

Fees compromise

If you can't beat them, join them. That appears to be the philosophy adopted by some University administrators and legislative lobbyists in relation to the student fees bill currently being considered by the Unicameral's Education Committee.

State Sen. James Dickinson of Millard introduced LB362 earlier in the legislative session. The measure would end the collection of mandatory student fees at state colleges and universities in Nebraska. Many observers believe that when the bill is reported out of committee to the floor of the Legislature it will have a very favorable chance of being passed into law by the senators.

If the legislators do indeed vote in favor of LB362, their action would effectively terminate all fees supported programs and institutions on the UNL campus, with the exception of the retirement of bonds issued to finance dormitory construction. The University Health Center, the Nebraska Union, ASUN, the Recreation and Intramurals Department and the Daily Nebraskan would all be forced to find some means of support other than fees or end their operations.

Predictably and justifiably, University officials are upset about the imminence of

these possibilities. University lobbying efforts thus far have been less successful than both students and administrators had hoped. So now University officials are described as "trying to reach some compromises" on the student fees issue.

Meanwhile, Sen. George Syas of Omaha has singled out campus speakers as the one program that he definitely wants eliminated from the student fees schedule. He says he will introduce an amendment to this effect when the Legislature considers LB362. Syas claims he's not interested in the politics of past or future campus speakers, but only that he's concerned about the fact that disinterested students must pay for speakers they don't want to hear.

Various sources now are saying that University officials may be willing to go along with the Syas amendment. Evidently administrators are willing to compromise away student fees support for the campus speakers program in an effort to defend the rest of the fees programming against this latest legislative attack.

Such a move by the University may be politically wise, but is also somewhat morally questionable. Following the controversial campus conferences last year, a small but vocal group of students and others have worked to persuade state senators that the speakers program is unbalanced at UNL and

that a majority of students are not interested in the speakers no matter what their politics. In spite of the persuasiveness of this small group, as indicated by the existence of LB362, both of the points cited above are debatable. Anyone who examines the record will find that UNL's speakers program has been both politically balanced and as well attended as a speech in any other Nebraska community of 20,000 persons.

If the University accepts the Syas amendment, it is admitting that the senator (or the whole Legislature) is a better distributor or administrator of student money than are students themselves. Ultimately, it must be recognized that the assumption that the Legislature has the right to dictate the use of student fees is ethically and philosophically unsound. Fees payments are not synonymous with public taxes. They are money paid for the support of student services, and the Legislature's continuing involvement in this matter is improper.

Finally, if the University compromises away the campus speakers program, it is also compromising away some of the spirit of the First Amendment's guarantee of free expression. And such an action is incompatible with the professed concerns and goals of an academic community.

Tom Lansworth

Let them eat cheese and meat substitutes

arthur hoppe
innocent bystander

The admirable theme of President Nixon's administration was to get the Federal Government "off the backs of the people," as he put it, and let them solve their own problems.

Exactly how he hoped to achieve this noble goal did not become clear until February of 1973. With meat prices soaring and housewives up in arms, it was Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns who pointed the way.

If people had a problem buying meat (even on a lay-away plan), he said, they could solve their problem themselves by simply not eating the stuff—at least one day a week.

"The American public," he said, "would be just as well off if it spent less on meat and more on cheese."

The wisdom of Burns' modest proposal was immediately apparent. Millions of patriotic Americans jubilantly gave up eating meat one day a week. In fact, some of the poor were so patriotic they hadn't eaten any in years.

Naturally, solving their own problem in this fashion quickly instilled in Americans a new sense of self-reliance and a capacity for sacrifice—qualities Nixon held dear. He was so pleased, he appointed Burns Director of the Federal Bureau of Problem Solving.

The first problem Director Burns turned his attention to was the high cost of medical care. "This certainly isn't the Government's problem," he said. "It's the problem of those who get sick."

"The answer, then, is simple: don't get sick."

"By golly!" cried millions of Americans worried about the \$105-a-day cost of a hospital bed. "Why didn't we think of that?"

Overnight, Americans were not only more self-reliant, but healthier, too. And once the pattern had been established, solutions tumbled daily from the Federal Bureau of Problem

Solving.

On Director Burns' advice, the President impounded not merely half the funds to clean up the nation's lakes and rivers, but all the funds. "Don't," said Director Burns, smiling confidently, "go near the water."

Poverty, that age-old scourge of mankind, proved equally soluble. "We will have no more poverty the moment people stop being poor," Director Burns pointed out. "Personally, I would advise them to buy five-per-cent tax-free municipal bonds."

Now that the concept of curing a problem by giving up its cause had been established, people found they could solve their own troubles even without Director Burns' advice.

Those with sexual hangups renounced sex. Those who feared crime in the streets stayed home. Those who disliked busing, airplane hijackings and fouled-up Amtrak schedules walked. And the Postal Service ran smoothly the very day that people stopped mailing letters.

All might have gone well if food prices, led by cheese, hadn't continued to skyrocket. "If you can solve your problem of the high cost of meat by giving up eating meat," Director Burns said sternly in a nationwide address, "you can solve your problem of the high cost of food the same way."

In a week, Americans were self-reliant, healthy, hangup free, safe from crime and starving to death.

The country was fortunately delivered from the throes of starvation by a sudden sharp increase in the smog level. "That's your problem," Director Burns told the angry, coughing delegation of environmentalists. But once again, he showed the way.

First, he tied a gag securely across his mouth. Then he carefully placed a clothespin over his nose. . . (Copyright Chronicle Publishing Co. 1973)