

A CURIOUS PHENOMENON

# The Transient Professors

by LINDA MUIR

A curious phenomenon mentioned in passing at the UNB SRC meeting of October 29, 1967 was the "transient professor". This phenomenon was more closely described as a professor with "liberal" ideas who was not afraid to "bite the hand that fed him." In the discussion on course evaluation and publishing of an anti-calendar, Tom Murphy, chairman of the Core Committee on this topic said that it would not be a difficult matter to find ten co-operating professors to work on the committee on course evaluation. A few conclusions may be drawn from the above statements. As the publishing of an anti-calendar could be considered an act anti-administration, it is questionable whether the ten professors who assisted in this work in 1967 would still be at UNB to assist in the work of 1968. Here is suggested that an Administration could exercise a control over its professors

via the purse strings. In this way, professors would be deprived of freedom of expression at a university, an institution designed to disseminate knowledge. However, the students are not deprived of their freedom of expression in the same way - for it is the students who "feed" the Administration with tuitions that are increasing every year. When a student enters university, he should expect to participate actively in this dissemination of knowledge. As John Henry Cardinal Newman said in his famous essay, "The Idea of a University" (1852): "... Knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no inter-communication, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no com-

mon principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary."

Now I ask the student to take a look at his own department. Which professors in your department have actively taken a stand on helping the student better define his ideas on the kind and quality of education he wants to receive at UNB? Which professors have accepted and acted upon students' suggestions for the improvement of a course, which is after all not just "bread" to the professor and should not be just sawdust to the student? Which professors have acted to help the student have some small say in and control over those years of education which are so important to his entire future life? And now let the student inquire whether the professors who left his department last year for other universities could have been listed among the above "liberal" professors - and let the student predict which of his present professors who have exercised their freedom of expression facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and displayed their interest in and improving the quality of education at UNB - which of these professors will remain at UNB next year, or which will join the ranks of the "transients". Dear Student: how many of the "liberal" professors in your department have already received their warning?

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