To serve the students

The question of having an ombudsman is about to be raised in the student government proposal. One of the three forms of government which will be on the referendum will specifically include the post of ombudsman as an elected student office. Without commenting on the rest of the proposal, this idea appears to us to be patently absurd. Before going into our reasoning, we will first examine the reasons for ever having such a person.

The ombudsman idea was initially tried in one of the Scandinavian countries several years ago in connection with the national government. Briefly,

he is an official who is a professional red-tape cutter, who can assist citizens in solving problems they have run into dealing with a large bureaucracy. He is generally given broad investigative powers, and these are few doors that are closed to him. In a phrase, he is there for the common man.

In this discussion, we stated that we favored the idea of an ombudsman on campus. His duties would be much the same as above: to assist in dealing with the bureaucracy known as MIT. The mere fact that the Institute’s decision-making process is so diffuse does set up the fact that it can often be quite difficult to get things done; in cases where time considerations are added, it sometimes becomes imperative to cut through the red tape.

However, as we said earlier, we do not believe that this post should be held by a student. First of all, there is the question of continuity. Given that the ombudsman is there to protect the students’ interests, it seems a bit absurd not to want the maximum experience possible in the job. If a student is elected to fill such a position, the most he could hope for is one year. Even if there were an “ombudsman staff” created, the amount of practical experience would still be limited to four, at most five. Years. One of the most common reasons among members of the senior class is that it seems more worthwhile spending three years in the office, and leaving a year in which to get anything accomplished. The ombudsman would undoubtedly be called on from time to time to deal with matters which would not come up any more frequently than every four years. If the post is left to a student, it seems that a lot of time will be lost in repeating work which was, perhaps, done only five years before.

Another point to be brought out is that of the time pressures which would exist if a student held the job. For one thing, it would be possible for a person to start a cyclic effect, simply by putting off the job. For one thing, it would be possible for a student holding such a job to remain as close to the student point of view as possible, and receive his salary through Inscomm. In a particular instance, and receive his salary through the Department of Science and Engineering Development.

Without commenting on the rest of the proposal, the administration is rather impractical. We would like to put forth some reasoning that we think is sufficiently strong.

We are now designing a new building to house the Instrumentation and Engineering Laboratory and the Research Laboratory of Electronics. This will be located between the present buildings 39 and 20. Now is the right time for ideas about the design. Of course, we are talking with everyone who is interested in the building. But I feel it is important to get ideas and opinions from students, even those who are not so well suited to their special field or major. I think the administration should solicit opinions from students, including students at every stage in the design of new buildings. I am not complacent about this, and I suggest some constructive action which any interested student can take.

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Letters to the Tech

New Building

To the Editor:

MIT buildings have often been criticized as being insanitary or too small, and they are not always well suited to their purposes. However, those bodies are being paid for, and administration simply added, it sometimes becomes imperative to cut through the red tape.

The ombudsman will undoubtedly be an "ombudsman staff" created, the amount of practical experience would still be limited to four, at most five, years. One of the most common reasons among members of the senior class is that it seems more worthwhile spending three years in the office, and leaving a year in which to get anything accomplished. In a phrase, he is there for the common man.

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