

Battalion EDITORIALS

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FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1947

Are We Blinded by Tradition? . . .

We are proud people at A. & M., and we have much to be proud about. But sometimes pride blinds our eyes; and we fail to see or recognize our own shortcomings.

For this reason, the static of last spring has not been without constructive value. We have been critically examined by the public, the newspapers, and the legislature. What they say they found is not all to the good. Perhaps it is time for us to look ourselves over in as detached a manner as possible and see if we have been perpetuating bad along with the good.

A. & M. was set up by two legislative acts. One is the Morrill Act of the national Congress; the other is the charter in the Texas State Constitution. Both documents state that the purpose of the school shall be "without excluding other scientific and classified studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such manner as the legislature shall prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."

How well are we fulfilling this charter? Let us take it up point by point.

We have not excluded other scientific studies; the phrase "classified studies" is rather ambiguous today, and we cannot comment on that. We have most certainly included military tactics. Our major lines of study are along agricultural and mechanical (engineering) lines. We most definitely promote practical education; our success in "liberal education of the industrial classes" is doubtful. Despite increases in cost to students in recent years, we are still a "poor man's school," if you doubt that, just get expense schedules from other institutions.

So much for these basic points. Now let's take a critical look at details.

Texas A. & M. has differed in its development from other land-grant schools. Most of them are now less technical than we are; they are coeducational and their military ROTC program is on the so-called "civilian school" basis. Examples of such schools are Oklahoma A. & M., Purdue, (Indiana land-grant college) and L.S.U. The only other land-grant college we know of that follows the A. & M. pattern is Clemson A. & M. in South Carolina.

We often proudly say that we do not want to be like Oklahoma A. & M. or Purdue or L. S. U. When we say this, are we just taking a prejudiced "my way is best, because it's my way" point of view, or do we base this opinion on comparative studies of our work with that of those other institutions? Most of us will have to admit that we speak from prejudice and not from comparative study.

Our military system of life has come in for some heavy criticism during the recent investigation. The defense usually is that we turned out 29 generals, so we can't be wrong. We are certainly proud of those generals—who, however, were mostly produced by a small Texas A. & M. College that was quite different from the giant university that occupies our acres today.

Charges have been made by older graduates that hazing in their days was much less severe than today, even though hazing was more taken for granted then in all schools than it is today. Is this true? Have we piled one traditional form of hazing on another until the load has grown too great? It is not an adequate answer to say "If anybody doesn't like hazing, let him go somewhere else." This is a state school, and the boy who doesn't want to be hazed has just as much right here as the ones who love it—in their upper class years.

The Battalion believes that cruel forms of hazing have become rare, despite lurid copy in the newspapers during the past se-

mester. Freshmen in all colleges are subject to some form of belittlement, and it is reasonable to expect that some form of "orination" will be practiced here as long as there is a school.

One undeniably unpleasant practice in our present condition is the treatment given students who transfer here from the two junior colleges which are part of the A. & M. system. Two-year graduates of John Tarleton and North Texas Agricultural are treated, not as brothers, but as outsiders, all during their two upper class years here. This is snobbery, and is indefensible. It is one reason why those two schools are now asking for four-year ratings.

We have often proudly compared ourselves to West Point and Annapolis. Yet those two institutions are themselves under fire as being a hundred years behind times, educationally. Latest blast at the service academies was in a May issue of *Look* magazine. The author is the wife of a graduate and mother of a son in one of the academies which she roasted. Many of her points ring uncomfortably true . . . and some of them hit A. & M. too! Are we slavishly following an outmoded model? We are not drawing a conclusion; we ask you to think about it.

The Cadet Corps is often spoken of as a military organization—when it is to our advantage that it be thought of that way. When it is not to our advantage, we say that the corps is not a military organization at all, but a social one. A fraternity, in other words. That statement was made by many cadets to the panel board last term. What is the truth—is the corps military, fraternal, or an indeterminate mixture?

It is rapidly becoming impossible to press the full amount of technical training offered by A. & M. into four years. Yet the obvious step, now being taken by many other technical schools, of adopting a five-year curriculum, is not easy to put into practice here because of the four-year military system, and the desire of cadets to stay with their class regardless of educational problems. The five-year courses will probably have to be adopted anyway, but they will be a new strain on the already-strained "system."

The four-year system backfired, of course, this year, when only four cadets graduated with almost 700 veterans. The other seniors are coming back to earn their commissions. A worthy goal, but it emphasizes what strange things the military basis does to the educational program.

Today A. & M. is divided against itself. Students are divided, ex-students groups have split, even Aggie mothers have started pulling each other's hair. Plenty of explanations have been offered and fought over, but an important one has been pretty well overlooked—"growing pains."

