

would let the University, alone among the State departments, choose its architects and conclude its own financial arrangements for such services. It could then develop the plans and specifications completely independent of any other office of the State, disregarding the Department of Public Works which was created to restrain over-exuberant spending for public improvements.

The law now requires contracts for public works to be awarded after competitive bidding. If this well-established public policy is correct, there appears no good reason for permitting the University to operate otherwise. The bill would allow the University to proceed by private negotiation, without publicly advertised bidding. I have not been persuaded that this departure would be in the public interest.

The recent episode of the "unauthorized" building at Princess Anne is still fresh in the public mind. If House Bill 681 becomes law the University can build what it wants, wherever it wants, without sanction of any official, board or commission. No other body in this State has such sweeping and unlimited powers, nor should it have.

This bill sets aside the authority of the Board of Regents in regard to the appointment of deans, professors, teachers and instructors. Doubtless the opinion and the recommendation of the President should be given weight by the Board of Regents, where they have the appointive power, but, to provide by statute that no authority shall be in them, but shall be in the President alone is not, so far as I am aware, consistent with the best thinking concerning higher education. Nor does there appear any reason for further diminishing the authority of the Board of Regents and increasing the prerogatives of the President.

No evidence has been presented that the existence of the authority to appoint professors, which is now legally in the Board of Regents, has led to abuses which would be remedied by putting that power in the hands of the President. Certainly there is no indication that the Regents have unduly restrained the President; the converse has often been asserted.

Academic freedom, one of the cornerstones not only of a strong University, but of democracy itself, is dependent upon the security in employment of members of university faculties. One of the faults that has been pointed out again and again about our University is the absence of this security. Shifting complete power over faculty employment from the Board of Regents to the office of President, in law as well as in practice, as this bill proposes, would certainly not increase the safeguards to academic freedom and might possibly further aggravate the present weakness in the University structure.