

Post-Mortem

It isn't easy to write an obituary for a student government project. So many have failed, so many have been forgotten that it almost seems trite to waste news space on them when they flop. But the ASUN Record Store's folding seems to be a different story. For its closing probably will have continuing importance to students and particularly ASUN.

The store was begun as an attempt to offer students useful goods at prices lower than those of other Lincoln merchants. According to *Daily Nebraskan* records, the store took almost two years to organize. When opened in 1970, it was already in debt to ASUN, its sponsor. But it seemed the store would soon pay back the loans and be on its own feet. This, however, was not the case.

The managers kept going back to ASUN with the same story: we need more money so we can increase our inventory. Loans and gifts authorized by the ASUN Senate to the store totaled more than \$5,000 when it was closed in July by ASUN President Ann Henry.

Henry acted wisely in closing the store when she did. An examination of the store's books by Student Activities showed that as of June 30, 1971, the store was operating at a monthly loss of about \$1,000. Some of the ASUN loans had been repaid, but only about \$1,600. There was about \$4,000 left to be paid. The store had other debts totaling about \$10,000.

Most of the debt appears to be due to inefficient and incompetent business practices. The Record Store's books were a bookkeeper's nightmare. They were a shambles. Many were kept on small pieces of paper. There was no accurate accounting of how much money was borrowed from ASUN or how much was repaid.

It apparently was the confusion in the books that led former ASUN President Bruce Beecher (1972-73) to announce incorrectly that the ASUN loans had been repaid. While such errors are not excusable, they are understandable. Even Beecher, a former Record Store manager who apparently did a fairly good job in keeping the store in the black, admits it was difficult to follow the accounting system. Beecher now also admits that the store needed a more businesslike accounting system. He says that he ordered former store manager Terry Braye to institute such a system following a Student Activities



examination of the books in January. For reasons unknown such a system never was begun.

It is possible that the store might not have closed if the accounting system had been changed. Even if the store flopped eventually, instituting such a system might have kept the debt from growing to its final proportion.

But though the Record Store is dead, its ghost will haunt future ASUN administrations. Henry has announced that the remaining deficit, following sale of all store assets and inventory, will be about \$7,000. It will be paid in yearly installments of \$2,000. But more than the debt might be a problem to the ASUN Senate and executives: the failure of the Record Store might be criticized at the Board of Regents meeting Friday.

It is known that a few members of the board look on trusting students with the management of money as being similar to trusting the fox in the hen house. The board must remember that the failure of the store is not due necessarily to student government's ineptness, but more to the incompetence of a few individuals.

But more than words will be necessary to convince the Regents that students can be trusted with money management. To regain some of the board's confidence and assure the success of future student business ventures

the ASUN Senate should appoint a committee to investigate the causes of the failure of the store. Three mistakes can be spotted easily:

—None of the Record Store managers had adequate business experience. All were close friends of the ASUN presidents who appointed them. It appears that in appointing record store managers, the presidents must have been more concerned with their friends' welfare than the welfare of the store.

—The ASUN executives who made up the board of directors for the store "just didn't ride herd enough on the managers," according to former ASUN President Steve Tiwald (1970-71). If they would have shown more interest in the store it probably would not have gone so deeply into debt.

—The accounting procedure was shameful. But the committee must not study just the causes of the failure. It also should draw up guidelines for the operation of other student business ventures. Of particular importance should be a sound accounting system with built-in safeguards to protect such ventures from incompetents. A method for selecting managers also ought to be established, as should corporate by-laws.

