

Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

TODAY, if you look and listen, you can see and hear of a "Crisis" in higher education. The President of the United States has discussed the matter. Leading educators are deeply concerned. It is a vital issue. What is the "Crisis"?

On the local level it is this: By 1960 there is a definite possibility that the University of Oklahoma will be faced with the problem of enrolling 15,000 students in a physical plant and with a teaching staff equipped to handle 10,000. The "Crisis" is the same for colleges throughout the U. S.

I don't believe it. I've heard scare stories too many times. It's just another pitch for more money. Crisis, indeed! Who are you trying to scare?

What caused the "Crisis"? Too many children for too few facilities. Following the depression years, the birth rate in the U. S. went spiralling up. Any parent with a child in grade or high school knows what the answer has been on that level. Class rooms are filled to the spilling point.

Sure, I know my child is in a crowded class room now. But what does that have to do with college? I'm sick and tired of our college administrators crying "Wolf" all the time.

Perhaps education has cried "Wolf" too many times for its own good. Perhaps you think this is another "Wolf" scare. The fact remains that it does not require a man of brilliance to translate the meaning to higher education of the overcrowded elementary and secondary class rooms. Tomorrow a fair percentage of those same youngsters will be trying for a college degree. And there is only one day between today and tomorrow. Time is running out. The answer keeps coming back: Under present conditions, there will not be enough room for all who want to earn a degree by 1960.

Even if I believe what you say, it's no problem of mine. I'm a leader in my community. My son will be admitted to any state college he wishes to attend. Besides, I'm not sure all of these children that want to go to college should be admitted anyway. I don't think it is my problem.

A good hard-headed viewpoint tells you that it is not your problem. But it becomes yours when it affects you personally. It is

inconceivable to think that your child will get special privileges because you are a person of economic and social substance. Colleges will have no choice but to accept students showing the greatest promise first. Priority, if it comes to that, will be based on promise, not on who you are. This might exclude your son or daughter. You may not think all who go to college should be there, but it is a decision that is out of your hands. Now, you see. The "Crisis" becomes your problem.

What can I do? You're painting a dark picture and you're not telling me what I can do. What can any citizen do? Is it out of our hands or can we help?

You can help. In fact, you are the hope of higher education. Administrators and faculty can do little without your help. Your support of measures to finance an expansion of our colleges is the first step. You do not have to be rich to be of service. An understanding of the problem is a good step toward finding the answers.

If you are concerned you can manifest that concern to others in your community. Tell them that higher education is facing one of the fastest expansion jobs in its history. Tell them they have a personal stake in this matter. Remind them that our state and national position is based, to a large extent, on the degree of our education. Ask them to help, also.

You have talked to me in generalities. You have offered me no concrete way of assisting. I want to do something to help. Don't just tell me the problem and vague ways of helping. Give me something to sink my teeth into.

It has been mentioned before how many areas of our leadership are concerned about this real "Crisis." An area not yet mentioned is the Governor of the State of Oklahoma and the State Legislature. They have not been blind or unconcerned about the matter. But they have one big stumbling block in their way. They have only so much revenue to appropriate and it must be spent for all state functions.

As this is being written, the Legislature is working on a bill to call a special election. The election, in addition to other matters, would ask for a vote on a measure to provide \$17 million for construction and

repair of buildings at Oklahoma's state-supported colleges. The revenue would be raised by means of a sale of bonds, if the people approve the bill.

Let this point be emphasized. The bill will not help simply the University of Oklahoma meet some of its expansion needs. It will do something much more far-reaching. It will help all state-supported colleges provide more classroom, library and laboratory space. Without doubt, the bill is a move in the direction of helping meet the "Crisis."

Perhaps now you see why I've written directly to you. It will be you and all Oklahoma citizens who vote for the bonds or against them, if a special election is called.

It now appears likely that the election will be held in the latter part of March. It is not a matter of one college facing the "Crisis." It is a subject that is of grave concern to all higher education in this state and in others. The Oklahoma Legislature apparently is going to give the citizens of the state a chance to deliver their own answer to the "Crisis." If it does, your vote will have much to say about whether your child will find room in college when he arrives to enroll.

IN THIS ISSUE, several articles of real interest and/or merit appear:

"Will the Reds Attack Formosa?" Dr. Percy W. Buchanan, an expert through training and experience in the Far East, reviews the tense situation and offers some interesting observations. His analysis of the question is a penetrating study of the probabilities and possibilities of Red attack. (See page 14)

"The Medic: His College Years." Never before has the *Sooner Magazine* made such an extensive attempt to cover the work of any University school or college in photographs. For several days, the editor and a photographer worked in Oklahoma City getting together the material that begins on page 2. An unexpected upshot of the effort: the editor has far more confidence and respect for the medical profession than ever before. The Dean of the School of Medicine and all who were requested to assist did so with a fine degree of cooperation. The magazine is dedicated and indebted to them.

"Conquest in Peru." Alumnus Leigh Ortenburger, '52bs, has made a hobby of mountain climbing for a long time. Among his many other accomplishments is a proficiency in photography. Color pictures of his trip to Peru, reported on page 16, appeared in a December issue of *Saturday Evening Post*. His account of the trip in pictures and text makes a stimulating alumni feature.