

Minister Talks To Liberal Club

Meldrum Defines Academic Freedom

Hon. W. W. Meldrum, provincial Minister of Education, spoke to members of the UNB Liberal Club, on Thursday, Oct. 27, on "Academic Freedom and Government Control".

In his address, Mr. Meldrum spoke of the dangers of allowing freedom to be usurped even through the Democratic process. "What is to be feared is the loss of freedom by public demand," he said. "Freedom is not lost by dramatic incidents, but by erosion."

"In our time, no one asks for loss of freedom" he said, "but for government assistance. Government assistance may not bring regulation of society, but it may bring regulation of the assistance, and the assistance inexorably regulates the receiver."

He said that government assistance is wrong when it creeps into areas where it is not intended, and where it robs initiative.

"Academic Freedom for the student," he said, is the freedom to study anything at all — or nothing at all."

Mr. Meldrum asked whether or not compulsion by the state was the only answer to the problem of educating the people at the elementary level. He cited the example of Mexico, where "only when the family and the student recognise the need for education do they go to school".

As a counter argument, Mr. Meldrum said that the needs of a modern technological society require universal education, at least to the point that society be, as nearly as possible 100 per cent literate.

ANOTHER REASON

Another reason Mr. Meldrum cited for universal education was that "man must be defended from his own folly." He said that perhaps it is because we do not want to help them that

we "insist that society provide for the unfortunate victims of their own failures."

Academic freedom for the professors, he said, "bestows the right to teach anything that the professor believes — anything." This meant, he said, that professors must be allowed to teach that God is dead or that God is living; that Communism is right, or that Capitalism is right, or that neither is right; and that, by the same token, he may be allowed to teach robbery and murder.

"Should we prevent him from teaching robbery and murder?" he asked.

Mr. Meldrum also stated that, by academic freedom, the professor should be able to teach not only what he believes, but even what he does not believe — what in fact he knows to be false. "How can you be sure that he is not wrong?" Mr. Meldrum said. He may be teaching the right thing for the wrong reason, or teaching the wrong thing for the right reason.

"Some limits on the anarchy of true academic freedom are desirable," Mr. Meldrum said. But, he added, "How much loss of freedom must we accept for the purpose of maintaining order?"

Our society has built-in safeguards against loss of freedom, Mr. Meldrum said. He said that we live under the rule of Law, that "everyone is subject to the law, and that all are answerable for their breaches."

We have a system of representative government, he said. The executive branch of the government, the Cabinet, is answerable to the elected branch, the Legislature.

"The knowledge that we may soon be held to account

for our actions is a pretty considerable deterrent," he said, in referring to his own department of education.

LEGISLATORS ABUSIVE

Mr. Meldrum said that, unfortunately, the elected members of the legislature often abuse the Question Period. "We spend our time playing politics instead of doing the people's business." He said, however, that the question period is essential because "when an honest question is asked, it must be answered."

Another safeguard of our liberties, he said, was that of the vote. He said that the right to vote was a guarantee that you will not suffer from abuse of power.

"If you want an education, and you want society to provide it, you must accept the education that society is willing to pay for," he said. "People have a right to expect that some reasonable standard be set."

"Government control of education is no thing to fear", Mr. Meldrum said in closing his address. "Democracy has produced our system of education, and it is a very good one."

Following his talk, Mr. Meldrum answered questions from the floor.

Paper Is Not Obscene

LONDON (CUP) — A morality squad probe into alleged profanity appearing in the University of Western Ontario's student paper won't result in criminal charges, a city police spokesman said Thursday (Oct. 20).

London morality detective Larry Campbell made the announcement after completing an investigation of the *The Gazette*.

Police and UWWO president had received an anonymous note complaining of profanity in the student paper.

Carnival Contest For Castle Opens

Designs are now being received for the Ice Castle to be used in conjunction with the 1967 UNB-STU Winter Carnival. All students with a flair for design are urged to submit their entries to the Brunswick Office before December 15th.

It is hoped that the Carnival theme — Canada 1867 — will be incorporated into the design. The award-winning designer will receive an engraved Beer

Mug and two free passes to Carnival.

For further information contact Jim Anderson at 454-3481.

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