

Your Career in a Changing America

By BRYCE N. HARLOW

I am flattered — I am proud — that you have invited me to be here. It is hard to put into words my feelings on such an occasion as this. But, as the song says: "This Is My Country" and I feel mighty good to be again in *my* country — Oklahoma. Especially do I feel good to be back at this great University which will always be so richly meaningful to me, as it will be, increasingly, to each of you as the years roll by.

This gathering this evening is, I realize, one of a series of discussions of your career problems and opportunities—to give you a glimpse, if possible, into the future. It is to look, for you and with you, down the road you are to travel. It is to give you an idea or two about the stones in the road and how to avoid getting lost on detours and side paths.

Now, make no mistake about it, this kind of a forecasting effort is no small undertaking.

For, your future is inextricably enmeshed with the future of all of the world. Not simply what happens in Oklahoma, in the Southwest, or even in the United States governs your future; your future will be governed, too, by what happens in Indo-China, in Korea, in Western Europe, in the Soviet Union.

Your future will be governed by what happens in diplomatic, military, and economic affairs over all of the globe. And here at home your future will be governed, also, by what you yourself do—by what you stand for—by what you believe in—and by how deeply you believe in it, as you come to grips with these many national and international forces.

Now, for your peace of mind, I want to assure you that in these remarks this evening I shall not attempt to touch upon every one of these massive problems in all of their detail. Instead, I shall pick off some of the larger problems only and attempt to relate them to your present and predictable future.

Let us first visit for a moment about the impact of conditions in the world upon your plans.

In respect to many of you, that impact

will be most immediately of a military nature, for under present world conditions, and as far as we can reasonably see today, the United States must maintain strong military forces for her own security and for the security of the free world. A military force of the strength required—something in the area of 3 million men—can be maintained only by continuation of selective service; continuation of selective service means that the youth of America must continue to expect involuntary military service as part of their lives for years to come.

I shall not dwell upon this circumstance, for I know that all of you are quite acutely aware of it and have surely taken it fully into your calculations. There are, no doubt, some among you who have already discharged your peacetime military obligation to the nation. At all events, not only will such service provide certain maturing and experience benefits for every vigorous, active-minded American, but for many it will open vistas of careers that only a few years ago were entirely unavailable to young men and women leaving college. Well do I recall that 18 years ago, when I graduated from O. U., many seniors were deeply interested in obtaining service in the armed forces. In those days none were called and but a few were fortunate enough to be chosen.

But for those of you who for one reason or another will not enter military service—as well as for those who already have completed or will complete that service—there is rare opportunity today in the tremendous growth of United States activities overseas. Only a few years ago, such careers were almost unobtainable. Today excellent careers abroad are available in the nation's service that would not exist were America not confronted by a multitude of serious world problems. Thousands of young Americans will surely take advantage of these opportunities. The University offers you excellent preparation for them.

Yes, and then you have the overriding problem of all—for your careers, for all careers, for all peoples, old and young—

the issue of war or peace. Probably throughout your lives this greatest of human issues will centrally affect your careers; you will be unavoidably affected by it and concerned with it, no matter your course and direction after completion of your college training. Whether you plan it or not, concern with war and concern with peace are to be part of your career. You will help work toward peace, or you will help work toward war—by the thoroughness of your preparation in college, by your military service, by your civic efforts, by your self-reliance and inner strength, by your faith and courage, buttressing the American faith and fiber—in all that you do, you will contribute to or you will injure the cause of enduring peace.

And as the years move by, the success or failure of the effort for peace will make or break the effort of every citizen to develop his own career. Now that one aircraft in one attack can deliver explosive power of no less than stupendous proportions, it behooves each of us, in talking of our plans for tomorrow, to make provision in our careers for working toward peace. When the Nation's debt today reaches toward 300 billions of dollars, with annual interest charges alone equal to the total Federal budget of only a few years ago, each of us must help prevent the incidence of a war whose colossal cost would surely destroy the Nation's economic system as it has been known. With the destruction of that system would go the traditional careers toward which all of you aspire.

