

The administration was charged with extravagance by a state legislator in March.

Published below are excerpts from Dr. Cross' rebuttal in public hearing. He asked that legislators examining the purchases

Consider Their Function

By Roscoe Cate, '26ba

Charges by a State Senator that the University of Oklahoma had made extravagant purchases were answered by President G. L. Cross in a public hearing before a special committee of the Legislature in early April.

The investigating committee was appointed after Senator Louis H. Ritzhaupt of Guthrie charged the University with extravagance and named several specific purchases. He mentioned "earrings and brassieres" but later conceded that he meant to say "brazier" rather than brassiere.

With Senator Frank Mahan of Fairfax presiding, the investigating committee heard President Cross explain in detail the educational purposes of the various items that had been mentioned by Senator Ritzhaupt.

"It should be noted that none of these items has been purchased during the current year, for which a supplemental appropriation was requested," President Cross said. "In my opinion, all can be justified as necessary in the operation of a modern university except possibly the portrait of the president.

"Perhaps the purchase of a portrait of the president does represent an extravagance. However, this portrait was requested by the Regents about five years ago and will be added to the collection of portraits of ex-presidents. This long-standing policy of the Regents will not make serious inroads on University finances unless the Regents change presidents too frequently.

"Reference has been made to the University's purchase of three airplanes. The University gives flight instruction leading to private pilot's license, commercial pilot's license, and instrument rating. Trainer planes are used in this program. It was necessary to buy the three trainer planes because the University lost seven trainer planes in the tornado which struck the North Campus about two years ago.

"It has been stated that the University could have secured such trainer planes from the Armed Forces free of charge. This is not true. No planes suitable or usable for beginning civilian flight instruction have been available from the Armed Forces at any time.

"There are 27 students presently en-

rolled in flight instruction, paying from \$6.50 per hour for private pilot instruction up to \$15.00 for commercial pilot instruction. Since the beginning of our program in 1947, 11,000 hours of flight instruction have been given, and the course fees received from aviation students have totaled more than \$75,000.

"The purchase of various museum items (pitcher, Egyptian earrings, brazier, etc.) has been criticized. The issue here, I think, is whether the University will or will not teach ancient history and develop a museum teaching collection. If it is to have such a program, it will be desirable or necessary to make occasional purchases in order that the teaching collections may be improved. The items in question were purchased for instruction in classical languages and history. They were deposited in the museum where they might be available to the general public. The Egyptian culture represented by the earrings is in a sense the parent culture of our western civilization. Should students be denied the opportunity to know something first hand concerning this parent culture merely because they happen to have been born in Oklahoma?

"The purchase of dictaphones has been criticized. Through the use of dictaphones, it is possible to use for secretarial help in-

dividuals who can type but who are not able to take shorthand. The use of dictaphones saves a tremendous amount of secretarial help. They enable our staff to dictate at night and on Sundays. They enable one secretary to handle the correspondence of two or more staff members. The prevalence of dictaphones in the offices of practically all successful business enterprises should be adequate evidence that they are money-saving devices.

"The soundscriber mentioned in this connection was purchased by the University's Reading Clinic. Unfortunately, many of our students get into college without knowing how to read well. In our Reading Clinic we attempt to help students overcome this handicap. The oral reading patterns of our students are recorded on the soundscriber discs in order that progress in oral reading may be noted from time to time by the student, by his teacher, and by his parents. These oral reading recordings are made a part of each student's record. Soundscribers are standard equipment in such laboratories.

"The room-type air conditioner was purchased for the guest room at the president's home. Because there is no hotel at Norman nearly every distinguished guest who comes to the University stays in the guest room at the president's home. It was thought advisable to make such guests as comfortable as possible.

"With respect to the harp, I believe that a reputable school of music which does not possess at least one harp would be difficult to find.

"In examining the purchases of any institution the size of the University it will be possible to find examples of what might seem at a first glance to be silly or ridiculous acquisitions. As a matter of fact, this would probably be true of the purchasing of any agency or individual. However, to be fair with respect to such matters, it would be necessary to examine each purchase in the light of the function which it is intended to serve. I shall be happy to explain the nature of any purchase and the purpose for which any article has been ac-



DR. GEORGE L. CROSS
... He Had an Answer

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quired to any committee or member of the State Legislature."

President Cross also discussed the statement that "There is one employee at the University for every four students."

"This statement is quite misleading," he said. "It should be remembered that the University does much more than merely instruct students. We not only provide classroom instruction, but we house and

Number of Employees, January, 1951, Payroll

Total employed for Instruction, Research, Libraries and Administration			
Permanent, full-time	804		
Student assistants	538		
Other part-time and temporary	83	1,425	
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Total employed for public services (Extension)			
Permanent, full-time	55		
Student assistants	37		
Other part-time and temporary	5	97	
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All other employees, including dormitories, dining halls and other self-supporting activities			
Permanent, full-time	495		
Student assistants	378		
Other part-time and temporary	210	1,083	
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Grand Total			2,605
Consisting of:			
Permanent full-time	1,354		
Student assistants	953		
Other part-time and temporary	298		
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			2,605

provide food for a substantial portion of our student body. We provide medical service and hospitalization. We have been called upon to provide kindergarten and nursery schools for the children of our students. Of course all such activities are self supporting. In addition, there is the University Press, the Research Institute, the Bureau of Community Development, various institutes and clinics, all of which require per-

sonnel and some of which are partially or entirely self supporting. There is the problem of maintenance of buildings and grounds.

"For the job we do, I believe that the number of our employees will compare favorably with any similar institute in the country insofar as economy is concerned. Certainly the fact that we have only 523 faculty members means that we have a student-teacher ratio somewhat higher than that approved by the accrediting agencies of the country.

"Last fall, we reduced our full-time faculty and part-time teachers by 104 and our nonacademic employees by 84. In order to do this, personnel, especially part-time help in certain departments, had to be reduced beyond the point where efficient service is possible."

President Cross submitted the above statement on the number of employees on the University payroll for the month of January 1951.

Mr. Tappan . . .

Volitantes or Flying Flies. You will find this in almost any unabridged dictionary. Due to impurities in the vitreous humor of the eyeball or to scars on its surface, one can see small discs, saucers, cylinders, beads or strings of beads. They are particularly noticeable when seen against the background of a clear sky. They may drift about in the eyes, or which is more often the case, they are seldom in the center of the field of vi-

Hal Muldrow, Jr.

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