

It's not whether it is better to unionize but...

One union? Two unions? Three unions?

Faculty unionization will shortly be a fact if all present indications are correct. Hearings with the Labour Relations Board ended approximately three weeks ago with three unions, the Association of UNB Teachers, the UNB Engineering and Forestry Association and UNB Law Faculty applying for certification.

When this issue first came up last spring, the Brunswickan stated that we were against any form of unionization. A brief was submitted shortly after to the Labour Relations Board by the Student Representative Council. Many of the points brought up in the brief were a reflection of our editorial comments.

To reiterate some of our previous comments, no faculty union is a good union for students. The main reason that a union could be a threat to relations between students and faculty. More formalized relations will be the order of the day and the passing of the informal relations between the students and faculty of this university would be regrettable. Another strong possibility is that students may be caught between faculty and administration when problems arise between the two, with the opinions and the feelings of students being unimportant and unheard.

Presently in Canada, an adversarial relationship between management and unionized employees is the norm. We can assume that a similar situation could arise at UNB. Strikes seem to be an inevitable result of the current system, we believe that students can therefore expect that sometime within the academic year faculty may go out on strike. Any student can deduce for him or herself where this will leave them.

The Brunswickan sees the establishment of a union on this campus as a blow to the already tenuous bargaining position which currently exists between students and the administration. Currently, the faculty is relatively disorganized, and does not have a collective voice. Should a case arise where the administration has to decide who is right in a certain issue between faculty and student, they have in the past been able to side with students. However a collective voice could



alter this situation to the detriment of the students. Having reiterated some of the points against faculty unionization we now have to take the realistic view and admit, that despite student feelings on the

matter, a union is inevitable. It seems that if there has to be a union, let there only be one. Consider the following possibility: What would happen if there were three unions and the Association of Engineers and Foresters decided to strike. Several

engineers are taking three or so electives in arts. Do they or do they not go to classes? And what or how will this affect their degree? Do other profs cross picket lines?

Another important point to consider is that a "leapfrogging" effect could become a distinct possibility with three unions on campus. This could come about as a result of one union going to

the bargaining tables for a pay increase of, shall we say 8 per cent. Then, once having achieved their goal and gone away satisfied, another of the unions sees what has been done and decides to ask for a 9 per cent increase. Meanwhile the third union, seeing the other two getting their pay increases, also decides to ask for an increase of shall we say 10 per cent. The next thing you know is that the original union wants to go back to bargaining for an extra 2 per cent. Not only will this mean that the administration will be tied up with unions all year, which could mean more personnel to deal with the increased workload, but where are the students going to be when everyone is tied up trying to get more money?

While the case may be somewhat overstated, we do see the above drama as a possibility. The Brunswickan does not believe that any more than one union would be either plausible or sensible.