

# “Hey, Hey! Ho, Ho! Tuition Hikes Have Got to Go!”

by Mariève MacGREGOR

Last Wednesday, between fifty and one hundred people walked down University Avenue toward the government buildings, in protest of ever increasing tuition fees. “It’s too expensive to go to school,” said second-year Arts student Kendra Murray. “I can’t afford a hat,” commented Lacy Costain, another UPEI student.

Before the grand march, students congregated at the Student Union Building, where they were supplied with picket signs and hotdogs. Petition sheets were gathered together, containing approximately 1,206 signatures. Some picketers got creative, and, under the guidance of Joey Weale, created the ‘Tuition Freeze Dance Team.’ Dances included ‘the samurai,’ ‘the wave,’ ‘the spin,’ and ‘rowing.’ All dances were done on the flatbed truck which led the protest.

“I think people should have money for stuff, like school and dancing,” said choreographer Joey Weale.

A great coincidence in the whole ‘freeze tuition’ ordeal was the raw cold that froze students as they walked. “I don’t think we would be as successful if it were a mild day,” commented Student Union VP of Finance Rob Kent. The cold also provoked stronger emotion among the students in their anger against high schooling costs. Said Stuart Neatby, “I’ll give you ire as soon as I get colder!”

The gathering wasn’t all fun

and games (and song and dance). Many students expressed concern over the issue of tuition. “It’s getting to the point where only the rich can afford [post secondary education],” said first-year Political Science student Joanna Gallant. “If the government says that education is a priority, they should put their money where their mouth is.”

Brad Deighan, a second-year Arts student, also said, “I don’t think you can argue against the fact that the best way to create a better society is through education. Why then, is it so expensive that a great number of people can’t afford it?”

Ashley Harvey, a first-year Science student agreed. “Tuition is so high, student loans don’t even cover it all anymore.”

“I consider myself fortunate to be getting an education,” said fourth-year Business student Nick Campbell, “but it’s unfortunate that some of my friends can’t afford it. It’s not right.”

Upon arriving at the Shaw Building, the group was met by the stern faces of Education Minister Jeff Lantz and Premier Pat Binns. The crowd of students, press, and politicians were first addressed by Joe Byrne from the Cooper Institute, followed by Leo Cheverie, president of the P.E.I. Federation of Labour.

After two strong speeches, Lantz and Binns approached the podi-



“Hey, Pat, I dare you to stick your tongue on the flagpole.”

um. Binns, gloveless and hatless, gave a speech stating his appreciation for seeing so many students taking part in the protest on such a chilly day, and commended them for their dedication. He said that he agreed entirely with the cause, but that the provincial government is running a deficit, which makes increasing funds for education difficult. He went on to say that money has recently been put into the school system, and they would truly like to be doing more, but Federal transfer cuts have made that next to impossible.

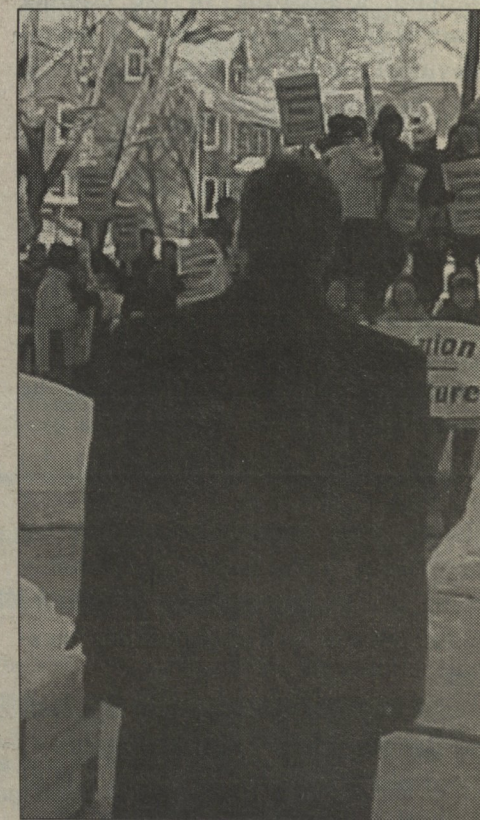
Jeff Lantz’s speech was even more uninspiring to the gathered students. Lantz noted that he didn’t have a “magical blank chequebook” to disperse money freely. His comments were viewed by some in attendance as a mockery of the whole situation.

“He said the exact same thing as last year,” remarked Student Union President Cynthia Dennis.

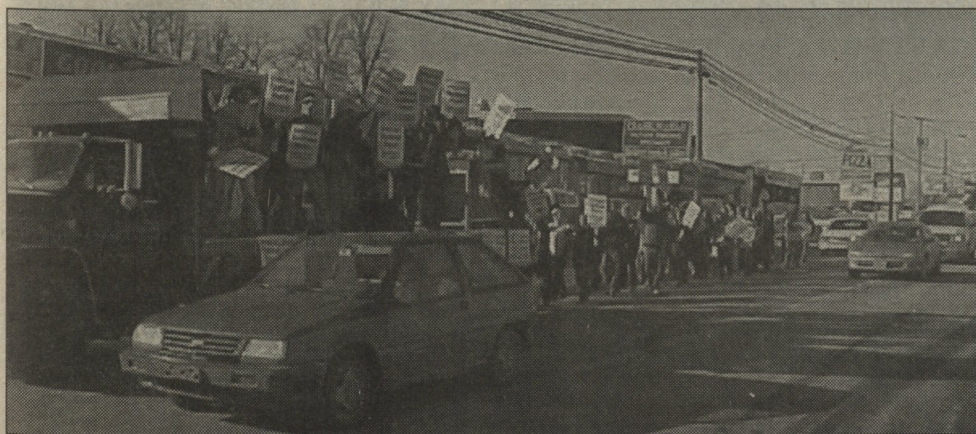
“The whole thing with his ‘blank chequebook,’ he said all that last year. Whose chequebook is this anyway? The federal government gives money to the province to give to us, and they aren’t putting it where we

need it. The ‘chequebook’ comment is getting old.

“We understand it’s a tough situation, but they’re missing the point. We’ve been complaining for ten years, and they keep giving us quick fixes.”



Pat Binns turns his back.



Car pool, motherfuckers.