

Time to clean out under the carpet

This is not a conventional editorial. It is a statement of facts concerning the page one photograph coupled with the reasons for making them known.

The photograph on the front cover shows a large van into which equipment is being loaded. The equipment involved is coming from the basement of Annex C. This area used to be the Microbiology Research Laboratory. The equipment was moved to the University of Windsor in Ontario by Dr. Mervin Franklin, and Dr. Maxine Holder-Franklin, where they have taken new jobs. In terms of replacement value, between 40,000 and 100,000 dollars is involved. Legally this equipment now belongs to the University of Windsor. It used to belong to the University of New Brunswick. The change of ownership has occurred because the Doctors Franklin requested it of Dr. Anderson. The President of the University of New Brunswick used his legal authority to dispose of university property as he saw fit. So it's gone.

Some years ago, the Editor of this paper obtained copies of the university budget. Actually two budgets. One was ready for submission to the M.P.H.F.C. and the other was one which the Faculty were told was the 'real' one. The two were different. This is not very honest. The Editor of The Brunswickan telephoned the President (Dr. Anderson) and asked him what he thought about this. Dr. Anderson said to come and see him later in that day. Shortly after this conversation, the Editor of the Brunswickan got a call from the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students told the Editor that it would look quite bad for the university if the two 'budgets' were published. In the interests of the university then, the budgets were destroyed and no comment was made.

Some weeks ago, someone completely unknown to us dropped by the Brunswickan office and left a note saying that "Dr. Franklin is taking \$100,000 worth of equipment from Annex C." Sounds kind of James Bondish, doesn't it? It is true none the less.

In an effort to see if there was anything to this, the Editor of the Brunswickan called a number of people to see what the story was. The Acting Vice President (Academic) said that he couldn't comment on that.

The Assistant Vice President (Administration) said, quite rightly, that he didn't know. The President said some quite astonishing things. First he said that the equipment belonged to the Franklins, secondly he said "you're making a mountain out of a molehill", and thirdly he said "the equipment is not really needed by the university."

In the intervening weeks, a lot of information, indeed the whole story has come our way. That is meant quite literally. No further effort was made to check the story out, because the President told us that all was well. After the recent editorial about the current trend in granting various honours,

we had a number of calls from faculty stating that it was time a lot of things were said, and that the faculty and the students should get together more often than in the past. A whole lot of people feel cheated in this situation, students and faculty

alike. With the printing of this statement, doubtless more people will feel cheated. People are just damned mad and can they take it anymore?

The equipment belonged to the University of New Brunswick. Equipment granted under the authority of the N.R.C. and other governmental agencies does not belong to individuals, it belongs to the universities. It is not at all usual for departing faculty to take everything away with them. Sometimes when a particular piece of equipment is redundant or exotic, then N.R.C. policy allows its transfer to another university with proper consultation within the university concerned. It is not the case that this equipment belonged to individuals. If that were the general case, then professors could just sell whatever they had by way of centrifuges, electron microscopes and what not to the

local pawn shop when they wanted to go to Bermuda.

Equally, this is not a molehill. This is a mountain. The research and teaching in the Biology Department will be affected. In addition, the precedent established has consequences which are too disastrous to think about. Imagine if everyone on staff who left walked off with 100 per cent of their laboratory equipment!

This is a sensitive issue. People have been told to 'keep quiet' about it. It is brought up in this paper because, sadly, it seems to be a last resort of some kind. It is brought up because of the precedent involved. It is brought up because Dr. Anderson's performance is being assessed for re-appointment as President. Things which have been, and indeed might normally have been swept under the carpet in the past have to be examined. Threats and half-truths are not very impressive. From this point of view at least.

