

UPEI BEING SQUEEZED BY HIGHER COSTS

from the Guardian

Peter Meincke, president of the University of Prince Edward Island, says UPEI will be hard-pressed financially if it receives only a 9.5 per cent increase in operation expenses for the coming fiscal year, but it's unlikely programs will have to be eliminated.

Prof. Meincke said the present level of programming could continue during the next fiscal year if the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) recommendation of a 9.5 per cent operating increase is accepted by Maritime premiers.

But he said if the level of funding continues to erode as it has in the past the university may have to drop some programs.

The Maritime institutions have sought a 17 per cent increase in operating assistance. Last

year they had asked for a 14 per cent increase.

But even while the MPHEC has recommended the 9.5 per cent increase for the coming year it still has to be approved by each Maritime premier and his respective legislature.

Prof. Meincke said universities are being squeezed by higher costs because of inflation - the costs alone of periodicals for the Library have risen 27 per cent this year over last - and lower funding contributions from government.

Lower levels of funding have caused the university to reduce laboratory chemicals, supplies and equipment, lowered salary increases to faculty, dropped money available for general maintenance, and has forced the university into an extensive program to reduce energy consumption, Prof. Meincke said.

"There are two results of this lower level of funding," explained Prof. Meincke. "One is a general lowering of the quality of education and if you haven't got the library resources, if your buildings are too cold and they're falling apart, students are not going to be encouraged to go to that university."

Prof. Meincke said when the point is reached where programs have to be dropped then students will

tend to go elsewhere.

Prof. Meincke said as well if faculty members are not receiving competitive salaries then they will move on.

Prof. Meincke said he "hopes" the Maritime premiers will accept the recommended increase. But he pointed out that extensive federal cut-backs in 1978 to the provinces could lower the level of funding increases the Maritime provinces can afford to give the universities.

KEVIN SPEAKS OUT

The president of the UPEI Student Union, Kevin Gauthier, has expressed deep dissatisfaction with the recently announced university funding recommendations of the M.P.H.E.C. to the Council of Maritime Premiers.

"The level of funding recommended by the M.P.H.E.C. shows that they have very little concern for the plight of students today. I think we've been sold out.

"Students at UPEI are being pressured on three fronts. Tuition and residence fees are rising each year, jobs are becoming increasingly harder to find, an unemployment insurance is beyond the reach of most students. We already pay the highest tuition fees of any province in Canada, but the M.P.H.E.C. wants us to

pay more. I don't know where they think the money is going to come from."

The 9.5 per cent increase in funding recommended by the M.P.H.E.C. is "disappointing" says President Gauthier, and it appears as if the Commission is "more concerned with making a good impression on the politicians than worrying about what is best for the post-secondary institutions and students in the Maritimes. The Commission itself has expressed alarm at the deteriorating state of Maritime universities in its own report, but they still suggest an insufficient level of funding. This can only be because they have succumbed to pressure from politicians whose only concern is to cut spending, regardless of how serious the consequences are for UPEI. The situation is getting very serious."

NEW VET AT UPEI

Veterinary Pathologist Dr. Reginald Thomson has arrived on campus to conduct research to determine the feasibility of establishing a veterinary college at the University of Prince Edward Island. Dr. Thomson will conduct all facets of financial, operational, programming and physical planning associated with the establishment. Prior to his appointment Dr. Thomson was Chairman of the Department of Pathology at the Ontario Veterinary College from 1969 and was acting Associate Dean of Research at O.V.C. His two-year appointment became effective Jan. 1,

1979. If a decision is made to establish such a College, School or Faculty, Dr. Thomson will be offered the position of its first dean.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomson and their family have taken up residence at 50 Prince Charles Drive, Charlottetown. They have three children: Joanne, 21 in third year at the Univ. of Guelph; Carol, 18 in first year at Univ. of Guelph; and Kathy, 14 at Queen Charlotte High School, Charlottetown.

His office is located in Blanchard Hall, Room 112 (Ext. 385).

PANTHER ACTION
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CHARLOTTETOWN FORUM
UPEI PANTHERS
VS.
MOUNT A
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