

hire about forty teachers. That's nearly a 10-1 ratio of applicants to positions. That gives the Eastern and Western boards the luxury of picking and choosing their teachers, which means that the average teacher hired on PEI is in his or her late twenties and has racked up a fair amount of experience.

This is due partially to an early retirement package offered to teachers in 1999 (which opened the door to eighty new hirings, twice the number of last year) and partially to a decline in the number of students in schools. In the past six years, the East's student population has dropped by over 700 students, a significant decrease for a board that size.

"And that trend will continue," says Hood.

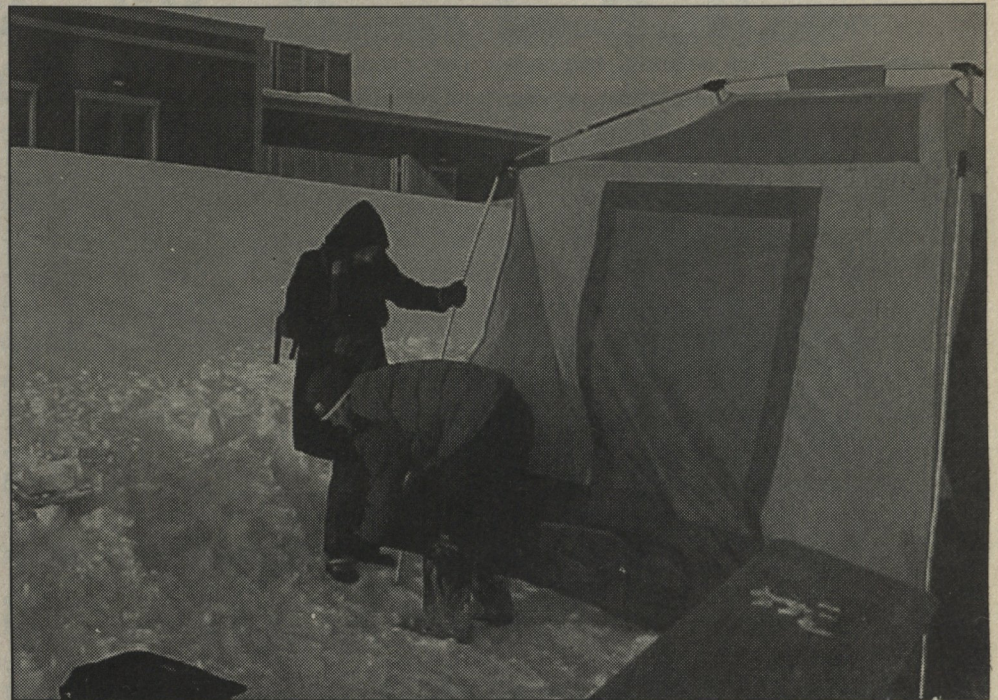
But while it's all but certain that Island teachers will have to spend some time away in order to find a job, there is a real advantage to coming from the Maritimes. Most of the Maritime teacher colleges now offer two year programs, whereas most B.Ed. programs across the country are

still single calendar year programs. As one Toronto Board rep put it, an Island student might be competing with a University of Toronto grad who has a three year undergraduate education and a one year B.Ed. Based on Ontario's pay grid system, those two extra years of education will automatically put you one level higher in the pay grid, earning you as much as one thousand dollars a year more than the Ontario grad.

Of course there are a slew of problems. Every night one can flip on the news and hear about more teacher strife in places like B.C., Alberta, and Ontario. Disputes over pay, workload, teacher evaluations, mandated extra-curricular supervision, class size, prep time, and funding are all frustrations that most teachers have to contend with along with the territorial headaches of high needs students in the classroom and angry parents in the community. But if one feels the calling, the deep-seated desire to teach, this is a golden era of opportunity, so long as one is willing to go where the jobs are.

Freeze This

by Stephan MacLEOD



Students preparing for the night ahead.

On Tuesday, February 5, seventeen UPEI students froze their asses off overnight outside the cafeteria to freeze tuition. Creating a temporary mini-city in the snow, tents surrounded by walls of snow were set up to house the brave demonstrators, while a campfire supplied some heat and melted a few boots.

VP of Campaigns and Communications Caolan Moore had a stash of crazy karpets in his tent for campers to use on the hill behind the cafeteria. Entertainment was also provided by Science Rep. Bobby Best, who played guitar for a few minutes at a time, when his fingers weren't frozen.

Throughout the night, about fifty people stopped by with hot chocolate, Timbits, and donuts for the

cold campers.

Brandy MacLellan was among the courageous souls who withstood Mother Nature's cruel winter for the entire night.

"The reason I went out and stayed the night was because it was something that I knew I would never do on my own [camp in the winter time], and at the same time I was protesting a good cause—tuition fees do need to be lowered. I knew it would be a good time, which it turned out to be," said MacLellan.

"The best part of it all though, was when I looked at my watch, just a little after 5:30 in the morning and just two seconds later I hear someone yell 'Stop jogging. Freeze tuition.' It was pretty funny," added MacLellan.

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Rodd

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A big ol' Student Union

THANK YOU

Goes out to all who participated in the Feb. 5th camp-out Feb. 6th march.
It was friggin' freezin'.

These campaigns were a success because of you!
Keep it up; let your voice be heard!