

Discrimination Bugaboo At BU

3-16

The ferment that has enveloped American college campuses in the racial discrimination issue reached Bucknell last month in a series of fast-breaking developments, involving editorials in the campus weekly, impassioned letters to the editor, panel discussions, faculty meetings, and group discussions both formal and informal.

Here is a timetable of events as they occurred:

February 3 — An editorial appeared in the Bucknellian campus weekly, calling for a statement of University policy on discrimination, alleging that the decreasing numbers of American Negro students at Bucknell is, on its face, evidence of discrimination in admissions policy, and requesting an end to the requirement that photographs be attached to applications for admission.

February 10 — In a three-column letter-to-the-editor, John F. Zeller, Vice President of the University, hopefully writing as an individual, heatedly took issue with the editorial. Admitting that there are in fact fewer Negro students at Bucknell than at some times in the past and that "no one a Bucknell is rejoicing about this," Zeller placed the blame on a lack of qualified applicants, arising from economics and social reasons. He stated that the cost of education at Bucknell is more and more outside the range of students from homes of average income or less and that a disproportionate number of Negroes fall in this group. As to the Negroes from wealthy families, he said that they tend to go to

Ivy League colleges, implying either that they are all able to meet the rather stiff admissions requirements of these institutions apply less rigorous admission standards to such applicants. He pointed out as social reasons — lack of dating opportunities, discrimination in fraternity and sorority pledging, last year's cross-burning episode, and discourtesies and rudenesses to which Negroes have been subjected by students in the past. He expressed his confidence that the admissions staff did not discriminate and could be trusted not to do so even though photographs were required on the applications.

February 17 — The ink hit the fan. Four members of the English department, both Negro students presently enrolled at Bucknell, an alumna, and assorted other students and faculty filled two-and-one-half pages of the Bucknellian with comment on the editorial and on Zeller's reply. His attack on social discrimination met with overwhelming support. Only the Negro students, admitting it exists, said it was not an important deterrent to applicants. Negroes in America; they said, are used to it and will put up with it if given a chance to get a good education. Almost all the letter writers were pained by the sharpness of Mr. Zeller's original letter and by what they professed to think was satisfaction with the status quo on administration policy.

February 24 — More of the same. The letters to the Bucknellian dropped to a mere three columns, including long letter from a student defending fratern-

ities and sororities as selective, not discriminatory.

March 1 — The faculty adopted a series of motions stating that neither religion nor race should have any bearing in choosing students or teachers for Bucknell and that it should be a concern of the University to prevent discrimination and to protect its teachers and students from it. The faculty also came out for dropping of the controversial photograph on admission applications and approved bills presently before the Legislature which would ban discriminatory admissions procedures. The faculty statement was released by the Secretary of the faculty rather than the University's regular press channels and scrupulously pointed out that the vote was not unanimous.

March 2 — Several hundred students and faculty attended a panel discussion at the Phi Lambda Theta house basement, with loudspeakers transmitting the proceedings to an overflow crowd in other parts of the house. Speakers were Professor David E. Horlacher, Professor Ralph Spielman, Mr. Zeller and Fitz R. Walling, Director of Admissions.

March 10 — The Bucknellian in an editorial commending the faculty for its strong statement of position, reaffirmed the desire of "all segments of the Bucknell community" for a more diversified student body and charges the student body with responsibility for encouraging applications for admission to Bucknell and with the necessity for changing the Bucknell "image."