

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Pride and prejudice

The Board of Regents aversion to controversial student fee-supported programs has been brewing for some time. And it finally exploded Saturday when the Board decided to stop controversial expenditures of student fee money budgeted for Nebraska Union programs and ASUN for a month until President Varner writes a new policy concerning the use of all student fees.

The Board's action Saturday is distressing to say the least. One trouble of the action is that it is very ambiguous. Exactly what programs of the Nebraska Union and ASUN are to be suspended is still unclear.

But one thing is very clear. The Board wants greater control over the pursestrings of organizations that receive student fees—such as ASUN, the Nebraska Union, *The Daily Nebraskan* and Student Health.

Greater control by the Regents would be a tremendous setback to the concept of student self-determination. Student fees are designed specifically for programs that will benefit students, but now the Regents are saying that they want to be the ultimate judges of what benefits students.

What is really needed is greater control of student fees by students as well as policies that insure all elements of the student population a voice in student fee appropriations.

The Regents Saturday indicated that their action was taken to protect the Board from further controversies over the use of student fees. This rationale indicates a lack of insight to the very nature of student fees.

The appropriation of student fees, like government taxes, is bound to be controversial at times. However, this doesn't necessarily mean student fees should be suspended or subjected to greater control by the Regents.

The Regents have been upset recently over the use of student fees concerning the conference on human sexuality and the birth control handbooks. But expenditures on both these projects were decided in a democratic fashion by ASUN. Saturday's action by the Regents demonstrates a definite lack of regard for the democratic process on campus.

Many students are wondering why it was necessary to suspend student fee-supported programs of ASUN and the Nebraska Union if the Regents' main concern was just to formulate a new policy concerning the use of student fees. But it appears from their action that the Regents also would like to kill the controversial World in Revolution Conference, which is scheduled for March. The Conference, which is planning to bring in some radical speakers, just happens to be supported with student fees by ASUN and the Nebraska Union Program Council.

Any attempt to squelch the World in Revolution Conference would be a violation of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly as well as the principle of academic freedom. It is a dangerous precedent when the Regents decide what information and speakers the students will be allowed to hear.

The Regents have acted, now what can the students do? For one, they should protest vocally, but peacefully, against the seven Regents who voted for the student fee suspension (Lincoln Regent Edward Schwartzkopf cast the only dissenting vote in the action). They should also make sure that there is meaningful student input into any new policy concerning the use of student fees.

The Regents Saturday tried to stop further controversies over the use of student fees. But in doing so they may have created a controversy of much larger magnitude.

Gary Seacrest



tom braden

The throwback

WASHINGTON—A "throwback" according to the dictionary is "a reversal or backward deviation." It is most noticeable under the microscope and occurs rarely in politics because politics places such enormous value on what New York's Gov. Nelson Rockefeller once called "the mainstream."

But occasionally politics does offer us a throwback, and Mr. Nixon's newest appointee, William Rehnquist will give us the opportunity to study the genus, probably for the rest of our lives.

There will be a certain satisfaction in the study—even perhaps a certain fun. It is interesting, for example, to speculate on what grandfather's grandfather would think of our world. What ideas would he espouse? Rip Van Winkle must have been the brainchild of just such speculation.

It is important not to confuse the throwback with the conservative. Grandfather's grandfather may or may not have been a conservative. The point is that if he were alive today he would be putting forth ideas which are out of context, ideas which have been discarded by the process of growth.

Let us imagine an example: He might suggest a means by which a slave could pick more cotton in a day. It might be a brilliant idea, testifying to his powers of observation, logic, even perhaps (supposing his suggestion incorporated social betterment as incentive) to his liberal frame of mind. The point is that it would not be pertinent. We should have to explain to him that there was no such things as a slave that cotton was no longer picked by hand.

What would he do then? Would he settle down to grow into the new age? Or would he fight for the old? Would he argue that we should have slaves and pick cotton by hand? It

would be an interesting study in what the psychologists call atavism, and since we cannot study the behavior of grandfather's grandfather, we can study William Rehnquist instead.

It is hard to believe that Rehnquist, once on the court, will "discipline himself intellectually" as his backers suggested, putting aside his personal opinion in order to conform to the facts of life. It is hard to believe he will do this because he never has done it.

In 1952, when he was 27, he was urging his fellow townspeople to stick with segregation. Twelve years later he was arguing against letting black people eat in drugstores. A local (Phoenix, Ariz.) ordinance requiring stores, restaurants and other public accommodations to serve citizens without regard to color was, Rehnquist argued, "an assault on the institution (of private property)."

And in 1967, he asserted that those who argued in favor of desegregated schools "assert a claim for special privilege for a minority."

Nor were these the private opinions of a private citizen of judicial mind. As a throwback, Rehnquist is an activist, arguing as private citizen before the city council, writing to the editor, making what the neighbors call "a nuisance of himself."

Faced with the problems posed to grandfather's grandfather he would undoubtedly argue the restoration of slavery and the picking of cotton by hand.

Rehnquist is a different kind of throwback. It is his thought which is archaic and he does not wish to be left alone; he wishes to stick the rest of us with what he thinks.

He promises to be an interesting reminder of the Nixon Administration for many years to come.

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