

Under Cover

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It is written on the sign, "Do not pluck the flowers."

It is useless against a wind that cannot read.

—JAPANESE PROVERB

PERHAPS it is merely an indication that we are human, but every day we see signs, read them, ignore them and run head on into obstacles that could have been avoided, if we had allowed ourselves to become concerned.

The University experienced such a head-on collision in March. It was a strange smashup. The University had posted signs but was still the victim.

Perhaps you were present as the first signs began to appear. For the past several years, President Cross has been speaking to alumni groups and others actively interested in O. U., concerning the inevitable increase in enrollment expected at O. U. He used as his proof birth statistics, the overcrowded conditions in the secondary and elementary schools, and the possible increase in the percentage of high school graduates who attend college each year.

After one reference to an increased enrollment and what it would require for adequate handling, a good friend of the University's commented, "I wish he wouldn't worry about big enrollments. I think it's good for O. U. to have a lot of students."

Another sign had been misread. Unless the editor of this magazine is completely off base and a poor reader himself, the President's comments were not intended to imply that he was not in favor of large enrollments. They were intended to show that the University would need financial help to meet the obligations such an increase would bring.

In September of 1954, first visible proof of trouble was available. As freshman sectioning lines grew and grew, worried administrators hurried to try to open up more sections in the basic sciences, English and math.

That the administrators were partially successful is indicated by the sharp upswing in students presently studying at O. U. (more than 10,000 compared to previous year's 9,000). But they were unable to accommodate everyone. Why? Teachers

could not be hired without additional funds. It is estimated that 500 students were unable to enroll in the necessary freshman courses. Many went elsewhere for their college education.

Even though some were unable to enroll in their required courses at the freshman level, the onslaught had the effect of clearing the campus air. Now the administrators knew what to expect and when to expect it. No one had anticipated the 11 percent climb in 1954. But it was a sure indication of things to come and had merely come a little sooner than expected. Now the University had a definite idea of what to expect and the proof was live students, not cold statistics.

Armed with the information from O. U. and other state educational institutions who had experienced similar increases, the State Board of Regents for Higher Education asked the State Legislature for an increase in appropriations for the 1955-57 biennium. But the Legislature, already hard pressed for enough money to cover all state needs, turned a partially deaf ear. The State Senate passed a bill that would provide roughly the same amount for higher education for the next two years that was available the past two years.

With all signs indicating no increase in appropriations, the O. U. Board of Regents came to a hard decision, but one that was inevitable under the circumstances. On March 20th, President Cross announced to the press that in the face of the facts—no increase in appropriations but a large increase in students—the University would be forced to limit freshman enrollment for 1955-56. (See story page 2.)

Thus far the Legislature has not passed a final appropriations bill for higher education. Should the appropriations bill, when passed, provide an increase to match the probable increase in enrollment, the limitation announcement will have little effect. However, if no additional funds are forthcoming, the regents and administration will have no other recourse.

EACH year a number of students leave college to join the service "to get it over with." Recently the editor had a let-

ter from one such former student that recalled the editor's early service days. It also served as a reminder that today's young people have their share of problems, too—a fact many of us like to forget in our eulogies to the problems of our own generation.

"Gung ho! I am now in the process of becoming a proud infantryman (don't hold your damn breath) . . .

". . . I've got to admit that I'm homesick. It doesn't show, but dammit, I am and I know it and it's aggravating.

"Gripe Number II. I don't like the 1st Sergeant. Now it is no novelty for me to have a complete disrespect toward some people and thus have an inherent dislike. In the service it's different. I have to be very diplomatic, beat around bushes and plain old lie to some questions or else. It has me worried . . . but I just can't bring myself around to telling him what is running through my mind. I'm between a rock and a hard spot and am getting bruised to a delicious blue on both sides.

"Food is getting worse, beds are getting harder, inspections stricter, training rougher and (the undersigned) madder."

Somehow the words have a familiar sound.

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