A. & M. still has the skeleton of a freshwater school with 800 pupils, on which has been superimposed the flesh of a giant university. We have become big in size, and there isn't much we can do about it except become bigger in mind and concept. If it becomes necessary to break away from tradition, we must do it, painful though such a step would be to many. As long as A. & M. appeared to be getting along all right, no one would dare make such a suggestion. But something collapsed at A. & M. last season. It now appears that tradition alone is not enough on which to run a college. Some of the world's most tradition-filled universities are actually some of the most advanced in their educational programs. Tradition is allowed to give color, but not to hamper growth. We might look to the example of such schools as Cambridge in England and Harvard in America. Their traditions go even deeper than ours, yet those schools are among the most progressive in the world today. If they can do it, so can we.

Study of a College Prexy . . .

Don't jump to conclusions until you have finished reading this criticism of a college president:

"Cold, ruthless and stubborn, something about him inevitably engendered controversy when he occupied positions of power.

"His refusal to compromise . . . his refusal to treat tolerantly those who opposed him . . . were among the major mistakes of his career.

"He drove through a magnificent reform program . . . his accomplishments were great and enduring. Yet he drove so hard, so flatly refused to delegate authority, and broke with so many friends that when the inevitable reaction set in, he was unable to cope with the new situation. His refusal to

compromise in the college controversy was almost the college's undoing."

The man: Woodrow Wilson! The college: Princeton! The critic: Prof. Arthur S. Link!

Oops, My Mistake . . .

Senator O'Daniel in his filibuster campaign against OPA last year introduced several hundred telegrams approving his campaign into the Congressional Record.

A few of the other kind sneaked in. For instance, W. D. King of San Antonio wired, "You have been raised in a nut patch; OPA must survive." From T. L. Todd of Monahans, Texas, came this: "If you are talking for me, you can shut up."

Two people saved England: Joan of Arc and George Washington. If it hadn't been for the first, the capital of England would have been in France; if it hadn't been for the other, it would have been in America. —Alfred Whitehill

The Battalion

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No Overproduction? . . .

Potatoes To Burn

By H. W. Spencer

Some economists contend that there is no such thing as overproduction. Yet today, tons of potatoes are being destroyed on U. S. farms while housewives in cities pay high prices and people abroad continue to starve.

Potato surpluses have resulted from favorable weather, a shift to irrigated lands, and better insecticides. Yet amid scarcities in some localities in some areas and high prices we literally seem to have potatoes to burn. This case of maldistribution, particularly in the South is due to the fact that the potatoes can't be dehydrated and stored because of the lack of processing plants in the areas where they are grown; that they can't be shipped north to processing plants because of high freight costs; and that they can't be exported because new potatoes have a high water content and thin skins, which makes spoilage almost certain.

Of last year's yield of almost 100 million bushels, 22 million were destroyed; 30 million were sold at a loss to alcohol distillers, 10% million went to starch factories, 10% million bushels into exports, 11 million bushels for livestock feed, and 3 millions into free school lunches. While this year's surplus is somewhat less, due to reduction in the number of acres planted, the same problem prevails.

Raised again is the issue over the Government policy of guaranteeing prices for many food products. Farmers are promised a price which is 90% of parity—that is, a price that would guarantee the farmer 90% of the purchasing power he realized from his crops during a favorable base period. Thus, when the farmer's expenses rise because of higher prices, his support rises too.

In 1946 the potato-price supports cost \$80 million. While the current supports are not expected to run into such a large sum of money, the support price has advanced 35 cents per 100 pounds because of the general rise in prices. While rising prices are being deplored by one branch of the administration, another branch is committed to keeping them up.

While the potato situation affords the main bone of contention, last year's corn, turkey and egg markets received support. Currently, along with potatoes, the important wartime export product, dried skim milk, presents a problem as expense shrouds its demand. The indicated surplus of citrus fruits may also require assistance.

The Department of Agriculture is committed by law to support, where necessary, farm prices for 20 specified food items, and farm policy calls for aid to other crops. That law isn't to expire until the end of 1948. What has happened with potatoes is indicative of what may happen with other major crops.

Continued support of potato prices at present levels promises bumper crops year after year because the cost of production has been greatly reduced. The long-range potato problem thus calls for price that will produce a smaller crop. Production controls are being used this year for potatoes and may be used elsewhere if surpluses threaten.

Production controls, however, are unpopular not only with farmers but also with present Congress, so some other method of supporting farm incomes without resorting to price supports and acreage controls is being sought.

One suggestion is to guarantee farmers' incomes without guaranteeing farm prices. Under this method, crop prices would be determined in the market place, without Government support or interference. If market prices failed to yield a "parity income," farmers would get a direct Government subsidy. This proposal has yet to find favor with farmers, who dislike the idea of direct Government handouts.

Observatory Move In Capital Same As Hunting House

The nation's strangest real estate deal is brewing at Washington. An advertisement might read like this:

WANTED: One-hundred acres of land. Must be at least 25 miles from nearest city. Must be certain city will stay at least 25 miles away. Must not be too far north or too far south. The weather not subject to quick change. Must be ideal for seeing heavenly bodies. Write or call the U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D. C.

