

SOONER MAGAZINE

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Let's Go Forward

Governor Kerr has two programs up for consideration before the twentieth session of the Oklahoma State Legislature. One will improve the state educational system and the other will improve Oklahoma state government. He has stated that he will not press for action on his proposed constitutional amendment which would improve state government (lowering of the voting age to 18, reduction in the number of state elective officials and so forth) if the elected representatives of the people of Oklahoma will approve the program for state schools.

Under the circumstances, this may be his only alternative, but by all right and reason he should not be forced to kill one plan in order to save another. What seems to be the hitch? Oklahoma has produced plenty of wealth from its resources. How better could we invest our money than in state schools? Oklahoma is supposed to have produced men with vision and new ideas. How better could the representatives of the people spend their time than in improving state government?

The Governor's two programs for schools and government are sound. He should not have to sacrifice one for the other when Oklahoma needs both.—E.W.

A Story for Today

The following editorial written by R. V. Peterson, publisher of the *Wewoka Times-Democrat* now a visiting member of the University journalism faculty, was published in the *Times-Democrat* and won honorable mention in an Oklahoma Press Association editorial-writing contest.

In this age of distorted human values, get-rich-quick philosophies and gewgaws, this story told in Mr. Peterson's editorial is worthy of reprint.—E.W.

An Oklahoman, who was a private in World War I, was commissioned into this war as a major.

One of his first assignments was to serve as defense counsel for a New York City boy of 20 who had deserted from the Army and was out for nine months before the M. P.'s caught him.

This Oklahoman sought the advice of his friends in the military as to how to proceed as he knew virtually nothing about law or court martial procedure.

"The only thing you can do is to throw this boy on the mercy of the court," was the recurring advice of his friends.

Being his first case and really frightened at the responsibility, the Oklahoman worked long

and hard on the job. He found out that this boy, brought up in the slum district of New York, had received none of the advantages of most American youths.

Early in his childhood he stood helplessly by and saw his father, in a drunken rage, commit suicide by shooting himself through the head. That terrible sight stayed with the boy and had a marked influence on his life.

When he made his get away from the Army the boy went back to his old haunts in New York. There he fell under the influence of a New York gangster and thug. The gangster kept the boy supplied with money, encouraged him to keep out of the Army.

The Oklahoman, acting as defense counsel for the boy, presented all this information to the court martial jury. The Oklahoman promised, furthermore, that if the boy was not given a sentence he would see to it that he received an overseas assignment at once in the Signal Corps.

Much to the surprise of observers, the jury let the boy off with a fine of \$500 with no time to serve. The Oklahoman was on the spot to have the boy make good.

The Oklahoman was with the New York lad at the port of embarkation and personally saw to it that he got on the boat headed for action in the Pacific. He gave the boy a good talking to, promised to answer his letters and agreed to meet him when he landed back in the United States again.

Within four months the Oklahoman had a letter from the New Yorker. He had seen plenty of action in the Pacific theater. He answered the letter as per promise.

Months went by again. Another letter and this time it was from the European theater of war. Again the letter was answered.

A month ago the Oklahoman learned that his New York friend had been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Later came a letter from the boy.

"I guess you have heard about the Silver Star," the letter said. "I will never cease to be grateful for what you did for me and what you told me. I am holding you to your promise that you will meet me when I get back to the States."

The Oklahoman was Major Ted Beaird, secretary of the University of Oklahoma Alumni Association, whom many Wewokans know. I heard him tell the story at a meeting of the Norman Rotary Club.

As Beaird said: "That one letter is worth the entire two years and two months I spent in the Army."

Hats Off, Please

Education knows no age limits. Many adults of the state have completed four years of high school work and have received diplomas by taking courses offered by the correspondence study department of the University of Oklahoma.

Mrs. Electra Deason, 41 years old, Westville, has completed five full units of high school work since May, 1943, while running her household, taking part in civic affairs and helping with the war effort. Mrs. Eliza Oglesby, 40 years old, of Haworth, is completing two full units in order to receive her diploma with the class at Haworth High School next spring.

Not a Pretty Picture

America is spending more to develop its industrial projects than it is spending to develop human assets upon which everything depends, it is asserted by Dr. George L. Cross, president of the University of Oklahoma.

Pointing out that the average teacher's salary is \$1,440 annually compared with an average of \$2,500 for the industrial worker, President Cross said that teachers should have an equivalent amount or more.

"Industrial workers are not overpaid and they earn their salaries," he said, "but education can never make the marked progress that it should as long as salaries of teachers remain so low."

The Cover

The University of Oklahoma Library photographed at night by Richard Meek.

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