

Timers giving problems

Canertech work leaving people in the dark

by Carolyn Ryan

As part of a half-million dollar program of energy-saving renovations, workers from three contracting firms are now on campus making some visible and not-so-visible alterations.

President Peter Meincke signed an agreement last January with Canertech Conservation (NB-PEI) Inc., a crown corporation which supplies the capital for energy-efficient measures to large institutions, and is paid back over a five-year period

from savings made due to their changes.

Eventually, when Canertech's investment has been paid off, \$160,000 a year is the forecasted saving. If not enough is saved in the five years to repay the \$500,000 bill, Canertech cancels UPEI's debt.

Some of the results of the agreement aren't too popular with students, though.

Perhaps the most visible change is the installation this summer of light timer switches in the library stacks,

which requires students to turn on the lights when they go in to look for books, and leaves them in the dark a maximum of 15 minutes later.

President Peter Meincke said "a sacrifice has to be made for the sake of savings," but students are wondering why the switch knobs, which have been installed only three weeks, are already starting to come off.

One student who works at the library says over half the knobs are loose or missing, and the ones they can find are

difficult to replace on the timers.

Jim Fletcher of Burke Electric, the Charlottetown company doing the electrical work, says that's because people are deliberately "popping them off" and couldn't say what can be done to prevent this.

"They're standard knobs," he said, "and there's not much we can do...we neither designed nor specified what types of switches to use."

He added he was sure if the manufacturers had been get-

ting "thousands of complaints" about the switches, they'd no longer be making them.

Fletcher is now waiting for more parts to arrive, so the job is about one third finished—or about 30 timers installed.

In the meantime, Burke Electric is going ahead with the other part of its Canertech commitment. Every lightbulb on campus is to be changed to one giving the same light but less wattage. That's 9000 fixtures, not counting the outside walkway and parking lot lighting.

Generally, says Coles, work is proceeding on schedule. Wiring is being installed for the computer-controlled centre that will eventually oversee all energy requirements on campus, valves have

been altered, and MC Powers, a Halifax subsidiary of Mark Controls Ltd., is now on campus surveying all the buildings.

The only problem has been with the timers, and Coles says that has to "go to a job meeting and be noted in the minutes before Canertech is obliged to do anything about it."

Associate Librarian Edward Hanus has noticed some knobs missing, but said, "the contractor is responsible for seeing that they work properly after they've been installed."

In the meantime, Fletcher is not concerned about students being inconvenienced.

"They're just going to go down to the next one, pop the knob off there, come back, and put it on (the switch they're using)."



Potato fuel of the future?

CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.—Many Islanders know that potatoes are a powerful commodity worth millions of dollars to the Prince Edward Island economy. But do they know the potato has resources strong enough to operate a clock?

Agriculture Minister Prowse Chappell was recently presented with a digital desk clock powered by two "potato batteries", as a gift from the plant industry services branch of the provincial department of agriculture.

The digital clocks are simply run by two fresh potatoes which are "tastefully" displayed in holders on each side of the clock face.

According to Dr. A.T. Raad, Director of Plant Industry Services, he found the "potato power" concept described in an arabic publication, "Al Shark Al Awsat", which is published by the Saudi News Research Centre.

A simple principle operates the clock using two copper and zinc electrodes.

The Bi-metal probes convert natural ingredients to low-voltage electrical output.

"The acid in the potatoes acts similarly to an ordinary dry cell battery," according to an explanation given by Richard Veinot with the Provincial Department.

"In effect, electrons are liberated at the zinc electrode and consumed at the copper electrode, and the flow of electricity between the electrodes forms the electrical current that powers the clock."

"Entrepreneurs in the

Tourism Industry are always looking for new souvenirs and gifts that reflect the character of this province," says Dr. Raad. "Potatoes as the number 1 commodity of the Province is as traditional and well known as Anne of Green Gables."

Registration stats

It's up!

By Jonathan Orlowski

Yes, the population of UPEI has increased by 2 percent over last year.

The final statistics, which were taken by December 1 for last year's class, had 1676 students attending.

"This year (as of September 7) the stats show 1733 students in attendance at UPEI. I predict that it will go as high as 1750 by mid-September; then by December 1, the number should slide down to 1700, our 2 percent," said an optimistic Michael Hennessey, UPEI's Registrar.

The National Association of Registrars had foreseen a 3-5 percent decrease in university attendance across Canada for this fall semester.

Why the increase? "Because of the large graduating classes of Island high schools, which make up most of UPEI's population," said Mr. Hennessey.

So now there are 660 of you little freshmen and freshmen running around this campus as opposed to 609 this time last year.

Mr. Hennessey pointed out that inadequate classroom space is one major drawback of having a large population.

"There are only 6 rooms on campus that seat over 60 and which have an 80-90 percent usage. This is especially difficult when there are 120-130 students in a course."

When a semester does start, things can be tense.

"It's like playing checkers—sometimes you can jump a large class from a smaller room to a larger one; sometimes you can move two; other times, you can't move

at all," said the Registrar.

And what a better checker player to play this game of checkers than Kaye Martell. "She is the one who jumps most of the classes around. Her moves are executed in an excellent diplomatic way," praised Mr. Hennessey. "But she also takes a lot of the flack for making the wrong move."

One advantage is the Veterinary College.

"When the Veterinary College is built, we will have access to 3 rooms—all of which will seat over 60 students. But in 1985, the university will lose the privilege of using classroom space in the bottom floor of the Robertson Library. This space will be used for library equipment," said Mr. Hennessey.

As for the population living on campus: "Six hundred applicants applied with a \$50 deposit for 454 openings on campus (Blanchard, Marian, and Bernadine)," said Mike Read of Student Services.

"Each applicant had 24 hours' notice; then a phone call was sent out to see whether the applicant was coming or not. If they weren't coming, we would move on to the next possible applicant." He continues, "I'm happy to say that we have looked after most of the students' needs for student facilities."

Credit is to be given to THE GUARDIAN newspaper because they have been a big help in finding room and board for much of the applicant overflow, and special credit goes to the public for taking these students in.

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