So, as a result of world conditions, we have an interesting composite today relating to the future of young America: Military service—an obligation, yes, but, for many, an opportunity as well; vastly increased employment opportunities overseas with the United States government and American industries; and looming over it all, the greatest test facing man—keeping peace on earth and encouraging good will among men.

Well, then, I think we can concede that world conditions will heavily influence your career. What about more practical consid-

erations—conditions closer to home within the United States?

Now, as we enter this discussion, I must again say for the sake of emphasis that these international considerations are not the distant and unrealistic factors that they might have appeared to you to be. I trust, therefore, that you will not omit them from your contemplation of tomorrow's opportunities, problems, and challenges. But, even so, we can all agree that what happens here in Oklahoma and in our land appears, at least, to be of more immediate and direct concern to us than what happens in Guatemala or Cairo, Moscow or Seoul. We can agree to this even though we are more than casually aware of such activities in Oklahoma as the tremendous Tinker Air Force Base at Oklahoma City and of the underlying reasons — which are certainly not local in character — why that base is maintained and brings revenue and opportunity to Oklahomans.

I should expect that many among you have a growing interest in the present economic conditions of the country and in where the economy is headed. If there isn't such an interest, there ought to be. Almost twenty years ago when I was emerging from this campus, the national economic situation, then far from inspiring, dominated our budding careers. The national economy is of equal importance to you today, for as the national economy is vigorous and expanding, so are your opportunities excellent and growing; and as the economy is stagnant or contracting, your own opportunities are limited to a greater or lesser degree.

Today, in America, we are in a period of transition from conditions of war to conditions of relative peace. Now to be frank about it, and as you well know, there have been some in our land with gloomy convictions that our kind of economic system can function successfully only under the all-out conditions of war—that in the absence of war, our economy must cascade into the bottomless pit of economic depression, carrying with it all high-school seniors and all college graduates, whether recent graduates or graduates of long ago. Now, this philosophy would present you with a really choice future. It would predestine you either to involuntary regimentation in the military forces, which is hardly a delectable prospect, or to economic prostration and, therefore, to peacetime government regimentation or starvation at home.

I assure you that such a pessimistic outlook is unwarranted. There is much—very much—that justifies confidence in our eco-

nomie future in the United States. But even were there every indication that the economy is leaning toward collapse, which certainly there is not, I can give you full assurance that the Federal Government is prepared to take preventive as well as remedial action—that it is ready to cope with any new economic conditions that may arise. The arsenal of economic weapons at the Government's disposal is formidable, and as the President has publicly stated any number of times, the Government will not hesitate to use any or all of these weapons as the situation may require.

This may appear to you to be a very general consideration, but I mention it because of its basic importance to your careers. That the Federal Government is prepared, and that the Federal Government is determined, to use its vast powers to deal decisively with the national economy where and when and if necessary, is of signal importance to your own careers—for, with this knowledge, you have the certainty that you are not to experience the travail and the despair and the black dependency that resulted some years ago when the national economy did collapse.

You have, therefore, the comfortable certainty that there will be economic opportunity awaiting your talents. Many other conditions assure you that opportunity. I shall mention but one: the rapid growth of our population, especially since World War II, reflecting the greater security and prosperity of our families and their confidence in the nation's future. This continuing rapid growth of our population—7,000 more Americans each day—300 more each hour—five more each minute—has tremendous implications for Americans like yourselves whose adult lives will span the second half of the twentieth century. These implications embrace the whole range of our national economic life; they signify growing markets for automobiles, for fountain pens, for refrigerators, for real estate, for homes. By 1975, when you will

have reached the midpoint of your careers—there will be about 90 million of our people employed. This is some 25 million more than today. Provided only that we continue our American tradition which fosters the development of a self-reliant citizenry, this population growth makes it certain that we shall steadily become a stronger nation, a richer nation, a nation of more and better opportunity. It makes it certain for you, if America is true to her heritage and if peace is maintained in the world, that you are to have a good future, a challenging future, a future wherein you can effectively serve yourself and your country.

