

Daily Nebraskan

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Friday, January 15, 1982

Vol. 108 No. 5

Lincoln, Nebraska

Copyright 1982 Daily Nebraskan

Students oppose crackdown at railroad crossing

By Mary Louise Knapp

This week's crackdown on trespassers on the railroad tracks running west across 14th street is being greeted with dissatisfaction by students.

Officials of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and the Nebraska Public Safety Commission announced Monday that people who cross the railroad tracks at points other than designated crossings may be subject to arrest.

Unnecessary safety risks taken by students crossing the tracks, such as climbing under stopped railroad cars, prompted stricter enforcement of trespassing laws, the officials said.

The law, which is in effect whether or not there are trains on the track, cuts off a short-cut route used by residents of Harper-Schramm-Smith residence halls.

Tom Mockler, a resident of Harper Hall and a member of the Residence Hall Association, said the rule would be unenforceable.

"There are 1,500 students living in Harper-Schramm-Smith," he said. "It would be relatively impossible to keep them from crossing."

Mockler said trains frequently stop across the intersections at 14th and 16th streets longer than the 10 minutes the trains can legally block the crossings.

"I can see their (the railroad's) point that it is a potential danger," Mockler said.

"It will only cost students about half a minute in terms of walking time," he said.

Kathy Mach, an RHA representative, said trains frequently block the crossings at times when students are coming to and from class.

"It's inconsiderate on their (the railroad's) part," she said. "If the train is going to be there when there's a wind chill factor of 72 below, of course people are going to go under them."

Doran Matzke, ASUN second vice president, said she questioned how the railroad

would enforce the law and what the penalties would be.

In an article published in Monday's Daily Nebraskan, Terry Kubicek, executive secretary of the Nebraska Public Safety Commission, said the penalty would be determined by the frequency of the action, vigor of prosecution, and the judge, with possible civil damages fines of up to \$500.

Trespassers might also be subject to criminal trespassing charges, Kubicek said.

Dan Wedekind, ASUN first vice president, suggested that the central administration, planning commission and the senate examine the problem and try to come up with a workable solution.

Being close makes regent accessible, informed

By Mary Louise Knapp

Regent Ed Schwartzkopf has a unique perspective on UNL — he lives closer to it than any other board member. Schwartzkopf, a Lincoln native, is serving his third term as regent and has been chairman of the board several times.

He has been the supervisor of career development at the Lincoln Public Schools since 1951, and is a member of several community organizations. He graduated from UNL with a master's degree in education, and was working on a doctorate in education when he was elected regent in 1966.

Schwartzkopf said he discontinued his work on the doctorate when he was elected, because of time commitments.

"I saw no need to cause any conflict," he said. "I don't necessarily think the degree makes me better."

Inflation is by far the most serious problem NU faces today, Schwartzkopf said.

"We (the NU) need more support and that's true in all areas," he said.

Tuition increases

Schwartzkopf said he does not favor yearly tuition increases, but said they are a fact of life which must be dealt with.

"Ideally, I would have tuition much less (than it is now)," he said.

A 10 percent yearly tuition increase was put into effect for the university three years ago, to keep up with the rate of inflation.

As a land grant institution, the university's primary support should come from the state, he said. However, he said the university must take responsible measures to keep costs down and educational quality up in order to receive needed funds from the Nebraska Legislature.

Another difficulty has arisen at the university because of the increasing enrollment in the last 10 years, he said.

"The State Department of Education said to us that we should anticipate a decrease in enrollment in the last 10

years, but we did not anticipate the turnaround in the business and engineering schools," he said.

Administration role

The role of the NU administration should be to provide the best learning situation possible, he said. For example, the administration should see to it that students who graduate from the university should be able to compete with students from any other school, and that students wanting an advanced degree should be able to gain admission to the school of their choice.

"The quality of the faculty is very important," he said. "If we have that, we will be able to have good educational quality."

Faculty members should enjoy teaching and try to use timely material in their classes, he said.

Schwartzkopf said he makes special efforts to deal with student concerns and problems. By being accessible to the students, he said, he can get a clear perspective on student issues.

"I have never turned down an invitation by a student, I have visited a number of classes . . . whenever I get a phone call from a student I don't just ignore it, I try to respond," he said.

Schwartzkopf said he is closer to students because he lives in Lincoln and can be better informed about student concerns.

Student regent

Schwartzkopf said the position of student regent is not conducive to good student input to the board.

"I'm not enthused about it," he said. "I don't think we're getting the real concerns of students now."

Schwartzkopf suggested that a group of about six or eight students should serve on an advisory board to the regents.

Schwartzkopf praised the university's athletic department, but said the academic departments at the university do not have the great statewide support that the athletic department does.

The university has experienced an increase in the number of Merit Scholars from state high schools though, he said.

Schwartzkopf said he is opposed to more stringent admission requirements at the university.

"We owe it to the students, if they have a diploma and have met all the requirements (of their high school) to provide them with an education. There is no reason to have any restrictions. We need to give them the opportunity to succeed," he said.

He said entering university students are often misdirected into classes which are too difficult for them and overloaded with credit hours, both factors which contribute substantially to the university's dropout rate.

Improved counseling and advising, especially for entering freshmen, would help reduce this problem, he said.



Photo by D. Eric Kircher

Ed Schwartzkopf

Proposal transfers county's burden of indigent medical services to state

By Alice Hrnicek

A move by the NU Board of Regents last fall to discontinue providing medical services to indigents prompted a legislative proposal to transfer the burden of care from counties to the state.

LB602, introduced last week in the Nebraska Legislature, is an attempt to alleviate the burden on counties which cannot afford to care for the indigent, said Sen. Sam Cullan of Hemingford, the bill's sponsor.

"I don't believe the counties have the capacity to carry on that financial burden," Cullan said.

But an official in the state Department of Public Welfare said the bill does not define the category of poor people to which the proposal would apply.

The issue arose when the regents voted to no longer treat, except in emergencies, persons who could not afford to pay hospital costs at the NU Medical Center in Omaha. The move was estimated to eliminate care for about 10 percent of the patients.

The university denied the care because state law reads that indigent care is to be provided by the county. But,

Cullan said, Douglas County did not have the money to provide the care.

"Douglas County has a legal obligation that they can't pay for," he said.

Cullan estimated the proposal would cost the state several million dollars, but he is awaiting results of a study on the matter by the legislative fiscal office.

"A lot of time; hospitals absorb the costs, but then this is passed on to other patients. This doesn't work in an area with a large percentage of poor people."

Derald Lembrich, administrator of provider services for the welfare department, which would administer the service, said a change is needed. He said some hospitals have had trouble paying for care when counties do not have the money.

But the bill does not define the category of indigent for which the county would be responsible, Lembrich said, making it hard for his office to determine how much the move would cost.

The only guidelines he can offer would be a category of persons who do not fall into current welfare categories, such as "those traveling as itinerant workers."

Inside Friday

Moan over Miami: Although band members say they enjoyed the trip they still wanted to be included in the bowl trip planning process. . . . Page 7

Splash Splash: The Daily Nebraskan presents coverage of Thursday's men's swimming meet. . . . Page 9

Enos! After Them Duke Boys: The International Autorama brings "General Lee" and the "Tribute to Elvis" Chevy to Pershing Auditorium this weekend. . . Page 10