

SOONER MAGAZINE

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Looking Ahead for O. U.

The University of Oklahoma has joined the nation in concentrating heavily on the things it can do *now* to help win the war. No American institution could do less. But an institution of higher education can never, even in wartime, afford to ignore the future completely any more than it can afford to ignore the past. A university ceases to be a university if it fails to use the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of past years in order to anticipate and plan for the future.

True, the uncertainties of wartime make it difficult to plan the future program of an educational institution. But a war like the present world conflict, which is causing profound social and economic upheavals in addition to the vast physical destruction inflicted, makes planning for the future more important than ever before.

The University of Oklahoma is going to face some serious problems.

In the first place, the state's financial picture will be drastically changed, and the impact of heavy federal taxes along with loss of gross production revenue may bring serious limitations on the amount of money available for state institutions.

The arguments used in the past for seeking larger appropriations for the University might as well be thrown out the window. Post-war conditions will be entirely different.

Student demands for certain kinds of training probably will cause a drastic change in the University's curriculum, because shifts in the economic organization of the nation will create vast new opportunities in certain lines, while men and women trained for other lines will find little demand for their services. It would be rash to predict the exact trends, but a great increase in airplane transportation and freight business, and a considerable increase in the number of persons employed in various phases of distribution of manufactured goods seem obvious examples.

The post-war cessation of war industry employment, pending a shift of production facilities to peace-time goods, is likely to divert a vast number of young people to colleges and universities. Except for the Business Administration Building and the Biological Sciences Building, the University of Oklahoma has had no major building program since that of the late Twenties. Classroom space, and particularly laboratory facilities, will not be adequate for any large rush of enrolment.

Army, Navy and war industries are, in effect, raiding the faculty for valuable teachers and administrative officers. The University, with declining revenue, has to leave most of these positions vacant. It might be difficult to fill them later with competent men at the University's low salary scale.

Oil and agriculture are vital for war, but immediately after the war there is almost certain to be a sharp decline in demand for these products that form the chief basis for Oklahoma's economic system. If the state is to meet the post-war conditions on a sound basis, it will need industrial production to give it a better balanced system. Leading the way in this direction, through scientific research and through economic research, is a vital responsibility of the University which cannot be laid aside to await a more convenient time.

These observations are not made in a spirit of complaint, or with a feeling of pessimism. They are made in an effort to face the future before it is too late to do anything about it.

The Cover

Old Glory, as photographed on a windy June day at the top of the flagpole in the University's North Oval, by Harold Tacker.

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