

# EDITORIAL UNB derelict in fulfilling responsibilities

In the "Inside" editorial of two weeks ago we described the culturally rich environment we live in here in Fredericton. We spoke with pride of our many artists in the visual arts, music, drama, literature. We mentioned quite modestly that we led the country with such positions as artist in residence, writer in residence and musician in residence. This was not just to impress the frosh, it is all quite true. However we did not mention the areas of artistic advancement in which we fall far behind. We would like to make up for this in small part this week.

UNB is not an impoverished university. Two years ago when universities, even those with a wealthy alumni like McGill, were cutting down on expenditures we could only complain that we were not progressing fast enough. While it is true that we can not afford all the additions we would like to make to the campus, it is also true that we do manage to expand a little every year.

On page six of this issue, Marjory Donaldson, curator of the Art Centre, mentions that for the past seventeen years she has been told every year to expect a new building for the Art Centre in the following five years. She has again been told this year that there will be a new building within five years.

The present center is only a makeshift building. Not only is the location a little out of the way for frequent use (the Bailey Commission recommended a wing on the then "proposed" Student Union Building) but the layout of the building is not practical for use as an art centre. There is no loading ramp for the crates of paintings so they must be carried up a flight of stairs. Once in, the only storage space is in the basement which means another flight of stairs. There is no humidity control and very little temperature control in the building. In the winter, particularly, as it gets very dry, the lack of humidity control is hazardous to the paintings.

The woodlot behind the Harriet Irving Library has been reserved for the art centre. When plans for the new building are discussed, those associated with the fine arts, usually mention the need for a theatre. The drama society is presently housed in Memorial Hall with a basement storeroom for costumes and props. The stage is inadequate and the Playhouse is often rented when available, at \$150 a night.

Perhaps one reason a new building is so difficult to get is that there is no department of fine arts to push for one. Although discussion has been regular on the feasibility of such a department for at least the last sixteen years, and all such discussion seems to end in a unanimous affirmative vote, it is not clear that we are any closer to the formation of such a department. The most recent commissions discussing this point have been the famed Bailey Commission of 1967 and the Shaw Report of 1970.

The Bailey Commission said, "The Commission is in full agreement with this proposed change (i.e. a Consolidated Fine Arts Department) and recommends that it be adopted forthwith." We remind you that this was in 1967!

We quote from page two of the Shaw Report, "An active and creative program in the Fine Arts is essential to the intellectual and cultural life of any university, community or region. Lacking a formal and co-ordinated program in the Fine Arts, this university is probably having an adverse effect upon artistic development in New Brunswick. The Committee is convinced that this University has been derelict in fulfilling

its responsibilities to itself as a major university, to the community of Fredericton and to the Province of New Brunswick as a whole."

This latter report uses a strong vocabulary and has had some results -- in the formation of yet another committee. This report will hopefully be the last for the administrators of this university must eventually get tired of researching the same ground over and over again.

The necessity of this further committee was explained by Dean Thomas Condon, the committee chairman. This committee is the "Academic and Campus Planning Committee", a Senate sub-committee. This is the organization which makes official suggestions to the Senate. The committee plans to have a preliminary report prepared by December and a final report finished in the Spring. This would be too late to make any major changes for the 1972-73 academic year, but Dean Condon indicated the preliminary report might suggest an immediate increase in the fine arts faculty.

Prof. Stuart Smith is applying for a sabbatical leave for 1972-73, and Dean Condon said, "A replacement for Prof. Smith will be found if his sabbatical is granted."

Prof. Condon added that present indications were favourable to the formation of a fine arts department "The preliminary enrollment of women in freshmen year is up from 51 percent to 57 percent this year. This percentage is expected to rise in the next few years. Women have been traditionally interested in the creative arts and performing arts, and this would have to be considered by the committee."

"A creative dramatic workshop has been set up on a trial basis in the English Department for two years. The class was open to a maximum of twenty-five students and considerably more than twenty-five applied," he continued. Past proposals for a fine arts department have suggested the inclusion of dramatics within the department.

Of the forty-five universities in Canada, twenty-four offer full degree programs in art; twenty-nine, in music; and nineteen, in drama. UNB lags far behind in offering no degree program in any of these three areas.

The Art Centre in Memorial Hall opens its exhibition schedule with Prints for Student Loan in the Studio and Selections from the Permanent Collection in the Gallery. The prints are a selection of framed reproductions which will be offered, free of charge, on October 1st at 10 pm, for students to hang in their rooms until spring.

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