

Housing rate increase—who's to absorb costs?

Saturday's NU Board of Regents meeting managed to be both predictable and surprising.

As expected, UNL residence hall occupants were asked to bear the burden of an increase in room and board rates for the third year in a row. The cost of living index has pointed to that for some time.

The surprise was the University's willingness to share the burden to the tune of \$45 an occupant, even though residence halls are supposed to pay for themselves rather than gobble up the University budget.

The Office of University Housing had requested a \$140 increase in double room rates for the 1975-76 academic year. The reason: to meet the rising costs of food and labor.

Regent Robert Koefoot introduced a resolution trimming the increase to \$95. The reason: to ease the burden on students and their parents. The specter of large drops in occupancy rates next fall also had influence, no doubt.

Only Regent Robert Simmons opposed the reduction. It isn't good management to ask for \$95 when \$140 are needed, he told the board. To do so, would be "playing politics."

To students, a little politics didn't sound like a bad thing, for once. The board passed the resolution with little debate.

What went unanswered Saturday was the question of where the missing \$45 per occupant will come from. Two options were mentioned—reducing services in the residence halls or simply absorbing the cost.

Of the two, the first seems most likely. Students must realize that the price of

compromise now will be paid next fall, possibly in the form of reduced food services. If paying \$95 more for less service seems a bad deal, it is at least better than paying \$140 more with the likelihood of reduced services later anyway.

The Residence Hall Association should work with Housing Director Richard Armstrong in the coming months. The goal should be maximum service with maximum savings.

Another solution was briefly touched upon. The \$140 figure was based on a projected occupancy rate of 86 per cent. If that projection is exceeded, the money situation would become less critical.

If the board expects students to flock back to the residence halls because room and board went up only \$95 instead of \$140, it is in for an unpleasant surprise. At best, the reduced increase will only maintain the status quo.

The answer, of course, lies in making residence halls more attractive to students. New curtains and carpets are a step in the right direction, but they only cover walls and floors. They do not cover the central issue—alcohol and visitation policies.

The regents are tired of talking about it. Students seem willing to let the subject drop for the time being. But perhaps this is the time to present the arguments again in a logical, unemotional fashion.

A university willing to gamble on a \$95 increase when the cards point to a \$140 one may be vulnerable.



Regent Robert Koefoot

Wes Albers

Cynic's crystal ball shows future of equality

bruce
nelson
the cynic's
corner

Last week a group of Indians from the Waimiri and Atoari tribes in Brazil killed four government officials over the white men's increasing encroachment on and destruction of their land and heritage.

The slow physical and cultural suffocation these people are suffering is in many ways similar to the past treatment of Indians in the United States.

Of course, we all know how successful the United States is in solving its minorities' problems.

So, taking a cynical look at the future, let's pretend it is 1976 and 12 Waimiri have arrived on campus to attend school and to become an integrated part of American life.

They are, however, immediately dismayed to find that, lo and behold, the University does not offer even one course in Waimiri literature.

The University, as always, hastily acknowledges its oversight and immediately approves the teaching of a Waimiri literature course.

There are problems, such as not having anyone qualified to teach such a course, but this is easily solved by allowing one of the Waimiri to teach the class.

The book list includes such classics as "Gone With the Waimiri," "Peyton Platroari" and "Dialectical Materialism and Brazilian Headhunting."

But still the Waimiri are uneasy, for, as one of their leaders says, "The Waimiri are left out of white men's history."

The University again humbly admits the validity of their pleas and Waimiri history courses begin to be taught.

By this time the regents, who as we all know are concerned about our education, believe that they must in some way help in the Waimiri struggle and so establish a Cultural Awareness Week.

All these things, naturally, meet with enthusiastic response from the student body. The literature and history courses of the Waimiri are such that simply thousands of students, not just the Waimiri, sign up for the courses.

They are so successful that the governor comments, "Yes folks, all you need to wipe out racism are courses in literature and history." And all the people cheer and go home feeling fine.

Yet there is still uneasiness among the 12 Waimiri, for to be truly integrated one must be a property-holder.

One can imagine, then, the glad tidings experienced by all when they find an ancient treaty which gives to the Waimiri large sections of upstate New York.

The print on the treaty is indiscernable but it doesn't matter because the Waimiri have their "oral tradition." And since all Americans have played the party game, "Gossip" they know "oral tradition" can be trusted.

President Ford is so overjoyed that he immediately signs over the land and makes the present dwellers "go back to where they came from"—Ireland, England, Italy, etc.

These people in turn displace those who are presently living in those countries, who in turn displace those before them so that it isn't long before the Neanderthal people are telling the Cro-Magnon people to "go back to where you come from."

Some people begin to think the integration program is breaking down, but others cry that it only takes political representation and then the Waimiri will be equal.

So, following the logic of a new "Quota System," two pints of Waimiri blood are pumped into four out of every 1,357 delegates to insure equal representation.

Then all the people cheer, for they know political equality has been achieved.

Yet, amid all this success there still are two Waimiri who feel discrimination. They say that what is really needed is an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

Ah yes, sighs the country, once we pass the ERA all will be well and exploitation will disappear from the face of the earth. And of course we all know it will.

