TATE officials announce an apparent deficit in the state's revenues approximating $2,000,000.00. They follow with an announced intention to cut appropriations $4,000,000.00, or two million less than the estimated income in order to save in this biennium enough to wipe out the deficit of the last two years. To date some $3,300,000.00 has been stricken from budgets of state educational institutions, mostly for buildings and equipment. With some $830,000.00 reduction, the University of Oklahoma is the heaviest sufferer. All new buildings and practically all equipment items have been eliminated. And then follows the further announcement that it is useless for friends of the university to try to restore any of the items. The case is closed and the medicine dosed out. Like it or not, that is your privilege. And they gamble that you don't have the intestinal equipment to make a fight.

I can remember one day when as a little kid I was running around in the yard where other boys were playing ball. Accidentally the ball crashed through our neighbor's window. The boys ran but I was too slow-minded to grasp the necessity of it. Mrs. Neighbor grabbed me and ruined a perfectly good seat with a perfectly good paddle. I have never yet been able to understand why she took it all out on me.

Nor can I understand now why so great a portion of the alleged deficit should fall upon educational institutions, and especially on the university; nor why the case should be closed without a hearing accorded to friends of the university who protest.

Politics of the rudest sort are played against the university. After the damage is done the cry is set up to keep the schools out of politics. Under the circumstances just how the university is to receive reasonable fair treatment unless her alumni play politics is too deep for me.

Practically all building and equipment items have been stricken from the university's budget for the next two years. And between us as friends, I can point to high schools in the state already better equipped to teach certain courses than corresponding departments in the university. The University of Oklahoma has fully a thousand more students than either the University of Kansas or the University of Missouri, and with much less equipment than either of these schools.

The fair minded citizens of Oklahoma who have paid taxes year after year gladly to support the state and to develop her greater institutions will wonder why the knife is not applied in more appropriate places.

Just how the state can step out of the line of progress for two years and then hope to regain its position after the lapse of months is a problem whose solution the governor and the legislature have not yet indicated. The sprinter might as well drop out of the race for two laps and then hope to make up lost ground and overtake the field during the last round.

Believe in one living within his income. The boy who cannot pay his grocer has no business buying a Packard for joy riding, and the one whose rent is past due is not justified in taking an operation for appendicitis for social prestige.

Some things are incidental, others are essential. The automobile and telephone to some are just an agency for promoting another joy ride, but to the doctor they are as essential as his pill bag and often more effective in earning a decent living. The doctor whose bank account will not meet his phone bill or pay for the Ford is not warranted in sitting back and letting the practice go to another better equipped. The man whose son or daughter must undergo a serious operation wants to know that the hospital is properly equipped and its staff capable of taking care of the case.

Certain things are equally essential to a state. One of the most important is an educational system available to every boy and girl in the state, offering each educational facilities and equipment of the highest type. The man who sends his son or daughter away to school wants to know that its faculty and equipment are fully adequate to teach the student and that the four years spent there will not be wasted. That four years cannot be done over and to offer anything less than the best available is a fraud against our future community life.

I have never been able to grasp the magnitude of Doctor Gould's figures on Oklahoma's production of $1,000,000,000.00 in new wealth annually. I see Oklahoma City and Tulsa spending upwards of $30,000,000.00 each year for new buildings. No, not spending—investing. And then I learn that the whole state cannot afford an investment of $400,000 a year on buildings and physical equipment for its state university. To the outsider it must be hell all of a place to live in.
For JUNE, 1929

Oklahoma Out of Politics

In pioneering the work of geology in Oklahoma, the University of Oklahoma has added more wealth to the state than the university will spend in maintenance and equipment for the next hundred years. No other single agency has done more to develop Oklahoma's marvelous petroleum resources. During the last three years alone the production tax paid into the state treasury on oil, gas and other minerals, exceeded $31,500,000.00.

Any policy which neglects or restrains an agency so potent in developing so prolific a source of the state's revenue, is indeed a short-sighted policy from the standpoint of the state's future revenues.

And let me add another instance. I could name a university graduate, who as head of one of the state's departments, increased the state's revenue through that department alone from $400,000.00 to $900,000.00 annually—a yearly increase through his efforts single handed of more than the amount required each of the next two years by the university for building and equipment.

And with the proper assistance and the enforcement of present laws, that same department could produce an additional $400,000.00 annually.

I can name a second graduate of the university whose work in another state department has resulted in saving to Oklahoma consumers in excess of $1,000,000.00 annually—more than double the university's budget items referred to.

Why not develop a few more of those boys and turn them loose in the state? Instead of reducing the university's budget and cutting out items now urgently needed, the state officials could give their attention more properly to increasing the university's facilities and its scope.

Oklahoma has marvelous natural resources. Her mineral production yielded over $10,000,000.00 in gross production taxes for the year ending June 30, 1928, and $12,000,000.00 for the preceding year. These funds went largely to the current expense of government through state, county and school agencies.

Oklahoma is consuming its natural resources ravenously and levying a tax thereon for current expenses of government. Any tax levied against natural resources consumed should go largely into permanent improvements to replace in part the natural capital which is being currently exhausted. No other means will provide for the future welfare of the state. Certainly ample provisions for public buildings and equipment should be made from such revenues.

The same can be said of our state inheritance tax. It is levied on the passing of property and applied against current expenses of government by reason of which it reduces capital itself. Revenues from the state inheritance tax should be set aside in a public fund for the university and A. and M. college and no part of it used for current governmental expenditures.

The total assessed value of Oklahoma has been in excess of $1,600,000,000.00 for each of the last three years. A levy of one fourth of a mill would yield in excess of $400,000.00 annually, or provide for the university's immediate needs for buildings and equipment. And such a levy would add 25 cents a year to the tax on each $1,000.00 of assessed valuation. To the average taxpayer it would mean probably from fifty cents to one dollar a year additional taxes.

The governor tells us that our state is living beyond its income and that we must call a halt. So far I agree heartily. But where shall we halt? Certainly not with the university.

What business man would trade a $900,000.00 salesman for a $400,000.00 one? And who cannot understand that a million dollars saved annually will more than pay the $400,000.00 required to meet the urgent needs of the university for buildings and equipment each year?

No state whose annual production of wealth is over a billion dollars, which seeks new industries and invites new capital, whose natural resources are scarcely touched, is justified in any niggardly policy which drives its youth, its greatest asset, to other states in search of decent educational facilities.

A corporation elects directors to carry on its business. A state elects its officers for the same purpose. Neither can sit by and say that current revenue is not sufficient to provide plant and equipment with which to carry on. Both are charged with providing proper facilities for their purpose, and nothing less will discharge their obligations. If the governor and the legislature find current revenues insufficient to provide proper buildings and equipment for the university then their duty to the state requires them not to neglect or destroy, but to cast about and develop such a policy or such a system as will produce the necessary funds to provide those facilities in proper measure.