Clinic of our times--the alumni university

THE PRESS OF MEXICO

BY WALLACE PERRY, '07

The editor asked me to write an article on: What's the attitude of the Mexican press toward the United States?

The answer is simple: It's whatever the attitude of the Mexican press toward the United States?

Just now, it's particularly friendly; before the American government recognized the Obregon administration, and even up to the time Dwight W. Morrow replaced Jas. R. Sheffield as ambassador to Mexico City, gringos and the colossal of the north were editorial terms that repeatedly appeared in the press of the southern republic.

Freedom of the press, though frequently proclaimed in political manifestos, is something that doesn't exist in Mexico. I have a friend in the interior of Mexico who owns a newspaper, a few years ago, was rabidly anti-American but whose personal opinions, I knew, were friendly.

I asked him why the conflict between his public and private utterances. "I don't dare write otherwise," he confided. "Now his editorial columns seldom if ever carry anything but a friendly tone toward America and Americans."

The reason is the better understanding Ambassador Morrow has brought about and the consequent friendly attitude of the Mexican administration.

Mexican newspapers always have given big play to American news. The death of Ex-President Harding, Lindbergh's flight to Paris, the last presidential election in the United States and Ramsay MacDonald's visit to President Hoover each was given columns and columns of space, not only in the capital but all over Mexico.

And that tendency was given even more impetus by the flight into and tragic death in the United States of Emilio Carranza and the more recent pre-inaugural visit to the United States by President Pascual Ortiz Rubio.

One reason for Mexicans' interest in American news is the direct effect of the policy of the United States on Mexican politics. Another seems to be the avidity for which the Mexican looks for news of violence, supplied by American crime, and for political news, which accounts for his interest in American elections.

"The press," in Mexico, doesn't mean anything like what it does in the United States. The "country newspaper," which springs up in every county seat and every town of consequence in America, doesn't exist in the neighboring republic. Outside Mexico City and the larger cities of the republic, newspapers are few and far between. And these deal more in political propaganda—long diatribes against political enemies and adjective-laden praise for political friends—than in the news of the day.

Yet Mexican newspapers have contributed much to Mexican literature. Some of the nation's greatest authors—and poets, too, since poetry plays a promi-

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Meet Dean Holmberg at a reception afterwards. The above is a card just received.

This is written before the date for Holmberg tribute but I am going to get a lot of kick out of joining a lot of other Sooners attending that function. Favorite speaker at law school smokers, director of a symphony orchestra, warm personal friend of thousands of students and alumni, the irrepressible and irreplaceable, that's our good friend Holmberg.

Two O. U. alumni, leaders in their fields, were on the library dedication program. Carl H. Milan, '07 arts-sc., is secretary of the American Library association. Milton J. Ferguson, '01 arts-sc., M. A. '06, is director of the California State Library commission, which has long served as a model for other states. The recently established training school at the university already has two alumni of the first magnitude.

I am strong for "Chuck" Newell, ex '08, who contributed that fine article about Bennie Owen in the last issue. When I was in high school, he is the boy that wrote the O. U. sport dope that made a lot of us keep on mighty good terms with the young lady Western Union operator.

The Tulsa contingent of the Jayhawk tribe came with a lot of whoops at Christmas time. The alumni and present students combined forces and started a new or rejuvenated K. U. club with officers and everything necessary for an enthusiastic career.

About Dec. 19 a few of the faithful met and planned an organization meeting which was held Dec. 23 with great success. They elected Hal Rambo, '13, treasurer and Bernice Palenske, '29, secretary.

On January 4 a dinner brought out sixty persons and from the dinner they sallied forth to attend the "College Night" at the Coliseum where representatives of the various colleges and universities were to vie with one another in putting on the most spectacular or cleverest stunt. Although the competition was strong Kansas won first prize which was a great silver loving cup. The Jayhawks, unstrong Kansas won first prize which was a great silver loving cup. The Jayhawks, unstrong Kansas won first prize which was a great silver loving cup. The Jayhawks, un

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nent role in the press—have begun their careers as newspaper writers.

Newspaper circulation in Mexico is small—even among the larger papers—though newsboys cry their wares as lustily as in any American city. The reason is the large percentage of Mexican illiteracy.

In view of that fact and the scarcity of advertising, coupled with the high cost of print paper in Mexico, one marvels at the impressive volume and lavish illustrations of Mexican newspapers.

The reason for their seeming prosperity is the same as the explanation for their attitude toward the United States: They are heavily subsidized either by the national or state administrations. And, along with the subsidy or the absence of it, goes a censorship more strict than was administered among European countries during the world war. The rule is: For the publisher who is loyal to the administration, a substantial subsidy; for the one who is disloyal, either to death or be kicked out of the country.

