

Maintenance crew underpaid for SUB work

by Dorothy Wigmore

The Student Union Building maintenance crew needs at least one more person on the day shift, if they are to adequately accomplish their work.

"We have almost enough staff to keep the building clean, but we are unable to keep it up to date because so much of what we do, we don't have to," building caretaker Sam Metlej explained.

The staff of twelve men and two women work three shifts a day. Six work during the first day shift, while the other eight work during the other shifts. The men earn \$1.86/hour and the women/\$1.45.

There is no job description of maintenance work in the last contract, so the staff often end up doing more than maintenance work.

"As you know, the biggest job we have right now is opening doors," Metlej said. This is the largest abuse made of the crews. In fact so many requests

are made to open doors that one maintenance person is now responsible for only that. This situation should be somewhat alleviated when the new key board and system begins sometime this month, he hopes.

"We are staffed to do the cleaning only," Metlej said. "Sometimes here on the day shift, we don't get to clean washrooms when there's a big function going on and we have to set up 500 chairs."

Right now, the staff is doing mostly cleaning and maintenance of the building (cleaning, stripping and waxing floors, cleaning washrooms, rugs, replacing bulbs, etc.). They also do a few repairs when necessary, in addition to setting up for parties and functions, and cleaning up after.

Since there are more facilities in the SUB than in other campus buildings, and thus increased traffic, the staff feels they are doing more work for the same wages as other maintenance crews. "We do more lifting, for

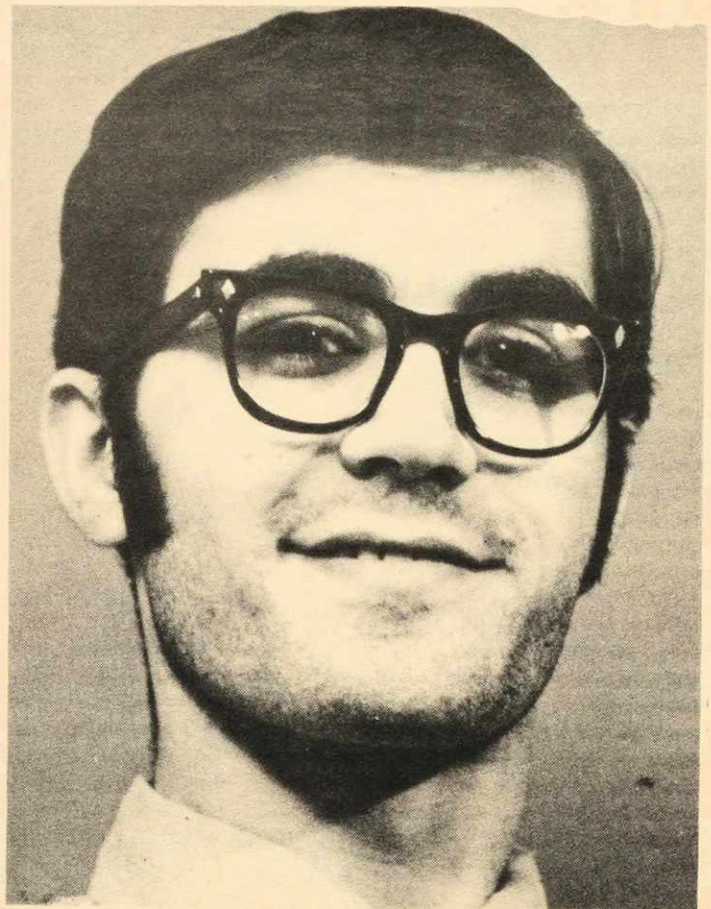
example," Metlej explained.

The PA system also means that people can easily contact the maintenance crew whenever they want. This often is to open doors or to find out information, not anything involved with the real maintenance of the building, he said.

He said the SUB administration "should look into the possibility of making a difference in the wages because of the extra service we are involved in."

The maintenance crews also have to contend with hard-to-clean areas such as Photography, Pharos, Gazette, and technical areas. The biggest cleaning problem, however, is the Green Room. Often it will be dirty by 11 a.m., although it was perfectly clean when the building opens at 7:30.

Despite the problems, the maintenance staff like their jobs here, according to the caretaker. The students usually don't provide real problems, he added.



Sam Metlej, Student Union Building Caretaker.

(art mckay/dal)

Benson moves to restore economic health

OTTAWA (CUP) — The government is about to spend a billion dollars that it doesn't have, by increasing its expenditures and decreasing its income.

While reiterating that the economy is strong and growing, Finance Minister Edgar Benson lowered the boom on unemployment by tabling a \$1,070 million winter budget in an emergency parliamentary session Thursday night (October 14).

There were two flaws in the show.

First, governments don't ever take emergency financial measures when the economy is healthy. And secondly, the

'budget' is strictly expenditure with no covering income.

In other words, government employment policies and the American import surcharge have created an unemployment crisis, and the federal government is trying to bail out the economy with a huge winter works program and tax cuts to industry and individuals.

Stressing again and again that the program is labor-intensive (the government is very sensitive about its capital-intensive policies), Benson delivered a five-point manifesto offering major incentives to big business and small concessions to tax payers.

The first two points are aimed

at short term corrections of the youth unemployment situation.

A Local Initiative Program will spend \$50 million on municipalities and give \$50 million to community organizations. And \$35 million will be spent on improving Canada Manpower Centre programs and on-the-job training programs.

The third point is designed to console the provinces: a \$160 million special loan program to finance construction.

Points four and five deal with direct federal government expenditures: \$90 million on construction, maintenance and improvement of government buildings, transportation

facilities, etc.; and a \$113 million to Central Mortgage and Housing to fund more housing projects across the country.

After announcing these short term expenditures to cover the roots of the economic problems for at least another winter, Benson played his final ace.

All Canadian corporations will have their taxes reduced by seven per cent which means, with the elimination of the three per cent surtax, that business receives a ten per cent reduction effective last July 1.

The corporations, of course, were not losing money in any area. When the economy is down, they maintain their high profit margin by laying off

workers. This is what causes unemployment.

"It is in the corporate sector of the economy that the adverse effects of the American import surtax is having its most serious impact," Benson claimed. So, to avoid a "weak and uncertain" corporate sector, he laid the government riches at their feet.

To soften the blow to individual taxpayers, he then announced a three per cent tax reduction for everybody.

The economic crisis remains. Who is going to benefit from this scheme?

Canadian corporations.

But it is going to be the tax paying public who eventually pays off the billion dollar debt.

