

## High-tech research facilities for B.C.?

VANCOUVER (CP) — University officials responded enthusiastically Wednesday to disclosures that a \$10-million high-technology research and development facility is being considered for the University of B.C. or Simon Fraser University.

The proposal, now being studied by a high-level committee of senior government officials, is one of several being considered to encourage the development of high technology industries.

The document, prepared by the government's Discovery Foundation, also recommends construction of office-sized facilities at the three public universities, and of research facilities on several regional college campuses.

High-technology business centres are proposed for the regional colleges campuses in Kelowna, Vernon, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Castlegar, Prince George, Dawson Creek and Co-mox.

Noting that he pushed hard to get land set aside for such facilities at SFU, university president George Pedersen said he has always felt it is important for people coming out of science programs to have facilities to develop entrepreneurial ideas.

"It's the product of universities that might be able to get high technology going in this province," he said.

"I'm quite enthusiastic about the prospect of doing these things."

But at the same time, he said, he's concerned about developing research parks while universities are so short of capital funding that they are having a hard time coping with the demand for their services.

"I'm delighted with the idea of developing the parks, but you also have to be sure you're developing the brainpower for these parks."

UBC information officer Jim Banham said the university has had land set aside for construction of Discovery Park facilities since 1981 and is looking forward to their development, which should benefit both students and faculty.

Capital cost is estimated at \$9.4 million, and start-up costs at \$100,000. Funding required over five years would total \$25 million.

Construction of this or any other similar facility at UBC would require an additional \$1.5 million for underground services and roads.



Sturgeon

Bob Little and Brenda Dixon of the environment ministry fish and wildlife branch measure the 2.5-metre, 136-kilogram sturgeon caught in the Fraser River last year. The huge bottom fish that has been kept in a walk-in freezer is scheduled to be stuffed so it can be viewed at room temperature rather than in the freezer where one has to wear winter clothes.

Citizen photo by Ric Ernst

## NO POSTAL CODE

# Some local mail 'taxed'

by BOB ROWLANDS  
Staff reporter

Some Prince George residents receiving business mail this week had to pay an extra fee to get their mail.

Companies had sent them letters without the postal code.

The post office doesn't like that so it charged people receiving letters an additional 14 cents.

That's a new regulation that came into effect Jan. 15, says George Shepherd, retail and delivery manager for the Canada Post Corporation in Prince George.

The post office calls it a tax. Most people would call it a nuisance.

Shepherd said the Canada Post Corporation tried contacting all businesses about the new regulation but the volume has been so great the post office has simply been adding the tax.

But shortly after the regulation came into effect, the Crown corporation decided there would be a period of grace.

Businesses can now send mail without postal codes until April 1, but the Prince George office wasn't told about this until 1:15 p.m. Wednesday, Shepherd said.

He's not sure when the corporation had its change of heart.

Meanwhile, the post office would like companies to get into the habit of using the postal codes on their metered mail.

After all, we've had postal codes for 10 years now.

All first-class standard metered mail costs 30 cents for the first 30 grams, he said.

Letters mailed without the postal code are con-

sidered to be non-standard, he said. These letters cost 37 cents for the first 30 grams.

If a "non-standard" letter is mailed with a 30-cent meter label, "it will be taxed double the deficiency," he said.

That means a person has to pay to get a letter — after April 1, or if he was unlucky enough to get a business letter between Monday and Wednesday this week.

The key phrases here are metered and permit mail, he said. Mail that has been put through a meter is considered business mail even if sent from a private house. Business mail with stamps isn't affected by the rule.

Metered mail in this country receives priority, Shepherd said.

The post office believes all mail that gets preferential treatment should have postal codes so it can be sorted by machines anywhere in Canada, he said.

Companies that decide to throw their meters away rather than use the postal code can expect mail to be sorted manually, Shepherd said.

That means letters will take longer to reach their destination.

The post office's short-lived new tax, which is in limbo for now, will be changing on Feb. 15, he said.

On that date, the cost of sending a standard business letter through the mail will increase from 30 cents to 32 cents for the first 30 grams.

But business letters mailed without the postal code will still cost 37 cents, he said.

If a "non-standard" letter is mailed with a 32-cent meter label, it will be taxed.

But the person who wants the letter will have to pay 10 cents rather than 14, Shepherd said.

## BETTER TV SIGNAL SOUGHT

# Hixon wants to be in the picture

The Hixon Community Association has been trying to get better television reception for the community for the past five years, but feels it has been getting a bureaucratic run-around.

"Everyone says everyone else is responsible," association president Mary McMurtry said, adding she has been unable to determine responsibility to provide good service.

