

024-1979
Phyllis Brooks
March 15, 1979

For immediate release

Editors: Note local names

WLU students' private member's bill
is introduced in the House of Commons

Five Wilfrid Laurier University political science students hope to see their private member's bill passed before a federal election is called.

The bill, which was recently introduced to the House of Commons by MP Perrin Beatty, is designed to limit the campaign spending period in by-elections to the last 58 days before such elections.

The students' bill is in response to problems that arose last year when October by-elections were announced in March. Many candidates, believing a federal election was imminent, spent freely. When the federal election, which would have cancelled their by-election expenses, was not called many found they had reached their spending limits too early in the campaign.

The students, Andy Blenkarn from both Orillia and Belleville; Mike Brown, Hamilton; Jacquelyn Berry, Cambridge; Cathy Becken, Mt. Forest; and Anne Brunskill, Fergus; are taking Dr. John McMenemy's Canadian government course. Dr. McMenemy believes students should learn by becoming involved. As part of the course Dr. McMenemy's students are required to write a private member's bill and try to get it sponsored by an MP or MPP.

The students gained the support of Perrin Beatty MP for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo. They also spent three days in Ottawa speaking to politicians, several civil servants and the chief electoral officer.

"It was quite an educational experience going to Ottawa and talking to people we had only read about," said Andy Blenkarn.

"We believe our bill is important and if it is debated soon enough we believe it will get unanimous consent in the House and be passed... we hope," he said.