeting with a debate. Wynne stated that the UPEI Senate, which is currently implementing a plan to make university buildings non-smoking areas, had decided to let the Student Council make the choice of whether the Robertson Lounge (The Pit) should be smoking or non-smoking.

If the area was made non-smoking, Wynne said, an room outside The Pit, probably where the UPEI information office is presently located, would be made into a smoking area. The other alternative, Wynne explained, was to install a \$40,000 ventilation system so non-smokers and smokers could use the lounge together. Wynne said that the Student Union would not have to pay for the ventilation system.

When the microphones were opened for comments, SU councillor Kirstin Lund said she would like to see the question go to a referendum so more students that just those present at the meeting could be involved in the issue. Another student, a smoker, said that non-smokers who didn't like

it in the pit could use the cafeteria in AVC, which is a no-smoking area.

Paul Peacock, a former SU councillor, made a motion that the issue be voted on immediately. Because a quorum of the student population was present at the meeting, the results of such a vote would be binding.

Several students brought up the fact that deciding an issue like this when there was such a small sample of the student body present was not fair. President Wynne suggested that the issue could be decided with a vote printed in The Gem for students could clip and hand in. After an informal show of hands, Peacock finally withdrew the motion to put it to a vote immediately in favour of the issue being decided at a referendum or some other vote involving more students.

As a result, the Student Council will be deciding this Sunday at their regular council meeting if a referendum on the issue will be held. If it goes ahead, the referendum will be held during the Student Union elections for the newly created position of Vice-President Communications to be held April 6th and 7th. Any UPEI student may attend the council meeting, which will be held in the Kelly Conference room, located in the hallway between the bookstore and the registrar's office. Students may call the SU office in The Barn for the time of the meeting.

Feds to announce better loan program

OTTAWA (CUP) - The Federal government could announce this month a restructuring of the Canada Student Loans program to make it easier for students to use, according to the Canadian Federation of Students.

Chair Tony Macerollo said he hopes the changes will include giving students more time to repay their loans, introducing grants and bursaries, and giving more assistance for disabled and part-time students.

The advisory group to Secretary of State David Crombie was set up last October "specifically designed to discuss student loans," said Macerollo, one of the group's members.

The group should make "immediate changes to Canada Student Loans for the 1988-89 school year," he said.

The CFS information officer, Catherine Louli, said "They're looking at a complete overhaul of the student loan system."

A change is needed in the way the government gives financial aid to post-secondary students, Macerollo said, because the system is too rigid for students to repay their loans.

In statistics released by the Secretary of State, 37 per cent of students who ne-

gotiated a Canada Student Loan graduated with a debt of more than \$5,000. The average debt load was \$4,796.

"The Canada Student Loans Act has served us well since 1964, but it's clearly time to reorient our approach for the future," Crombie said when he announced the establishment of the advisory group.

If the federal government provided better summer job programs with higher wages and more positions, the debts wouldn't be so high, said Macerollo. "It's always been the position of the CFS that the best form of student aid is a summer job."

Macerollo said he's disappointed with the stagnant funding of the Challenge '88 program given by youth minister Jean Charest.

A Secretary of State official said Crombie "intends to bring about changes as soon as possible" to the CSL. Mary Meloshe, the head of the department's Student Assistance Directorate, said the program must have "more flexible repayment terms and greater accountability" to students.

The value of outstanding loans the government guarantees for students totals more than \$2 billion across Canada, Meloshe said.

"That represents a significant amount of money and federal investment," Meloshe said. "It's a question of public money being well-spent."

The ministry's advisory group is made up of representatives from national student organizations.

"An exciting part of this whole committee is it's the first time ever (that there has been) direct student input into Canada Student Loans," said the CFS' Louli.

The minister can make minor policy changes to CSL, said Macerollo. But an overhaul will require amending the Canada Student Loans Act.

Meloshe said it could take a while for this kind of bill to pass in Parliament.

"Whenever you are talking about legislation, you have to look at the broader government timetable," she said. The ministry's group is also working with the Council of Ministers of Education, made up of the provinces' education ministers, to discuss what level of funding the provinces can contribute for grants and bursaries.

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