But can business expand enough, and can occupation grow enough, to provide employment for these 25 million additional workers that the Nation will have when you are in your early forties? The nation's working population has grown also in the past, and yet, employment in some industries—mining, for example—has actually declined. By contrast, in some other industries, employment has expanded at almost a fantastic rate. If we can know something about these industrial changes, we may have some idea of the kinds of career opportunities open today to college students.

One thing you can certainly count on: continued technical advances will transform the life that we now know. You can confidently expect these advances to proceed at a faster rate than ever before, because we have more technical talent working on industry's problems. The number of engineers in the United States doubled in the 20 years from 1920 to 1940; the number of engineers has doubled again in the 15 years since then. The number of scientists has grown similarly. There are now three quarters of a million scientists and engineers in our country engaged in extending scientific knowledge and applying it to industry. Therefore, if one can say that in the nineteenth century industry's technical progress moved at the speed of a covered wagon lumbering across an Oklahoma prairie, and that in the last 50 years it



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raced across that prairie like a crack express train, we can say that in the next half century it will flash across the prairies like a rocket.

Technical change brings economic change; it is safe to say that the occupational and industrial character of this country's economy, with 90 million people at work, will be quite different from that of today. In only very recent years research has given us many new industries and products. You know many of them. They include atomic energy, radio-active isotopes, electronics, helicopters, jet engines, titanium and heat resistant materials, plastics, synthetic fibers, and soil conditioners. This building of new knowledge through research is the surest promise that you and all Americans have of expanding economic opportunity. Last year some four billions of dollars were spent in our country on research alone. For those of you with interest and ability in the rigorous and demanding fields of science and engineering, there will be great opportunity in the years ahead.

The importance to your future of the Nation's rapid population growth is made especially clear when you apply it to a specific field—for instance, to the field of agriculture. Here the nation has been recently plagued by crop and commodity surpluses of gargantuan size. But by 1960 our population will have increased by an amount equal to the present total population of Canada. By 1965, our population will have increased by *twice* the present population of Canada. Now, if we in the United States are to eat in 1965 as well as we eat now, we will have to produce much more of many different products in order to take care of the increased needs. We should then have 30 million more people than we have today. To meet the increased food demand, our farmers will have to raise their meat output by about four billion pounds. They will need to produce ten billion pounds more of milk, and one billion dozen more eggs. For the production of the livestock and livestock products that will be required by 1965, we will need to have sixteen million tons more of feed grains. This one item alone is equal to over one-half billion bushels of corn. Our production of other products such as fruits and vegetables will also have to undergo a comparable expansion. So, in only a few years, instead of contending with surpluses, our farmers will need to expand their production to meet national food needs.

And pains and strains in many areas, as well as opportunities, must accompany this growth that is so important to your future. Take, for example, the field of education.

The first wave of children born since the war has already reached the elementary schools. It has created serious problems of overcrowding and understaffing which are just a forecast of what lies ahead. This wave will reach our secondary schools at the end of the present decade, and the colleges by the mid-1960's, boosting enrollments by at least 50 percent.

By a conservative estimate, we need to train 85,000 elementary school teachers each year for the rest of this decade to replace those leaving the profession annually and to provide for growing enrollments. Yet last year we graduated only 46,000 elementary school teachers—half of our national needs—and there seems to be no immediate prospect for a substantial increase. In Oklahoma this year we find the same picture: only 500 students will complete training required for certification in elementary schools—300 fewer than last year.

This growth and this increased opportunity that we have discussed in science, engineering, and teaching, may be expected as well in the many occupations and skills which minister to our health needs—physicians, dentists, nurses, and medical technicians, and the industries that supply the medical profession. The needs for these services and these skills will also expand, and with their expansion, economic and career opportunities for able, dedicated, vigorous young men and women will also expand.

