

# Student loan changes

by Diane Kristine Wild

Positive changes have been made to the Canada Student Loan Program as a result of concerns expressed by both students and lenders.

The major amendment will allow for greater flexibility in setting the repayment schedule of a loan, so that the individual's circumstances may be better accommodated. Also, the retroactivity of the six month interest relief period has been altered. "Some borrowers had been unemployed for more than the three months previous to their application for interest exemption," said Jean Sprague of the Student Finance Board. The new amendments will be "more relevant to the unemployed former students' difficulties."

A new confirmation-of-enrolment form, which can be filed after studies have commenced, will reduce the number of "technical defaults" arising from the student's failure to reinstate their loan within the stipulated interest relief period.

Previously, a lifetime borrowing limit of \$54,600 was imposed on all students. There are now limits on the amounts borrowed in a specified level of study: \$20,000 at the undergraduate level, \$30,000 for Master's, \$40,000 for doctoral, and \$15,000 for most others.

These new amendments came into effect in September 1989 and will affect an estimated 41,000 Alberta students with a combined total of \$124 million worth of Canada Student Loans.

# 1990 International year of Literacy

by Norman Fennema

The trend lately towards designating a day, a week, or a month to some one of an infinite variety of causes has become so commonplace as to hardly generate much in the way of excitement or expectations. Not a day on the calendar is exempt from designation by some group representing a common disease, endangered animal, or, more recently, sexual behavior.

The United Nations has institutionalized this trend with annual designations in attempts to heighten awareness of global causes. Thus in the same spirit which brought us the year of the homeless and the year of the child, the U.N. has now announced 1990 as the "International Year of Literacy." Consequently, the Alberta and federal governments have pledged themselves to a \$1.35 million 'Literacy Awareness Program'. In Alberta this will translate into activities such as the publication of material on adult literacy, use of the UNESCO literacy logo on government stationery, and the dedication of 'literacy flags' in 70 Alberta communities.

Unfortunately, those whom the program is meant to reach will not be able to read about it, but this is not the main concern, according to John Gogo, the Minister of Ad-

vanced Education. "Our primary goal is to make people aware," said Gogo. "Adult illiteracy is of real concern to the government. In the north, 15 years ago, many were leaving school to work on the oil rigs because the money was good... many of these workers may not be able to read an operator's handbook. Computer illiteracy is also a problem," Gogo adds, admitting that "I'd be counted amongst them."

Just how many Albertans are illiterate, however, seems to be a matter of debate. "Those without 9 years of schooling are considered functionally illiterate," but cautioned Gogo, "one has to be careful with definitions."

The Minister rejects out of hand the controversial Southam report which had pegged illiteracy in Alberta at 17 per cent, claiming instead that Alberta has "... the highest adult literacy rate in Canada... 90 per cent of Albertans over the age of 15... are considered functionally literate." Gogo had no estimate of possible economic costs or the possibility of a dark figure of illiteracy in Alberta. As to the question of whether illiteracy is a growing problem, Gogo has no answer save that, "given Albertan participation in our institutions, we believe that it's diminishing."

# Timms Centre underway

by Sarah Ahmad

Construction on the Timms Centre, the University of Alberta's cultural museum, has finally been slated to begin this fall.

The museum will be situated on the southwest corner of 87th Avenue and 112 Street.

The project has been on the drawing board since 1974 when Alfred Timms, an oil-rich farmer from Erskine, Alberta, disinherited his daughter and left his legacy of \$4.5 million to the University.

Ruth Timms Nishioka, now living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, was disinherited after marrying a Japanese-Canadian against her father's wishes. Ms. Timms-Nishioka holds no ill will towards the University.

"She is very positive about the opening of the museum," said James Parker, Director of Collections. "She was present at the sod-turning event in June with 46 relatives and will be returning in October for the President's Council Annual Dinner."

In 1981 the Timms Centre received the remainder of its funding from Canada's five chartered banks and the Alberta Department of Advanced Education.

The total cost of the museum is \$21.5 million.

Designed by Barry Johns Architect Ltd., the Timms Centre will consist of four main components:

a 10,000 sq. ft. exhibition space, a conservation unit, state-of-the-art storage facilities, research theatres and studio teaching areas.

The museum will house the University's many collections and the University Archives.

According to Parker, the University's Collections include over 3½ million artifacts and specimens.

The Timms Centre is scheduled to open in spring of 1992.

"It is a very exciting venture," said Parker. "It is as significant to the University's development as the opening of Old Rutherford in 1951."



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