

Miss Dorothy Livesay is the resident writer at UNB. Terry Fisher of the *Brunswickan* talked with her.

Brunswickan

Miss Livesay, what are your duties as resident writer?

Livesay

Well, I think this position is now in the process of being discovered and I believe UNB was the first to ask the Canada Council for help in this direction. I also think the University would like to see perhaps more community activity developed in relation to writing and current Canadian literature, because certainly they have had this same policy towards art and music. At present I am scheduled to give several talks to community groups in the city.

I think the Canada Council's motive in giving the appointment was simply to give the writer a chance to work undisturbed by teaching.

Brunswickan

What opportunity or financial assistance does the University give to you to initiate schemes in creative writing on campus or downtown?

Livesay

I simply have the Canada Council grant which is enough to live on, and the University then gives a travel grant which got me here from British Columbia. Beyond that there isn't any fund connected with my position to do a community job with literature or poetry.

What I would like to see, rather, is a series of workshops on contemporary writing, organized by the students themselves.

Brunswickan

What would you like to see happen at UNB that would involve you?

Livesay

I would like to see something such as developed at UBC. Three years ago we had a summer session out there where a great number of poets came up from California and gave a fascinating series of seminars on the approaches to poetry. At least five hundred students attended readings by famous poets.

'A Poem Is A Happening'

What I would like to see is a much greater participation of students in the new developments in our own poetry and in the different currents abroad.

Brunswickan

What have you seen so far at UNB that involves student creative writing?

Livesay

Well, I haven't seen the student publications yet, but I was here this summer and taught a creative writing course. I had a very nice group of about fourteen people, all of whom were, I believe, teachers returning to get an idea of how to teach creative writing in the schools. This is the newest thing now, and it is most encouraging.

I found this class of teachers very stimulating and well informed. Really, all of them had a gift for writing. We published a little mimeographed magazine you may have seen about, called "Bottlenecks".

Brunswickan

What is the present situation regarding creative writing in Canada?

Livesay

There has been a very great change in the past ten years. It used to be a real struggle to get yourself known and published. Lately there has been a great upsurge in the publishing of poetry and other literature in the coun-

try and there is now, we might say, a favourable climate for writing in Canada.

I think the Canada Council has contributed the most to this and certainly the publishers have rallied. Young people who can't

get published by the more established firms are going ahead and setting up their own presses, publishing mimeographed things, and so on.

I don't think the prose has caught up to what's happened in poetry in the last ten years though. I think that the leaders, such as Irving Layton and Earl Birney, have established a Canadian poetry that is virile and very closely connected with our own way of life and thinking, and which will eventually be considered as distinctive.

It's had very poor reception abroad, but this is partly, I think, because no Canadian book published in Canada is reviewed in the United States. The only books of poetry which the American magazines will review are those which are also published in America.

Brunswickan

Whom would you say is leading the current trend in Canadian poetry?

Livesay

I don't think there is any one

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