The growing complexity of our industry calls for specialists in many different business areas, each of which has become an area of specialization in its own right—accounting, advertising, personnel work, market research, and many others. The information you will be able to get from other speakers and consultants in this career conference on dozens of specific fields underlines this one general point: whatever your talents may be, and wherever your interests may lead you, the nation's dynamic, growing economy offers opportunity that will be limited only by your own imagination, your own ability, your own drive, your own determination.

There is another general consideration important to your immediate future: the college student today is in an especially favorable position, because he is in relatively short supply. About twenty years ago, in the midst of the great depression, birth rates in the United States hit an all-time low, and therefore fewer people are entering their 20's now than in any of the last 10 years. The number of people aged 20 has dropped about fifteen percent since 1952 and will not get back to that level

until after 1960. Simply by operation of the law of supply and demand, you will find your value to industry, to government, to public and private effort of all kinds, greatly enhanced.

In consideration of these many factors affecting your future, it is fair, I believe, to say that you are fortunate to be on the verge of your careers at this particular time in our national history. There will be challenge awaiting you. There will be a vigorous, growing nation awaiting the application of your talents. There will be a kaleidoscopic, stimulating world, effervescing with change, with test for your mettle, with return for your investment of time, effort, skill, and brain. There will be need calling for your best; there will be demand to be fulfilled; there will be interest; there will be promise of a bright and rewarding future.

I think that these things are true regardless of your area of dedication upon leaving the University. I say that for this reason: You, yourself, can have no definite assurance now that what you embark upon when you leave University will meet your purposes and desires, six months or a year or five years later. If you are trained in a profession, the odds favor your staying in what you begin more than if you are not so trained; but nevertheless, considerable time must elapse after you leave here before you can be firmly settled in your chosen profession or career and move with sureness in one direction. But with such rich opportunity abounding in our society, and with a future for young Americans so surely bright with promise, I can hardly see how you can fail to find some activity fully satisfying as well as highly rewarding to you.

Now, I am not going to end with a sermon. It is not only unnecessary but unwarranted. But let me say just this much in the way of personal counsel:

The University can help—yes—by giving your brains a good work out and by giving you an environment in which your personality can grow.

Your government can help—yes—by maintaining the general conditions of freedom and progress, at your insistence, so that all who are willing to roll up their sleeves and work can carve out satisfying lives for themselves.

But the responsibility for your decisions, the responsibility for your taking hold of a profession and a career and making the most of it, the making of opportunity where and when there appears to be little or none—and above all, the having and the holding to a solid basis of religious faith, which you will find to be your greatest

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creature. But her daughter may now be enrolled in the university or in the American School for Girls (a fine institution) and *she* has different ideas. It is this generation, now adolescent or recently out of their teens, which increasingly seeks to throw over many of the restrictions placed on choice of husbands, possibility of entering a career, and the sort of life they themselves may lead after marriage.

The middle group comprises those women who do not have so many servants, nor so fine a home, but a fair amount of financial security because their husbands are administrators in a government agency, perhaps, or proprietors of small businesses, or members of the professional group—lawyers, doctors, teachers. To this group may also be added those young women who are employed in offices or the better shops. This group is seen more frequently on the streets; they are smartly dressed, more European or American in style and use of color, and are less noticed by the foreigner because they look so much like ourselves. Just how numerous this group is would be hard to say without authoritative figures. The middle group probably seems larger than it is because the women are more in evidence, since they have more freedom than the wealthier group and also have to do more things for themselves.

The third group arouses one's sympathy, if not always one's admiration. I used public transportation much of the time while I was in Egypt and came in close contact with these black-clad women, almost invariably with a baby in their arms, and perhaps another child tugging at their skirts. A woman of this group sometimes does not wear the veil, is often not clean-looking, presents an apathetic, down-trodden appearance, and is inclined to talk shrilly and voluminously. These women squat on the streets selling the small green "lemons" which we call limes, or eggs, or vegetables; they carry heavy loads on their heads; in the rural areas they work in the fields. They can not read or write but many seem to have an alert intelligence.