WHY A UNIVERSITY

By LEONARD LOGAN, '17

WHAT I have to say here is not offered in the spirit of criticism. Those who are responsible for the past achievements of our institution have my most sincere commendation. My appreciation for these accomplishments is the appreciation of an alumnus, a member of the faculty, and a resident of Oklahoma for thirty years.

Since December 19, 1890, when the act was passed by the legislature of the Territory of Oklahoma locating and establishing the university at Norman, many changes have taken place. The university has grown from a faculty of less than a half dozen men who met their classes in the old stone building on Main street in the fall of 1892 to a faculty of several score men and women who meet crowded classes in a cluster of buildings on the north edge of one hundred and sixty-seven acres of land adjacent the city limits.

According to this law “the object of the university of Oklahoma shall be to provide the means of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the various branches of learning connected with scientific, industrial, and professional pursuits, in the instruction and training of persons in the theory and art of teaching, and also the fundamental laws of the United States and this territory in what regards the rights and duties of citizens.”

When the university was established Oklahoma was a frontier. There was no university in the Indian Territory although several academies supported by tribal and denominational funds were flourishing. Institutions of learning were few and far between in the Oklahoma Territory. The equipment of all of them was very meager. The university was established to afford an opportunity for the sons and daughters of this new country to acquire learning.

The university has succeeded admirably well in the forty years that have passed. The enrollment has increased from a handful of students taking a few courses to a roster of five thousand enrolled in courses ranging from the “Growth of Civilization,” to the “Theory of Wrestling,” “Housewifery” to “French Romanticism,” and “Personal Insurance” to “Comparative Religion.”

We have now come to a turning point in the university’s history. Social changes, changing technology, and even the students themselves demand new things. The function of a university is to teach and extend the boundaries of knowledge through research. Heretofore, the university has been stressing the teaching function. This was a new state. Educational facilities were limited. The demands upon this institution grew faster than the resources. Students at first came here for the purpose of learning. This school with the exception of one or two others was the only place in the state where the boy or girl could go where the curriculum was broad and deep enough to meet their requirements. Today there are high schools dotted over the state with courses of study embracing most of those offered by the university during its first years. While these schools have been growing the university has been growing. They were purposely organized as feeders for the university until today there are only twenty-five universities out of several score in the United States with a larger enrollment.

No period in the history of the world has witnessed as rapid growth in the development of technology. Inventions have multiplied with increasing rapidity. It would be trite to dwell on them here. However, they have had tremendous influence on the university in meeting the new demands they have made. New courses must be offered. New methods of teaching must be devised. The automobile, radio, aviation, cigarettes, and synthetic drinks have created a sophisticated student who offers new problems.

The new student demands a change and brings to the front an issue that cannot be ignored. There is nothing unusual in students wanting something they do not have. That has been the experience of the human race from antiquity. Today we have a new student in a new era offering a new challenge that must be met. There are symptoms of this condition on every campus. I have not had the time yea to read The Students Speak Out printed recently by the New Republic but I have heard them speaking out here and elsewhere attacking the methods of teaching, the curriculum, and the whole educational policy of this and other institutions. I repeat that the fact that they are critical is not unusual. They have never been satisfied. But there is a dart of truth in the challenge that they hurl that strikes home.

We cannot afford to sit in academic smugness oblivious of things around us lest inflamed youth fire us all.

The time has come when the University of Oklahoma must formulate a new policy. Since the success of the school rests upon the shoulders of the faculty it is becoming and appropriate that this body take upon itself a study of the problem.

When the university was established there were fewer high school graduates in proportion to the population that there are college graduates today.

Even I can remember in my high school days when the chief theme of speakers at high school assemblies was to urge boys and girls to go to college. Extra-curricular activities were inaugurated to encourage the student to attend. So remarkable has been the success of these efforts and propaganda that college enrollment has increased several times faster than the growth in wealth and the extra-curricular activities have become so institutionalized as to form the chief center of interest on every university campus. In fact attendance in college has become so important that President Angell of Yale was prompted to remark recently before the Colgate alumni that the American youth in his opinion goes to college to a large extent merely to gain social prestige. The hunt for social prestige has drawn hundreds into college who would have done better had they never been there.

I stated the function of the university is to teach and to engage in research. I did not say it was the function of the university to teach everybody. It should teach only those in this generation who will become the leaders in the next. The selective process should begin in the high schools. The entrance requirements should be made more rigid and the process of elimination more efficient. The details of this process should be left with each school and college on the campus as is now done. But the standards should be raised and raised gradually. This would eliminate such incubation courses like English 0 and others and release more energy for more effective work.

In connection with this policy of gradually raising the entrance requirements,
(and when I say gradually raising I mean the curve of accomplishment so this policy will be carried out more swiftly and quickly than heretofore) we should work to the goal of finally eliminating the freshman and sophomore classes within a period of not less than five years.

