

Two Student Backed Projects Fail During Fall Quarter

Co-Op Cleaners, Campus Theater Meet Opposition

Reporter Traces Hard Fought History Of Student Ideas

Officials Stand

By BOB PERKINS

Crying for support, two student-backed projects have been hurled at the student body and the administration this fall. Both have failed to gain the necessary financial backing and recognition: one from the administration, the other from the student body.

The odd part of the situation is that the project wanting the support of the University administration, apparently had the support of the student body; while the other, having the unspoken backing of the administration, was unable to attract adequate financial student support.

Indirect Factor

It would appear from this that both projects would have been put into effect if the two factors directly concerned would have cooperated. However, it is because of a factor indirectly effected that they did not cooperate—Franklin street.

The truth of the matter is that the University administration is not in a position to recognize, officially, a student cooperative movement, which would not involve the administration in any tangible form. So, naturally, it withdraws quickly when there is some mention made of using one of the University's own buildings to show commercial films.

Burnt Fingers

Too many times already the administration has gotten its fingers nearly burnt by the merchants. So it is impossible to expect the administration to

stick its neck out on a new venture which does not even show the slightest possibility of being a financial success such as the book-exchange and dormitory stores have become.

The administration, though it may have blundered in some instances, has attempted from an early date to protect its student-body from being "exploited through private enterprises."

Protection Limited

But due to the set-up which has evolved out of the history of the University and the corresponding history of Chapel Hill, it has been limited.

This is not the fault of the administration nor the Chapel Hill merchants. It is merely a situation which has come into existence through the passage of time, and which, if recognized, might tend to settle once and for all the feuds between the University and the towns' tradepeople.

New Venture

When the University was first begun it was not a power as it is today, but a new venture, looked upon by many as an unwanted step-child of the state.

Its faculty and students were dependent solely on the merchants of the village for their entire supplies. There was no central heating system, no electric lights. Everything except higher learning had to be obtained from local merchants.

Co-Dependent

The village came into existence because of the University. It was dependent on the University, and the University on it.

Back when Dr. Winston was president there was less than 300 students, faculty members, assistants and all, totaled 20, the State appropriation \$20,000. Full professors were paid \$2,000 per year. Pay checks were sent out every three months, and Dr. Eubanks sent out his bills every three months.

Increases

But as the years passed the payroll gradually increased until now it reaches into the hundreds of thousands per year, and student expenditure also increased.

And as the University increased, its services increased. The Book-Exchange began primarily as a place to provide adequate books and school supplies for the students. The University established a lighting and heating plant for its buildings—and offered the service of this plant to the townspeople. There was no laundry. The University built one. Students wanted dormitory stores. They were provided.

Branching Out

It was the branching out of the so call Book-Ex into various other fields of mercantile business which was the cause of the first unrest among the Chapel Hill merchants.

This is not a private cooperative institution such as the Carolina Cooperative Association, under which the cleaners operated and the Co-op store still runs, but a business enterprise set up by the State upon State property, exempt from taxation, with a definite purpose of making a profit. Nor does the profit come to the University, except in an indirect means. It goes to the State. That's how Franklin street looks at the matter.

Branch Store

When the Book-Ex set up a branch store on Franklin street, called the University Student Supply Service, the animosity between the merchants and the University, which had been continually growing, reached a climax.

It was then that a group of merchants attempted through

the legislature to prohibit dormitory stores and any other use of University property for the conduct of a mercantile business.

Self-Protection

On their part it was a protective measure. If steps were not taken to check the University, they might wake up in the near future to realize that their business had been taken over by the State, leaving them nothing but the stores and the stocks that they had struggled years to build into a business enterprise. Chapel Hill was their home as much as the University's. Many a business had been in the hands of their families for generations.

But a compromise was effected. The merchants withdrew the bill while it was still pending before the Senate Committee. The committee representing the University agreed to: 1. Eliminate the sale of clothing and drug sundries, toothpaste, shaving cream, razors, etc. from its stores; 2. Discontinue the Student Supply store which was a town branch of the Book-Ex; and 3. Make a careful study of the desirability from all points of view of the dormitory stores.

Signed

The agreement was signed by President Graham and Charles T. Woolen, business manager, on the University side, and by J. M. Pritchard, Grady Pritchard, and J. L. Sutton, for the merchants of Chapel Hill.

The reign of peace was short lived. In the fall of '33 the cooperative dry cleaning and pressing business was established. A year later this enterprise branched out with a clothing store.

Private Trust

In this the administration had no part. They could clearly point out that the Carolina Co-operative Association was a private cooperative business trust,

and, except for the fact that many of its members were students, had no connection with the University.

But the Publications Union Board did not get out so easy. The merchants discovered that the P. U. Board had made a loan to the Co-Op of \$3,500 from their surplus, which was built up through sale of advertising space in the student publications.

The merchants threatened the publications with a 100 per cent

advertising boycott as a result. They claimed that the money they paid for advertising in the publications was going into their competitor's pockets.

The Chapel Hill Merchants' Association advocated a hands-off policy and the matter was dropped as far as the merchants were concerned.

At present the situation is tense, to say the least.

The State, through the University Consolidated Service

(Continued on page seven)



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