



—Neil Driscoll photos

Placard-waving students march to legislature

By ELAINE VERBICKY

"Freeze the Fees" the signs said, but a 30 miles-per-hour wind froze students instead at Tuesday's protest march.

An estimated 3,000 students left SUB at 12:30 p.m. to carry to the provincial legislature a protest against rising tuition fees and a petition for increased government grants to universities.

Led by students' union president Al Anderson and president-elect Marilyn Pilkington, they waved placards reading "Students are Human Resources", "No dough, no go", and "Pas d'argent, pas d'etudiants".

The procession stretched nearly the length of the High Level Bridge.

The students were marching because the Board of Governors had announced a tuition fee increase, \$100 more for most students, to help meet operating costs of the university next year. The B of G took the action after a government grant came \$1.7 million below estimated university costs.

Rather than cut enrolment or services, the university will ask

students to make up \$1.2 million of the foreseen deficit by increasing tuition fees.

GATHERED BELOW

The demonstrators gathered below the steps to the north entrance of the legislative building. Members of the press corps were there to meet them, but it was 15 minutes before education minister Ray Reiersen came out into the wind to receive them.

During the wait, students' union treasurer Phil Ponting cried through his megaphone, "There are over 3,000 of us here today, Please try to move closer together so we can keep warm."

There were cheers as Mr. Reiersen arrived on the steps. He welcomed the crowds as "the answer to a politician's dream."

"We are here to show many students are concerned with the proposed tuition fee increase," began Anderson. There were more cheers, and cries of "We want money".

RECONSIDER GRANT

"We have a petition requesting the government to reconsider its grant for university operating costs, and it has 6,500 signatures," continued Anderson. "It has support from the Alberta Association of Students, students at Red Deer Junior College, and the executive council of the Alberta Teachers' Association."

He rapidly outlined reasons against the fee hike:

- upper and middle class income groups are already over-represented at U of A; hiking the fees would only aggravate the situation.

- income of students has not been keeping up with the inflationary cost of living; a fee increase would make it impossible for some to continue university.

Student assistance from the provincial and federal governments does not provide an answer, said Anderson, because a student is sometimes not sure of his grant until three months after commencement and because many people, especially girls, are reluctant to go into debt with student loans.

SUPPORTED REQUEST

Gordon Drever, arts 3, also supported the student request. "Today we are holding a peaceful demonstration—but this is only the beginning, if students start becoming more concerned," he said, mentioning students are paid to attend university in Newfoundland.

Mr. Reiersen replied with three main points:

- fees are set by the Board of Governors, not the government; the government had already been generous in its grants to the universities.

- the Alberta government gives \$400 more per student in grants than the rest of Canada.

- the financial aid system has been extended to allow students with low marks grants.

The demonstrators responded with boos.

Mr. Reiersen then invited Anderson, Pilkington and Ponting to confer with Premier E. C. Manning. The march disbanded quietly.

Union members meet provincial government

Few results expected from meeting

By ELAINE VERBICKY

A confrontation between the students' union and the provincial government over a tuition fee increase brought few results Tuesday.

Students' union president Al Anderson, president-elect Marilyn Pilkington, and treasurer Phil Ponting met with Premier E. C. Manning, education minister Ray Reiersen, minister of youth Robert Clark, and two other cabinet ministers.

They presented a students' union brief and addendum, with a 6,500 signature petition, requesting the government to increase its grant to universities for operating costs.

Meeting in an inner chamber of the legislature after leading a student demonstration 3,000 people strong, Anderson told the premier increased student aid is not an answer to increased tuition fees. The system of distribution is "not in touch with reality," he charged.

Treasurer Phil Ponting supported Anderson, saying students are dis-

satisfied with both the mark criteria for money grants and the parental contribution table.

The students concluded by suggesting the government increase its grant for operating costs of the universities.

QUOTED LETTER

Mr Reiersen replied by quoting from a letter sent by him to the students' union. His main points were:

- it is the Board of Governors of U of A, not the government, which sets tuition fees.

- fees have not gone up since 1964, and university costs have.

- the government already pays about \$2,440 per full-time student. This is at least \$400 more per student than any other province.

- it is debatable whether the general public should pay for the personal benefit of education to university students.

- the government already has education as its top budget priority.

Premier Manning added he did not think students could ask the public of Alberta to offset the proposed tuition hike when it had already made a generous grant to the universities.

"We have a real difficulty seeing why the universities cannot adjust their expenditures within a \$31 million framework," he said.

CUT TO THE BONE

President-elect Marilyn Pilkington said the university has cut its operating budget to the bone, and "The amount we are requesting—\$100 more per student—is only 4 per cent of the operating budget, but 33 per cent of a student's tuition budget."

Later in the house, Mr. Reiersen promised the question of operating grants would be reviewed at the next meeting of the executive council. In answer to a question on transferring part of the capital expansion grant to the operating grant, Mr. Reiersen said, "I don't believe the government will review the amount given to capital funds already given to the Alberta universities."

Mobilizing the troops

An estimated 3,000 students from U of A marched across the High Level Bridge (below) Tues., and descended on the legislature (above). The marchers, led by Al Anderson and Marilyn Pilkington, were protesting increased tuition fees.



Withholding tuition fees suggested

David Leadbeater, next year's students' union vice-president, says if tuition fees are increased as proposed, the students' union should consider withholding fees next year.

"It (withholding of fees) is a good possibility and must be considered seriously," but this would mean some kind of referendum he said.

"It seems to me that there are some difficulties. University of Victoria proved that.

Last year the students at the University of Victoria threatened and then attempted to withhold fees but their attempt fizzled when

see page 3—Student Fees