

Oil industry and agriculture still adversely affected

No economic upswing in future, profs predict

by Ken Hui

The Alberta economy is in for a beating in the next few years. Low oil prices, aggressive grain marketing by the U.S. and others, and slow movement towards free trade means Albertans will have it rough in the near future.

Dr. Paul Boothe of the Department of Economics at the U of A commented that the economy may end up in recession. This would cause a reduction in demand for domestic goods which, in turn, causes a decline in federal tax revenues. Boothe said this would tempt the federal government to increase the deficit to support programs (an election is not too far off).

"The federal government lacks money to help Alberta which suffers from both low energy and low grain prices," said Boothe.

There is reason to be optimistic. "We have a falling energy price but not a high interest rate this time," said Boothe. During the 1st recession, in 1981, we suffered from both high interest rates and low energy prices.

Boothe pointed out that only a rise in oil prices would make a difference to Alberta, and that the federal government action of removing the PGRT would have little positive effect in the immediate future. "The removal of the PGRT would have had a bigger effect in times of higher oil prices," he said.

The recent change in our provincial government will probably not have any great effect on the economy, according to Boothe. "I don't think the provincial govern-

ment is doing anything more. It (the economy) is beyond our control," said Boothe.

Professor Powrie of International Economics strongly supported free trade for Alberta. "Protectionism secures jobs in Ontario but hurts consumers in Alberta . . . It hurts our energy and agricultural exports. The others may be benefited but people in Alberta suffer from protectionism," said Powrie.

Powrie claimed that protectionist policies aimed at Japanese automakers would help Ontario car-makers, but not car-buyers in

Alberta. As for the Canada-U.S. free trade negotiation, Powrie doubts the outcome will be highly beneficial. Greater access to duty free goods may be a modest benefit to Alberta.

Powrie went on to explain how declining oil prices affect Alberta. Badly.

Development costs in Alberta, especially in heavy oil projects can be very high. "In some parts of Alberta, expansion in tars and extraction—such as building new plants—costs more than the British North Sea oil venture," said Powrie.

He anticipates the economy will prosper within about a decade when oil will probably become more scarce. "Canada should keep the Alberta industries healthy in the meantime because it will cost more to build up from nothing again in five to ten years time," said Powrie.

Alberta's other big business, agriculture, is not going to be in a much better position for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Michael Percy, of Economics, paints a grey picture. "It is not optimistic in the short run," he said.

Percy remarked that the subsidy policy adopted by the U.S. has had immediate impact on the grain market. Canada is losing its competitive strength. Subsidized producers in the European Economic Community, and now in the U.S., have made it much more difficult to sell Canadian grain.

"Farmers should diversify their crops and try to ensure the government attempts to promote multi-lateral agreement in agriculture in the coming GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations," said Percy.

New student phone directory format

by Alex Shetsen

When the annual Students' Union Directory is published this year, near the end of October, it will contain less information about the students than it previously did.

In years past, the directory of all U of A students included names, programs and years of study, and telephone numbers. But the 1986-87 edition will omit both the programs of study and the addresses of the students.

The change comes as a result of persistent complaints by those students or their parents who did not wish to have their addresses listed. Some students found themselves the unwilling targets of junk mail or other types of promotions by companies with access to the directory; others simply did not want to have their privacy invaded by being

included. One student even threatened the Students' Union (SU) with a lawsuit because she was afraid that a certain person might harass her after finding her through the directory.

"The SU Executive decided to drop the addresses because of all the complaints we received," says SU Vice-President Internal Barb Higgin, in charge of producing the directory. And as for the program and year of study, "the GFC (General Faculty Council) considers that confidential information also."

Last spring, the GFC actually approved the release of students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers for publication in the directory (with the provision that students who wanted to have this information withheld could do so.) But the GFC did not approve the

release of the programs and years of study, information it considers in the same category as students' dates of attendance, places and dates of birth, and addresses.

The Office of the Registrar, which issues the students' records to the SU for use in the directory, could not be reached for a statement of their current policy on the matter. However, in a July 1985 letter to the SU, Bonnie Afanasiff, Associate Registrar in charge of Records, expressed concern over both the mounting complaints about the publication of the students' addresses in the directory and the incompleteness of the addresses themselves under the directory's format. Addresses of the students may be up to 60 characters long; the old format of the directory did not allow for addresses longer than

20 characters. Moreover, the Office of the Registrar was unsure about some students' whereabouts: it had had mail returned from their last known address.

The students, meanwhile, seem satisfied with the decision to drop the addresses from the directory. "I am pleased . . ." says David Haljan, a second-year economics student. "I feel that this sort of information is privileged and ought to be provided only by myself." Geoff Haynes, first-year science student, echoes David's opinion. He adds that the phone number is a useful way to contact a student, though it should not be printed if the student objects.

The programs and years of study, however, are a different matter. Both students expressed apathy over their deletion from the directory, saying it would not matter whether that was printed or not. Craig Cooper, SU Vice-President Academic, said "I don't really see why that shouldn't be printed."

It is unfortunate that with the directory's new format, the majority of the students will now have to wait until their addresses are published in the Edmonton city telephone directory in March instead of having a reference available in October.

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