Not A Partisan Affair

Many a Democrat must have taken umbrage at the announcement last week that the Democratic State Central Committee had contributed money to a fund being raised to finance possible court action on behalf of a professor who has been dismissed by Northern Michigan University.

The size of the contribution was not divulged by the committee or by those in charge of raising the money. All that was stated was that the committee's contribution had raised the total in the fund to more than $2,000. But the size of the contribution is of secondary importance. The matter of primary importance is the principle involved.

And the principle is the injection of partisan politics into a controversy that is—or should be—completely non-partisan. It happens that there are both Democrats and Republicans who support the professor who was given a terminal contract by NMU. And it happens that there are both Democrats and Republicans who oppose the professor in this case.

But the Democratic State Central Committee implies by its monetary contribution that this is a partisan affair. A lot of Democrats on both sides of the NMU issue will dispute that assumption.

These party members may wonder what the Democratic State Central Committee is going to contribute to next. The Anti-Vivisection Society? The Anti-Saloon League? The League of Spiritual Discovery (LSD)?

The committee's contribution came after Zoltan Ferency, state Democratic chairman, issued a public statement criticizing the NMU administration for its public relations in the case in question. Ferency certainly is entitled to his opinion in the NMU case and could not be faulted for expressing it as a private citizen. Moreover, however, he is concerned that he should not have issued a statement supporting either side in this matter in his capacity as state chairman because, again, it simply isn't a partisan controversy.

The Democrats have plenty of legitimate partisan issues to discuss upon without muddying a non-partisan affair with party politics.

Changing Times

The following list of rules for teachers was posted by Winifred Northrup, a New York school principal, in 1872:

1. Teachers must fill lamps, clean chimneys and trim wicks.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and scuttle of coal for the day's sessions.
3. Make your pens carefully; you may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After 10 hours in school, the teachers should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each day a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, or gets shaved in a barber shop will be given reason to suspect his worth, intentions, integrity—and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents per week in his pay, providing the board of education approves.