Constitution: Student Sellout

Unreceptive To Criticism

One legal opinion has said that the students of Northern Michigan University have approved a new constitution. After months of debate and an outstanding job for a finals, the Student Government Evaluation Committee and particularly Assistant Dean of Students Norman Hefke have succeeded in imposing a third-rate student body constitution upon NMU.

The University's extremely competent attorneys have made an informal ruling that the 672 students that cast an abstention vote did not vote at all. Consequently, with nearly one-third of the voters ignored, 29 percent of Northern Michigan University have adopted their third constitution in five years with the approval of the Board of Control.

There is no doubt that more than one legal opinion on the issue exists, but to argue any issue on a technicality is much less effective than presenting the actual issues. The fact of the matter in this case is that the students of NMU have been literally sold out by a committee that never faced up to the task that it was formed to take on, and more important by an Assistant Dean of Students that saw fit to manipulate the committee, close his ears to all divergent points of view, and completely write off all criticism of the proposed document as ignorant babbling.

The constitution may be declared adopted. However, there is no legal interpretation that can ever change the fact that this approval was gained through deception. The students are hardly bound by the constitution of a university We may have a new constitution, but it is because Hefke decided that he would have the constitution he wanted at any cost.

The one original committee was formed at a retreat at Camp Casino, the very issue of integration of the governing functions was discussed as a predominant reason for forming a special committee to control, the students are not parties to the decision. Yet several weeks later, when the rough draft was published, it completely failed (and still fails) to do anything about integrating the governing functions.

In the month that has passed since that time, the committee that Hefke has been completely unresponsive to even a criticism of the constitution and recommendations made.

The most disgusting deceit has come in the manner in which the election was carried out. If an abstention vote is no vote at all, then why was it included as a third alternative on the ballot—a ballot for which, by the way, there were no election instructions.

According to one of three student members of the Evaluation Committee, this was done because the committee was afraid that the constitution would be beaten by "no" votes. Offering the third choice of abstention was, according to this member, designed as a way to head off the "no" votes.

Students were given a choice which appeased both but to have a definite meaning only to have it discounted. The fact can never be changed that 70 percent of the individuals who went to the effort to mark a ballot did not vote for adoption.

Even the last minute inclusion of the Job Corps question on the same ballot is quite inappropriate. The only purpose it served, since the SGA has never had any intention of representing the opinion of the student body on this question, was to confuse the predominant issue.

The question: "How many more students would have voted "no"?" How many more students would have voted "yes"? How many more students would have voted at all if it were not for the misleading, underhanded tactics used by the Evaluation Committee?

Corps Political Victim

Anyone who has ever participated in or is a student of the political arena is very aware of extremely high mortality rates that its activities incur. This refers to individuals both inside and outside the organization.

People within the political organization realize the risk they are taking on by participating, but the individuals outside that become pawns of the political machine do not realize this risk even though they can be the biggest losers. The women of the Job Corps center at Northern and many other centers like it have become the political victims in any case, but especially in light of the federal government's decision to phase out the Marquette center immediately and not allow it to run on or up to merely the contract termination date.

What makes the situation so unfortunate is that this political maneuvering is a gross exploitation of human beings who have practically no control over their futures.