

We Need a Shield Law

"... were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

—Thomas Jefferson

Oregon law doesn't agree with Mr. Jefferson. Neither, from all appearances, does William Frye.

In his effort to force the managing editor of this newspaper to reveal the names of students she interviewed for a story on marijuana, Mr. Frye has stated over and over again that he doesn't believe there should be a law which would allow reporters to keep their sources of information confidential. Although 12 states have such a law, Oregon does not. Oregon allows confidential communications between doctor and patient, lawyer and client, clergyman and parishioner, husband and wife, and—believe it or not—secretary and employer, but not between reporter and his sources of information.

Mr. Frye has argued all along that the central issue is not freedom of the press. He couldn't be more wrong.

This country has a long tradition of freedom of the press. But freedom of the press is an empty and meaningless phrase unless there is also freedom to obtain information. The United States Congress just recognized this fact with the passage of a bill which will open up to the press more official records than ever before. If

the flow of information is not free, if the press cannot find out what the public needs to know, then what good is the freedom to print the news?

Essential in getting information is the ability to use confidential sources. No good newsman really likes to use anonymous sources. A good reporter would rather tell all the information he can get because he believes that our democracy functions best when the public has all the information available. But often, as in the case of Annette Buchanan, the story could not have been written without keeping the sources secret. The public is far better off to be informed that there are students at the University who feel as these seven students do than it would be to not know this information.

But what Mr. Frye would do is to cut off this source of information. He would subject reporters to legal harassment if they attempt to use anonymous sources. Or at least this is what he has done to Miss Buchanan. This can only hurt freedom of the press and the public in the long run.

While Mr. Frye's tactics in this whole matter are not to be condoned (something we will deal with later), the heart of the problem is in Oregon law. Oregon does not have a shield law which will protect journalists from this kind of harassment. As long as there is no such law—and as long as there are officials like William Frye who are willing to take advantage of it—newsmen will have to work in constant fear that they may

be hauled before a grand jury or a judge and be asked to tell all they know. No free press can exist in that kind of fascist situation.

Mr. Frye keeps repeating that the freedom of the Oregon press has not been visibly hurt by the lack of legal protection for reporters' sources. But this is only true because no one has attempted to do what Frye is now attempting. Most responsible government officials recognize the need for a free press and the need for freedom of information. Mr. Frye apparently does not.

Oregon legislators should move as quickly as possible to pass a law which would require officials like Mr. Frye to show that the information they want is essential to the administration of justice and cannot be obtained any other way before they can force newsmen to reveal sources of information. And the higher courts should look seriously at the implications of forcing such testimony from reporters.

Meanwhile reporters in Oregon and other states where there is no shield law will have to risk prosecution—and, in places such as Lane County, persecution—for refusing to reveal their sources. We hope all newspapers everywhere will continue to print all the information they can obtain which will make for a better-informed public. We know that in spite of the legal harassment to which Annette Buchanan has been subjected by William Frye, this newspaper will continue to print all the news we can, even if it means using anonymous sources, even if Frye should haul every member of our staff into court.

Oregon Summer Emerald

Opinions expressed on the editorial page are those of the Emerald and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ASUO or the University. Opinions expressed in signed columns are those of the writer.

PHIL SEMAS
Editor

ANNETTE BUCHANAN
Managing Editor

LOUIE ABRAMSON
Business Manager

WILBUR BISHOP JR.
Advertising Manager

University of Oregon, Eugene, Thursday, June 30, 1966

Shades of Joe McCarthy

A stench reminiscent of Senator Joe McCarthy was heavy in the air two weeks ago.

A U.S. Senate internal security subcommittee came out with some vague and unimpressive charges that Communists are playing a key role in organizing campus demonstrations against the war in Viet Nam.

The committee singled out two isolated instances, demonstrations at Madison, Wis., and Berkeley, Calif., and made some glittering generalities from those about the character of all anti-Viet Nam demonstrations. The committee talked vaguely about 28 card-carrying Communists but offered no names and no real proof of its allegations. The only name it did offer was that of Bettina Aptheker, one of the leading organizers of Berkeley's 1964 Free Speech Movement. About a year later Miss Aptheker admitted she had been a Communist all along. The committee didn't have to dig very far for that one, since Miss Aptheker admitted her beliefs publicly.

It is certainly true that campus demonstrations provide an excellent opportunity for Communist infiltration. But so far no one has come up with any evidence that infiltration is very extensive. So far all such statements have been confined to vague generalities of the character of the subcommittee's recent charges.

Even if there is some Communist infiltration—and there probably is on some campuses—it is unfair to generalize that a major share of demonstrations are Communist inspired.

And it is even less fair to therefore state that, because there may have been some Communists involved, the dissent of those who have demonstrated is any less valid. Yet that is what is implied in the statements of the Senate subcommittee.

It appears that this country has yet learned the lesson of Joe McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee. The greatest danger to this country is not posed by Communist infiltration. It is posed by those who would brand everyone who dissents from current policy a Communist and a traitor. When such allegations come from a Senate committee or other high places, they make dissent much more difficult. And if we lose our right to dissent, we will have lost all our freedoms.

Wallace Immen Research Is Big Business

Editor's Note: Wallace Immen is a member of the staff of the Michigan Daily at the University of Michigan.

Legislators who are continually issuing pleas for a more equitable division of research funds for colleges should take a closer look at what their plans entail.

Most present grants are awarded on an individual, not an institutional, basis. This is the most efficient and practical method because the projects are matched to the researcher best qualified to do the study.

Less than \$1 out of every \$20 awarded for research in the

United States reaches the smaller colleges, which constitute 95 per cent of the total number of schools in the country. Considered only politically, this situation appeared to require drastic and immediate action.

Therefore, influenced by massive political pressure, Congress added a section to the National Defense Education Act in 1958 which gives block awards starting at \$25,000 through the National Science Foundation. These grants, however, give priority to requests from smaller colleges, and they may be divided in any manner the college sees fit in order to increase its research capabilities.

By their very nature, well-established research facilities in schools such as MIT, Berkeley, Columbia, Stanford and the University of Michigan draw the best minds, who put their knowledge to the best use with the finest equipment and assistance. Their programs are expanding and diversifying each year, and many fine new discoveries are made.

Small Schools

More than 700 small schools in the country, however, do not have any active research program, and most of them do not wish one. The offer of several thousand dollars for development of a program which might make their institutions more attractive to students and teachers is indeed a temptation. The administrations of these schools may put in an application for funds without any real program in mind.

In its zeal to make sure the colleges get research facilities, NFS is actually tying up funds which could be given to another school doing work on the same research program. Therefore, there is duplication of efforts and the small college may become the proud owner of a worthless laboratory.

Research is a highly intricate big business, with many administrative responsibilities and the smaller colleges may not have the ability to make many additions to their staff. It goes without saying that if the college fails in its attempt to stimulate research, it will be hard for it to get a renewal of the grant. If it fails to get a qualified person to do the study, the school will become disillusioned and may abandon the entire idea of research.

Limits Capabilities

But, some argue, this limits the capabilities of the nation. If a great proportion of the research funds are tied up in a small group of schools, we must expand to keep scientific knowledge expanding.

A simple scrutiny of the criteria for awarding the average grant shows that most of the money gets into competent hands. The NSF grants, however, have gone to several institutions in the past with inadequate research facilities and the money has been grossly un-

(Continued on page 8)

