

Editorial Opinion

Place for Precedent

A precedent, to our minds, is an unwritten law which, although not officially adopted by a rule-making body, has all of the authority and sometimes even more authority than a written, adopted rule.

The legal system of the United States operates largely on precedent. It looks to past decisions or precedents for answers.

The House of Representatives of the United States Congress follows many precedents both in its organization and in its daily operation. One of the strongest precedents is that the Rules Committee, which controls the bills to be sent to the floor of the Congress for action, is divided politically along lines parallel to the political division in the House itself. In other words, if there are two Democrats for each Republican in the House, there will be two Democrats for each Republican on the Rules Committee. This is not a written regulation, but a precedent which is always followed.

The Congress of the Undergraduate Student Government has a Rules Committee which was modeled after the Rules Committee in the House of Representatives. It controls the bills which are reported to the floor of the Congress for action.

The parallel continues even further as the Rules Committee of the USG Congress has established a valuable precedent on its composition which we believe should be followed.

This precedent differs from that of the House Rules Committee, for by necessity it has a more local "raison d'etre."

USG's Rules Committee was organized so that there would be one Congressman on the committee from each of the major representation areas in Congress—fraternity area, men's residence hall area, women's residence hall area and town independent men.

This plan was originated last year so that every student would be able to contact a member of the Rules Committee from his general area more easily if he wanted a bill to be presented to the Congress.

We believe that this is a valuable precedent and should be adhered to.

No precedent was set for political division in the Rules Committee at that time because last fall's Congress elections were carried out without political parties.

In the past, student governments at the University have relied almost entirely upon written regulations to govern their actions. A step to break away from the binds of an inflexible list of rules and regulations was taken last year when the student government adopted a Constitution which rests on a broad base and has few specific binding regulations.

We believe the natural continuation of this process involves a gradual building up of sound precedents which Congresses in the future may refer to on questions of procedure.

With the composition of the University's student government changing so often, a state in which precedents become as strong as those in the national government will be difficult to achieve.

However, we feel confident that several basic precedents such as that of Rules Committee composition can develop effectively and can release the USG from possible technicality binds.

Tonight a proposal guaranteeing each political party representation on the Rules Committee will be presented to the Congress. We urge the Congress to seriously consider the possibility of building a precedent which will guarantee USG a representative Rules Committee instead of creating a written law.

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for the record

Link for Master Plan

by carol kunkleman

The University's initiation of closed circuit television to the Altoona campus may be the way for the University to establish a strong basis for developing the Commonwealth's master plan for higher education.

Although the project for Altoona is a pilot one in which certain TV courses offered here on the main campus are simultaneously offered to students at the center, Leslie P. Greenhill of the Department of Academic Research and Services thinks the project may mark the beginning of a statewide system which would link the University's 14 centers.

Since the Department of Public Instruction in Harrisburg has already proposed linking the state colleges through closed circuit TV, state funds available for such facilities would probably go first to the state colleges rather than the University, Greenhill said, and we could cooperate by interchanging classes.

The state has shown its intentions of expanding educational

opportunities in Pennsylvania through its state colleges and the University has already begun the initial groundwork of such a system. It would seem that the state could use the facilities available here and make University Park its educational center.

In this way, there would be no duplication of effort and students all over the Commonwealth would benefit from the high-caliber faculty and greater wealth of information we have at our fingertips.

The University itself might consider applying to the Federal Communications Commission for an educational television license, thus avoiding the short power distance of microwaves without risking another refusal for a commercial outlet.

With this greater power reaching all areas, not only would more students receive a better education, but citizens throughout the Commonwealth would have closer contact with the vast, dynamic and worthwhile education and research programs the University carries on.

In the guidelines on functions for universities listed in the master plan, television, of course, is not mentioned as such. These are suggested rather than definite guides.

Compare, however, the functions for universities: (a) preparing college teachers, superintendents of schools, (b) providing consultation services to other institutions of higher education, the government and private agencies and (c) maintaining a high level of undergraduate education, with the functions of state colleges: (a) preparing 50 per cent of our teachers, (b) providing basic education in specialized areas and (c) providing a liberal arts education.

It seems, then, that the University should, without fail, be the one institution to be given the initial task, for the state colleges are new on the liberal arts scene, having gone into the field only recently when they took the "teachers" out of their names.

Another reason would be, again, that the University has an education and research program which is probably more extensive than that of Pitt or Penn, for example, in the field of television.

