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Golf Club Road
RR3, Fredericton, N.B.
November 24, 1969

The Editor,
The Brunswickan
University of New
Fredericton, N. B.

Dear Mr. Editor:

I believe, Mr. Editor, that you along with many of the rest of us, may have been rather hasty in jumping to conclusions last week about the true nature of Dean Ker's letter. At first glance it did, I admit, seem to be just a scurrilous attack on some of his fellow faculty members but I think that on reflection you will agree with me that this was not its real purpose at all. Only the always perceptive John Earl seemed to realize right from the beginning that there was more to the letter than first met the eye. Admittedly I thought his attempt to explain it as a piece of satire (in Friday's Gleaner) was a bit thin but then he must have been writing early in the week before the grand design began to take shape and, as it turned out, he wasn't too far from the truth after all.

It was only when one could look back over the events of the week that was that it was

really possible to appreciate just what the Dean apparently had in mind. He was, it would appear, actually engaged in a very clever operation designed to encourage full and frank discussion at the university. The operation was brilliantly successful but its success was dependent on temporarily keeping people in the dark about what was actually taking place and this did cause a bit of confusion for a while. Even faculty were slow to catch on to what was taking place and it was being said as late as Friday that UNB seemed to have gotten its Spiro Agnew even before it got its new President.

Just what was the Dean engaged in? It is, of course, easy to understand why he should have been disenchanted with the AUNBT and with the CAUT after last year's events. In spite of the actions of the AUNBT executive and membership supported by the actions of the CAUT executive, academic freedom and tenure committee and paid staff Professor Strax remained suspended, an injunction was obtained and made permanent, and he was ultimately dismissed without a proper hearing ever taking place. This created the possibility that dissent might be stifled at UNB. Probably feeling that

little could be hoped for from AUNBT or CAUT, the Dean recognizing - as has so often been observed at UNB - that firm decisive leadership by one man could be effective where boards and committees would fail, grasped the needs of the situation and proceeded on his own.

To appreciate what the Dean accomplished let us first consider another letter, written by a professor MacCormack, which wasn't sent to the Gleaner. "Professor MacCormack's" letter went something as follows:

"The members of the Board of Deans are traitors to UNB and to their profession who, because of the highhanded manner in which they handled the recent so-called Strax affair at the University of New Brunswick and their failure to insist on due process from the beginning produced dissension within the University community and brought down upon the University Administration the CAUT censure with all of its attendant adverse publicity for the University. Because of their ineptness they have forfeited the right to speak for or to represent the interest of the University of New Brunswick Faculty members."

But "Professor MacCormack" is on a probationary appointment he has a wife and two children and he owes Vicky quite a lot of money. He is, necessarily under the circumstances, a cautious man and he had visions of suspension, police in the faculty club, trial without charges, maybe even an injunction, and then dismissal - the whole bit. Fanciful as these thoughts may have been "Professor MacCormack" could not put them entirely out of his mind and sadly he added one more item to his growing file of "Letters Written But Not Sent."

J.O. Dineen
Acting President
UNB

member of faculty, was not troubled by "Professor MacCormack's" hesitations. Let him write a letter - the Brigadier would surely publish it coming from a Dean - and show by example that there was nothing to be feared even if one were to call his fellow faculty members "traitors". It should now, of course, be clear why the Dean waited until November 17th to send his letter, a point which puzzled you and many others. Just as moon shots require, as a condition for their success, that the planets be in an appropriate relationship and the Dean's scheme required that Senate and Board meetings follow promptly on the publications of his letter. And it would appear from reviewing meeting dates that last week was the first time in almost six months when the two heavenly bodies were in conjunction. (True the same conjunction does occur at the time of Fall Convocation but that would have an inauspicious time for the launching.) Clearly "if it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly". The board and Senate had to act on the letters while everyone still thought that it was intended to be taken seriously but its real nature had to become apparent before the statement about "traitors" again stirred up dissention and division within the University.

Dean Ker's fellow AUNBT members reacted as he no doubt expected (although apparently none of them were in on his secret) and promptly placed his letter formally before the Senate and Board which, after due consideration, concluded that no action should be taken against Dean Ker. The maneuver had been successful; the limits of discussion and dissent had been reaffirmed (possibly even widened) and the

MacCormacks' need have no fear. Whether the rights which Dean Ker has established for his fellow faculty members also apply to the students is not quite clear at this point. They may yet have to find their own "Dean Ker".

I believe the Dean is to be commended for what he has accomplished and I trust he will forgive all of us for our initial unworthy views. I trust, Mr. Editor, that in your next editorial you will see fit to associate yourself and the Brunswickan with my views. And let us hope that any of his fellow members of the Board of Deans who may have suffered some temporary embarrassment last week will in turn forgive him. Of course the Dean might have revealed the true nature of the scheme once it had succeeded - no doubt the Gleaner would have found space for one more letter - but this is a small point in a venture of such magnitude.

Now that it is clear that the Dean did not intend the references to "traitors" etc. to be taken seriously probably we can assume that his "resignation" from AUNBT and CAUT was also a blind (after all his letter to Professor Irverson was signed "Yours Sincerely" which might have alerted some of us in the first place.) After all it must have been the Dean's twenty years of experience with the CAUT that led him to conceive his great venture and which gave him the courage to carry it out.

And finally, Mr. Editor, just so that there will be no confusion over my letter let me make clear that "Professor MacCormack" is a purely imaginary professor, that his letter was but a dream and that it does not, as far as I know, represent the views of any member of faculty at UNB.

Yours truly,
Edward D. Maher
Professor

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THE FREDERICTON DAILY GLEANER

Your issue of November 17 carried two letters from Dr. J.W. Ker with respect to his resignation from membership in the Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers. The letters were signed by Dr. Ker as Dean of Forestry.

Dr. Ker has sent me a copy of a third letter, dated November 19, and addressed to you, in which he states that the two letters of November 17

were written by him, not in his administrative capacity with the university but in his private capacity.

The Board of Governors has asked me to state that the letters of November 17 were written by Dr. Ker in his private capacity and did not constitute an expression of opinion of the administration or of the board.

VIEWPOINT

by tom wallace
brunswickan staff

what are your feelings about fredericton?



harv lewin
law 4
"It's not where you go but who you know."



barney wright
arts 3
"It stinks."



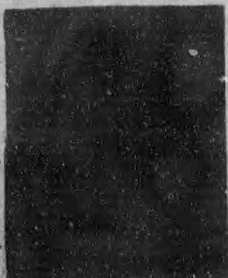
jerry viel
forestry 2
"It's okay."



steve murchison
forestry 2
"It's a beautiful city but it's too quiet."



shirley allanach
tc 1
"Not bad, but..."



carolyn alexander
arts 3
"Typical Maritime city."



cathy dryden
arts 2
"Leaves something to be desired."



pilot
sub 1
"Too many trees, too many decisions."