

"It's been so long since I made love..."

The Gateway

...I can't remember who gets tied up." — Joan Rivers

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Cheers, jeers at packed SU free trade forum



U of A students and staff packed into SUB Theatre last Friday to hear Katie MacMillan (left) and Marjorie Cohen (right) debate the free trade issue.

Dragos Ruiu

by Shelby Cook

Observers' reactions were mixed at the Free Trade Forum Friday in SUB Theatre. Speakers Marjorie Cohen and Katie MacMillan were confronted with a mixed barrage of cheers and jeers from the standing room only crowd.

Students, staff, and the general public heard Cohen speak about the negative side of free trade, and MacMillan speak about the positive side.

Most age groups were present, including a group of sixty grade six students from Albert Lacombe Elementary School in St. Albert. They are studying what free trade would mean to Canadians.

Cohen said that "Canadian

workers' income expectations have been lowered... and that the MacDonald Commission's report did not examine the service industry." When mentioning the "selling-job" that the government has been doing on free trade, Cohen drew boos from free trade supporters, and applause from those against the deal.

MacMillan, emphasizing the benefits of the agreement, said, "it will not allow us to give our energy away to other countries. Social programs can't be lost, because they are exempt from the free trade agreement. The legalese is not an attempt to snow Canadians," she said.

One observer, Hiromi Takaha-

shi, a University of Alberta graduate of music, felt the forum was "worth the time but did not change his attitude" toward free trade. He would have liked to have seen specific parts of the agreement more narrowly focused on.

Questions posed during the question period focused on such diverse areas as federally funded student programs, the economic strategy for Canada, Alberta's resources, and management of hospitals and provisions for health care.

Another onlooker, Wes Hargreaves, a second year political science student, said he is now better informed on the "mindless pap," but would like to see the actual agreement and a federal referendum on the issue.

Despite the attempt at non-partisanship, Hargreaves felt that there were biases in the speakers presentations, and in the literature handed out by several protestors in SUB Theatre lobby, even though they didn't contain direct political references. The PCs, the NDPs and the Young Albertans In Favour of Free Trade were

some of the groups on hand.

Paul LaGrange, SU president and moderator for the forum said

he was pleased with the large crowd and felt the forum informed students on a complicated issue.

Subsidies dropped

by Kevin Law

Foreign students studying in Alberta received a surprise shock from Alberta Health Care last July. Without any visible consultation with the University or student body, health care subsidies for foreign students were abolished.

For the 1,560 foreign students who attend the U of A, the subsidy withdrawal means an additional financial burden. Single students will now have to produce several hundred dollars more to cover premium costs, while married students are left with an increased financial burden of \$432 a year.

According to Carol Vander Well, Public Affairs Officer for the health care department, it was decided to disallow health care subsidies for foreign students because the Canadian Immigra-

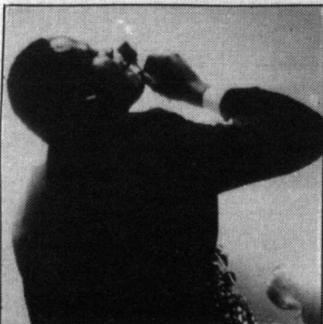
tion policy requires foreign students "to be financially independent. They are granted their visas under those conditions," Vander Well said.

A letter written by C. A. MacKenzie, Deputy Minister of Health Care, argued some provinces don't provide any health care coverage for international students, let alone subsidies.

Vander Well summed up the government's position by explaining, "foreign students studying here enrich us, but it is also a privilege as well."

Wilf Allen, Director of Student Affairs at the HUB International Centre, agreed "it only makes sense they (Immigration) ask them for resources," but the average first year admission for a single foreign student amounts to \$6,300, plus tuition, and, accord-

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