

MARKHAM SPRING HOMESHOW
February 29, March 1 & 2, 2008
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Students welcome additional federal funding

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

Students welcome the help offered by the federal government during yesterday's budget announcement, but say there are more issues to be addressed. The budget earmarks \$350 million

for 2009 for a new Canada student grant program that eliminates the Millennium grant program. The money, which will increase to \$430 million by 2012, will provide \$100 to \$250 per month for the duration of a post-secondary program to almost 250,000 students who are deemed low to middle income.

This would mean a middle income college student attending a three-year program will receive \$2,400 in monthly installments, according to Tyler Wiles, president of the College Student Alliance.

"That money could go a long way for a student, but we have to remember the

federal government isn't the only player in the game," he said. "Now we need to get the provincial government to mirror this grant program to really help students."

The lack of communication between the two governments has always created problems for students and makes financial aid and grant programs more difficult to access. A uniformed approach would be preferred, Mr. Wiles said.

The Conservatives also announced \$123 million to modernize and enhance the current Canada student loans program.

"Applying (for a student loan) is easy, but on the federal side, paying it back is confusing," Mr. Wiles said.

Students in the repayment phase of a loan only receive a statement once a year, unlike a credit card statement that comes in the mail monthly. It can also be difficult for students to get up-to-date information online. The funds will be spent addressing these and other issues.

Yet more needs to be done, Mr. Wiles said, citing, as an example, the fact the application process doesn't take into account the debt load carried by parents of dependent students.

"Some students can't get assistance because their parents make too much money on paper," he said.

He also wants a national accord for post-secondary institutions to ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to loan interest rates for students, saying he was disappointed high interest rates weren't addressed in the budget.

"The government is simply making too much money off the backs of students," he said.

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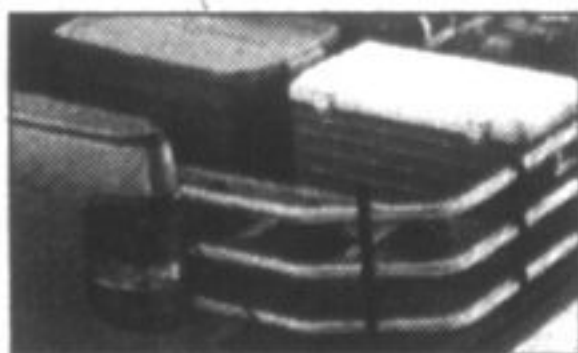
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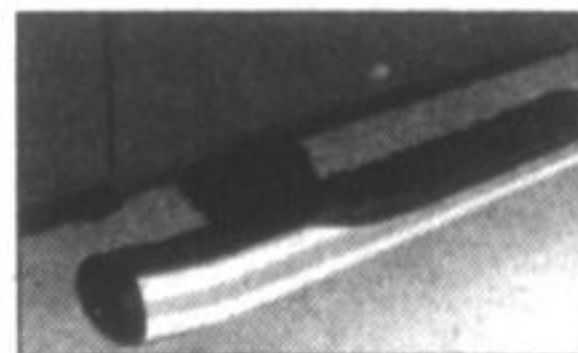
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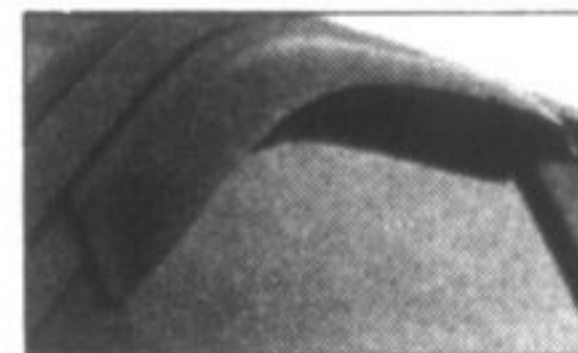
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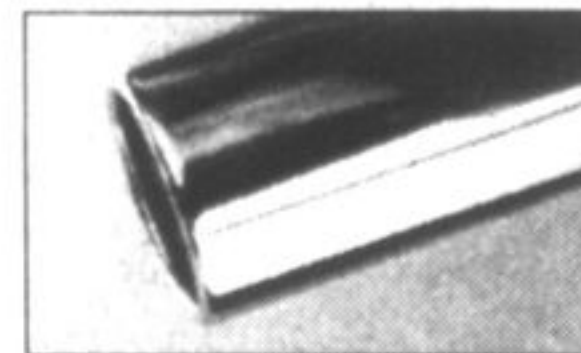
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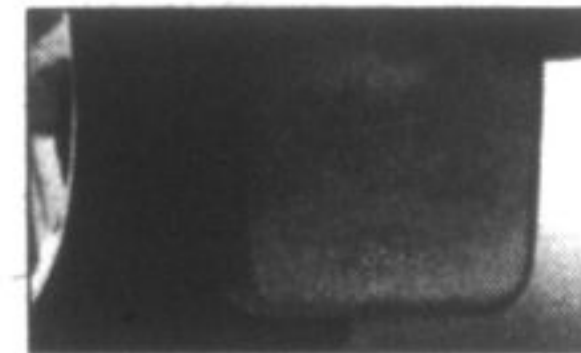
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