

Martin Promises Canadian Students \$3,000 Each in Tuition Relief

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MONTREAL (CUP) - At an election campaign stop on Thursday, Liberal leader Paul Martin pledged to provide students with billions of dollars in tuition assistance if re-elected prime minister, but critics say the plan does not address the problem of rapidly rising tuition in Canada.

Speaking at the University of Waterloo, Martin unveiled a new system of grants that would pay for half of student's tuition in their first and last years of university, to a maximum of \$3000 per year.

"Reducing the cost of tuition for Canadian families, and improving Canadians' access to skills training and employment opportunities is about ensuring that all Canadians - and their families - can prosper in the global economy," Martin said in a press release.

The grants would be available through the current Canada Student Loan Program, and are available to every student in Canada who begins their first degree program in the 2007-2008 school year. The program is expected to cost \$2-billion over five years.

The money will be available through the Martin said that the grants will not be available to Quebec students, as the province has its own system of grants and loans. Instead, Mar-

tin said that he would offer "full financial compensation" to the Quebec government.

George Soule, the National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students, said Martin's plan does nothing to address the funding shortfall that has led governments and post-secondary institutions to triple their tuition fees since 1990-1991.

"In the absence of a plan to regulate tuition, this plan is incomplete," said Soule, explaining that, as tuition fees continue to rise, the effectiveness of a \$3000 grant will be diminished. He added that a \$3,000 grant is not sufficient to cover half the tuition of students in provinces such as Nova Scotia, where the average tuition is \$6281 this year.

James Turk, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said he was pleased that the Liberals have made postsecondary education a priority during this campaign, but pointed out that Martin himself is largely responsible for recent tuition fees increases in Canada.

"The problem [of high tuition fees] was created when Paul Martin, as Finance Minister cut billions of dollars from postsecondary education," he said.

Paul Martin was Finance Minister between 1993 and 2001. In 1996, he created the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which lumped

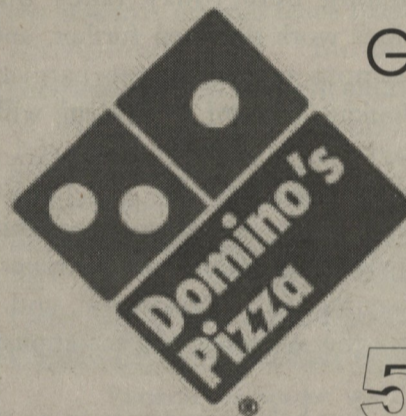
together money for education, healthcare and social assistance into one payment to the provinces. This fund was cut by \$7.4 million between 1995-1996 and 1999-2000, according to the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Both Soule and Turk called on the Liberals to re-invest \$4-billion into education in the form of a dedicated transfer payment for post-secondary education that could be used both for tuition relief and for funding post-secondary institutions. Martin pledged this fund during the 2004 election cam-

paign at a televised meeting with students in Newfoundland, but has yet to follow through on the promise. Representatives of the Liberal Party did not respond to requests for an interview.

On Thursday, Martin also announced plans to make employment insurance more accessible for those enrolled in apprenticeship programs, and a scholarship program that will allow 25 Canadians to study abroad and 50 international students to study in Canada. These initiatives are in addition to those included in the mini-budget in November.

