

Chief research for STOP Lucien Royer, shows a little respect for Syncrude's or other companies' pollution habits.

Photo by Greg Neiman

## STOP, Syncrude

by Greg Neiman

Information contained in five documents leaked to STOP (Save Tomorrow Oppose Pollution) indicate potential catastrophic hazards to health and environment in the tar sands area, through a dangerous mixture of weather patterns and the sulphur emissions of Syncrude's and other's oil extraction plants.

The documents prepared by Alberta civil servants working for the Minister of the Environment, D.J. Russell, were to have been appendices to their earlier report on the environmental impacts of oil extraction from the Athabasca tar sands, but Lucien Royer, researcher for STOP alleged Tuesday they were kept secret because of their explosive nature.

The report therefore "was sanitized" said Royer.

Although he would not reveal his source, Royer said it was not any of the authors of the leaked documents. He said he has had them in his possession for just over a week, verifying their statements and authorship.

One document called "Climatology and Environmental Problems," prepared by E.V. Stashko, reports the tar sands area as being highly unfavorable to industry because it is situated on valley floor, in a cold region, where air inversions typical to the area can trap emissions, building into potential killer foqs.

"Regardless of the wind flow over the higher flanking terrain, winds along the valley floor are usually up or down valley with a very high frequency of southerly down-valley winds both summer and winter," says the report.

"Therefore, long linear plumes of trapped pollutants can be expected to fill the valley floor on a frequent basis. It is likely that the noxious industrial effluents will concentrate in a layer crowning the foliage of the Birch Mountains with a possible kill. Acid rains could affect valley and hills alike."

The conclusion of the document held a warning

against future development on a large scale in the area:

"And future gigantic complex of industrial resource exploitation of the anticipated nature, operating without cognizance of the severely limiting atmospheric factors involved could bring Albertans an environmental legacy that pales Sudbury and the San Bernadino Mountains of Los Angeles."

Royer pointed to another document on "Plume Rise and Dispersion" which reports that sulphur dioxide emissions already exceed the legal limits from time to time, and that the limits themselves may be too high in the first place.

R.P. Angle, and R.M. Stetson co-authors of the report say, "the potential for serious air pollution problems in the oil sands region is high. Already ambient standards for sulphur dioxide are exceeded frequently. With two plants operating the chances for upset are increased. Should simultaneous upset occur, sulphur dioxide will be emitted at a rate of 1,700 long tons per day. Under adverse meteorological conditions, this is a grave situation.

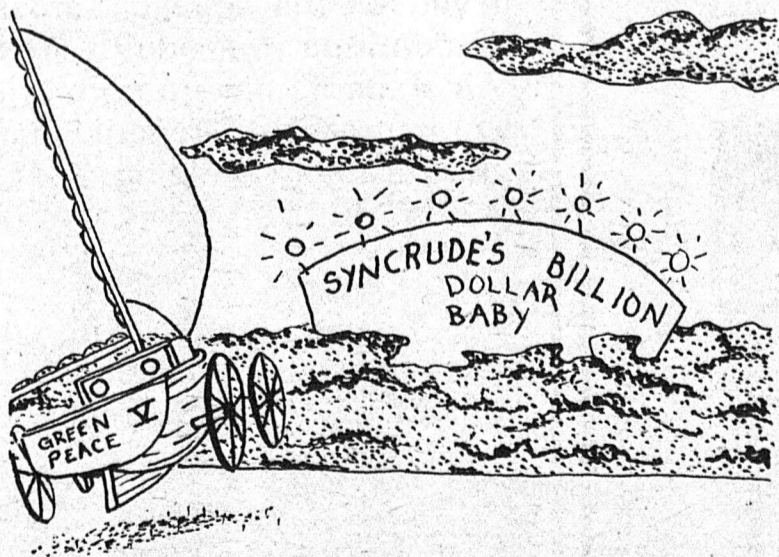
When more plants come into operation the hazard will grow."

