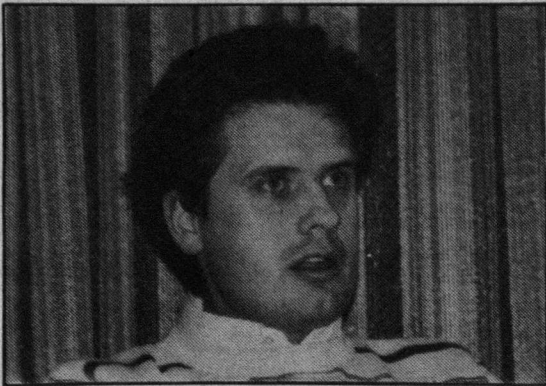


White Paper neglects unemployment, says prof



Tupper: Are Tories able to develop a coherent industrial strategy?

by Bill Overend

"The White Paper is part of a strategy to justify an assault on living standards," says U of A economics professor Ed Shaffer.

Shaffer and political science professor Allan Tupper were guest speakers at a forum held Friday in the Tory building.

The forum, entitled, "The White Paper: Alberta's Plan for the Future", was sponsored by the Political Science Undergrad Association (PSUA) in conjunction with the Legislative Interns.

Interns John Brennan and Jean Munn opened the discussion with summaries of the Government's

White Paper and the Official Opposition's response. The White Paper was issued last summer while the NDP's counter-proposals appeared in November.

Shaffer said the result of the White Paper's plan, which proposes encouragement of industrial and economic expansion as means to loosen the recessionary grip on Alberta, would be to make the rich richer and the poor, poorer.

The Alberta Government wants to improve already attractive incentives to industries and trade, he noted.

If it does so, "we'll have the socialization of risk with the privat-



Shaffer: Government holding a pie in the sky.

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ization of profit," Shaffer said.

He accused Western governments of persuading voters that, "we're going to be worse off and it's going to be good for us."

Ignoring the urgency of today's problems, governments hold a "pie in the sky" to be had only through short term hardships, Shaffer said.

Among these hardships are social service cutbacks and high unemployment rates.

The White Paper proposes to lower the jobless rate through long term "trickle-down" benefits brought about by a re-energized economy.

In Shaffer's view, the government wants to maintain short term unemployment levels so it can contain labour union power.

"It (the White Paper) neglects the problem of unemployment now," Shaffer complained. "We all have a finite life... Lost labour is lost to society forever. Aside from the morality, this (unemployment) is the grossest inefficiency of all."

Tupper commended the Alberta Government for releasing the White Paper.

Describing the Lougheed Conservatives' fourteen year reign, Tupper said, "There was a four-year period of initiative and a decade of drifting." To Tupper, the White Paper signifies a renewed attempt to plan.

He doubted the ability of the Conservatives to deal with the recession-ridden economy of the '80s.

"The Government has not yet made the transition from policies for the expansion and growth of the 1970s," Tupper noted. "Is a Conservative government able to develop any coherent form of industrial strategy?"

The Alberta Government, Tupper said, is only now recognizing "obstacles of diversifying the economy in Alberta." And the Conservatives have never adequately reviewed the possibilities of intervention, according to Tupper.

Government members simply define "supportive intervention" as any policy which the Tories favour and "intrusive intervention" as any plan the other parties suggest, Tupper quipped.

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