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# Loans guarantee no confidentiality

OTTAWA (CUP) A new Canada Student Loans Plan regulation forces students and their parents to sign waivers authorizing student aid officials "to receive a copy of any book, record, writing, return or any other document pertaining to the 1976-77 income" from Revenue Canada. This regulation is in effect in Newfoundland, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick are doing pre-verification, so all student aid applications must include copies of the appropriate 1976 income tax return. Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia are the only provinces which could not get the waiver system set up in time for the 1977-78 year. Quebec does not participate in the Canada Student Loans Plan. The new regulation has been called "a massive and unwarranted invasion of privacy" by the National Union of Students president Ross Powell. "It turns Parliament's legislative

guarantee of income tax confidentiality into a scrap of paper." Powell urged that the tax documents should not be used without a Canada Student Loan Act amendment to extend the legislated tax confidentiality. NUS first heard rumours of the new regulation last April, but they admit that they really didn't believe the government would try to initiate such a plan since last summer the Alberta government was forced to withdraw a similar proposal. However, when the CSLP information was made public late last spring, the rumour was confirmed.

and learned that in Saskatchewan the confidential files are being kept in the regular student loan files. The files are available to the assessor working on the particular case, officers of the student aid branch of the department of continuing education and to the minister and deputy minister of the Department of Education. There were no assurances that the files would be kept confidential.

Some provincial governments aren't happy with the new regulation either. Nova Scotia ministry of education officials say that it is unlikely that Nova Scotia will incorporate such a waiver into the student aid process. Officials in Alberta blame the federal government for the embarrassment they are suffering trying to re-introduce a policy that was withdrawn last year.

In a letter to the provincial ministers of education and the federal minister of finance, NUS agrees that "dishonesty in applications should be discovered" but they argue that "under no circumstances should a student, their parents or guardians, or their spouses be forced to rely upon the vigilance and proper behaviour of student aid officials to maintain the confidentiality of income tax records established for them by the Income Tax Act."

Student leaders in Saskatchewan met with their representative on the CSLP plenary group earlier this month

Powell says that "cheats can be discovered without universal waiver of tax confidentiality. Notarized financial statements or working copies of income tax forms, provided on request, would be enough."

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## Graduate Students Association GENERAL MEETING

Thurs. 29 Sept. 7:00 p.m.  
Tory Lecture Theatre TLB2

Guests: Dr. H.E. Gunning (President, U of A)  
Dr. J. Forster (Dean of Grad Students)  
Mr. L. Henderson (Student Awards)

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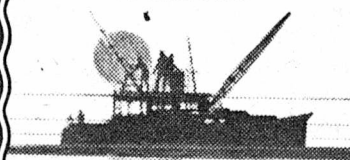
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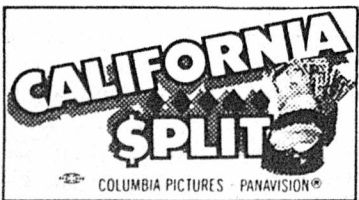
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