

# UPEI Students Freeze for Tuition

By Julie VEINOT

Despite the freezing rain and despite the bitter winds, three dozen students slept in tents and igloos on campus last week before driving to the provincial legislature on the back on Opposition Leader Ron MacKinley's hay wagon.

Why? To protest rising tuition costs. UPEI has announced a likely increase of four to six per cent in time for the fall semester, adding anywhere from \$154 to \$232 to a student's tuition cost.

(The cost of one course is \$387.) UPEI has one of the lowest tuition costs of the Maritime Universities, compared to schools like Acadia, where students pay about \$6,500, but Island students are still asking the provincial government to increase funding to their school.

"To see a tuition freeze would be very nice," says Student Union President Chris Power. "We want to see fees at a level where they're realistic."

Tuesday night, about 20 students spent the night behind the dining hall, packed into tents and an igloo. Freezing rain, however, began in early evening, making it a wet, miserable night for the protesting students.

Even on Wednesday, it seemed as though the weather did not want to cooperate: a hard wind blew as the students travelled to the legislature on the back of Ron MacKinley's hay wagon, holding bright yellow signs. While at the legisla-

ture, students met with several politicians, including provincial treasurer Pat Mella, Opposition Leader Ron MacKinley and NDP Leader Gary Robichaud.

Basically, says Power, the government said the same things it has been saying - that they need to have the federal government dole out more cash - and Power is not optimistic there will be a tuition freeze next year.

"It was the same answer we get every time," he says of the meeting with government officials. "We haven't been

invest in maintenance of the buildings on campus, as well as new ones.

The Student Union met with Mella two weeks ago to discuss the matter, but didn't get any promises tuition costs will stay frozen for one year. Multi-year tuition freezes, says Power, are not a good idea, as in British Columbia, some universities are raising tuition 30 per cent after long tuition freezes.

While it doesn't look like tuition is going to be capped for the fall semester, Power says there probably will be changes to provincial student loans to help Island students pay for university's rising cost.

too successful in freezing tuition for the last few years."

Still, he is pleased with how the protest turned out, even if the weather dissuaded many people from attending. While the government did not offer anything new, Power says the mission of the protest was to put the student's concerns into the public eye. Considering the media attention garnered by the protests, covered by the local media, it is quite possible more people are thinking about the cost of higher education.

Though a cap on tuition for next year is part of the request, the Student Union would also like to see government



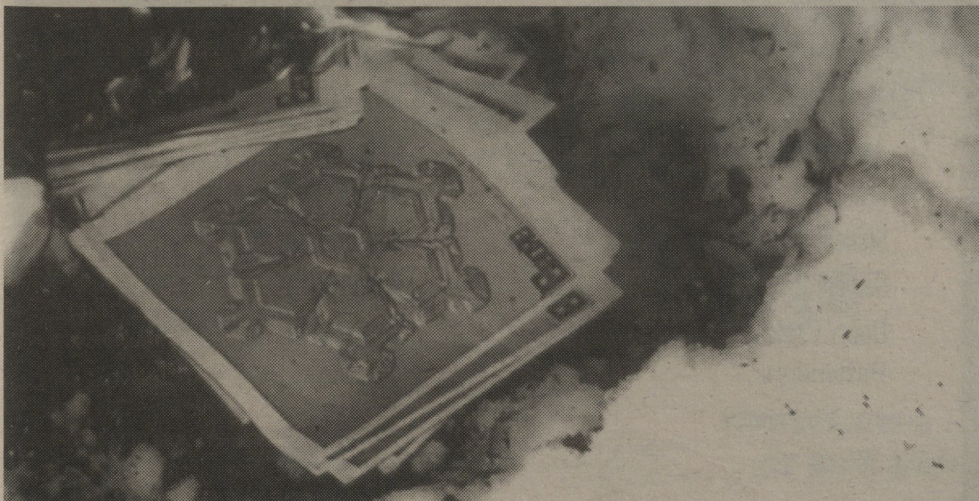
A big igloo, with four protest-campers



Close to three dozen people showed up



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