

# Honorary degrees - UNB

## bestows tokens of appreciation

By BRIAN DINGLE

This past week the University of New Brunswick distributed six more honorary degrees, adding to the total of approximately 242 awarded since the May Encaenia of 1949. These degrees have been awarded on the basis of merit, success, accomplishments, contributions to society, the university and the public.

The six degrees awarded this year went to: David Baird, Director of the National Museum of Science and a UNB graduate; Gordon Fairweather, member of the opposition in the federal Parliament, former Attorney General of New Brunswick, lawyer and UNB graduate; Paul Gorham, Chairman of the Department of Botany at the University of Alberta and a specialist in plant physiology as well as holder of numerous

research positions; Charles Hughes, Chief Justice of New Brunswick; John Junor, Editor of the Sunday Express and 1973 Beaverbrook lecturer; Reginald Tweeddale, Executive Director of the New Brunswick Forest Resources Study and New Brunswick's first Deputy Minister of the Department of Economic Growth.

They were chosen by a fairly detailed, and somewhat democratic process. All faculty members are invited to make nominations for possible recipients of honorary degrees. The nominations are then sent to the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee. This committee documents all nominations and generally prepares them to be sent to the Board of Governors' Honorary Degrees Committee. Here they are added to a list of past nominations that had not been chosen.

Then the entire slate of nominations is evaluated. (The recipients are, for all practical purposes, chosen here.) The number of recipients chosen usually ranges from four to six, with some exceptions. The list is sent to the entire Board of Governors for approval, amendment or rejection - mostly approval.

The Chancellor, presently Sir Max Aitken, has the right to submit nominations for honorary degrees because he is a member of the Board of Governors. His nominations, almost always approved, are usually Beaverbrook lecturers as well.

It would appear the title of Chancellor alone affords him the courtesy of not having his nominations challenged.

### Committee members

The members of the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee are: Dr. Desmond Pacey (Chairman), Prof. W.G. Paterson (Forestry), Dr. R.J. Kavanagh (Dean of Graduate Studies), Prof. M.M. MacLachlan (Nursing), Dr. T.J. Condon (Dean of Arts), Dr. L.C. Smith (Classics and Ancient History), Prof. T.W. Bremner (Civil Engineering), Dr. Forbes Elliot (Principal UNBSJ), W.R. Willoughby (Political Science), Prof. K.J. Dore (Law), George McAllister (Student, Law I), John Reid (History Post. Grad. Student) and James McLaughlin (Student, BBA2).

The members of the Board of Governors' Honorary Degrees Committee are: Dr. John Anderson, Chairman, Dr. Robert Burrige, Mrs. D.W. Coburn, F.A. Harrison, M.M. Hoyt, Miss M.L. Lynch, Chester Mahan, Secretary, George McAllister, Philip Oland, Dr. Desmond Pacey, G.W. Robinson, R.F. Shaw, and Craig Wilson.

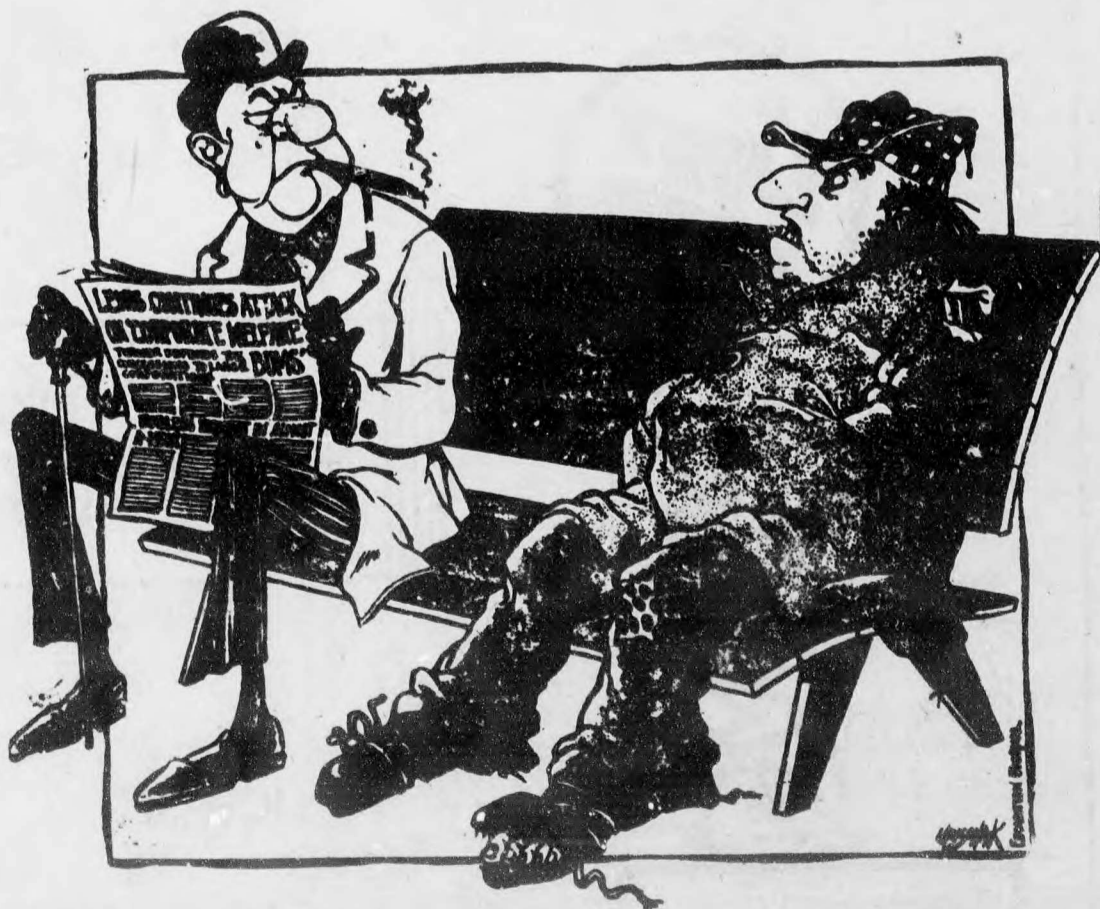
The granting of honorary degrees is one connection between the university and community, however due to the critical nature of a candidate for an honorary degree, the community association is only with the socially elite; top business officials, politicians, professionals, academics, and so forth. It adds to the grandeur of the university, placing it on a pedestal far above the common man. Yet it is the common man the university relies on for its existence. He is expected to educate his sons and daughters at the university to receive a degree of education and perhaps a degree of prominence.

### Public relations

Let's face it - honorary degrees are good public relations. Those who receive them should be known and respected in their field. Therefore it is important that the recipient has exceptional merit.

Keeping this in mind, it is necessary that every President of New Brunswick, every Minister of Education, every Lieutenant Governor, receive an honorary degree? Certainly, since the provincial university, it should recognize the provincial government and its officers. In granting these degrees, we should be careful not to give them to individuals solely on the basis of the office they have attained, rather on the merit of their work in that office.

Such considerations should govern the present granting of honorary degrees to politicians in New Brunswick. Past recipients include Robert Winters, Minister under Lester B. Pearson, Brendan Bracken (Chancellor, Cabinet minister), W.J. Bennett (then Premier), Jean-Eudes Dube (Cabinet minister under Pierre Trudeau).



"Yeah, I got my degree. I delivered the London Express."