Professor B. Rose - History

1971

Head of Department - was only Professor till 1976 when 2nd appointment. In 1980 History Department adopted principle of elected headships. Situation in Sydney University History Department in 1960's part reason for looking elsewhere.

Department situation in preceding 10 years "very difficult" - 3 professors all of whom had left difficulties behind - some details. Professor Rimmer's problems with a particularly different member of the department (not named, but clearly Malcolm MacRae) Acting head for 2 years after Professor Rimmer's departure was M. Roe, who then held view that department could be conducted on a collective basis.

"I was told by the then V.C. that my job was to contain a member of the department who ... boasted he had driven out three professors."

Discussion of character and actions of (M. MacRae)- good and bad aspects. He was allowed "certain liberties in order to get work out of him". Other members of department naturally resented having a "rogue elephant".

Playing bagpipes; and making extensive trunk calls to Brisbane at departmental expense. Also unexplained absences. But not major problems.

Strong ambitions in department: people "pushing own barrow" after 2 years without head of department.

Method of "moulding" department when one is the only new member of that department.

Aim of consensus solution, giving everybody something but nobody everything.

"The traditions of the good professor - the role of the professor then."

New courses being introduced at that time. Medieval history. "Would not have been a course I would have chosen if setting up a department in Hobart".

Asian History

Changes to Australian history courses - from 1st to 3rd year, for instance.
Looking back at these developments with hindsight. Asian history has not developed as expected. "I still think it a pity to overemphasise Aust. history by putting it in 1st year - 2nd year".

History in the schools.

Possibility of students becoming Australian historians but not historians.

The numbers. Fall off as a result of dropping Aust. history as 1st year subject - that was recovered - numbers increased steadily till 1976 or 1977. Numbers have declined since to 35 to 40 per cent of previous numbers. Department now overstaffed "with excellent teachers, good reputations in research, ".

Reasons for decline in numbers.
(a) decline in prestige in history at school level rise of "social psychology" also legal studies rise in no enrolling for (less academic) English at school level (b) introduction of Sociology at university level - supported by B. Rose in interest of broadening B.A. degree. Discussion of sociology as a discipline.

Opportunities for pursuing own work since being in this university.

The future of the department - the problem of overstaffing. Not a critical problem. There is an irreducible minimum of staff. Here, if you lose one member of staff you lose all your teaching facility in, say Japanese history etc.

"The academic needs to produce excellence in departments which have become less popular" and the exigencies of staff shortages in expanding departments.

Changes in system of tenure in future leading to unknown results.

Changes in own view of role of professor since coming here. In a situation where colleagues are not renewed i.e. remain on, senior and experienced staff members, consensus becomes more important "I have tried to move in this direction - but still think
it not appropriate to have departmental policy decided by majority meeting" ... The statement of the "green paper".

"Defeat on quite important occasions" eg in 1979 on subject of interrelated courses - structures developing from year 1 to year 3 and even into Hons. year.

SIDE 2.
"Shortened very personalised" courses, units - students may treat department as smorgasboard".
I was defeated on this in 1979 - a very serious modification of structures, a dismantling of connected courses...

"If the professor is no longer Head of the Department, what is he?"

"Professors no longer have a monopoly of leadership - if they ever had - in the academic field".

General views of the university - "after Sydney one's immediate impression of the student body is politness and assiduity - perhaps students too conservative and cautious - "Hobart is a very long way away from the world".
Difficulty as teacher of modern history in coming here from Sydney to cope with ignorance of students. "General lack of an elite who are fascinated in the subject of history and its relations to the world".
The problems of education and size. "You need a critical size to get an elite of self-conscious intellectuals" -

The incorporation of the T.C.A.E. courses.
Good and bad aspects.
"The institutions would have been better kept separate".

Submission to the Williams committee 1976.

"It did seem to me that the conclusions in the Karmel report were the wrong ones and in the long run there will be resumption of the growth in tertiary institutions - it may not be for 10 years - and that we're not locked for ever in this pessimistic situation - better use of leisure, broader education, capacity to adapt to technological advances - all enhanced by broad tertiary
education rather than by "emphasis on training people to a very high level in a very narrow field" - which will be seen to be a mistaken development.