

EDITORIALS

ALL WE ASK--JUST DON'T PANIC

If a resolution blasting a resolution can possibly carry any weight with our elected representatives in Harrisburg, the Undergraduate Student Government's proposal might smooth down the ruffled feathers in the state Senate.

But, it doesn't seem likely. For one thing legislative resentment against certain "educational tactics" has been growing for a long time.

Some Assembly members publicly voiced their ire when an overwhelming crowd of students turned out for the Viet Cong propaganda film shown on campus last spring.

What the legislators failed to note then was the student reaction toward Russell Stetler, the narrator, and the film. Not only was the majority against the film but they vocally made it known before, after, and during the showing.

Virtually the same sort of hasty reaction has occurred in the Legislature again, this time toward the recent demonstrations against the government's Viet Nam policy.

The Senate obviously feels that the Communist speakers who have at one time or another appeared at the University have by their speeches managed to sway the majority of the students.

They are dead wrong. They have erroneously assumed students see Communists as the great Pied Pipers of political thought. They have erroneously assumed students condone draft-card burnings and Viet Nam demonstrations.

Their hasty reaction has made them accountable on two counts. First, they did not bother to check whether this was the view of one, 20, or 20,000. If they would simply read the letters printed daily in the Collegian they might become a little embarrassed.

Second, and most important, their legislative witch hunting is an example of hasty, irresponsible law-

making at its worst.

Not only have the senators failed to realize learning is most successful in a free atmosphere, but they have implied themselves to be a little doubtful about the democratic bases of our government.

In their own houses, legislators debate laws and issues to test the strength of their beliefs. The principle is called freedom of speech.

What legislators failed to realize in the fever pitch of the moment was the reason behind that first constitutional amendment. The guarantee was, and is, not so much to support the majority, but rather to protect the minority point of view.

While freedom is being defended in Viet Nam are we to lose it within our won territorial borders?

Legislators would have it so in all "state colleges and Universities" (at present there is only one). Although merely a Senate recommendation, the resolution has set a dangerous precedent. The threat of a cut-off of state aid was more than an innuendo.

Draft card burners and other law-breakers should be made responsible for their actions. What we don't need is the sort of panic that creates hasty legislation all of us might be sorry for later.

Reprinted from The Daily Collegian
October 28, 1965

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