

photo Russ Sampson

It might not be "Paper Chase" time yet, but this law student is heading for the exit. Did Timothy Bottoms have to go through this?

Laboratories safe

Safety standards in U of A biological laboratories are at a very high level, according to the executive secretary of the Bio-Safety Committee.

Dr. Susan Rubinstein says there's "absolutely nothing to worry about" despite a prominent story in the *Edmonton Journal* concerning abuses of the guidelines governing hazardous biological agents.

"The article gives the implication that some new monster is being created. It simply isn't true."

"We have not worked with recombinant DNA and no work will be done until our facilities and procedures are approved by the Medical Research Council."

She says the campus is as safe now as it has ever been and that the Bio-Safety Committee which was set up to perform an advisory function, has met with "absolute co-operation."

Rubinstein says the story was sensationalist and that Dr. Yung, who was quoted in the story, was badly misrepresented.

Awards may draw students

CALGARY (CUP) - In hopes of enticing a greater percentage of Alberta high school grads to university U of C president Norman Wagner has proposed the establishment of a provincially administered 10 million dollar annual scholarship fund.

Wagner is in Edmonton today on behalf of Alberta universities to present the plan to Advanced Education and Man-

power minister Jim Horsman.

His proposal would require an endowment of 100 million dollars from the Heritage Trust Fund that would subsequently generate 10 million dollars annually in interest for the actual scholarships.

The awards, to be known as the 75th Anniversary Heritage Scholarships, would be made available to Alberta high school grads principally on the basis of academic merit, in an effort to

encourage more qualified students to pursue a university education.

The percentage of Albertans between the ages of 18 and 24 presently in university is running about one point below the national average, which currently stands at about 12 percent.

Wagner attributes this phenomenon to the relatively easy availability of work in Alberta, tempting high school grads away from the universities.

"Alberta is in the middle of a fantastic development period, and is experiencing a great shortage of skilled manpower in all fields, including the humanities," Wagner said.

Rather than importing a large portion of our skilled people, Wagner holds that we should act now to encourage more young Albertans to train for these positions.

Profs aglow over leaks

OTTAWA (CUP) - Universities across Canada are coming under scrutiny for lax procedures in handling radioactive and chemical wastes on campus.

At the University of Ottawa 34 canisters of radioactive tritium were recently found on a dock in the biology building. The storage area was not locked and only a "Do No Touch" sign written on a piece of paper attached to the canisters and a radioactive waste sticker on each canister warned passersby.

Although the surface radiation level was apparently nil, if the canisters had been opened the radiation level could have been harmful.

At the University of British Columbia anger continues to mount over the discovery that radioactive sodium-22 was stored in the basement of a classroom/office building and that the basement has for several years been used as a waystation for radioactive materials.

Twenty-two professors who have offices in the building have

drafted a letter to the radioisotopes and radiation hazards committee at UBC calling for a complete description of what the building has been used for in the past.

"I think the university itself should call an investigation, they owe that to us," said Dale Rolfson, one of the professors. "The important thing is to find out what had been in there."

Wayne Green, the B.C. inspector for the Atomic Energy Control Board, said there was no infraction of UBC's licence to store the radioactive material because radiation levels were below the legal limit.

At Carleton University about 4,000 grams of potentially dangerous chemical, picric acid, will remain in the chemical storage room of the chemistry department.

The acid became the source of controversy in mid-September after high schools throughout Ontario called Ontario Provincial Police bomb disposal squads in to have the chemical removed.

NDP battle rages on

The court case which the NDP is bringing against the Chief Electoral Office of Alberta over last spring's provincial election is entering its fourth day.

The NDP claims it was difficult for students to vote because of the placement of the polls and because students were not enumerated.

Evidence from several students has been heard by presiding Judge Andre Dechene. The NDP presentation is nearly complete and it is expected that a verdict will be reached either late this week or early next week.

FAS challenges loan program

by Peter Michalyszyn

Post-secondary education.

The Alberta government says it is committed to the principle of its availability to all Alberta citizens.

But Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) executive officer Lake Sagaris says the government is not living up to its commitment because of its outdated and discriminatory student loans program.

And FAS may be right.

Last year the provincial government's Grantham Task Force report on post-secondary education was released. The 31-page report confirmed FAS sentiments that the student loans program is lacking.

The Grantham recommendations are now under review by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and several of the points the FAS wants to see changed are included in that review.

One of the most outstanding downfalls of the loan program, according to FAS, is the age-of-independence issue. Students who are legal adults at the age of 18 are not considered independent from their parents when they are applying for student loans. In some cases, if parents refuse to contribute to a student's education, the student may be denied a loan. The least that can happen, as Sagaris says, is that the amount of remission finally available to students can be substantially reduced.

