

New Brunswick takes its laws to the cleaners

By JEFF DAVIES

In a move unprecedented in the history of the New Brunswick Justice Department, a Law Reform Division has been established with the intent of updating the laws of the province. This program, presently under the direction of a UNB Law professor, has been instituted by the present Conservative government and is expected to be a permanent venture. With Prof. Allan Reid on the project are five lawyers, although this number will soon be raised to seven.

Reid said that the formation of the new division amounted

to a "departmental reorganization" and stated there has been a considerable amount of discussion concerning such a move over the last few years.

Three members of the division are now involved in the revision of the statutes. These are the laws which are in the law books, as opposed to the common law which is based on precedent. The statutes are to be computerized so as to form a data bank. With the statutes on computer tape, one will need only to "press a button" to obtain the desired information.

One of the areas now under examination is expropriation,

the compulsory taking of land. The reform here will take the form of measures which will be more favourable to private individuals. It will be decided to what extent the person involved will have a say in the case and to how much compensation he is entitled. Reid said that the existing laws pertaining to expropriation have a tendency to be weighted against the individual. These laws make no provision for relocation costs. He felt that the individual should have "a better chance to express his view."

With the object of bringing in reform which is "definitely oriented toward protecting the consumer", laws being considered include the Law of Contracts, laws relating to security financing and creditor-debtor relationships.

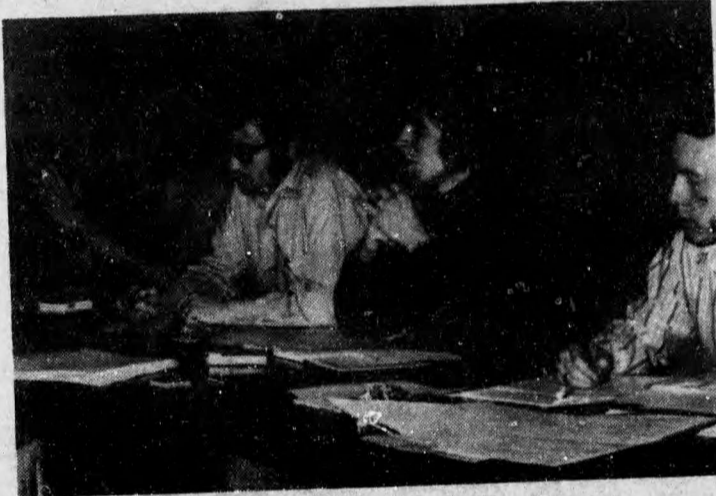
A small amount of work has already been done in the interests of reforming family laws—those relating to family maintenance, marriage, and adoption, although to date this has consisted of "more or less

housekeeping". Last year the government instituted a system of family courts. Reid said it is generally conceded there is a need to go over all the laws in this area.

Of special interest to students are the age of majority and the Landlord and Tenant Law. With regard to the former, Reid said it "is being looked at in the light of the fact that in several other provinces the age of majority has been reduced." He declined to go into detail so as not to "prejudice the Government's position." It is also "certainly anticipated" that the Landlord and Tenant Law will be looked at in the near future, although this may be done by a group other than the Law Reform Division.

Before the Law Reform Division was instituted last August, there was only a periodic revision and consolidation of laws. Such a revision has not been carried out since 1952. These revisions were not extensive and Reid said there "has never really been an organized law

reform". Therefore, it is the aim of the Division "to do this on a regular, rather than sporadic basis". Reid cautioned that the Division was still in the organizational stage and that it would take a couple of years to get it working smoothly. Reid himself has taken a two year leave from the University in order to help it along. Problems will be tackled by the Division as they present themselves, whether they are long or short term concerns. Says Reid, "We're not operating in an ivory tower."



Let us pray!



... so they did.

New council takes office

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He made particular reference to an Article in the By-laws dealing with attendance of SRC members at the regular Sunday night meeting. This states that voting members must attend all SRC meetings. If a member fails to attend two meetings (not necessarily consecutive ones) the SRC may, on a two-thirds majority, declare that member's position vacant.

Neale also reported that a position remains open for a Public Relations Officer for the SRC. Anyone who is interested in the job, whether an SRC member or not, should get in touch with Neale.

Council was also informed that another Businessmen's

Tour will take place on Feb. 29. An official of the Dept. of Education will attend and possibly the Minister himself.

A motion was made, and passed, that the Council accept the referendums from the elections. Mike Richard, Vice-President told the members that "Council should take a stand on them" and pass on the results to the proper authorities.

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the Canadian Beaverbrook Foundation Dean Kent has verbalized the appreciation of the university for this money. The total cost has been about \$400,000.



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