

cross-canada briefs

Forest devastation revealed

BY SHARON BENNETT

VICTORIA (CUP) — For years, B.C.'s forestry industry has challenged environmentalists to prove their claims that forests are being cut at unsustainable levels.

Now after six years of research, the Sierra Club of B.C. has met their challenge. On March 19th, the club released maps that show over half of B.C.'s old growth rainforest has been destroyed.

"This is the majestic ancient rainforest that most of us have grown up in," said Vicky Husband, conservation chair for the Sierra Club of B.C.

"I think it's shocking how little remains."

The map, based on interpreted satellite imagery, shows only a few areas where large sections of temperate rainforest remain, mostly on the central coast and in Clayoquot Sound.

Husband was critical of forest companies' recent lobbying efforts to relax logging regulations and reduce stumpage fees. There are already problems with the Forest Practices Code, she said, citing a Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund audit which showed that 83 per cent of the streams studied were clear-cut to the banks.

"We were told that streams would be protected [under the Forest Practices Code]," said Husband.

Husband was joined at the press conference by professional forester Herb Hammond who said now that the evidence has been compiled, forestry in B.C. has to change.

"As a professional forester, I'm here to say the cat's out of the bag," Hammond said. "These maps are an embarrassment to the profession of forestry."

Liberals target youth votes

BY NIHAL SHERIF AND SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) — As part of a series of pre-election youth initiatives, the government announced last month it would spend an extra \$255 million to help young people get summer work.

To break the youth unemployment trap, Ottawa has set aside \$120 million to create 60,000 summer jobs over the next two years. The last \$135 million will be spent on 20,000 internship programs with the cost shared by private companies.

The Liberal commitment to youth is such that Prime Minister Jean Chretien was quoted in *Take on the Future* as saying, "We want young Canadians to become active participants in the economy. They want jobs. They deserve jobs. Young people want to embrace the future not fear it. It is up to all of us to create that hope and opportunity for them."

Starting next year, the government will increase student tax credits, and students will get a longer, interest-free grace period after graduation before they have to start paying off their student loans. The Liberals also plan to spend \$800 million improving research facilities at post-secondary institutions and affiliated hospitals.

Jennifer Story, a national representative of the Canadian Federation of Students, which represents 375,000 students, says the Liberals are using sexy youth strategies to further their election prospects. She calls the strategy a smokescreen.

"They want to look like they're in tune with young people, but they're not," she said.

Student parents hit by Nfld budget

BY DENISE RIDEOUT

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CUP) — The Newfoundland government's decision to cut social assistance to student parents will double the amount of debt they have upon graduation say outraged student parents.

In last week's provincial budget Brian Tobin's government cut funding for social services recipients attending postsecondary institutions forcing recipients to take the maximum student loan available. Previously, student parents on social services were provided with living arrangements but were required to get student loans to cover their schooling costs.

The old system generally kept total student debt lower for student parents, as it recognized the added strain of raising children while getting an education. But now the government has said student parents must get the maximum student loan and social services will provide funding only if it is needed.

Joyce Aylward, a student at Memorial University and a mother of three, said she was shocked by the announcements made in the recent budget.

"Overnight the government turned around and effectively doubled the future debt load of the majority of student parents on the whole island," she said.

"The government made it seem like they were helping us out by giving us a bigger student loan," Aylward said. "But what they are really giving us is a bigger student debt."

Used books may become history

BY KAVERI GUPTA

Students may see a drastic reduction in the number of used books available in stores this coming September.

Canadian booksellers depend upon American publishing companies to supply them with used books, but in an amendment made to Bill C32 in December, restrictions will be placed on the importing of American books.

These restrictions may limit the number of American used textbooks that enter the country, and could possibly ban them entirely.

Booksellers across Canada are in an uproar because Canada does not have an extensive used textbook exchange and Canadian companies are frequently "indefinitely out of stock" of these much needed books. Also, if a bookseller is in a pinch for time and the book isn't available in Canada, American companies are an expedient and convenient remedy.

This is frequently the reason why Dalhousie Bookstore Manager Michelle Lassaline purchases American textbooks.

"If a professor doesn't inform the bookstore of what they need until August, we really have to scramble to get the book in time for classes," said Lassaline.

Textbook ordering in August also plays a role in the lack of used textbook circulation on campus.

"Getting orders in August means that we don't know what we need in April, when students are still around and may be interested in selling their books back to the store," she said.

