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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

THE RIGHT REV. ANGUS J. MACQUEEN, B.A., B.D., D.D.
MODERATOR



421 WESLEY BUILDINGS
TORONTO 2-B, CANADA

January 2, 1959.

The Ministers of the Winnipeg Presbytery,
United Church of Canada.

My dear fellow ministers:

I have been instructed by the Sub-Executive of the General Council to send you a complete copy of the statement released by that body on the situation at United College. Let me assure you that it was carefully prepared with the best interests of the College and the Church in mind. There has been a regrettable delay in writing you because of the sudden death of the esteemed secretary of our Board of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Rev. Dr. W. Harold Young, and the hospitalization of Dr. Ernest Long, the secretary of General Council. Dr. Long is off work for about a month, and I am trying to carry both my own Church and the Moderatorial office without assistance, and with the added burdens of the Christmas and New Year season.

Even though the Board of Regents of United College had reinstated Professor Crowe on December 15th it was necessary for the Sub-Executive to make a statement. The situation in Winnipeg had aroused national interest, and we had numerous requests from university and theological college professors, from Church sessions, alumni organizations, students and other individuals to say something on behalf of the United Church of Canada.

The statement of the Sub-Executive deals only with the use made of the private letter as a factor leading to the dismissal of Professor Crowe, and not with personalities or the contents of the letter in question or the background situation. The one exception was caused by our concern to express our confidence in Principal Lackhart. We deeply deplore the hurt that he has suffered during these past months. We regard him as one of our ablest ministers, a man of great talents and dedication, and hope that the future will compensate him for any damage inflicted upon him by this unhappy dispute.

Our best wishes are extended to the Principal, the Board of Regents, the staff and the students, that together they may be able to bring about a spirit of harmony and reconciliation in the College, and enable it to fill its important role in the Christian and academic life of Winnipeg.

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The Ministers of the Winnipeg Presbytery.

January 2, 1959.

May I extend sincere regards to you as ministers of our Church, and express the hope that God will bless you and your work during 1959.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

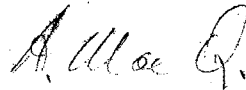


Moderator of The General Council
The United Church of Canada.

AJMacQ/dv

P.S. -

Dr. Long showed me the release he gave to Pierre Berton and it did not contain the word "reprehensible." The statement had to do with the photostating of the letter, and the words he used were "understandable but regrettable."



The Sub-Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada, meeting on December 17th, considered at length the situation at United College, Winnipeg.

After very careful consideration the Sub-Executive desires to make clear the following points:

1. The United Church has always stood for academic freedom. It has never required loyalty oaths or rigid doctrinal conformity from its college or university teachers.
2. While United College is a church-related institution, it operates under a charter granted by the Province of Manitoba. The United Church of Canada has only limited control over its policies and none over the appointment or dismissal of the professors in the faculties of arts and science. The Board of Regents of United College therefore possesses virtual autonomy in the conduct of the affairs of the college.
3. We have confidence in Dr. Lockhart as a man of integrity and one whose devotion to the cause of Christianity and the Church is of a very high order. Dr. Lockhart did not tamper with Her Majesty's mail. There is no evidence whatever as to why the letter in question did not reach the person to whom it was addressed. The only fact known is that the letter in question came to Dr. Lockhart by ordinary mail in an envelope addressed to him. Attached to this letter was a note, unsigned, which read as follows: "Found in College hall. We think you should read it. Some staff loyalty???" Dr. Lockhart did not disclose the text of the letter to the Board of Regents. He did make the mistake of photostating the letter. This was a mistake in judgment, without malicious intent, for which he has made a public apology.
4. We believe that Professor Crowe was justified in protesting the use to his detriment of his private letter and we are glad that the Board of Regents has rectified the situation so far as possible by reinstating Professor Crowe.
5. Because we are deeply concerned with the issues of academic freedom and security of tenure, we suggest that the National Conference of Canadian Universities and the Canadian Association of University Teachers consider and devise procedures to be used as circumstances may require.
6. We express the hope that the fine spirit which has been developed in United College over many years will be able to overcome the serious difficulties which have arisen and that Board, faculty and students will work together to that end.

December 17th, 1958.