These are just possibilities, but their implications could be great for all students of the state. Co-ordination rather than separate planning of such programs by the Commonwealth would aid the realization of a master plan in the near instead of the far future.



Interpreting

More Red Headaches

By WILLIAM L. RYAN

Associated Press News Analyst

Bedeveled as it is by Cuba and a raft of other complex problems, Washington can find consolation in the knowledge that the Kremlin, too, is having severe headaches.

This has been made clear by Monday's decree halting the Kremlin's program for gradual abolition of income taxes. There is no doubt that the decree was unpopular. The Soviet propaganda machine demonstrated this.

The really significant aspect of the decree was that income taxes are not and have not been an important source of Soviet government revenue. Such taxes have accounted for only 7 per cent of revenues. The rest came from hidden taxes.

Thus, one gathers that the Soviet Union is investing so heavily in such enterprises as the space race, the arms race and the economic cold war that it must scrape the bottom of the barrel.

Its fiscal difficulties constitute only one of a long list of troubles. It has agricultural failures throughout the Red bloc to worry about. It has the problem of investing in the Fidel Castro-Communist regime in Cuba, which is expensive and dangerous. It has investments in subversion all over the world. It has its fight with Red China, now being intensified because of the new courtship by the Soviet party of Yugoslav President Tito's "deviationists."

The Soviet press had carefully prepared the people for the bad tax news. But once the bomb was dropped, the propaganda machine fell silent on the subject. The next day there was no mention of the decree in any Moscow paper, except the government organ Izvestia, nor did the radio mention it despite the fact that government decrees ordinarily get massive publicity.

The decree explains the violence of recent Soviet domestic propaganda against the United States, the scare campaign to persuade the Soviet people that war because of Cuba, Berlin or some other issue was a possibility.

This conditioning was accompanied by a parallel campaign demanding more labor productivity and warning against such "remnants of capitalism" as individualism and the hankering for private property.

The public was told that because of the war threat it should work harder to make the Soviet Union impregnable. Then came the tax decree, with an explanation that the "imperialists" were on a rampage of war preparation

and thus the government had to postpone tax relief. The public was told it would have to wait "until the international situation changes."

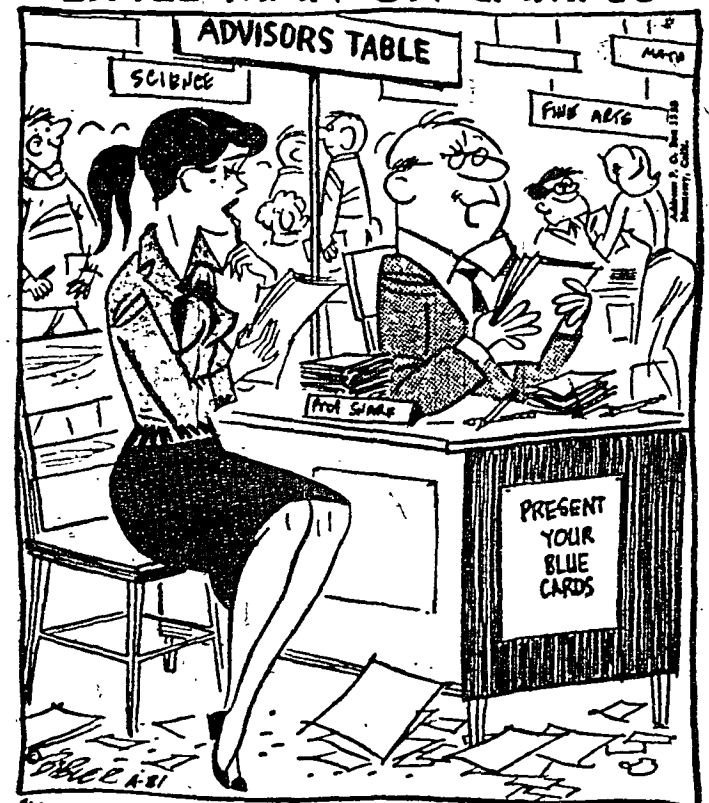
This was one more in a series of broken promises. The public

was already jolted by sharp hikes in butter, meat and milk prices.

It was disappointed by the slowness of the housing program.

It was told also there would be a halt to private building of one-family homes.

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS



"NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND TH' SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED HOMEWORK — WILL THAT BE AT YOUR HOME OR MINE?"

