

# THE MEANING OF CENSURE

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The Canadian Association of University Teachers has just censured the President and the Board of Governors of the University of New Brunswick. What does censure mean, how

does it come about, and what is its effect?

Censure is relatively rare and relatively new in Canada, though its equivalent has been widely used in the United States by the American Association of University Professors, the American counterpart of CAUT. What is means, essentially, is that the

censured university has for one reason or another become an institution in which the working conditions of professors are no longer satisfactory. Censure is the most extreme sanction open to the CAUT, one which is used only when all attempts at quiet diplomacy have failed.

Disputes between professors and the universities normally have to do with such things as rank, salary, failure to grant permanent appointments, and so on. If the faculty member has a reasonable grievance, the CAUT may add its authority to his case and argue it for him. Very few such cases are ever made public, but if the university is indeed guilty of continuing and unrepentant malpractice in any of these areas, it may as a last resort be censured — in effect, blacklisted.

months; early this year it threatened censure; last Saturday it carried out that threat.

Censure is the only force available to the CAUT, and it really amounts simply to a recommendation that professors stay away from the censured university. The academic life is a very queer one, however, unlike any other. Academic men are very mobile; we have — in effect — a union, but we don't strike; and money probably counts a little less for us than it does for most other employees. The crucial features of a good academic job are the prestige of the institution, the prestige of one's position in it, the morale of the place. And because university teaching is such a queer profession, the queer weapon of censure is pretty effective, because censure strikes at the psychological ambience that is essential to a good university job.

have of getting some basic and necessary reforms in the University if the faculty won't even take a firm stand on a question so serious that eleven thousand professors, through their national organization, have censured the government of the University? So the CAUT supporters must consider resigning — and the ones who can leave easily are the best ones, the ones who are attractive to other universities. Their replacements aren't likely to be nearly so good. What professor with a choice of jobs would willingly walk into a battleground like this?

So my guess is that censure, unless it's lifted quickly, will probably hurt UNB very badly. And the people who will suffer in the long run will be the people of New Brunswick, whose university will slowly turn from a good small university, with a bright future, into a kind of academic slum. Nobody wants that to happen, but if the Board of Governors isn't prepared to allow fair academic hearings for its faculty members that's a reasonable prediction of what could happen.

What it boils down to is this: that a fine university faces one of the gravest crises in its long and honorable history.

All its friends must hope, as I do, that the Board of Governors will retrieve its good name by acceding to the CAUT's stipulations at the first opportunity.

## UNIVERSITIES EDUCATE CHILDREN OF WEALTHY

A survey of Canadian university students done in 1966 showed:

—Over 33% of New Brunswick families have yearly incomes of less than \$3000, yet only 85 of New Brunswick university students come from these families.

—Over 66% of New Brunswick have yearly incomes of less than \$5000 yet only 34% of New Brunswick university students come from these families.

—25% of all New Brunswick university students come from families whose yearly income is over \$10,000 whereas less than 6% of New Brunswick families fall in this income class.

—48% of all New Brunswick university students' fathers are classified as either professionals or proprietary

and managerial, whereas only 17% of the New Brunswick labour force are so employed.

New Brunswick universities are not equally accessible to all New Brunswick youth. They are top heavy with students from high income families. However, all New Brunswick taxpayers are paying an increasing amount to operate their universities. If we are going to build a vibrant and democratic society, it is essential that our youth be educated to the fullest extent of their ability. All of our young people should have an equal chance and opportunity to attend the universities supported by the taxpayer. Statistics show that is not the case now. We are taxing the poor to pay for the rich.

## COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN N.B.

In 1968-69, 8800 students are attending university on a full-time basis in New Brunswick. To support these universities, the provincial government gave \$22,642,000 in assistance.

By 1971-72 it is projected that there will be 10,600 full-time university students in New Brunswick. Provincial assistance in that year is programmed to be \$30,680,000.

Our universities are costly. There is no doubt that institutions of higher learning are a necessity in a progressive society. However, they must be responsive and responsible to the needs of the province of New Brunswick.

New Brunswick faces many crises. There are crises in housing, social services, industrial development and

utilization of our natural resources. We suggest that the universities of New Brunswick do not offer programs, nor attempt to offer programs, which will aid in solving New Brunswick's basic problems.

The Board of Governors of the University of New Brunswick is chiefly appointed by the provincial Board of Governors shows that they are primarily represent the wealthy, industrial sector of our society. These men and women are not educators nor are they concerned with the basic needs of the common citizens of New Brunswick.

The people of New Brunswick should demand universities that will seek to provide answers to the needs of our province.

### SENSITIVE AREA

The most sensitive area of dispute, however, is academic freedom. The concept of academic freedom arises from the fact that the university is the home of ideas, a place where any idea, however bizarre or repulsive, may be tested, discussed and accepted or rejected on its merits rather than its respectability. On the other hand, universities are situated in communities, and the communities tend to regard the university as a training school for necessary professionals like doctors; communities don't usually understand that the university must be the home controversial ideas, and so the legislatures which represent the communities and pay many of the bills erupt from time to time with cries of "Clear out all the kooks on the campus." Naturally enough, the faculty insists that it must be protected from irresponsible criticism, it must on no account permit its members to suffer for their ideas. A real university can never be a home for orthodoxy; even the most radical, unpopular and subversive of faculty members must be allowed to speak in perfect security.

### CONSEQUENCE

As a consequence, the suspension or dismissal of a faculty member is always a ticklish business. Professors legitimately demand that no faculty member be fired without a fair and impartial inquiry, without stated charges and an opportunity to answer them. For one thing, such conditions prevent a "dangerous" thinker from being fired on a legalistic pretext. Dr. Norman Strax is not a popular figure, and many academics would agree that if he did indeed do what we are told he did at the university library last September, he probably should have been suspended. But the onus is on the University to prove that, in an impartial hearing. And even now, months after suspending him, the University has still not instituted what the academic profession regards as suitable procedures. The Canadian Association of University Teachers protested and negotiated privately for

### THE EFFECTS?

So what are the effects; UNB has about three hundred faculty members, and hires, I suppose, about thirty professors each year. It's not easy to get professors to come to Fredericton; Fredericton is a nice little town, but most professors find New York or Montreal or San Francisco more congenial; those places have publishers, major laboratories and libraries, higher salaries, more graduate students, more research opportunities, a more exciting cultural life and so on. So if UNB goes after thirty professors next year, and it's still under censure, the odds are it's going to stand an even worse chance than usual. And professors already at UNB will begin to think of other jobs. The best professors, those most in demand elsewhere, will leave first. Indeed, that's already happening; I know several colleagues who are negotiating for jobs elsewhere, and a number of faculty members have had inquiries from other universities who suspect that people at UNB may be thinking of moving. And it won't take much of this to lower the quality of instruction measurably, and thus lower the quality of UNB degrees.

Censure has only been used once before in the CAUT's nineteen-year history, at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and Simon Fraser is still suffering from it; the bad taste of censure still deters faculty members from applying for jobs there. If this is true at Simon Fraser, one of the richest and most exciting experiments in Canadian education, what will be the effect at UNB?

### ADDITIONAL FEATURE

At UNB, there's an additional feature. Norman Strax is so unpopular and UNB professors are so accustomed to being ruled from above that many faculty members haven't been able to see the principle involved very clearly. As a result, the faculty is deeply divided, and professors who fully support their national organization face a real decision. What chance do they

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