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Students threatened by proposed copyright law

By MARK STEVENS

Students and faculty may soon have to pay a royalty to photocopy previously published library material.

Proposed legislation to amend the 1924 Copyright Act could mean that library users will be forced to pay authors and publishers for the privilege of making even a single copy.

The Canadian Library Association has interpreted the proposed Bill as a threat to Canada's library system and its users. "Bill C-60 will hinder the principle of freedom of access to information for all Canadians", said a spokesperson for the CLA.

Judy Colson, from UNB's Harriet Irving Library, is heading up a committee to examine the possible effects of the proposed legislation. She explained that the CLA has presented a number of briefs to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communica-

tions and Culture. Objections to the Bill include allegations that it will encourage the theft and mutilation of library materials.

Colson maintains that it is high time some revisions were made to the original Copyright Act -- primarily because it is over sixty years old. "When it was introduced, we didn't have photocopying machines, material stored on microfilm, or computers", she said. But nevertheless, she feels that any new legislation would need to be carefully thought out.

"At the moment, the Copyright Act is open to interpretation. In fact, according to the existing legislation, a lot of photocopying done on this campus is technically illegal."

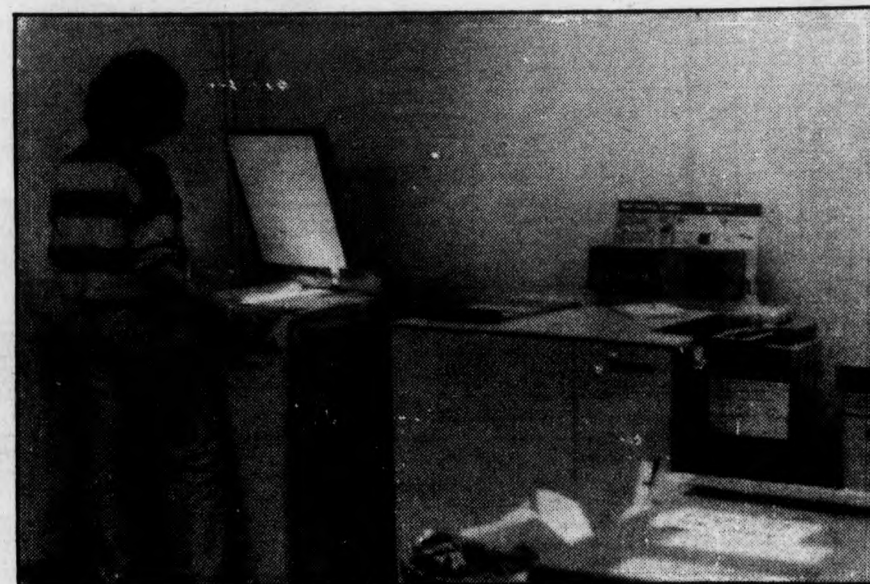
Colson admits that it would be virtually impossible to enforce the proposed revisions to the Act. But it is highly probable library staff would remove the photocopying

machines if the Bill were passed, she said.

The proposed revisions -- as yet undefined -- have been in the pipeline for some time. A white paper on the Canadian Copyright Act was reviewed by a Parliamentary Committee in 1984. This review was published in 1985 under the title of *A Charter of Rights for Creators*. It was widely perceived by the CLA to champion the rights of "creators" at the expense of those who want access to information.

According to Colson, the royalties generated by the new legislation would go to a Copyright Collective. "We'd like to see it better defined, but a collective would be favourable as far as we can tell. Hopefully, the government would provide initial funding. Yes, I think a well organized collective could work."

But who would profit from the royalties? The CLA claim



Photocopying at the Harriet Irving Library could be a thing of the past if the proposed legislation becomes law.

that only 8% of copying from periodicals is from Canadian publications. The same survey indicated that 62% of copying is from American periodicals. Because of Canada's international copyright obligations, that 62% of royalties would go to U.S. creators.

On campus, reactions to the proposed legislation have been mixed. Larry Hansen, vice-president external, said he didn't think the revisions to the Copyright Act would have any real effect. Other students

Continued on page 4



Physical plant boys look for the missing chair over at Singer Hall. For the full story, see Page 3.

CONTENTS

News	3
Editorial	8
Letters to the Editor	9
Distractions	10
Viewpoint	13
Literary Page	12
Entertainment	16
Feature	14
Sports	21
Classified	28