It is this last and largest group which most needs a better way of life and for whom the process of changes will require the longest time. This fact is recognized by Dr. Doria Shafik, one of the leaders of the feminist movement whom I met. Dr. Shafik is a remarkable and charming young woman, educated at the University of Paris. She edits a woman's magazine, *Bent El Nil* (Daughter of the Nile). She is also head of the women's political party of the same name. However, while I was in Egypt all political parties were banned, so

presently Bent El Nil does not function as a party, at least outwardly. Naturally, Dr. Shafik has her admirers and her critics, but a few prominent Moslem men have defended her beliefs and the fight she is making for women in Egypt. Personally, she is attractive and poised. She has the good sense to make her appeal with tact and charm rather than assuming the belligerent, masculine attitude that characterized some of the American campaigners in the early days of our fight for women's suffrage. At the time a committee was being chosen for the drafting of a new constitution for Egypt, she urged that women be represented by one of their number on that committee. Her plea was that only by guaranteeing women's rights constitutionally could Egypt take her place in a progressive family of nations. She lost this round, for no woman was appointed on the committee, but the end is not yet and the seeds have been sown for later reaping. Dr. Shafik advocates in public speeches and through the newspapers that qualified women be appointed to public office (unheard of as yet in Egypt) and that they be given the right to have a seat in Parliament. There they would be able to introduce needed reform laws and women could eventually take their place as real citizens.

Some of her critics are women themselves and some of them are leaders also. But it must be admitted that a number of these are motivated by the desire to share the spotlight she enjoys. Others are conservative-minded women who are not in accord with her forward-thinking ideas. But, whether she is motivated by publicity-seeking as some of her critics charge or not, she has stimulated enough attention to this problem that the feminist cause is growing in strength and sphere of influence.

Dr. Nejla Izzedin, the first Arab woman to receive a Ph.D., points out in her book *The Arab World* that women's work thus far has been largely social service: orphanages, milk centers for undernourished children, kindergartens and nurseries, and hospitals. Women have also been interested in the preservation and revival of native arts. Dr. Izzedin presents the orthodox Moslem attitude toward the position of women: "Integrated in the family where at all stages of her life she has essential tasks, woman feels secure in her usefulness and derives power and importance from the broad responsibilities and fundamental functions she performs. Consequently, Arab women are, on the whole, at peace with their society and in harmony with their environment; drifting, uprooted, and neurotic women are practically unknown among them." The staunchest argument against changing the status of women in

the Middle East is that they would lose some of the advantages they now enjoy. But from my own experience I know that while they may not be "drifting" or "uprooted," boredom is not an uncommon malady, on the part of the privileged, nor is over-work and economic oppression, on the part of the underprivileged. If the first group could lend a helping hand they could contribute something toward solving their own ennui and the other, more real, problems of others.

Literacy, poverty, and over-population are problems which have to be solved by both men and women and will never be solved by one of them alone. However, it must be recognized that politics in Egypt is not politics as we know it here. There, political parties seem to have run the country's affairs (at least till the present government) often more for the direct benefit of the party and its adherents than for the benefit of the people as a whole. This is probably the most frequently used argument on the part of the conservative-minded against allowing women to participate in politics. They not only think, they say they know, that politics is a "dirty business" from which they wish to protect their women. This can be, of course, one of the strongest reasons why women should be given political rights—namely, that a good housecleaning might result. Still, because the situation is different, it will, no doubt, be advisable to proceed somewhat differently than was the case in the United States, but it is nevertheless my belief that political equality should be given to the women of Egypt soon, even if they are not all ready for it (they weren't in America, either), for the capable and educated women can only then, by taking their rightful places in public life, win for themselves and their less fortunate and more indifferent sisters the social and economic equality that may otherwise not be theirs unless as the result of a struggle that would probably be much too long and too discouraging.

Your Career . . .

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strength and resource in life—all these things, my good friends, are your own. They are yours, and only yours, to have and to hold and to create and to develop. No one can supply these most important things for you. Good luck—God speed—and thanks very much for your kind attention.