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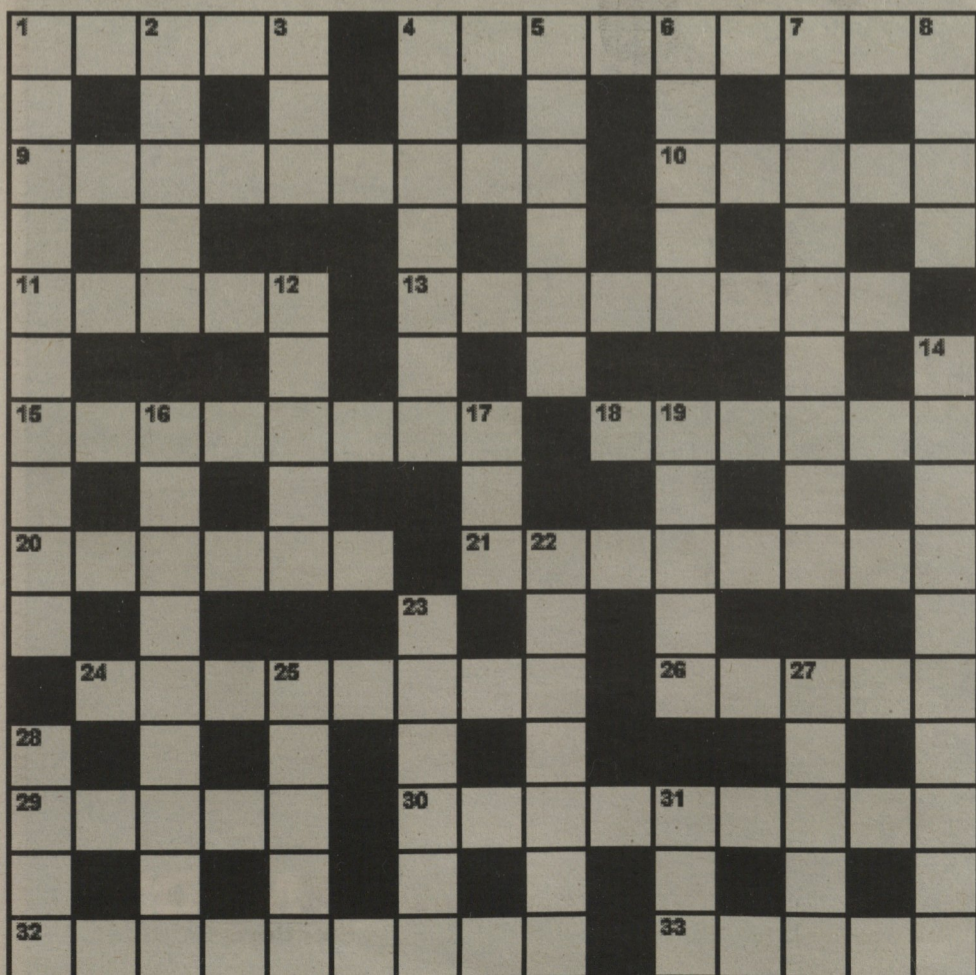
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This Week's Cadre Crossword



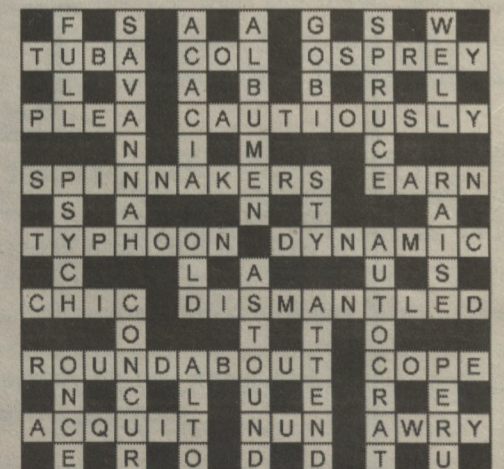
Across

- 1 Deduce (5)
- 4 Persistently harass (9)
- 9 Very probably (9)
- 10 Unusually energetic (5)
- 11 Reasoning (5)
- 13 Unreal (8)
- 15 Compellingly attractive quality (8)
- 18 Notify (6)
- 20 Platitude (6)
- 21 Abstaining from alcohol (8)
- 24 Promontory (8)
- 26 The same thing again (5)
- 29 Topic (5)
- 30 Cocktail of tequila and citrus fruit juice (9)
- 32 Sulkiness (9)
- 33 Research deeply (5)

Down

- 1 Tactless (10)
- 2 Thrown (5)
- 3 Informer (3)
- 4 Amount regularly paid for insurance policy (7)
- 5 Outcome (6)
- 6 Characteristic spirit of a culture (5)
- 7 Highest (9)

Last Issue's Solution



- 8 Deserve (4)
- 12 Plagiarizes (5)
- 14 Make better (10)
- 16 Fun (9)
- 17 Skill (3)
- 19 Well known (5)
- 22 Approve (7)
- 23 Opera by Bizet (6)
- 25 Reside (5)
- 27 Test (5)
- 28 Pace (4)
- 31 Annex (3)