

The Daily Tar Heel



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Sunday, January 11, 1931

Our Brief for Optional Attendance

Final action on optional class attendance will be taken in the near future we are informed. Before the holidays the faculty made decisions which practically abolished optional attendance. As we understand it each department was to decide for itself its attitude towards optional attendance. Instructors in the departments would be governed by the action of the department. The action of the faculty was nullified and a return made to the system employed last quarter. Now final action is expected.

General misunderstanding has existed since the holidays as to what attendance is required. Discussions have been held on classes both before and since the holidays and a number of conferences between members of the faculty and students have been held recently. Altogether both faculty members and students are beginning to understand the opposing points of view.

Recently the administrative council of the student body adopted a plan to confer with the faculty on the subject. This was a wise move and undoubtedly this committee will present the consensus of student opinion. Final action is expected within the next few days.

Frankly, the Daily Tar Heel has always been and probably will always be opposed to compulsory attendance. As long as the Daily remains under present editorial control its policy will be to agitate for optional attendance, regardless of the action of the faculty.

Some of our arguments will not bear investigations. They are based on personal reactions to the idea of being forced to attend classes. Arguments based on personal reactions cannot be

made to apply to the student body as a whole. But we wonder if the action of the faculty isn't based more on individual professors' and instructors' experiences with empty seats and less on their desire to improve the general scholastic standing of the University.

The theory of liberalness has been discussed. It would be useless to say that abolition of optional attendance would be retrogressive. Those who think so will continue to do so. Those who hold differing opinions cannot be convinced. Similarly it would be useless to describe the move as a step backwards, for such descriptions are theoretical as are most the arguments for and against both optional and compulsory attendance.

But practical or theoretical compulsory attendance is a nuisance. It is unnecessary. The time and red tape involved in fulfilling the requirements of a compulsory attendance system do not justify such a system. The honor roll for the past quarter indicates that the students are progressing nicely under the present system. If we are seeking mechanical perfection perhaps it would be wise to vary our system until we discovered one which would make us mechanically perfect. But if we are educating let's eliminate some of the red tape and get down to it.

And Now The History Department

The Younger Generation is not as infantile as college pictures and magazines would have you believe. They have a hard, brittle outlook on life and society in general. They are not mere youngsters to be imposed upon. And furthermore the best way to handle them in colleges and educational institutions is to place with them the responsibility for the successful culmination of educational policies as they relate to students—examinations, etc.

Thus it is that the Honor System so admirably fits the Younger Generation in theory, and in actual practice where faculties wholeheartedly support it. The University of North Carolina—both faculty and students—is pledged to uphold the ideal of the Honor System. Any organized disregard for that ideal on the part of either party is a break in good faith. The Tar Heel is forced to lament the decision of the history department of the University which would refuse to take the word of pledge of students that they had actually read outside reading, and which demands of them that they must outline each page of reading in detail to prove that they are gentlemen and men of honor, or rather, and actually, as they are viewed—dishonest children incapable of being trusted. —JACK D.

We Must Have Money

Quite naturally, Governor Gardner's proposal to further cut the salaries of all state employees is meeting with considerable discontent throughout North Carolina. High school and college teachers will probably be hit harder by the cut than any other group. Perhaps, the cut in salaries is essential. Yet the fact is that the harmful results which this and other educational institutions will suffer are greatly to be lamented.

The tax payers of the state are justified in complaining of high taxes, for real estate has fallen to the level of worthlessness. The University of North Carolina, however, must have money from some source if it is to maintain its present rating among the universities of the nation—if it is to render the state of North Carolina the service that it has done for a long number of years. An educational in-

stitution of collegiate rank is not to be compared with a house, which can be neglected when half completed, the building process being resumed later without any considerable loss. This university cannot stand still, there must be advancement in one direction or the other. Damage incurred from one year's operation on too lean an allowance will require perhaps ten years of constructive labor to regain lost ground.

This University must compete with the largest and best of the United States for its professors. Salaries paid the present faculty are already ridiculously low. The result of a cut in existing salaries is too obvious to be mentioned.

Great credit is due Governor Gardner for his untiring efforts in attempting to bring relief to the people of the state. There can be no doubt that he has the interests of the University at heart. His failure, however, to recommend securing increased revenue from such institutions as the Duke Power interests to bridge the present very grievous emergency is worthy of note.

The fact is that the University of North Carolina cannot operate without funds. The people of the state are not fully aware of this truth. High school teachers throughout the state are making mediocre salaries at present. Lowering of their salaries cannot help but result in a corresponding decrease in the number of competent persons who will enter the teaching profession in the future. Money must be had, or the aggregate results will outlive the narrow ken of the present.—J. C. W.

