

the **A**lumnus of tomorrow

In the year 2000 A.D. present students at the University of Oklahoma will be in their late fifties. As alumni, they will feel closer to the University than do alumni now. They will expect more from O.U. in the way of service and intellectual leadership, and conversely they will feel a sense of obligation to their alma mater and will feel compelled to give their time, talent and money to support worthwhile programs of the institution.

Production techniques will be so highly developed in 2000 A.D. that the needs of the human race in foods and consumer goods will be produced by a very small percentage of the total population. People will have more leisure time, will be better prepared to take advantage of it and will have a greater interest in cultural and intellectual pursuits. To me this means that they will turn naturally to the institutions of higher learning for guidance, especially to those that have kept pace with the times. The academic community will be the nucleus of much important planning and work, and the college alumnus will be recognized as a leader in a society that will devote more time to improvement of social, political and religious institutions. Surely there will be at least a moral obligation to give of individual time in the public service, to governing agencies on a local, national or world level, to apply talents to the improvement and enrichment of cultural and social institutions.

The alumnus of tomorrow will be interested in student recruiting for his alma mater. This interest will be sophisticated, and active alumni will be interested in learning as much as possible about a student's academic proficiency and aptitudes. And as the alumni go about recruiting these scholars of the future, they will be urging them to enter an academic world far more revolutionary than they themselves imagined in the 1960s. It is not difficult to envision that whole classes of students might move across the country or across the world to receive specialized study at certain levels. For example, why not send all the Spanish majors to the University of Madrid for a semester of study during their senior year? Or why not place a senior class in astronomy on a satellite observatory for a couple of months?

Upon enrolment at O.U. all students will become honorary members of the Alumni Association, so they will be well-informed about the University through the *Sooner Magazine*. The basis for alumni organization will be academic interest. Organized alumni will be grouped around individual colleges, schools or even departments. They will be in the position of school advisers or visitors and will participate in various studies, consulting with the faculty on curricular problems. Thus, the future alumnus will be a more valuable member of the college community and will be considered by all as a lifetime member of his school, particularly in the College of Continuing Education, which by 2000 A.D. will be by far the largest college in most universities, including O.U.

Education beyond high school in the United States will not

only maintain its characteristics of diversity, but these differences will be even more pronounced. Today there is much to say about the difference between schools considered "public" as compared to "private" colleges. This classification undoubtedly will remain, but long before the new century dawns the meaning of these names will be something entirely different. Higher education is so greatly in the public interest, even today, that every sign indicates that more and more public support will be provided for all colleges, both public and private. The real difference will be not so much in the source of financial support, but rather in the source from which the board of control gets its authority and power. The basic difference between these schools will be in the fields of teaching, the quality of teaching, the level of teaching and the resources of an institution in faculty talent and facilities.

What does all of this have to do with the alumnus of tomorrow? Everything—both in regard to the kind of person he will be and in his relationship to his school.

The American concept of philanthropic enterprise will have spread throughout the world, and the generosity of affluent men will continue to be a substantial source of support for higher education. The alumnus of tomorrow will be the key to this support as is the alumnus of today.

And what about the long-standing romance between the alumnus and college athletics? It is only reasonable that sports fans of tomorrow, whether alumni or not, will continue to be just as enthusiastic as they are today. I do predict growth in the importance of school-oriented sports activities because of the health problem represented by the lack of opportunity for vigorous physical activity among the young people in this future society. If they are to be healthy, they must exercise. This might be accomplished by developing new games, which have something to offer every student regardless of his capabilities. Every youngster will be encouraged to select his own sport and to participate in it throughout life.

But, regardless of what changes may occur in college athletics, you are sure to find alumni interested in them. The competitive aspects of sports in college may be more or may be less than it is today, but emphasis is apt to be on activities providing vigorous exercise for the most youngsters.

In many ways, the alumnus of tomorrow will be much like the alumnus of today. As a group, he will praise, criticize and view with alarm. Occasionally, he will jump to rash conclusions on misinformation about the University, and occasionally he will make a studied judgment after reviewing the facts. He will have great respect for the best of the college teachers as a group as competent, devoted scholars and teachers, and occasionally he will be critical of a teacher merely because he disagrees with him or because he abhors the way the professor wears his clothes. In other words, the alumnus is a product of the institution and the society from which he comes. Much is expected of him, and it can be hoped that in the future, as in the past, he will usually exceed those expectations. —RBC