

Maurice Young  
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Interview No. 505

Tape No. 2, Side No. 1

Mr. Specht: What, would you say, was President MacDonald's attitude toward the military units?

Dr. Young: I think he was...he certainly tolerated us on campus. I don't think his interest lay with the services to the same degree that Larry MacKenzie's did. Larry MacKenzie was always present at the various military functions that we had on campus whereas, I think, Dr. MacDonald attended the tri-service parade and ball, but he didn't seem to be sort of so intimately related to the services.

Mr. Specht: President Gage, I believe, took over as acting President, I think it would have been the last year or two the...

Dr. Young: Yes he took over as acting President after Dr. MacDonald resigned and he too was...tended to swing back toward the Larry MacKenzie era, because he always tended to be very enthusiastic, certainly in his support of the services.

Mr. Specht: What for example did he do?

Dr. Young: Well...for instance, the three C.O.s would meet with him periodically. There is a committee on the campus which was a military committee, which he presided over, no he didn't either, it was the first C.O. of the U.N.T.D. was chairman of that committee.

Mr. Specht: MacIlroy?

Dr. Young: MacIlroy.. But there was also the committee which is still in existence, still allocates scholarships.

Mr. Specht: But there was a change back though?

Dr. Young: There was a swing back and then of course, President Gage has always been interested in I would say practically every student that went to U.B.C. And he was very interested in all the activities on the campus. So I think he made it his business to maintain a sort of...well sort of close relationship with them. He knew always what was going on. He had a copy of all our reports each year.

Mr. Specht: I wonder as quotas were reduced, they were reduced to fifteen, in the last six years, if there would be stricter eligibility standards which you would apply in this case?

Dr. Young: No, they didn't really because...well toward the end I think the interest waned and the number of candidates dropped and by and large, speaking very generally, I think the standards dropped, the quality dropped at the same time. There was less interest. Well, the writing was on the wall. It sort of practically destroyed campus units toward the end.

Mr. Specht: This is going to be a difficult question I have for you - I wonder if you felt when as you say the writing was on the wall, if you felt the government was mostly responsible or if the armed forces were as responsible for deciding that there were going to be budgetary cuts and to economize then it should be the university units?

Dr. Young: No. I think it was a government decision and it was forced on the services. You've only got to look at the permanent forces for the answer to that. Look at the number of res-

ignations amongst some of the most senior officers in all three services, as soon as they brought in integration. Some of them tried to go along with it and eventually chucked their hand in, they couldn't take it any longer.

Mr. Specht: The only reason I asked that was because the armed forces of course, are interested in getting officers and the university was only a random supply of officers. They weren't...

Dr. Young: Well, it depended.... You see, the three university units were basically different again in this respect. At one time, I suppose, oh probably nearly 75% of the officers at Discovery were U.N.T.D. trained toward the end of my time, whereas with the C.O.T.C. they were a corps unto themselves and their cadets went after the individual Army units, some with the engineers and some with the Supply Corps and so on so they were split as soon as they left the university whereas with the U.N.T.D. they were still all together because there was only one Navy establishment in Vancouver, but there were a number of Army units. So that the Army cadets were sort of split up into their individual units whereas the Navy fellows were able to stick together pretty well. At one time Discovery couldn't accept all the cadets that were graduating. There were more applications to transfer to the Naval Reserve than there were places for.

Mr. Specht: I suppose that would be in the early fifties when you had the highest enrollment?

Dr. Young: Yes. Well...no, no, no! Early sixties. I was having to try to rate the cadets in order of priority so far as

I was concerned as to the best quality to go into Discovery. The C.O. of Discovery would ask my opinion as to well...I've only got eight places and you've got twelve cadets, what are we going to do about it?...and we'd somehow have to weed out four and say sorry, there's no place for you.

Mr. Specht: Another reason why I brought <sup>up</sup> the idea of the government or the armed forces is that <sup>the government might</sup> have had a different attitude towards it. One of your arguments with the government was you weren't just turning out people for the forces you were also interested in training people for citizenship for example and this could have had a political appeal as opposed to you understand, just fulfilling the needs of the armed forces

This is why I thought maybe the government might you know, be interested in...more interested in the units.