FAS is also disgruntled with the remission system. In the remission system, a portion of the student loan is paid back by the provincial government. FAS says since the remission is based on a fixed percentage of the loan, poorer students who have larger loans in the first place still end up with the largest debt.

The remission system is a result of a government bill in 1971. Then, the province changed the Students Assistance Act of 1959, and instituted the new Students Finance Act. In the

old system, a combined grant/loan arrangement was available. Now the loan/remission arrangement is exclusively used.

FAS says it would like to see the old grant/loan system brought back. This, it says, would alleviate the problem of poorer students having the largest debts — the result of unconditional remission. The remission is not even available to students until they have graduated, and until then they do not know how much remission is forthcoming.

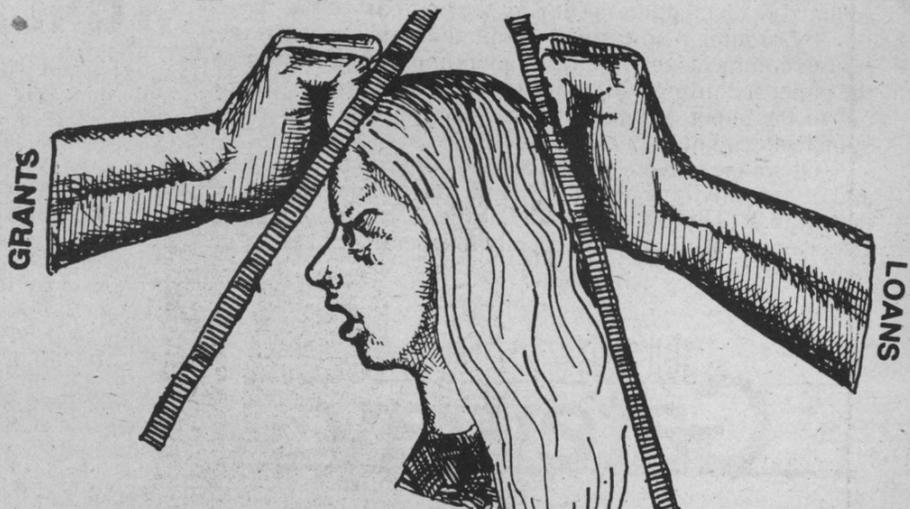
Sagaris points out that several of the other provinces do have the grant/loan system, and she says the Alberta government switched to remissions in 1971 in order to save money.

FAS argues the loans-only program available now can only deter low-income people from taking the risk of incurring large debts, if they want to attend a post-secondary institution. With increasing unemployment, prospective students also face the risk of defaulting on their loans, as the loans are payable only six months after students leave school. Furthermore, part-time students are completely ineligible under the loans program.

Director of the Students Finance Board (SFB), Fred Hemmingway, would not comment on FAS complaints about the student loan program. He said it would be inappropriate to comment at this time because the complaints are currently under review by the government.

Hemmingway did, however, defend the SFB against several other FAS accusations not supported by the Grantham report.

FAS has accused the SFB of setting budget figures too low for students on loans, particularly in the area of food. The SFB allows only \$36 monthly for food for children of students on loans. According to Calgary Board of Health figures, children under 11 years require \$46 - \$84 per month for food. FAS also says the SFB figures are too low in other areas.



Hemmingway says the SFB did not have the Calgary figures when the guidelines were set, but upon re-examination, the existing figures are fair. He says FAS has based its conclusions almost entirely on the Calgary figures, while the SFB referred to various other statistics available. He says the SFB decided enough flexibility existed to overcome particular problems.

In response to another FAS complaint, Hemmingway admits the tables for parental contributions to school costs are derived from metro-Toronto figures, but he says there is little "regional disparity" across Canada in these figures, the difference being only about 5%. All the other SFB guidelines have been set by the SFB itself.

Student representation in decision-making groups, such as the SFB, or the Canada Student Loan Plenary Group (CSLPG), has been an ongoing concern of FAS, and the National Union of Students (NUS).

In addition, last year the SFB had an appointed student representative who has since graduated. FAS wants another student to be appointed, but James Horsman, Minister of Advanced

Education and Manpower, must make the appointment because the student representative is not a permanent position on the SFB.

FAS says it is concerned because in the present loans system, lower-income students will be disadvantaged by inflexible guidelines which will ultimately discourage them from attending post-secondary institutions. A U of A study and Stats-Can figures verify that income groups of \$24,000 plus make up 57% of the university population.

At the same time, the \$10,000 and below income group only represents 6.1% of the university population. Thus, FAS concludes, there is a strong case for saying the loan system discriminates against poor people, and makes post-secondary education accessible only to higher-income groups.

The SFB stresses that its budget guidelines are only guidelines, not absolute maximums. They are more flexible than FAS assumes, says Hemmingway. In an "attempt to meet individuals' needs", loan counsellors at the SFB are empowered to increase loan amounts between \$300 and \$800 over the guidelines.