Lobbying hard for the amendment to be passed are Canadian publishing companies. They

want to promote the sale of new, rather than used, books. Interestingly enough, many of these organizations are branch companies of wealthy American parent companies.

"These American companies want to push their new books," said Veronica Callinan, Executive Assistant of the Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA).

"They don't want to keep supplying Canada with used textbooks because they don't make as much money."

Lobbying hard against the amendment are booksellers across Canada, "and they are making headway," said Lassaline.

Red light, blue light

BY NEAL GRAHAM

Dalhousie's new blue light system has been operating for five months, but has yet to be used to call in a real emergency.

Students forked out \$150,000 from their Capital Campaign Fund to set up the security system which, since its inception, has been the target of 34 prank alarms.

Fewer instances of abuse have occurred in recent months as the novelty of the system has worn off. The blue lights were illegally activated 16 times in November (their first full month of service). That figure dropped to a low of 2 in February.

Friday is the worst day for pranks, with the majority of illegal blue light activations happening "between 9 and 10 at night," says Dalhousie Security Chief

"There is a committee currently reviewing the amendment because of all the opposition."

The issue did not start out as such a fiery topic. Originally, a committee was organized to come up with guidelines for book regulations in Canada. Then, however, the guidelines became legislated, making it illegal not to follow them.

"Now everyone is sitting across the table from one another," Callinan said. "It is not a friendly atmosphere anymore."

The controversial amendment was added in December. "[It was added] probably by the companies

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G.A. Macdonald.

He adds that he expects an increase in crime will occur when students return to school in the fall.

No reduction in crime has been seen on campus since the installation of the blue light system.

Crimes reported in January of this year were similar to the numbers reported in January of last year. According to the Security Department's crime inventory statistics, the number of assaults on campus remains unaltered from previous years.

None of the assaults occurring on the Dalhousie campus during the last five months were reported to Dalhousie Security via the blue light system.

Despite the lack of legitimate use, Macdonald insists that Dalhousie's costly blue lights are "functioning very well."

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members.

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) president Brad MacKay says that he is pleased with the voice students are receiving on the various committees.

"Student have at least two reps on every committee, so I think that students have a very strong voice and will be able to have a huge impact on this building," MacKay said.

MacKay says that there are a number of planning issues that students feel are important.

One such issue is class size. Students are not going to be having mega-classes in Park Lane cinemas, but there is still concern that class sizes will increase in the new building.

"I think students want to see the third and fourth year classes stay small," MacKay said.

"The way to do that, considering the current fiscal realities, means some larger first year classes, which isn't a bad thing as long as they're supplemented by small tutorials."

MacKay says that students are also concerned about the appearance of the building.

"We don't want to see a building that's going to detract from how the campus looks," he said.

"People are more interested in something along the lines of the older buildings on campus, but because this building is going to be in the middle of campus, I think you want a building that sort of includes some of the old style architecture as well as the new, so you want a building that's going to join the campus."

MacKay added that there is a general consensus that the buildings on lower campus, built in the 1950s and 60s are "pretty ugly."

In terms of the students' financial commitment to the project, MacKay says that students have done their part.

"A million dollars towards a project is a massive donation, so I think that students have really done their share of contributing towards the new building," he said.

MacKay added that student commitment to the project remains strong.

"Everyone thinks it's very needed, even in terms of just providing a building that's accessible to students with disabilities and is safe," he said.

Dalhousie's Physical Plant and Planning director, Bill Lord, agrees that the students, through their contribution, have been a positive influence.

"Student commitment has had a huge impact," Lord said.

"It shows the people outside that we believe in this project."

Lord echoed MacKay's desire to build an aesthetically pleasing building, saying that proposals from architects are already being reviewed. He added that choosing an architect is a detailed process.

"It is important to get a building that's the best fit [for the campus]," Lord said.

"I want people to walk into it and say, 'Wow.' It should be a focal point, a handsome edition to the campus. It also must be sympathetic to the buildings around it, but not mimicking them."

Lord says that he would also like to increase the green space on campus. He suggested that a "college"-style building enclosing a green quadrangle would be ideal.

"It's not going to be like the LSC [Life Sciences Centre]," said Lord.

"With the atrium in the Killiam Library, we created a space that people love to be in, we want to do the same thing with this building. How you feel about your surroundings makes a huge difference about how you feel," he said.

Although the building is not scheduled to open until September 2000, Lord says the planning committee is on a very tight schedule so that they can meet that deadline.