

PLANETARIUM CONTRACT SIGNED

By John Cairns

On November 29 a contract was signed in the conference room of Kelly to bring the Abegweit Science Centre (A.S.C.) to UPEI. The Centre, featuring a 100 seat planetarium theatre, was represented at the signing by its president, Mr. Heber

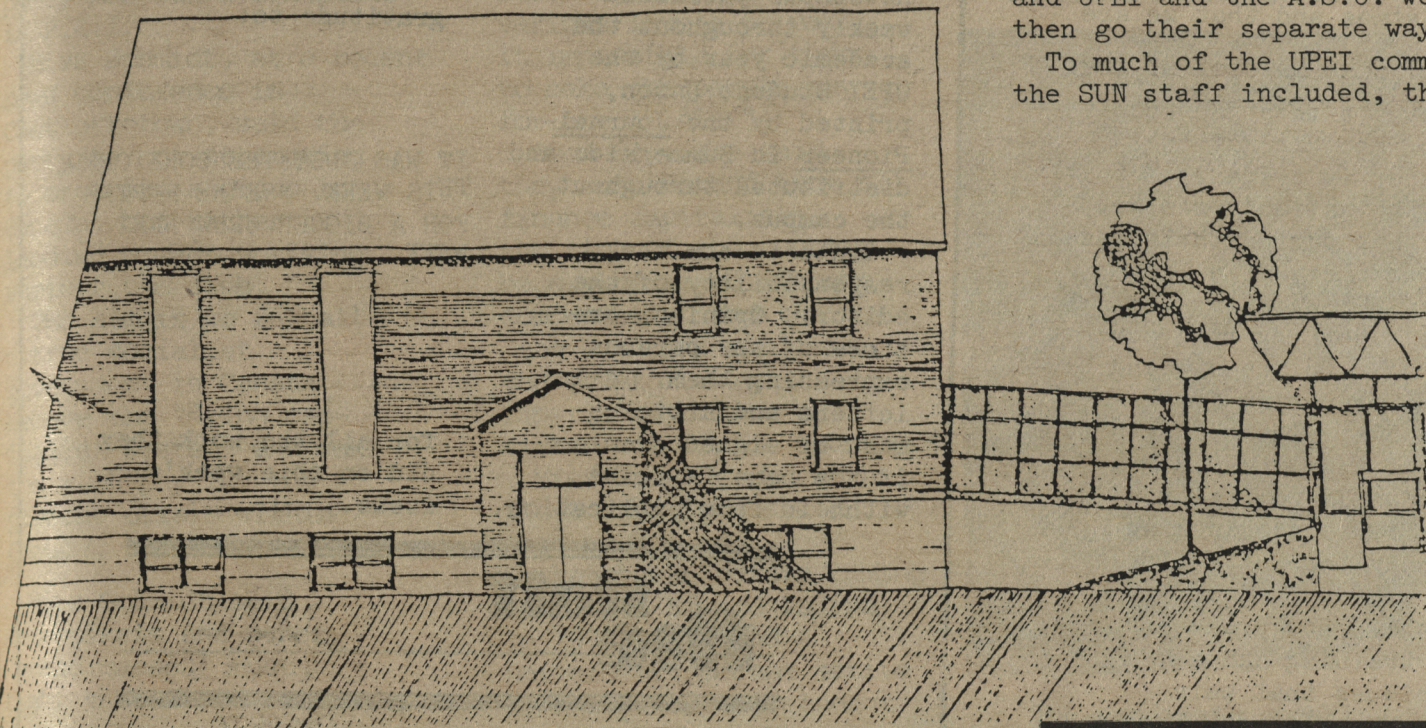
government's University Act forbids UPEI to undertake any new financial liability without the approval of the provincial cabinet. Dr. Meincke hoped such approval would be forthcoming.

Dr. Grant feels that the planetarium will be a way to

is a separate corporation from the university run by its own board, but UPEI does have the assurance that the facilities will be used to the university's advantage. It will be part of the lease on the planetarium buildings that if they are used in a way detrimental to UPEI the agreement can be ended, and UPEI and the A.S.C. would then go their separate ways.