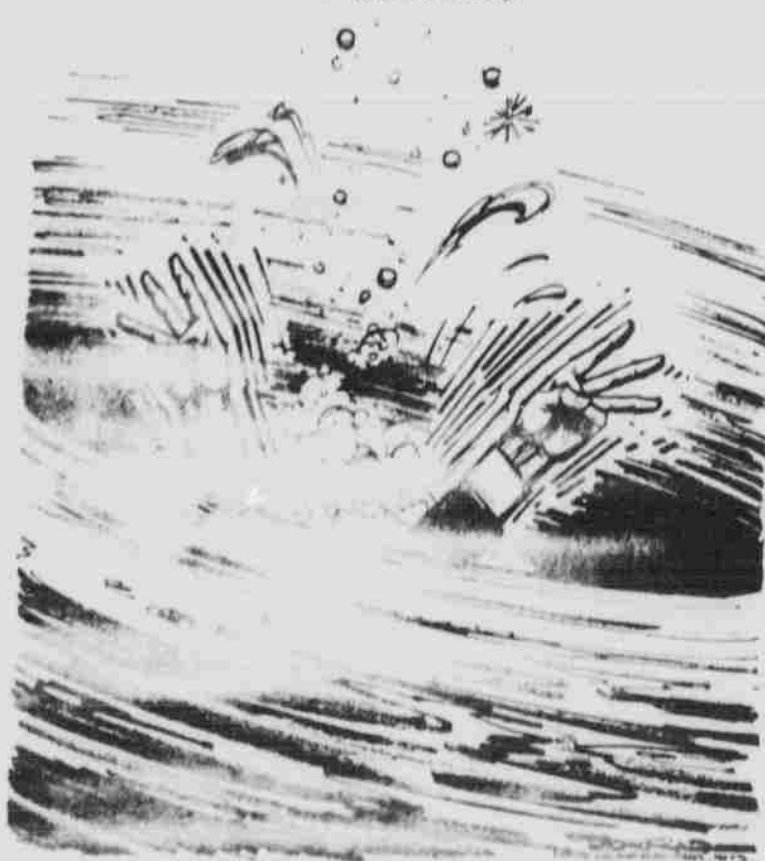
As Henry acted quickly and wisely in closing the store, so should the senate act quickly to discourage future failures.

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desperate remedies

'W' FOR WATERGATE



Nixon side steps questions

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The President's press conference at San Clemente August 22, significant for its omissions as for its contributions, was a step in the right direction. At least it was a step away from the wrong direction.

Before the conference Nixon offered only monologues. His televised speech on August 15 and its accompanying written statement both failed because of their format. Insulated by television cameras and a printed explanation, Nixon answered only the questions for which he had ready answers, his replies were inadequate, particularly on the subject of Watergate.

It is true that the country is tired of Watergate. America is tired of learning it has been misled, tired of hearing of its mistakes, tired of seeing a great nation in the hands of misfits. But America never will tire of seeing criminals brought to justice.

John Dean must not be made the only villain in the Watergate case. No one outside the White House is prepared to believe Dean planned, financed, directed, and covered up the Watergate burglary by himself. Nixon must know that.

The President must stop pretending John Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman are "two of the finest public servants" he has known. They did not serve the public: indeed, before the

Ervin committee hearings they seldom spoke to the public.

The speech ignored too many pressing issues to be of great value. Nothing was said of the cost of San Clemente or Key Biscayne. No light was shed on the connection between the \$400,000 campaign contribution to the Republican party by International Telephone and Telegraph and an antitrust settlement in ITT's favor.

Two days later in New Orleans he compounded his errors by trying to defend his Cambodian policy. Worse, he packed the speech with emotional jabber and presented it to the only audience in America who could be expected to cheer such news. The defense failed, but the Veterans of Foreign Wars applauded anyway.

Finally, on August 22, Richard Nixon faced the press. Weakened and aged as only his mistakes could make him, Nixon began correcting those mistakes.

Hopefully the President sees, by now, the folly of seclusion. The news media doesn't speak for the nation but they do ask questions for it and those questions must be answered. Those who do speak for America, the men and women of Congress, must be heard. Most important, the President must cease speaking to us and begin speaking with us. The road to dialogue and reconciliation, begun at San Clemente, must be followed.