

# On a cold day...

# ...you can't march forever

by Don Truckey  
and Kevin Gillese

On a cold day, you can't march forever. But a vocal group of picketers showed even a brief march can put across a point rather effectively as the Alberta committee for Equal Access to Education Thursday led a 200-person protest against differential fees, in front of the Legislature Building.

The protest, which developed out of an "information" picket line to provide news on differential fees to MLAs as they entered the House for the opening of the spring session, lasted only about an hour and a half in the cold shadow on the dark side of the Legislature Building.

Although it was brief and orderly, city police came prepared for trouble — with two police dogs stashed away in a parking lot a block away from the Legislature, nine police cars around the building itself and about 25 policemen patrolling the protest.

As Lieutenant-Governor Ralph Steinhauer, arrayed in full native chieftan regalia, swept up to the Legislature shortly before the 3 p.m. House opening, and the 21-gun salute boomed around the government centre, protestors began to chant loudly against the differential fees.

"Two-four-six-eight, Hohol's fees discriminate," "Hohol's fees are a racist disease," and "Hohol, Hohol — up against the wall," bounced off the Legislature's dome as protestors chanted and handed information leaflets to incoming MLAs and visitors.

Neither advanced education minister Hohol nor provincial Premier Peter Lougheed came to the front door to speak to the protest.

Inside the House before the official opening, Social Credit leader and leader of the Official Opposition Bob Clark asserted his support for the protest: "This is another instance of the government trying to walk over some aspects of our post-secondary education.

"But," Clark added, "I'm not sure whether this is the place for them (the protesters) to plead their case."

Clark said if the government had talked to the people of Alberta before they proposed differential fees, there would have been no need for such a protest.

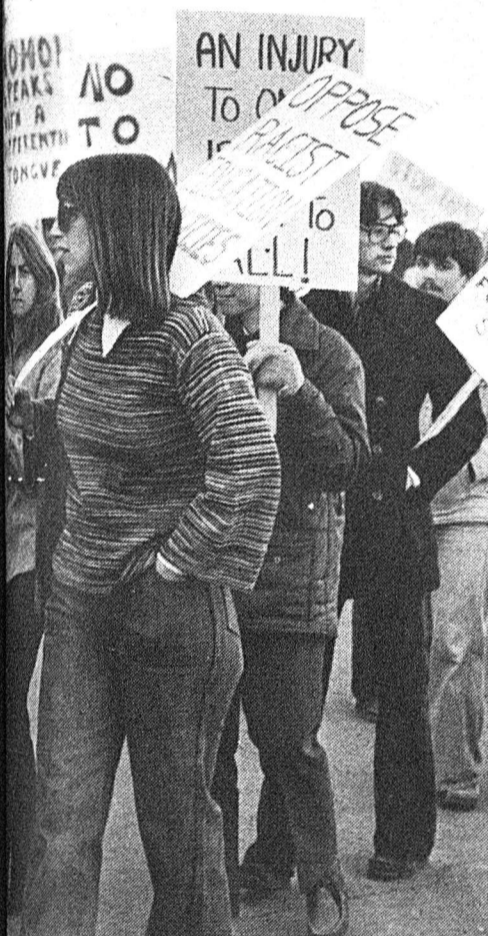
New Democratic Leader Grant Notley and the staff from the NDP's Legislature office came out during the middle of the protest to talk with the protestors and join the picket line.

Halvar Johnson, Alberta Teachers' Association president, offered his personal support for the protest. "I think they have raised a good issue," he said, "and I don't think differentials will secure any more places for Alberta students."

Johnson suggest if the government wished to ensure places are reserved for

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Gateway will not publish during Reading Week. Next issue of the paper will be Tuesday, March 8.



Above: Walk the line...  
Below: ...but have fun doing it.

Photo Grant Wurm





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Alberta students they should put quotas on foreign students, and not assess differential fees.

Many MLAs refused the handouts from protesters, including Alberta's former ombudsman George McClelland.

The handouts assert that differential fees will not affect the numbers of foreign students at Alberta universities and colleges but merely the composition. "Canada has an obligation to international education," the handout reads, "especially those students from developing countries. Differential fees will limit access to education on the basis of wealth, making it an elite activity."

Howard Hoggins, Students' Union executive vp and an organizer for the Equal Access committee, said the picket was more successful than anyone had anticipated it would be.

"With the small amount of publicity and so on, I expected only about 40 or 50 people out," Hoggins remarked. "But we had upwards of 150."

"Some people may oppose the tactic of public protest; I don't."

"Today we showed the government and the public there are people willing to get out from behind their desks and protest this proposed fee hike. Perhaps they'll start paying attention now."

*SU vp Howard Hoggins leads the chorus (above) as Edmonton's finest hold the line (below) and keep their guard dogs in readiness (far left). Lieutenant-Gov. Ralph Steinhauer (below left) turned up in native regalia—on his way to opening the spring session of the Alberta legislature.*

