

"Real education" goes with President's position

By MARIA WAWER

"I have always said that if anyone wanted a real education, they should become president of a university," said Dr. J. O. Dineen, Professor of Electrical Engineering, and Past President of UNB.

Dineen's education at UNB and knowledge of the university started some time before he became president. He first came to UNB as a freshman in Engineering in 1936 when the university had 360 students.

Dineen became a faculty member in 1942, Head of Electrical Engineering in 1951, and went on to become Dean of Engineering in 1957. He held this position until January 1969, when the Board of Governors named him Acting President Designate, upon the resignation of Dr. Colin B. MacKay in December 1968. He remained President until the fall of 1972.

"Thus, I was available in the wings, so to speak, to take over the presidency, were no one else to be appointed by June 1969. Personally, I was certain at the time that someone else would be!"

Asked what was the greatest problem he had to tackle upon first being appointed president, Dineen replied, "It was probably the uneasiness on campus felt both among some students and faculty, partly as a holdover from the suspension of Professor of Physics, Dr. Norman Strax. (Strax was suspended from UNB in 1968, supposedly for "counselling students to break university regulations".)

"Full credit for the way in

which these problems were overcome has to be given to Dean Dugal Blue, who was then Dean of Student Services. Together with him, I met frequently with students that summer, as for example, those of the SRC who were still around."

With these students, many points of differing opinions were discussed. As well these included student representation on the Senate. At the time, the Senate was considering taking on four student members, whereas a general student consensus seemed to indicate seven was a more realistic number.

The figure was finalized at six, and the first students to become senators met as members of this body in Nov. 1969.

"Actually, student pressure to get such representation on the Board of Governors has not been as acute," Dr. Dineen noted. He attributed this to an overall more pronounced feeling for the need for student involvement at that period.

He went on to say:

"We also talked over other problems that summer. Gradually, the uneasiness lessened as students began to feel that the Administration was not against them".

"As I said to members of the Faculty this spring, July 1969 was the longest month I put in while in office. One never knew what to expect next. The University

agreed to bring in arbitration on the question of Strax. When the censure was involved against us, no one knew just how black a mark it was. As it turned out, Strax did not appear at the

arbitration hearings. In effect, we won by default. On July 18 the censure was lifted. Looking back, it did not seem to have hurt us very much at the time."

Dineen stated that he could not pin down any one major problem which might have plagued him during his term of office.

"I am not a worry wart", he said.

"Also, I was lucky. We were in a period of expanding enrolment and revenue.

"As far as capital building projects go, the rate of expansion of the physical plant was tapering off. Tibbitts Hall was under construction. Also, the central heating plant and a section to the computing center were added, but that was all.

"One thing we would have liked, would have been more of a financial input from private sources. However, our financial advisors pointed out it was not a good time for a fund raising campaign. So, the funds from the 1964 campaign were used up, and since then the university has had to depend upon provincial funding."

Dineen added that had the private funds been available, a field house for St. John might have been considered, and the tennis courts on the Fredericton campus could have been ready a year ago.

"As it was, we had to wait for the government." As far as the present financial problems go, Dineen pointed out that the Higher Education Commission would be approached and the gravity of the



Having resigned as UNB's President this fall after three years in office, Dr. J. O. Dineen's portrait now hangs in the Old Arts Building beside other past presidents.

situation set forth. "If we are unsuccessful and no changes in the grant system are made, we will have to look inward on our expenditures."

What is the greatest change Dineen has seen since he first came to UNB?

"It has to be the number of students and the size of the physical plant! As a freshman, I was one of only 360. We knew everyone and they were almost all from New Brunswick. Two students had cars, and until 1940, only one was married."

The only buildings on campus were the Old Arts Building, Lady Beaverbrook Residence, Memorial Hall, the Forestry Building, the Library and the old Gym.

"One of the greatest growth spurts occurred just after the war, to almost 1,600 students. It then fell off again, and people were saying this place would never

see a thousand students again."

Dineen said he felt the university would keep on growing, but gradually.

"I have heard that in Ontario, secondary school enrolment was up by 13 percent, but college by only 1 percent." This could be a trend, in Dineen's opinion.

To the question of what he considered the role of the university in the context of education and research versus training for a future job or career, Dineen answered that the university can have a viable function in both respects.

"The university can never be just like a technical school in that the depth of understanding of a professional person must be much greater than that of a technician in the same field. The theory, as well as the practical aspects, must be stressed".

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