

WEDNESDAY'S

CHILD

By Pete Fogo

SMITTY-A-GO-GO?

Last Tuesday morning, the Northern Michigan University Student Senate drafted a resolution to support the recently deposed political science instructor, John Smith. The dismissal and the reasons for it were as well hidden from public knowledge as the Khrushchev ouster of 1964. Because of the lack of justification for the move, the Senate was compelled to take action. What will happen now is anyone's guess.

As a member of the Senate, I attended the meeting and voted favorably on the resolution. The reason is quite simple. John Smith is far too valuable to be given the boot. I was enrolled in his American Government class last year and I believe I can discuss his abilities objectively and authoritatively. I have no reason to soft-soap the man. He gave me a "D". However, I learned more in his class than I have in many others in which I have received higher marks. I have never seen an instructor who could effectively handle the vast amount of material that John Smith presented in the course of one semester. Our class covered in four and one half months what would have taken most other classes seven months to master. I might also add that the more industrious students really did master the material and this was directly because of Mr. Smith's methods of instruction.

So much for personal experience. For over-all student reaction, consider the Undergraduate Guide to the Faculty. According to the guide, John Smith ranks second. Student opinion has designated only one man to be Smith's superior. One man is purported to be a better instructor in this entire university. Why then, has John Smith's resignation be requested?

At present, there has been no conclusive evidence presented that can support the administration's action. Rumor and hearsay have made allusions to a conflict with administrative heads, conflict with a department head and acts of insubordination, and there are probably several other variations that I haven't heard yet. But,

as I said before, no one knows definitely, yet. If the reasons for dismissal are discovered to be valid, it still does not excuse the irresponsibility that the administration has displayed allowing a situation like this to manifest itself. A man like John Smith cannot be squeezed out of the picture silently.

Why should Smith be forced to leave the picture anyway? He is a competent educator at an educational institution. His problem apparently lies with some sort of conflict with administrators at an educational institution. Unless it can be proven that an instructor cannot perform the task of educating his students, on what other possible grounds can he be professionally censured? He is at Northern to impart as much of his knowledge of political science as he can to his students. As far as anyone can tell, he has done this in an admirable fashion.

Northern is growing quite rapidly. Recently the administration, the faculty, and the student body expressed a concern for the quality of education on this campus. An integral part of a sound education is a competent faculty. A good university needs a diverse, articulate, and stimulating corps of instructors to maintain academic spirit. A university is not a corporation that must maintain a rigid conformity and a blind allegiance to all areas of official policy. A university should be a place where a student can be exposed to intellectual ferment. The dismissal of John Smith signifies that Northern Michigan University is not so much concerned with the quality of education and the promotion of academic spirit as it is with meek compliance for the sake of administrative rapport.

The Student Senate has resolved to support John Smith. Any student who cares about his education should do the same. United students support may be able to rectify the present state of affairs. We shall not acquiesce!