Dr. Young: Well no I think they were much more interested in the economy that they could develop. The university forces after all were a financial encumbrance in a way. The cadets were all paid and, not a great deal but they were paid for their training and during the summer months for instance in the Navy, they went into the Navy and were paid as Sub-Lts. for the summer months. Well that was anywhere from seventeen to twenty-two weeks and they would have a whole group of Naval cadets right from the ten divisions across Canada all requiring summer training and it was quite an organization because the cadets in their first and second year, they used to train in the summer on the east coast, in

the third year cadets trained on the west coast. One of the problems was to get the billets for them. Naturally they all wanted to go to sea.

Mr. Specht: This would seem to be economical in one way though too, because you would have to have the personnel for the R.O.T.P. anyway, for administration.

Dr. Young: Not nearly as much. You see, for instance, at the present time there are still permanent force cadets on the campus but their numbers are dwindling, but they have one officer to look after all three services whereas, previously I would have eight to ten officers in the U.N.T.D. alone.

Mr. Specht: Yes. That's quite a difference then. You mentioned earlier that there seemed to be a decline in interest. I wonder was there sort of change in...did you perceive a change in attitude on the part of the students in the 1960's?

Dr. Young: No. The change in attitude didn't happen until the government put its foot into it. We still had just the same enthusiasm amongst the cadets until integration and unification took place. After that, I don't know, the bottom seemed to fall out of the whole thing as soon as they started that.

Mr. Specht: What was the feeling, the atmosphere in the last year or so? I guess it was a bit discouraging having continuous cut downs from the top?

Dr. Young: Well yes. In my last year I was really glad to get

out when I got out or when I was retired because there was obviously a falling off in interest and enthusiasm. There wasn't the sort of spirit in the various units that there had been previously. We were all sort of you might say, a motley grey rather than a true black or white. Everything was sort of averaged out and inevitably the average standard fell.

Mr. Specht: You were with the U.N.T.D. for ten years, also with the Sea Cadets before that. How do you account for this long involvement?

Dr. Young: Well, I don't know. I suppose basically it was an interest in the Navy, secondly it was an interest in trying to produce someone of officer status, out of a sort of sloppy looking civilian who first came up to apply to the U.N.T.D. The other was the fact so far as I was concerned, it was a night out a week away from medicine, so that I was able to mix with people other than in the medical profession and look at other people's views from other faculties, I had students from all different faculties, I don't know, I suppose there was a sort of personal satisfaction out of it. But I enjoyed it otherwise I wouldn't have done it. The average C.O. in the Navy and the average C.O. in the reserve establishment was C.O. for a matter of three years and then he retires and his place is taken by someone else, but somehow or other I seemed to keep going for ten years.

Mr. Specht: What do you think...do you think with these training units there was...you were passing on certain values?

Dr. Young: Well, I suppose yes. We'd established a standard

and tried to stick to it and tried to get others to live up to it. But a very strong factor I think throughout are the Naval

traditions which to a large degree now have been abolished.

They're beginning to come back a little bit now. If you've

noticed just lately the Navy is allowed to maintain its ranks

and its ratings when at sea. In other words you're no longer

going to have a corporal or a sergeant up on the bridge.

Mr. Specht: It doesn't sound right at all does it?

Dr. Young: Well no. It's a crazy idea. You can't possibly

have a Navy rating piloting an aircraft. You know, he's trained

for the sea and he's interested in the sea and he's much better

at the job whereas you know, now everybody is well you can't

tell it other from which!

Mr. Specht: How do you think the training changed the cadets?

Changed the students after three years?

Dr. Young: Oh, you mean originally? Oh well I think, mind you

some of them fell by the wayside in the course of training. They

had to maintain, they had to reach a certain academic standard and

they also had to reach and maintain a definite standard from the

standpoint of the Navy. I suppose the same thing applied in the

Army and the Air Force...but I, I like to think we turned out

a much smarter and more broadly educated young man at the end of

the training than he had been when he came into it. But there's

many of them I was very surprised initially at the number of

cadets or applicants who, if I was to ask them why they wanted to join the U.N.T.D., they said well, I think the discipline would be good. So these fellows, a lot of them, were looking for discipline. They didn't always like it when they got it, but it proved it was for their good.

End of Tape No. 2, Side No. 1.