The age of the average high school graduate is growing lower and lower. Freshmen entering at the age of sixteen are not uncommon. This is too young for a boy or girl to enter college. They don't know what it is all about. High schools all over the state are establishing junior college courses. This movement should be encouraged. When they have grown to a sufficient number let the junior college work here be dropped.

The work in the junior colleges could be supervised by the university but the university authorities need not bother themselves about that. A rigid entrance examination would have more wholesome effect than any kind of credit system and supervision.

There are six teachers' colleges scattered over the state. These colleges should be taken out from under the control of the state board of education and put under the control of the board of regents of the university. They should be made separate and independent colleges of arts and sciences, each with a dean, who is a member of the administrative council of the university and responsible to the president and board of regents. It is not intended here to infer that their present function of training teachers be abandoned.

This policy would have a tendency to eliminate many of the objectional features mentioned heretofore and permit the university to carry on a more constructive program in the field of research. These conclusions are the result of five years' experience working with freshman committees here at the university.

Some time ago I discussed this very problem with a colleague of mine on the freshman committee of the college of arts and sciences. He was one hundred per cent opposed to my suggestions because he said the freshmen should be brought here to acquire atmosphere that they could not get elsewhere in the state. It is on account of this very atmosphere I urge that they be scattered out. Freshmen learn more from other students than they do from their professors. A large part of what they learn is not wholesome. Besides, the instructors with whom they come in contact in the classroom are the most inexperienced on the faculty.

The University of Oklahoma has never engaged in an extensive research program because it has not had the resources. The increase in appropriations have been absorbed by increasing enrollments. There is no way to estimate it. One guess is as good as another, but I would say that over fifty per cent of the material, time, and energy, now spent in teaching is wasted. This should be conserved and applied in research. In this way our institution could render a more valuable service to the state.

The purpose of the university is to serve the state and on that basis alone can it lay claim as it has in the past for support. The publicity that has gone out has centered the attention of the public on less important things. The picture of co-ed blondes and brunettes have a greater appeal than a theory of value. That is human nature. However, effective journalism can convince the public that the university could be made more useful and once this is done appropriations would not be so hard to get.

Not so many months ago I was talking with one of my friends who teaches a humanistic subject in another college about the function of research in a state supported institution. His theory was that research should be fostered by the university for research's sake alone; that the university should not undertake problems of practical research. Research has its cultural value and for that purpose should it be carried out.

I do not propose here to enter into a discussion on what is culture. I would not be capable of the task if I had the time. I cannot help but agree, however, with John Cowper Powys who said in his recent book on The Meaning of Culture that "culture is what is left over after you have forgotten all you definitely set out to learn—and in this sally you get at least a useful warning against associating culture too closely with the academic paraphernalia of education."

Professor Winifred Cullis hit the nail on the head when she discussed in her presidential address at the annual conference of the educational associations of University colleges, London, the question as to whether research should be directed to the mere acquisition of knowledge, or to the solution of some immediate problem. She approved of the search for knowledge in the abstract with a view of turning the results to practical use.

The state of Oklahoma is overlooking one of its most valuable resources when it fails to tie together the functions of state and its university in an attempt to solve its problems which are increasing in importance and magnitude with the passing years.

Time will not permit me to outline all the ways this correlation could be brought about. Each of you are more acquainted with the most pertinent problems pertaining to your respective fields than I am. Some important examples, however might not be out of place. The English, language, and anthropology departments have made a good beginning in research in the culture of the southwest. There should be a close connection between the state department of charities and corrections and the school of social service. This school should have sufficient resources to furnish data from its researches to assist this department in its work.

Not long ago the governor of Oklahoma announced that he was going to appoint a commission to study the problem of taxation in Oklahoma. It should have been unnecessary for him to do this, although the commission has not yet been appointed. The University of Oklahoma could make a scientific study of the problem to furnish the basis on which the governor could formulate a policy.

It is true that our fabric of state government, like practically all the others, is shot through and through with politics. This is a handicap but the task is not hopeless. As more science is injected into government the less politics there will be. This arrangement need not bring the university into politics. The function of the university is to get data on the particular problem at hand through its research machinery. The state officials need not act always according to reports presented to them. However, a true scientist will not let these things color his conclusions.

Road building is one of the most important problems confronting our people today. The college of engineering is already co-operating with the state highway department by testing types of structural material used in road building by the state. This work ought to be carried further in making studies of the types of road material the resources of the state afford and the best methods of its application. It is a reflection on the state and not on the college of engineering when Senator W. B. Pine went to Pennsylvania state college to get them to work out a problem of finding a new material cheaper than macadam and harder than concrete to be used in building roads. They claim they have found this material. The university should be given the resources to make this study possible.