

academic freedom. What is now sought for the University is not a safeguard against outside meddling with its scholastic interests. Rather the issue is whether the Legislature and its agencies shall abdicate in respect to all of the University's affairs, non-academic as well as academic.

With certain apparent exceptions of no great consequence, this bill, like its predecessor, expressly releases the University from all restraints by any other State board, bureau, department or commission. No department of the State, especially one receiving millions of dollars a year, should be granted such complete independence. The enumerated "exceptions" such as a reservation to the Governor and other State officials of a right to attend meetings of the Board of Regents when requests for appropriations are being considered, create the mere illusion of a restraint on the University and are meaningless.

Members of the General Assembly should seriously ask themselves the following questions:

1. Why should all purchases be exempted from the procedures established for other departments to prevent favoritism and to promote economy? Appropriately modified procedures might be worked out between the State Purchasing Bureau and the University; but why dispense with every check upon the expenditure of these millions of dollars for supplies and services of a non-academic character? The specification of a so-called "exception" to the broad grant of autonomy under this bill in the form of a provision that the University shall have the "right to use" the purchasing facilities of the State, is no limitation at all. It confers an option and gives merely the appearance of a limitation.

If the State's system of purchases is beneficial in the case of all other agencies, no reason appears for discarding it in this instance. It is significant that a recent survey by a committee of the Purchasing Agents Association disclosed no reason for excluding the University or any other State agency from the central purchasing procedure. It does not seem to me wise to retain the law as to purchases for the Health Department, the Department of Education, the State Roads Commission and other branches of the State Government, while wholly exempting the University.

2. Why should non-academic employees be selected without the merit system? It is surely not enough to answer that once they have been chosen without the merit system, they will be blanketed in. It is difficult to see why stenographers, clerks, bookkeepers, maintenance people, watch-