

SOONER MAGAZINE

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Frying Out the Fat

Passage of the 18-year-old draft law has brought forth many dire prophecies to the general effect that colleges and universities are "ruined" and that the campuses soon will be deserted.

It is quite true that college-as-usual is on its way out. It is practically out already in the mid-west and southwest where students under 21 have been volunteering in large numbers since before Pearl Harbor. It is true that enrolment of male students is likely to decline rapidly in many if not most institutions of higher education; that curricula will be vastly simplified; that there will be a tremendous speed-up of educational procedure.

It means that colleges and universities face some lean years; some drastic belt tightening. But it might also result in a toughening and strengthening of colleges. As one observer put it, the war might "fry the fat out of them."

This process of getting down to the basic fundamentals of higher education for the duration, to be followed after the war with a new flowering of the curriculum on a systematic basis, might accomplish in a few years what would take a long long time under peace conditions.

It is something like the situation in the automobile industry. Designers say that after the war, cars will be entirely new and different because the drag of the traditional and conventional in automobile styles has been erased. Higher education, also, may take on new vigor and effectiveness because of the wartime break with the past.

According to the latest information from Washington, men selected to go to college after the present school year will be men furloughed from active military service. They probably will go to school in uniform, be subject to military discipline, and study the courses necessary to train them for the most needed professional services, such as medicine and engineering.

The students apparently, will be selected on a basis of aptitudes, as determined by military authorities, and with no reference to the ability of the individual to pay for a college education. This, too, might have far-reaching effects after the war as it would be the first large-scale experiment in removing the financial yardstick as a major element in getting a college education.

The University of Oklahoma, along with other institutions, probably will have a lean time during the war, but it is quite possible that it might emerge from the war more fit than ever and well prepared to handle a more effective educational program.

Plan for Industrial Progress

The news about the recommendation for establishment of an industrial relations institute at the University of Oklahoma was largely lost in the midst of important war news. This plan, however, which was recommended by a committee at the joint labor-management conference held in Oklahoma City last month, deserves attention as a step which might lead to a great new field of service by the University.

Most troubles between labor and management are due to misunderstandings and mutual recriminations that often are based on misinformation or lack of information. The function of the proposed industrial relations institute would be to conduct fact-finding research; to accumulate factual information that would provide the basis for better co-operation between labor and management in working out their mutual problems.

The University can provide an impartial agency that is equally interested in serving labor, management, and the general public. Through an industrial relations institute, the University can make a valuable contribution to Oklahoma's industrial development after the war.

The Cover

Maj. Gen. Raymond O. Barton, '07, former Ada resident now commanding officer of a motorized division at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Photo by the U. S. Army Signal Corps.

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