

Prelude to Planning

A MOST unfortunate catch-phrase was coined a few years ago—"The Impending Tidal Wave of Students." It captured the attention of the public, told them that many more young people would soon be seeking college preparation. It also captured the public's emotional reactions. "Swamped," "desperate plight," "overcrowded," "inundation," "impending crisis" expressed typical response to the prospective doubling of college enrollments by 1970 or earlier.

Three million college students in 1957. Six million in 1970. The difference is not a tidal wave, a calamity, an overpowering burden. The difference is three million American young people, full of promise, one of the most fortunate bounties received by America since its founding. Equipped intellectually, socially and spiritually by higher education these sons and daughters of ours can make our present achievements seem puerile, can move civilization forward as much in ten years as we did in thirty. If they are a tidal wave, so were the petroleum reserves discovered in Texas and California a few decades ago.

Between 1910 and 1920 educators and pundits were in much discussion about who should go to high school. Somehow, the American people did not hear. They answered the question in typically American fashion—by sending everybody who wanted to go and many who did not want to. Maybe between 1955 and 1965 it will be interesting to speculate again, this time upon who should go to college. But, the odds are high that the Ameri-

can people will give the same answer—everybody who wants to go shall go. Whether what the students get when they enter is higher education, continuing education, technical education, post-high school education or what-have-you, relatively few people will care—so long as it is called college education and eventuates in a degree.

Educators must care, however. Planners must care. Actual and potential donors must care. Taxpayers must care. And caring, they must act before the fact.

Strangely enough, for once the primary actions needed are not financial ones. Although the chief change in college attendance will be quantitative (the most drastic estimates show only minor changes in the "ability" distribution of 1970 enrollees), the adjustments necessary to meet that change are qualitative.

As has been true for many years, the pay-off question is, "What shall happen to these young people while they are in college, and to all the rest of us because they were in college?" We shall need new ways of reaching old ends. We shall need some new ends.

This issue of *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP* is devoted to an examination of ends and means for American higher education. Perhaps the best way to introduce its content is to ask the reader to ponder a few opinionated, epigrammatic propositions:

"Who should go?" might be better asked, "Who chooses to go and how intelligently does he choose?"

Success in college is related to I.Q. and T.Q. (Teaching Quality), but it seems really dependent upon M.Q.—the motivation quotient.

If our scheme for higher education ever becomes monolithic, we can expect a monolithic society. Each institution has the right to be different, and the obligation to respect differences. Even in the jungle of modern advertising, it is unethical to cast aspersions upon another's brand.

The imperatives for re-examining and redesigning the ends to be served by a multilithic scheme of higher education arise not from the surging enrollment but from the surging tides of twentieth century civilization.

Numbers are not necessarily a big bad wolf. Seventy-five percent of the colleges in the United States could double their enrollments and still be smaller than existent colleges of the same kind now doing excellent jobs.

The chief end of higher education is not to make man dependent upon teachers but independent of them.

The real hero of the next decade will be the man who convinces the majority of the faculty members of one single college that something phenomenal is going to happen to *them*.

Now is the time to rock the boat. The

gentle breezes of complacency currently blowing over American college curricula are far more dangerous than a hurricane. We are making history, all right, the kind of history which historians in 2000 will likely begin, "Unfortunately . . ."

College at its best is a constructively educative environment. The teacher is a prime part of that environment. In the immediate future, he will become more and more rare and perhaps more precious. It is not necessarily true, however, that the educative environment which is college has to become less constructive because it is more sparsely settled with teachers. We have at our disposal means which can free the teacher from instructing, explaining, drilling, and many other components of his present job and turn him loose to *really* teach—that is, cause people to learn. We have also almost unlimited opportunity to add to the environment other educative influences and experiences. We have millions of young people whose educability, we are beginning to learn, is far beyond the ceilings which most of us accepted. What more could a man want as an opportunity for curriculum planning?

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REMINDER

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