

THE FACTS ABOUT THE CRISIS

On 19 November, 1975 the Minister of Education wrote Notre Dame University Board of Governors that an earlier decision to replace the University with the Kootenay University Centre as of July 1, 1976 would be delayed ONE YEAR.

The Minister stated:..."Notre Dame University will continue to operate during the 1976-77 academic year under the existing fiscal arrangements with the Provincial Government. The President and the Board of Governors of Notre Dame will be responsible for the continued operation of the University until the end of the 1976 - 77 academic year, with no direct involvement of the Department of Education."

(It should be understood that existing fiscal arrangements provide that Notre Dame University receives most of its operating funds from the Department of Education.)

On 27 November these arrangements were accepted and confirmed by the Chairman of the Notre Dame University Board of Governors as follows:..."The Board of Governors will, as instructed, continue to administer the University for the 1976 - 77 academic year under existing fiscal arrangements."

Furthermore, in her letter of 19 November the Minister stated..."it is the intention of the Government to establish the Kootenay University Centre as the first branch campus of the new decentralized university."

In response to student fears about Notre Dame University's future which were voiced at that time the Minister also gave assurance that the present Notre Dame University would become a part of the new university structure.

On the basis of these instructions and statements of policy the University completed planning for the 1976 - 77 year.

Late in January the Department of Education announced in a press release that Notre Dame University would become the responsibility of the Universities Council of B.C.

(The Universities Council was set up in 1974 to oversee the operations of the public universities of the province. Notre Dame University was not included in its jurisdiction.)

Subsequent to the press release from the Department of Education, the Universities Council has been informed that no additional monies would be provided to the Council to fund N.D.U.

The Universities Council has recommended to the Minister of Education that provincial funding for N.D. U. cease on May 31, 1977, but the Council has indicated it cannot allocate any funds to Notre Dame from its allotment for the 1976-77 year. The Minister of Education has reiterated to the Universities Council that, if funding is to be provided for Notre Dame for the coming year it must be as part of the total funds allocated to the Council for university purposes.

ALTHOUGH NO WRITTEN COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, IT SEEMS THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER PUBLIC FUNDING FOR NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY, IN WHICH CASE THE UNIVERSITY WILL HAVE TO CLOSE ITS DOORS.

During the provincial election last December, representatives of the Progressive Conservative, New Democratic and Social Credit parties all favoured the continuance of a four-year degree granting institution in Nelson. Social Credit candidate G.H. Coleman specifically stated support for the University in his program, and Social Credit Party President Peter Hyndman was reported in the Nelson Daily News of Dec. 2 as follows:..."He (Mr. Hyndman) said the independence of Notre Dame University as a four-year degree granting university would be guaranteed, and falls well within the Social Credit policies..."

FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS NOTRE DAME COLLEGE AND - SINCE 1963 - NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN A VITAL PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE KOOTENAYS. THE WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT WILL HAVE A VERY SERIOUS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY.

The Executive Committee of the Notre Dame University Board of Governors met with local members of the Board on Feb: 14 and authorized this statement so that the facts may be known and understood by all concerned.

The full Board of Governors will meet next week and, in the light of its responsibility to the students, faculty, staff and the community, will take action on the ethical, legal and financial problems posed by this apparent reversal of government commitments and policy.

The Executive Committee

Notre Dame University
Board of Governors

YOU ARE URGED TO WRITE TO PREMIER BENNETT EXPRESSING YOUR CONCERN.