



Letter to Paul A. Dodd from Morris Neiburger, April 13, 1950

April 13, 1950
Paul A. Dodd, Chairman
Faculty Steering Committee
Dear Dr. Dodd:

As the sole dissenter to your motion of confidence in the President of the University, I wish to make known to you and to the members of the Faculty Policy and Steering committees my reasons for voting in this fashion.

1. This vote reflected my honest lack of confidence in the kind of integrity which the President has displayed. Starting with his failure to inform the faculty that he had proposed this action to the Regents, and his direct denial, in response to my question at the June, 1949, meeting of the Southern Section of the Senate, that the action was at all impelled by the Tenney bills then before the legislature, his behaviour toward the members of the faculty as a whole has been at least evasive.
2. On Monday April 3 you indicated to me that the President had assumed leadership in the struggle to remove the oath, and that a public statement by him would be forthcoming in a few days. Later that week we were informed that the letter which came from his office over his signature, dated April 3, 1950, was sent out without his knowledge and approval; this information was repeated in a circular signed by you dated April 10. At no time has the faculty had any direct statement from the president regarding his attitude in opposition to the oath, as you had been led to expect, or regarding the usurpation of his powers by someone in his office.

These failures to take the faculty into his confidence may, perhaps, be in the line of correct political tactics from the President's standpoint in his dealings with us and with the Regents. As you know well by now, I am not versed in matters politic; discretion and diplomacy have never impressed me as being more desirable than frankness and honesty. I am not opposed to compromise; I am opposed to evasion and maneuvering. Since the President has not seen fit openly to take us into his confidence, I cannot see how we can vote him ours.

I wish to state further, though more briefly, my reasons for voting in favor of the motion of confidence in your committee. As you know, I do not agree wholly with the tenor of its actions and public statements. I do agree, however, that these actions and statements reflect more nearly the temper of the majority of the members of the faculties than do my views. I believe that, within the scope set for it by the faculties' attitudes, the procedures of the committee have been admirable. The committee has done more than devote the large amount of time and energy referred to by the maker of the motion; it has taken the lead and carried forward activities, while others of us felt frustrated and stood idly by. The direction of movement (or in some cases, lack of it) represented

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the desires of the majority of the members of the faculties. I wish that it would have been possible for the committee to mold those desires, rather than accept them. But recognizing my own inability to do more than criticize from the side-lines, I heartily concur with the commendation voted the committee. And I wish to state that at no time has there been any intimation of double-dealing, withholding of information, or machination on the part of the committee. For these reasons I can in full conscience vote my confidence in the committee,

while dissenting from the basic policy of the Senate.

Finally I wish to state that I have become resigned to the fact that from my standpoint the fault lies not with the Regents but with the faculty, whose motto "Discretion is the better part of valor" has led to the abandonment of all points of principle. I shall follow the wishes of the committee in not signing the oath until after the Senate meeting of April 24th. My personal reasons for not signing were ceded by the Senate when it adopted Resolution No. 2. When I send in my oath I shall of course accompany it with a letter disassociating myself from endorsement of the policy, while acceding to the rule of the majority of the Senate in adopting that policy. Whether I decide to stay at the University or seek employment elsewhere I shall decide on the basis of personal considerations. In the meantime I shall abstain from participation in further discussion of this matter in meetings of the faculties, until such time as I see evidence that the merits of a subject, and not expediency, form the basis for faculty decisions.

Yours truly
Morris Neiburger