To much of the UPEI community, the SUN staff included, the

planetarium announcement came as a surprise. Although it had been taken to the university Senate and Board of Governors, the plan for the planetarium received very little advance publicity. Dr. Meincke declared this lack of buildup the result of uncertainty. The negotiations with the A.S.C. were delicate, and they might have broken down at any one of several points. Yet as luck would have it, the talks proceeded, agreements were reached, and now the contract has been signed. All systems are go, and the planetarium dome should soon start to loom next to Alumni Gymnasium.



PLANETARIUM
LINK TO GYM

Jones, and by its vice-president, Mr. Henry Coia. Signing for UPEI were university president, Dr. Peter Meincke, and Dr. Kenneth C. Grant, Chairman of the Board of Governors. The agreement stipulates that the university will construct the buildings for the new facility while the A.S.C. provides most of the additional equipment.

Having the A.S.C. at UPEI was a project conceived in June of 1977, and for which negotiations proceeded until recently. Construction is to begin almost immediately and the planetarium's opening date is to be sometime in the summer of 1980. This means that the buildings must be finished by late April for it will take an extra 90 days to install the planetarium machinery. Once completed, however, the new facility will provide a rather spectacular way to study the sky and sky phenomena. Though often confused with observatories, planetariums are more for demonstrating scientific happenings than for watching the real thing.

On November 29 University president, Peter Meincke, called the completion of the contract a historic moment for UPEI. He expressed pleasure that the long discussions and negotiations with the A.S.C. have borne fruit. At the same time he cautioned that the planetarium still faced one final hurdle. The provincial

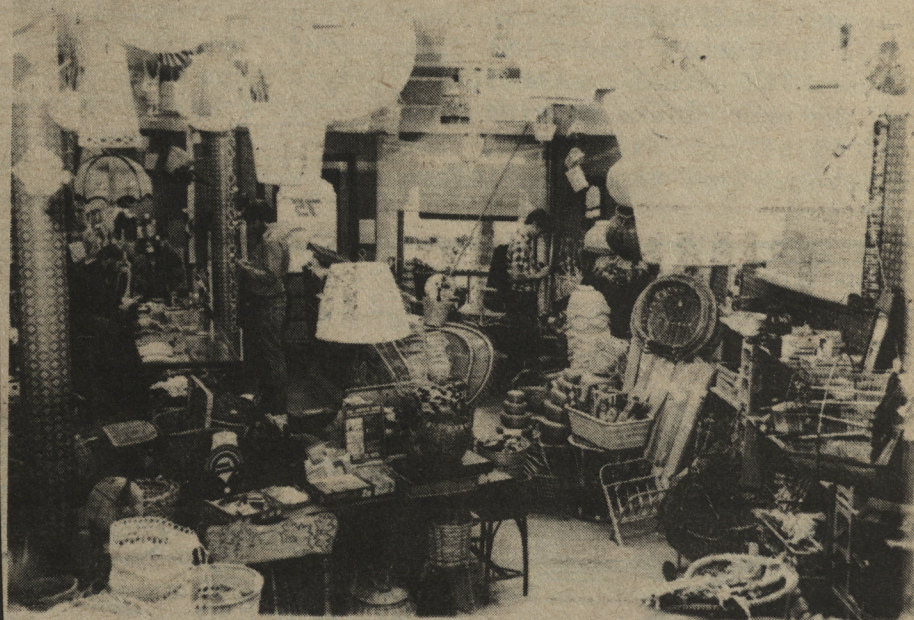
make UPEI more attractive to Prince Edward Islanders. He states that UPEI, as a new university still finding its place, has to have the support of the community. By being of interest to people, the planetarium can help win that support.

The Abegweit Science Centre will be built just to the north of Alumni Gymnasium. The two facilities will be connected by a walkway, and eventually the gymnasium will be turned over to the A.S.C. as a museum. This location, along with the provision for the gym, makes the planetarium more affordable for UPEI. It also puts the planetarium on display to the public while keeping it away from the more ancient structures at the center of the campus. Thus, the planetarium will be clearly in sight to travellers on University Avenue while remaining invisible to students moving between classes.

Just because it will be on the periphery of the campus, however, does not make the planetarium valueless to students. Montreal's James Dumas, curator of the Abegweit Science Centre, assured those present at the contract signing that the planetarium will be a definite asset for university courses, particularly astronomy. Dr. Meincke then added that special planetarium shows could be provided for students in certain UPEI courses. The A.S.C.

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