

Condom Controversy Heats Up

MONTREAL (CUP) — An entrepreneur's dream of installing condom vending machines in CEGEP washrooms may never come true, if opposition to the plan continues to mount.

Jocelyn Morin, a former X-ray technician, has been approaching colleges throughout Quebec and is reported to have an exclusive contract with an American condom manufacturer, Nation Sanitary Lab. But education minister Claude Ryan said the plan is absurd and should be abandoned.

"As I understand it, there are places where these things can be procured by people who want them—there are pharmacies," he said. "I'm not too familiar with this, but I can't see these things being installed in colleges. It would be too ridiculous."

Itidal Sadek, director of Dawson College's campus, doubts condoms will be available there. "We don't sell anything in dispensers, not even sanitary napkins."

"It's basically a fear of vandalism and although condoms would be good for educational purposes, they're not needed for emergencies. I just haven't heard any convincing arguments."

Tom Nowers, head of student services at Marianopolis College, says the potential for vandalism is too great.

"The minute you put money into a machine, you've got a problem," he said. "I can understand both sides of the argument, though, of having birth control versus the implied tacit approval of sexual activity."

John Abbott College official Irena Fish agrees. "If you have them available, you could be seen to be promoting sexual promiscuity, but on the other hand, you're also promoting health," she said.

"The idea will have difficulty passing here because of parental and community reaction," she said. But Mary Farrell, a Dawson College health services

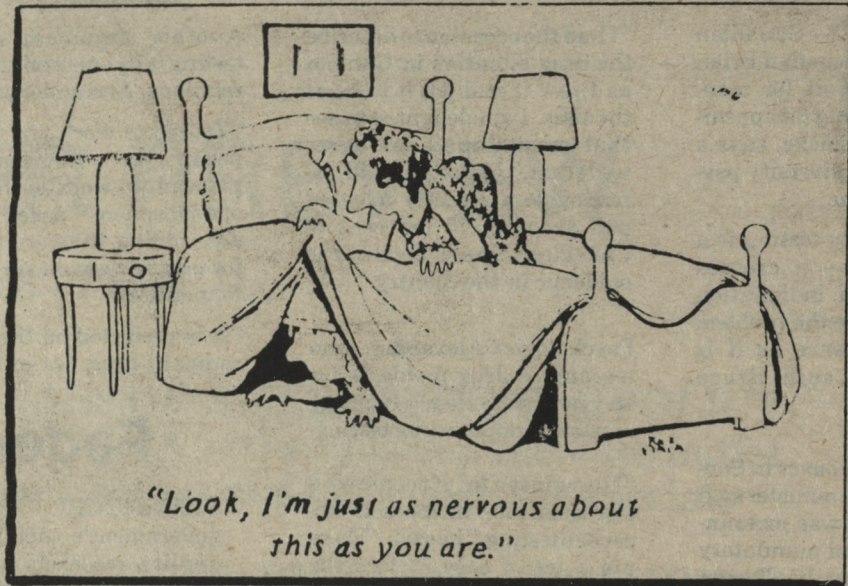
worker, has no problems with condoms on campus.

"Even the Department of Health is promoting the use of condoms. It should be up to the students. If they want them, they should be available," said Farrell. Trois Rivieres College

director Alain Lallier said Morin approached him about the plan, and said he found merit to stopping transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. "We haven't installed any machines yet, but we have set up a committee to study the idea," said Lallier. "The con-

dom vending machine would have to be one aspect of a total educational campaign to make students more aware of their responsibilities."

There were more than 40,000 teenage pregnancies in Canada last year.



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