

MARCH 16, 1973

President delighted by first days in office



"One may have to be unpopular from time to time, but a university president has to look to the future."

By MILTON THOMAS

UNB President John M. Anderson says he is 'delighted' by his first days in office.

Dr. Anderson was interviewed by the BRUNSWICKAN earlier this week to gauge his attitudes to his first week as UNB's new president.

When asked what was his primary reaction to his new position, Anderson said 'I feel much more at home behind an academic desk than in a government office.'

He said he was apprehensive about leaving his former job as Director of Research and Development of the Fisheries branch of the Department of the Environment.

'I was wondering if I was doing the right thing,' he said, 'but now I know I have.'

Anderson said he had no pre-conceived ideas or attitudes toward the job. He did say he 'may have assumed, at times, that the faculty and students might be hard to deal with.' Present indications are, however, that such will not be the case.

'This university,' he said, 'is much more sensible than many people think. Everyone, both students and faculty, has his head screwed on tight and knows what he is doing.'

Anderson has met some of the faculty and students informally during the past week. No formal affair has yet been held.

Last week, Anderson talked with Student's Representative Council President Roy Neale.

He said he 'was impressed with Neale. I thought he had a positive concern and interest in the welfare of the university.'

Anderson said ten years ago the SRC was not nearly as involved as it is now. He described the present role of the council as 'a healthy sign.'

'With the assistance of the SRC,' he said, 'my job will be made easier. They want to make it better here, too.'

The Board of Governors meeting last week also impressed Anderson. 'Though it seemed uneventful, it was a good board

meeting. I was delighted by the meeting and the Board members,' he said.

No glaring problems have presented themselves to the President as yet. Anderson said there are always problems entailed in any job and finding solutions to them makes work interesting.

'At UNB, our biggest problem right now is balancing the budget,' he said, 'and even here, solutions will be found.'

When asked how he was adapting to his position, Anderson replied he 'will have to grow in the saddle.'

He said he has been trained to adapt and believes he will be able to do so, though he does 'have some growing to do.'

Former interim President Desmond Pacey has been providing invaluable assistance, says Anderson, in this adaptive process.

'Dr. Pacey,' said Anderson, 'makes recommendations to me and I approve them. Final decisions are mine alone, but Dr. Pacey's recommendations are usually approved because of his experience and ability.'

Other individuals serve in an advisory capacity. Administrative Vice-President Beverley Macaulay and Dean of Engineering Leslie Jaeger were both credited with providing sound guidance.

Anderson believes his former

things straight. The last thing I want is to become embroiled in some reorganization scheme.'

Anderson was asked if anything was to be done about the drop in student enrollment. He said the greatest significance the drop in student numbers had was that 'it disturbed our finances.'

He stated, 'We should not go out to attract students solely for the sake of increasing the size of our student body.' There is no point in students being here unless they want to be, he said.

The issue here is the growing disinterest in university education throughout the country. The 'why' of this problem is what disturbs Anderson most, not that UNB has suffered a drop in size.

The President was also asked if he noted any changes in UNB since he was here in 1963. He said he knew there were more students but this was not really noticeable merely by looking at the place.

What does impress him is the increase in academic activities. He mentioned particularly the Bio-Engineering Institute, the Surveying Engineering department and the Water Resources Branch. There is 'more involvement in environmental matters, he said, an area of particular interest to him.

Anderson also said he hopes to be able to meet more students and organizations such as the BRUNSWICKAN, SRC, and CHSR. It is however, 'a matter of time because the present year is running to a close.'

Fredericton Mayor J. W. Bird and the President have met in the past week. Anderson said that in a situation where a university comprises a large proportion of the population, such as in the case of Fredericton, relations between the two 'are a sensitive area.'

Anderson said he and Mayor Bird had a good talk and a desire for co-operation exists between the two.

The President was not aware of the city's proposal last fall to tax the university. He said, however, that such a plan, if implemented, 'could only be a bookkeeping matter.' He does not believe it would affect the university's finances.

Anderson also desires to meet provincial government leaders. The university is going to depend on the government for finances and close relations have to be established and maintained. Anderson wants the provincial government to turn to UNB for solutions to some of its problems. He said there is a vast store of knowledge and ability on this campus. If the government would turn to UNB for help when needed and we, in turn, respond well, a type of 'mutual dependency' would exist between the two.

Anderson defines the role of a university president as 'providing academic and administrative leadership.'

'One may have to be unpopular from time to time,' he said, 'but a university president has to look to the future.' Unpopularity may be necessary for future benefit.

He does not plan to make any alterations to the office or role of the president.

'There is often the assumption,' said Anderson, 'that by reorganizing, things will get better. This is false. What counts is strong leadership and getting

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Continued from page 13

hope to make arrangements with the Information Department, Registrar's Office, the various faculties and College Hill Report to prepare whatever pamphlets, newsheets and other services they may require. Besides typesetting and layout, they also offer to handle the printing through their

own printers in Moncton.

Posters, business cards and letterheads can be set by the staff, then sent to Graphic Services to be printed. The result is a much lower cost to the customer, a profit for the SRC, and more financial independence for The BRUNSWICKAN.

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