

Memorial Students Win

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — Students at Memorial University have virtually won their fight over the checkoff of student union fees, following a 10 day non-violent occupation of their administration building.

A tentative agreement was reached early last Friday following negotiations between student representatives and representatives of the University Board of Regents. But the agreement must still be ratified by the Board at their December 14 meeting and by the students in a referendum.

The student referendum will be supervised by the University Faculty Association, but no date

has yet been set.

MUST COLLECT FEES

The agreement stipulates the university must collect the \$8 student union fee each semester, but student union membership will not be compulsory. However, the student union will be given all the fees collected and individual students must decide if they consider themselves student union members.

Until the referendum, the administration will collect the \$8 fee.

The occupation, which began November 14 with about 1500 students, followed an an-

nouncement November 9 by University President and Vice-Chancellor Lord Stephen Taylor that the administration would not collect the student union fee as of December 31 this year. He claimed the Board of Regents was concerned that half the \$140,000 collected for the union was spent on Administration, \$42,000 of it on salaries.

Most student union budgets reveal a similar breakdown and about 80 percent of most university operating budgets cover salaries and administrative costs.

Until Thursday of last week, Taylor had refused to negotiate unless students ended their

occupation of the building. But the threat of a student strike (scheduled for November 23-24 but never held) and possible intervention by Premier Frank Moores, apparently forced Taylor to the negotiating table. Students from the negotiating committee called Moores because the Government had taken no official stand on the issue.

The students did receive support from most of Newfoundland's large unions, including the province's largest one — The Loggers Union — and the St. John's Trade Council. The Memorial Faculty Association voted November 20 not to support the students by a vote of 70-50, with 100 abstentions. Students thought more pressure would have changed the vote in their favor.

Many faculty members are upset with Taylor's behavior during the occupation. In fact, one conservative faculty member began circulating a petition on Wednesday, November 22 calling for Taylor's resignation.

Following the negotiations, students decided to end their occupation and cleaned the building before they left.

NO REPRISALS — BOARD

Representatives of the Board of Regents agreed no reprisals of any kind will be taken against any student and the Senate will be asked to consider the situation for students who may have academic difficulties in the up-coming Christmas exams because of their participation in the occupation.

The students were happy with their apparent victory, Bob Buckingham, one of the four student negotiators, said.

FEES NOT ONLY ISSUE

They decided to stick to one issue in the negotiations, although they have many grievances about the attitudes and decisions of Taylor and the Administration.

"It started with checkoff as the issue, but it became very much more than that," one student said. "It became a matter of whether we would

continue to be treated like high school kids, whether we would be good little boys and not annoy our teachers."

Students are angry with accommodation currently available to the student union in a university-owned building. They have put forward several proposals for a new student union building, a stadium and a student housing complex.

For years, students have collected money for the new student union building. Taylor has always opposed this proposal and others, the students say.

Students also accused Taylor of unfairly raising university entrance requirements to keep Memorial at approximately its present size. Last year the high school entrance requirement was raised five percentage points. The Administration has also been using the Bell Curve in recent years to scale marks given by Professors.

"Surely the Professor should be the best judge of what a student can do. But this university is run by an elite group of Upper-Echelon people with money. If you're poor, you don't count. We have no say in anything. Lord Taylor wants everything run his way," one student said.

TAYLOR OUT?

"After 23 years, we have just got rid of another one who always wanted his own way," he continued, referring to ex-Premier Joey Smallwood. "But we apparently have another three years left of Lord Taylor."

Taylor appears to have been cut down to size by his intransigence in not negotiating with the students and then reversing his position. If the faculty petition goes through, he may not be at Memorial to complete his term of office, some students said.

Much of his power is apparently illusory. Some students consider his vice-president more influential and that Taylor is prone to act to petulance when he tries to exercise his authority.

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

(see you in January)

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