

Give us substance

The President's speech Thursday afternoon was splendidly well packaged and performed. Air Force One touched down at two o'clock and took off an hour and a half later. In that short time, the President sped to the University, through a speech and back to the airport. What was left behind?

Much of the youth, even in Middle America, distrusts you Mr. Nixon. Many young people are sensitive to the issue of polarization and the attacks of Mr. Agnew and even you. There is a paranoia among young Americans which grows deeper when dissenters and demonstrators are branded as "hooligans" and "thugs," as you have labeled them.

You gave these people some hope two years ago when you adopted the theme "Bring us together." But in those two years there has been an ever widening separation between youth and elders — a separation that you have permitted men from your administration to tease and irritate.

Now you call for reconciliation but people note that this call comes after the elections. They remember the divisiveness during November and the last two years. People are too scarred to be turned on and off like faucets — they no longer respond to easy pleas when the tasks can be so difficult. They don't want to be "brought together" in the next two years as they were in the last two.

Your words were encouraging, Mr. Nixon, but they were the words people were asking you to speak and act on since you were elected. The only program you proposed was a combination of the Peace Corps, VISTA and "a number of other agencies" whose only advantage is that it will offer "a chance to transfer between service abroad and service at home."

That advantage seems as tangible as the emperor's new suit of clothes and does nothing to inspire confidence in the program. Nor does the placement of the existing groups under one head offer any apparent change from the status quo.

Appeals to the idealism of young people are easy, Mr. Nixon, but fear has sapped the response that might have come so quickly. Give us something real so that there might be a reason to believe. The youth of America want to respond. Give us some substance.

Kelley Baker
Editor

All the plastic people

One of the most disappointing aspects of the afternoon was the audience response to Devaney, Nixon and the small group of protestors. There is something completely out of proportion when a football coach receives a far more thunderous ovation than the President . . . and it reveals the priorities of much of the Nebraska student body — bread and circuses but not in that order.

What better show for most of the audi-

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ence than the President of the United States on the same floor with Bob Devaney and the pride of the AP? So it came as no surprise that the crowd shouted down the only discourteous effort at vocal protest with booing that ranked alongside the applause in noise level. No surprise, only the irony that the shout of the protestors was the "peace now" chant.

But in one important respect, the audience paid the President a discourtesy far greater than that of the five or ten chanters. In their eagerness to hear the chief executive, just to be in the same room with him, many of them abandoned their minds and left thought behind. As a result Nixon was greeted with a fawning acceptance that oozed from every part of the Coliseum — not the sharp response of critical minds that every leader needs.

It is insulting to be applauded by an audience that would applaud a singing dog act the very next hour if one were provided. And many of those who cheered so loud and long forgot what was said within an hour and could care less the next day.

Carpenter strikes

State senator Terry Carpenter seems to be opposed to free speech wherever it offends him. Eight days ago the senator introduced a bill in the Legislature to cut off student fee funding of *The Nebraskan* and admitted that the paper's editorials criticizing him were a factor in his decision.

In the Legislature Thursday, Carpenter protested ASUN President Steve Tiwald's and Innocent Society President Ken Wald's intention to wear black armbands

while seated on the dais with President Nixon. The senator stated that Nixon "should not be confronted by black armbands" and claimed that such an action would embarrass the state of Nebraska as well as the President.

Carpenter continued by maligning University President Joseph Soshnik with the accusation that he "has a bit of a tendency to be soft on students in order to prevent disturbance. The quality Carpenter calls softness in Soshnik is recognized by others as reason and a willingness to discuss disagreements. 'I'm sick and tired of temporizing,' he bellowed. 'You never get through compromising. They never quit demanding.'"

Freedom of speech and expression are not matters that even Carpenter can be allowed to "temporize." What the senator fails to understand is that the armband, a display of mourning and dissent, is a non-violent expression of freedom of speech. In the time should come when this right is abridged, that will be the time that people who once were willing to work "within the system" will become violent revolutionaries.

The irresponsible and repressive antics of a state senator trying to quash the right of people to dissent was far more embarrassing to the University and the state of Nebraska than was Wald's and Tiwald's dignified and responsible expression of their beliefs.

There is something supremely ironic in the senator's fear that Nixon and Nebraska would be embarrassed by two armbands since, at the 1956 Republican National Convention, it was Carpenter who nominated a fictitious person (Joe Smith) for the vice-presidency and humiliated the entire state.