In a letter to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, McMurtry said she believes more video tape recorders are being used in the village than any other settlement its size.

"This is not brought on by affluence, but by necessity due to lack of proper TV signals."

The village, about 75 kilometres south of Prince George, is in a small valley and broadcast signals miss many TV sets as a result, McMurtry said. Some people who live at the top of the hills can receive both CKPG and BCTV, but reception in the "bowl" area is spotty.

People can receive a picture but no sound, or vice-versa, McMurtry said.

Some residents don't get any television at all, but their next-door neighbors do.

The Association filed an intervention against CKPG at the station's licence renewal hearings in Fort St. John last week, asking the CRTC to force the station to improve its service as a condition of renewing the licence.

But Lorne McCuish, who represents the area in the House of Commons, said the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is responsible for providing a quality signal but has failed to do so.

McCuish suggested the people form a television society and use a satellite dish for better reception. But McMurtry replies a society has existed for many years.

Residents also tried installing a satellite dish at their own expense, but it didn't work, she said.

A portable unit worked well, but when they put a satellite dish on a hill, there was interference from two-way radios and the B.C. Tel microwave system, she said. One spot near the village would be suitable, but there isn't any power and installing new utility poles would cost about \$30,000.

After that experience, "people said they wouldn't put in a cent into another system unless they have proof it will work."

Gordon Leighton, general manager of CKPG, said in a letter that television service in Hixon isn't up to par and he asked the CBC if the community could receive special assistance from the network.

For its part, the CBC believes Hixon is CKPG's responsibility because the company already has rebroadcast facilities there, said Ian Ritchie, director of station relations for the corporation in Ottawa. The CBC launched a program in the mid-70s called the Accelerated Coverage Plan to improve radio and television service to communities with 500 people or more.

Leighton asked about getting this for Hixon, but the Crown corporation told him there weren't enough people.

The community is unincorporated and precise population figures aren't avail-

able, but a Statistics Canada spokesman said 563 people lived in the area in 1981. The regional district estimates the population at 600.

With that many people, the community would have qualified, but ACP is ending and the Crown corporation is suffering from budget cutbacks. Even if the community was entitled to assistance, it would take about two years before any upgrading could be done by the network, Leighton said.

Brian Bethel, chief engineer at CKPG, said the station has tried to improve service and has worked with the community association, "but I'm not sure if a station this size can do everything on its own."

In the past, signals from Tabor Mountain were received by a rebroadcaster in Hixon and sent to residents on Channel 10. People outside the village had good reception, but those in the village did not.

He said the station switched its transmitter to Pilot Mountain northwest of Prince George in the fall of 1980 and signals were sent to a rebroadcaster on the west side of the village and to residents on Channel 5.

People outside the village who had good reception before lost it, so the station reactivated the old rebroadcaster, he said.

With two rebroadcasters, residents are being served better than they were before, he said. But they have power-line noise, reception is "difficult," most people have just one channel and they're dissatisfied with the lack of choice.

## MAN ACCUSED OF MURDER

# Memory went 'blank'

by BILL McEACHERN  
Staff reporter

"Everything just went blank," a man accused in the death of his common-law wife testified at a B.C. Supreme Court trial here Wednesday.

With those words to Justice C. Lander, Frederick Wayne Rankin, charged with the second-degree murder of Ita Elkins, gave his testimony describing a day that began normally enough, according to the 37-year-old Williams Lake man.

Elkins died in Kamloops hospital, seven days after she was found unconscious in the parking lot of a Williams Lake hotel by two RCMP constables at 8:15 p.m. June 12.

Witnesses placed Rankin at the scene.

Massive brain damage forced doctors to turn off the native woman's respirator and pronounce her dead June 19.

Rankin told the 12-member jury he doesn't remember anything after a few hours of drinking in a bar the afternoon of June 12 to highlight the trial's eighth day of evidence.

Asked by defence counsel Griffin Layne what he did June 12, Rankin told the court he got up early and went to town at about noon with Elkins.

After walking around for "a while" Rankin testified he and Elkins, 36, went to drink beer at the Lakeview Hotel bar.

By mid-afternoon Rankin said he had become so drunk he didn't recall leaving the bar around 5 p.m. with friends.

"I woke up the next morning in the drunk tank in the jail."

It wasn't until RCMP let out other drunks and not him that Rankin said he knew something was wrong.

"I thought I was just in for drunk."

But a RCMP member told him he was charged with the assault causing bodily harm of his common-law wife.

"I asked why — what happened and he told me he couldn't tell me what happened."

It was the crucial 60 minutes from the time friends left the couple's home at about 5:30 or 6 p.m. June 12 after driving them home from the bar and the time Elkins was found unconscious that Crown counsel Al Bate asked Rankin about under cross examination.