The Russian Trial

Professor Calvin Hoover of Duke University, in his address on Russia in Gerrard hall Wednesday night, made a statement concerning the recent sensational Soviet trial of eight professors and engineers accused of plotting against the Russian government that is the echo of hundreds of similar editorial comments in American newspapers during the past few months.

Mr. Hoover asserted that the trial was a dramatic sham; a theatrical spectacle for the Russian people. The Communist party needed some alibi for the recent food shortage that has beset the nation, and so it used these men as scapegoats, and accused them of bringing about this crisis by the use of sabotage.

General opinion in this and other countries regarding this trial has been of the same nature. The Russian people are fond of the dramatic, so they were given this play. The trial was planned in advance, and all the roles were carefully rehearsed. The eight "actors" in the "play" were cautiously coached for their parts. And the play went over with a flare. The eight men were merely unfortunate puppets controlled by strings held in the hands of the Communist party.

So runs popular opinion. But, somehow, we do not think this was the case. The accused men were men of the highest type of character and intelligence. We do not think that any amount of money or punishment could have made them sell their souls and lower themselves so deeply into the mud. We think they were too fine to truckle to the government and utter the false testimony they have been accused of doing.

What could they have gained by doing this? At the least, exile in the far North or many, long years in a Russian prison, and the hatred of millions of their countrymen for the remainder of their lives. Would it have been worth it? We do not think so.—P. L.

OPEN FORUM

FROM THE FACULTY

To the Editor of the Tar Heel:

In the fall of 1928, 124 freshmen entered one of the schools of this University. At mid-term of that quarter eighty-eight of these men had failed to do passing work on one or more courses. At the end of the quarter forty-four of the 124 (less than thirty-six per cent) passed all of their work. Twenty-eight men (twenty-two and five-tenths per cent) passed two courses and the same number passed one course. The other twenty-four (nearly twenty per cent of the class) did not pass any work at all. It is true that in this list of twenty-four men there were several who had withdrawn, some who because of illness could not take the examinations, and some who absented themselves from the examinations. The stark fact remains, however, that only a little more than fifty-eight per cent of the work for which this freshman class registered in September was passed at the end of the quarter, and that a very high percentage of the work that was passed received the grade of D, the lowest passing grade.

The resume that the men assigned for their failures included the following: loafing, twenty-one; poor preparation, fourteen; a lapse of one or more years between high school and college, thirteen; time spent in football practice, seven; time spent in self-help work, six; miscellaneous reasons twenty-seven. Among the latter group many said that they had missed quizzes by being absent from school at week-ends.

Does this record bear out the contention that just because a man has been accepted at college he is, therefore, able to direct his own affairs? To me it indicates that he needs guidance of a very positive nature, and I presume to suggest a program that I believe would help materially. I give below the plan that I would like to see tried out.

The Plan

1. Set aside a group of buildings on the campus for freshmen and provide that all fresh-

men should observe study hours, say from seven-thirty to eleven o'clock each evening.

2. Provide study halls for all who were deficient in any work and place in charge of these halls men both able and willing to help the freshmen with their problems.

3. Install a system of Saturday morning quizzes for all freshmen and excuse no freshman from these quizzes except for the most urgent reason.

4. At the end of the fall quarter, grant to all freshmen who had made the average of C on their three courses the right to move out of the supervised buildings.

5. Make class attendance optional thereafter so long as a student should maintain an average of C.

6. When a student should fall below the C average, remand him to the supervised program, no matter to what class he might belong.

Such a program would seem to meet the demands of both students and faculty. All the faculty is contending for is that students shall do the work for which they are sent to college. All the students should demand is a reasonable amount of freedom, and the above plan would

seem to give freedom to all able to use it in a right manner. Suppose the students give their reactions to the above suggestions.

A FACULTY MEMBER.

COMMUNITY CLUB REVIEWS WORK OF PAST SEASON

(Continued from preceding page)

several books reviewed and has discussed current magazines in its meetings. One of the programs was on Vergil with an address by Professor George Howe of the University faculty.

Mrs. Ralph Trimble has had charge of the home department which has studied primarily subjects of interior decoration.

The music department, led by Mrs. F. H. Edmister, has presented programs of Scandinavian and American music. Special attention was paid in the first program to the selections of Grieg and in the latter to McDowell.

The garden club was organized late, but under the leadership of Mrs. L. A. Koonts, the club has met several times for concentrated study on specially arranged programs.

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Advertisement for Marie Dressler in "REDUCING" featuring Polly Moran. Includes text: "Laugh and Grow Fat!", "Talk about your Hollywood diet! Here it is—just a thousand laughs, one after the other!", "SEE LEO, the M.G.M. Lion in Front of the Theatre at 4:00 O'clock.", and a list of other attractions like "The Knockout", "Truth About Youth", and "Going Wild".