Arguing against Syncrude's earlier allegations that he has been misinformed, Royer asked that Syncrude show their figures on pollution potentials in the light of the climatic situation to show him where he has erred.

He said government officials, both federal and provincial, indicate environmental dangers that Syncrude has denied, and have suggested technologies exist for practical methods of reducing the risk of pollution damage that may already be occurring.

STOP's position on the issue, according to another member, is to "call the provincial government to task for acting in bad faith. We are not attacking Syncrude yet with a lawsuit. We are simply backing up our statements with those of workers in the federal and the provincial governments, people who are highly paid to produce these documents."

Royer added it was unfortunate the minister chose to keep these particular documents secret.



## No aid for NUS

OTTAWA (CUP) - The National Union of Students made no impact on the Canada Student Loans Plenary Group when it met in Ottawa October 23-24.

The Plenary group, a high-powered federal-provincial body, which meets in closed session to determine student loan policies nationally, flatly rejected a request by NUS to include student representatives on the group.

NUS staff members met with the group secretary, Claude Passy, immediately following the final session and were informed their request had been rejected by the provincial student aid officers at the meetings.

Passy, according to those staff members, expressed concern that NUS was not representative because all students are not members, and feared including students in student aid decision-making would require letting in other "outsiders".

NUS wrote to Passy as early as last November to request student representation on the plenary group, and an opportunity to address the members directly to state their case.

The plenary meets only once a year and Passy assured NUS on October 2 their request and any accompanying brief would be dealt with at the October 23-24 meeting.

He also said NUS would be asked to attend "to respond to questions raised by members" if there were any questions.

On September 30 plenary chairman, David Levin of the Department of Finance's Federal-Provincial relations division said he opposed student representation, and called NUS's request "inappropriate".

Allowing NUS to present its case to the group would create "a bad precedent" and "would really foul up the discussions of the plenary", he said.

By the final morning of the sessions no questions had apparently arisen and NUS staff members sat outside the conference room awaiting the call that never came.

They carried a statement arguing in favour of NUS participation on the plenary group, endorsed by 48 student

organisations, but the meeting ended without it being distributed.

Other than the negative decision on student representation no information was released as to other matters dealt with by the plenary.

Last year it recommended the loan ceiling be increased from 1400 dollars to 1800 dollars per student per year, a decision which NUS and other student organizations condemned because it allowed the provinces to decrease the amount of aid given as a grant.

## Ed Students register next month

A notice has been released to elementary education students currently registered in extended practicum, which is no longer an ongoing course this year due to disputes between the Alberta Teacher's Association and the provincial government.

The three alternative arrangements have been confirmed and dates have been set for counselling and registration changes.

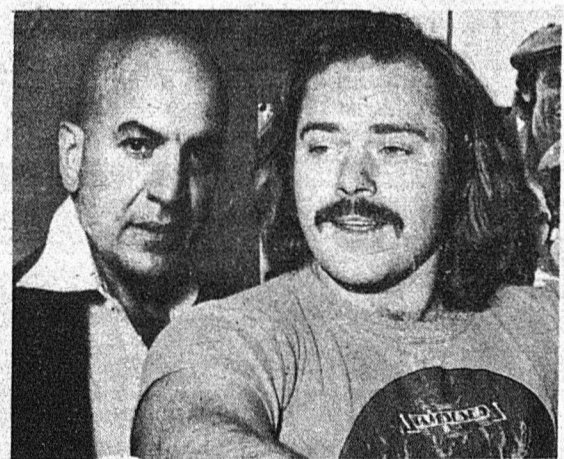
Faculty consultants will be available on November 6 and 7 for information and counselling for the new programs from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm in room 165, Education 1.

Formal changes in registration may be made only in room 234 commencing on November 12 at 9:00 am.

The three alternatives include an integrated teaching skills program, which consists of two weeks full time school experiences and an equivalent of four half courses. This alternative has a limited enrollment and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The other two alternatives involve the traditional student teaching component and academic programs selected from the faculties of arts and sciences or from the education faculty.

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