But Rankin testified he could not recall anything.

Had he ever previous to June 12 suffered from

blackouts, Bate asked Rankin.

The accused replied he had — up to 12 hours — but no one had ever reported him being violent.

He said he and Elkins had not been fighting on June 12 and he did not know why she turned up at a neighbor's home with two suitcases — barely 70 minutes before being found unconscious.

Witnesses in the trial have testified Rankin

was beating Elkins in the parking lot while others have testified it appeared as if he was trying to lift the woman to her feet while slapping her face on the evening of June 12.

Layne is scheduled to end his defence case today after calling a Vancouver neuropathologist to give evidence.

The trial is the first of three in this sitting of the B.C. Supreme Court in Prince George.

## COQUITLAM KILLINGS

# Blackman remanded

PORT COQUITLAM, B.C. (CP) — Bruce Blackman, looking pale and drawn, slowly shook his head to friends in a packed courtroom Wednesday as he faced charges in the slaying of six members of his family.

Dressed in a red, plaid shirt and blue jeans, the 22-year-old man later slumped, his head bowed, as evidence of the killings was presented by Crown counsel Pedro De Couto and Dr. Gary Hayes.

Blackman is charged with first-degree murder in the death of his father, mother, two sis-

ters, brother and brother-in-law in the Blackmans' suburban Coquitlam home early Tuesday.

Dead are Blackman's father Richard, 50, his mother Irene, 49, brother Rick, 16, sisters Karen Rhodes, 25 and Roberta Davies, 28, and brother-in-law John Davies, 39.

Their blood-spattered bodies were found Tuesday throughout the family's comfortable home in this Vancouver suburb.

Judge Kim Husband ordered a ban on publication of the evidence and remanded Blackman until Feb. 16 for psychiatric examination.

Husband refused a motion by duty defence counsel Phillip Pelzman to have the courtroom cleared.

Pelzman claimed that

the evidence presented by De Couto and Hayes "may be prejudicial to the accused." Pelzman said Blackman "doesn't want the press in the courtroom."

But Husband said he believed the courts should be held in public wherever possible and said he wasn't satisfied justice would be served by clearing the courtroom.

J. Ian Evans & Associates  
OPTOMETRISTS

J. IAN EVANS D.O.S.  
F.A.A.O.  
GREGORY E. EVANS  
B.Sc., O.D.  
ALAN D. EVANS  
B.Sc., O.D.  
ALLAN W. JONES  
B.Sc., O.D.  
FRANK E. DECKER O.D.  
Optical Wing 401 Quebec St.  
Fane Building,  
Prince George, B.C.  
562-1305

Was Your Home Built Before 1971?

up to \$500

Federal Government Insulating Grant Available

CALL FOR A FREE BROCHURE

Comfort Insulation

CSA

562-6200

1-8-CHIP

# HART DRUGMART

January 20, 21, 22, 23  
SALE ENDS SUNDAY

HART CENTRE STORE  
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  
9 A.M. - 9 P.M.

Sundays & Holidays 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

DOWNTOWN STORE  
OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK  
9 A.M.-6 P.M.

Closed Sundays & Holidays

the Bay

# FRIDAY IS CHINESE NIGHT

SWEET AND SOUR  
PINEAPPLE PORK

CHOW MEIN / BEAN SPROUTS

HAM AND CHICKEN  
FRIED RICE

3.50

We have many other tempting Chinese dishes, plus a full selection of Canadian cuisine, all priced to please your family's shopping budget. Served from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at all Bay Buffets.

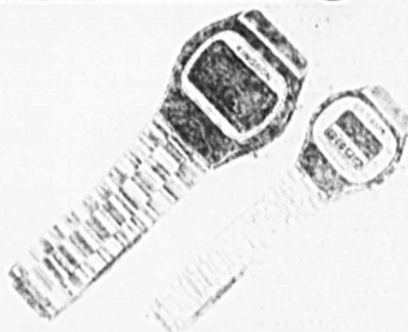
Hudson's Bay Company  
Support The  
CKPG SHRINER  
TELETHON  
Jan. 22 & 23



# PEN WATCHES

Silver, Gold, Red, Black  
1 year guarantee  
Reg. \$19.95  
SALE.....

\$9.95



# MEN'S & LADIES' WATCHES

LCD Quartz  
5 function  
1 year guarantee  
Reg. \$19.95 SALE.....

\$9.95

SALE ITEMS WHILE QUANTITIES LAST

TWO LOCATIONS  
HART CENTRE  
MALL  
962-9666

DOWNTOWN  
3rd AVE.  
564-7147