The observatory with its 55 buildings must be moved. The reason, astronomers explain, is that the view from Washington just isn't what it used to be. The nation's capital has grown up in the 103 years since the observatory was founded. Smoke and dust from the city mar the view of the heavens. City streets and buildings radiate heat which "upset" the atmosphere.

If you think it's hard to find a home, you should try finding a place to put an observatory.

Druids Probably Responsible . . .

'Sack' Is Man's Best Friend, But It Threatens Civilization

By Ivan Yantis

Your best friend is your bed. That is a gospel truism which will become more evident as the summer terms roll on. Less and less will you associate with the sack, and more and more will your heart long for that happy reunion.

Only in the past decade have beds become the center of so much controversy. In England at present movies can show beds no closer than twelve inches to each other. And for cinematic purposes the old double bed is obsolete.

Bed, from the Anglo-Saxon Beddian, is really of uncertain origin. The ancient Druids, a thrifty bunch, had beds on the three-legged stool principle which were always and forever tipping over. So many people were fatally injured from falling bed accidents that the Druids are now extinct. Perhaps it's all for the best, however; they revelled in bloody pastimes and would have become extinct anyhow.

While the Druids were climbing back into their three-legged beds and nursing their abrasions, Inca engineers strove to overcome the three-legged problem. They leaped in the wrong direction and experimented with a two-legged bed, which, as we enlightened ones know, will not work. They are also extinct.

Today, in a frenzied school where studies require never-ending attention, the bed might as well have never been invented. It fills a corner of the room and gives that lived-in look, but serves no practical purpose. There is, however, one saving grace. The bed need not lose all self-respect. Let us consider how far modern literature would have succeeded without a bed.



Yantis

Portrait of an Editor

By Mack T. Nolen

Charlie Murray, new supreme omnipotent master of the Battalion and its satellites, was born in 1925. He has no other claim to fame except for a slight strain of nepotism.

A rotund, enigmatic chap who likes to remove his shoes and let his toes breathe at every opportunity, he left Eagle Pass on a rail in 1942 for A. & M. to make a name for himself. Several names have been given him, all of which are unprintable in a family newspaper.

His brother, Bill Murray (they have the same last name, isn't that odd?), had a fling at managing the neurotic staff of this rag in 1939 and 1940, but gave up in despair to devote his talents to the Eagle Pass International News-Guide, of which he is now assistant-editor.

Charlie and his brother Bill differ in that respect; Bill is allowed within the city limits of Eagle Pass.

During the Great War Charlie guarded rear echelon road intersections as an M. P. (Member of Parliament). His Judo lessons will serve him in good stead in his forthcoming wrestling bouts with theirate citizenry.

With a thick Swedish accent,

Sliderule Enters Field of Music

By Bill Galbreath

Future Beethovens and Irving Berlins may sit down with a slide-rule as necessary equipment when they compose new pieces of music. Even musicians may pull out a slide-rule and make hurried calculations before starting to play. L. E. Waddington, of C. G. Conn, Ltd., Elkhart, Ind., presented the slide-rule for music idea at a meeting of the Acoustical Society of America. Waddington said, "musicians are seldom concerned with the mathematical background of their art, but an understanding of the underlying physical principles of music can be very helpful to the student in considerations of problems related to harmony, intonation and general band instrument design."

Musical information adjusted on the slide-rule includes chord structure, scale building, instrumental transposition, interval relations and degrees of scales.

Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries was played as it actually sounded for scientists at the meeting. W. B. White of the School of Pianoforte Technology, Chicago, explained the difference between the two systems of keyboard instrument tuning and then demonstrated the difference by playing music as it was composed in the 17th Century when tuning was done by the mean-tone system. Sebastian Bach introduced the equal temperament system of piano tuning that is used today.

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Letters

SUMMER INERTIA

Dear Editor:

It seems a pity that during the recent election of officers for the Veteran Students Association only 167 votes were cast for the presidential candidates; surely a few more of the remaining 2,987 veterans currently enrolled in school could have taken the time and the very little effort required to cast a ballot.

A vote by 5% of the eligible voters of a school election, local election, or any type of election is hardly indicative of the will of the majority. Is there no interest in electing the most capable man to this most important office of the Veteran Students Association? Are not the veterans interested in good government? As was shown in the recent disturbances concerning the Administration, an able and influential spokesman can be a great asset to both the school and the organization.

This fall will see another election of officers for the Veteran Students Association. Let us hope that each of the incumbent officers and each member of the Association will do his share in turning out the vote on that election day.

J. T. MILLER

★

QUIET!

Dear Editor:

It is bad enough to be stationed on the outskirts of Navasota (the New Area, that is) but why must we suffer along with those people attempting to sing over in the Music Hall? Not that the females squalling is not bad enough, but the two-fingered pianist really has a gay time on that two-note keyboard.

You could begin a drive to move this Music Hall out to the outskirts of the college along with the cow-barn near the A. & I. Building.

Deliver us from this so-called music stuff.

Sincerely yours,
LAWRENCE W. BRUNSON
Dorm 4.

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