

# STOP meets Syncrude

Allegations and denials dominated the question periods when Save Tomorrow Oppose Pollution (STOP) people tangled with Syncrude's environment representative at a Tuesday night sponsored by U of A's Boreal Institute for Northern Studies.

Dr. Brian St. John, manager of environmental programs for Syncrude Canada, addressed a small audience in the Biological Sciences lounge on "Syncrude's Environmental Program."

Among the audience members were Lucien Royer, former research director for the public interest group STOP and its present director, Jean Poulin.

Royer claimed that Syncrude's S02 (sulphur dioxide) emission figures of 287 long tons per day in northern Alberta and John's comparisons to Sudbury's and Toronto's S02

emissions were "fallacious" because the effects of S02 varies with climate and topographic conditions.

Concentration of S02 denudes the landscape of trees and vegetation as it has done to the area surrounding Sudbury, explained Poulin.

St. John ignored the cumulative S02 emission figures, said Poulin, which is accomplished by adding the emissions from the Great Canadian Oil Sands (GCOS) plant which is situated nearby.

Syncrude and GCOS S02 emissions would total 637 long tons per day and that under "upset plant conditions" (when the plant malfunctions) the S02 emissions could reach 1,740 long tons per day.

"Emissions won't go in the same place and mix, and the

emissions won't mix on the ground. If they did, it would have to occur in exceptional circumstances," answered St. John in a telephone interview Wednesday.

"If plants did operate at this level it would be illegal," he said, "and they would be heavily fined for doing it; therefore they wouldn't do it."

Poulin charged that studies made of the GCOS tailings pond (waste material) showed that approximately 70,000 gallons of salty water per day can be expected to seep through Syncrude's protective dike surrounding their pond.

Syncrude doesn't know what the long-term effects of the seepage are, he said, "because it isn't in their terms of reference."

"I don't want to comment on GCOS and their figures and their

pond because it's really none of my business," responded St. John.

But he explained that the bulk of the seepage occurs laterally because the tar sands are almost impermeable and besides, he claimed, the natural saline content of the tar sand's moisture is greater than that of the water seeping down from the tailings.

Royer asked St. John if Syncrude was monitoring the level of carcinogens that were emitted from their 600-foot stack.

"Well, I believe that tea causes cancer, and so does chromium," remarked St. John.

"That question bugs me more than any other," he said later, "because it's a scare question. Everything causes cancer these days at the right levels."

"We await the development

of science in this area," he commented. "There's no evidence to suggest what these dangerous levels of carcinogens are."

Royer and Poulin claimed that St. John placed too much faith on the "stop order" power of the province - to prevent any possible environmental mistakes being committed by Syncrude. A 'stop order', they said, has never been used to halt production at Alberta's tar sands, and secondly, it's questionable whether the stop order and similar environmental safeguards could ever be enforced.

"I don't think this is true," responded St. John. "GCOS has been ordered to shut down on sulphur emissions but I was speaking specifically about the land reclamation act in referring to the 'stop order.'"

Birth control...

## The Gateway

...is artificial unsemination.

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## SC opposes Board move

by David Oke

Students' Council Monday voted to oppose last week's Board of Governors' decision to replace the playing fields south of Corbett Hall with parking facilities.

The B of G motion reversed their earlier decision Oct. 1 not to turn the Corbett Hall field into a parking lot.

Len Zoeteman, SU President and SU rep on the Board of Governors, voted for the parking facilities in the Corbett Hall field.

A Health Centre affiliated with the University hospital is soon to be built; the proposed parking facilities would provide 300 stalls for construction workers.

The B. of G. motion stresses the parking lot is temporary, promising that the decision will be reviewed after three years; with the field reverting to its original state after a maximum of five years.

The field now is being used for recreation by residents of the Garneau area and for intramural sports.

The reasons Zoeteman gave for his vote include:

- temporary nature of the facilities

- students have the lowest priority in assigning parking space. If new parking facilities were not built, students would lose 300 stalls to make room for construction workers' cars.

- the value of medical research to the Med. faculty and the university generally.

"We need to maintain a good relationship between the Alberta hospital and the University," he told Council.

Zoeteman's stand was strongly criticized by some Students' Council members. Arts rep Ken Reynolds asked whether students were fairly represented" at the B of G meeting, adding "if so, why did we people vote against the motion?"

Bruce Olasker (Rehab. Med.) said, "We're 334 of the maddest students you saw in your life. How many will be here five years from now? I don't think that we

should take the chance. I don't see how we could trust them!"

Reynolds' motion seemed poorly understood by Council members, resulting in sloppy debate.

Some members thought the motion was a criticism of Zoeteman, some thought they were censuring the B of G while

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## Fall convocation

Fall convocation will be held this Saturday, Nov. 20, at 2 p.m. in the Jubilee Auditorium.

Over 1300 students are eligible to receive degrees at this convocation but only about 600 are expected to attend; the remainder will have their degrees granted *in absentia*.

Graduates will come from most of the university's faculties with the greatest number receiving undergrad degrees in Education. A number of grad degrees will also be presented.

An honorary Doctor of Laws degree will be granted to Dr. Mary Percy Jackson, who for many years served the Peace River country as a physician.

Jackson will deliver the convocation address and university president Dr. Harry Gunning will give the report to the convocation.



'Tis the season...

Workmen spend an afternoon putting Christmas lights on SUB's spruce tree, reminding students it's the season to be jolly. But not quite yet. Before anyone can enjoy the superficial sparkle of North American Christmas, they will have to write final examinations which begin in three weeks time.

## University is all cracked up

Students aren't the only ones cracking up on this campus, according to a report given Tuesday to the Board Building Committee by Ron Phillips, vp planning and development.

Phillips told the board that several months ago a two-by-three ft. chunk of stonework fell from the north wing of Biological Sciences. And on the 1st of November, five concrete slabs on the 13th floor of Clinical Sciences swung out four feet from the building in 90 kph winds.

At that time, the bottom three

floors of the building were evacuated and traffic was diverted from the streets below, as maintenance crews struggled to restrain the blocks with rope.

Phillips reported that the wind created a partial vacuum that sucked the panels out from the side of the building. Apparently the middle and bottom fasteners securing the blocks had never been fastened or had broken off.

Phillips assured the Board that the blocks were "secured now better than they ever were secured - probably better than all

the other panels."

The total cost of repairing Clinical Sciences will not be known until consultants and contractors have finished their investigation.

Physical plant workers punched holes through the wallboard, removed the insulation, and anchored the blocks through metal loops that were originally part of the blocks.

To actually remove the slabs to take a look at the fasteners behind them would be "an extremely expensive job," said Phillips.