

The Daily Tar Heel

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Saturday, February 21, 1931

Unequivocally For Student Stores

For two or more years merchants of the state have looked with disapproving eye upon the mercantiling services which the state institutions have been forced to carry on in order to insure continued service of high quality. In the beginning the Merchants' Association of the state petitioned the University to desist from this sort of thing. Now comes a movement led by Willard Dowell, representing the North Carolina Merchants' Association, John A. Gilmore, representing the Southern Retail Furniture Association, and Raleigh and Chapel Hill merchants individually, by which these men hope to abolish the dormitory stores, student barber shops, and to restrict the activities of the buildings' department, the Book Exchange, and the Consolidated Service Plants in such a manner that they will no longer be able to participate in any mercantile business whatsoever.

The lobbyists who favor the bill are powerful enough to cause it to be enacted, were there to be no opposition to the measure on the part of friends of the University and its self-help men. It is said by Dowell that he has been to Governor Gardner about the problem and that the Governor has agreed that the business now conducted by the self-help men and the University must be stopped.

The theory upon which the Merchants' Association is basing its case is a strong one, and one calculated to properly sway the votes of the legislators who will be called upon to sit in judgment of the dormitory stores and the University's activities. The association men say that no state owned school has the le-

gal right to compete with tax paying businesses of the state by underselling these tax paying businesses or taking trade away from them. After all, the legislators' chief duty is to please the tax-payers so that they may more easily carry on the larger business of the state.

And that is just where the argument of the lobbyists proposing the bill breaks down. The larger business of the state demands that its citizenry and its future leaders be educated efficiently at the lowest possible cost. If, by permitting students to operate stores they can earn their way through school in a community notoriously lacking in means by which young men of limited wealth may earn their way, the legislators are but living up to that larger purpose and obligation. Further, the proponents of the measure kill their case, and thoroughly break down their logic in trying to generalize and make a law for the entire state. There is no disputing the fact that Chapel Hill is the brilliant exception, and that what is fair and good to communities much larger is grossly unfair to Chapel Hill.

No student generation passes from the Hill without witnessing a rapid succession of failures of private enterprises, regardless of whether the University offers them any competition or not. Chapel Hill because it is entirely subservient to the University and its student population, which is never opulent and which fluctuates in size, is always a risky place in which to do business. Due to this condition of unpendability—never knowing whether private services essential to the comfort of the community will be forthcoming—the University has had to take the initiative in providing such services.

Our understanding is that the University has never willingly sought to enter any of the activities under question, and has done so only to insure continuous and reasonable service. There was a time not so long ago when the question was not whether the University should own and operate its own light system but whether it should have lights at all. Graduates can remember when water had to be carried from the Old Well so that the occupants of the dormitories could bathe. The University was forced to enter the water business. Such has been the case all along the line, the University being forced to enter all kinds of businesses in order to safeguard the health, comfort, and continued conveniences of its community because of the failure, inefficiency, or lack of private enterprises.

Were the merchants who propose to take the livelihood of worthy self-help students who run the dormitory stores and student barber shops successful in their undertaking, we fail to see what benefit they would derive from the thirty or so paltry dollars which the twenty or so students earn on their merchandise. In the first place this is really extra money which would not otherwise be spent in the town at all. Divided among twenty merchants of the town this magnificent sum which the students earn would be equivalent to seven dollars and a half a week for the businesses mentioned, and it takes some mathematician to figure how seven dollars and a half per week is going to save failing private enterprises.

As for curtailing the work of the Book Exchange by disallowing them to sell cigarettes, quiz books, candies, soft-drinks, ink, typewriters or other things than mere books and athletic equipment, the services rendered by the Book Exchange are downright essential.

It is said that the work of the

buildings' department would be practically wiped out with the exception of some few small tasks. The Daily Tar Heel has often complained of the low price the buildings' department pays self-help men, but the fact remains that it does provide the largest single source of work, and without it many men would have to leave school.

One reason why the University is able to hold its great men at ridiculously low salaries is due to the fact that on some few commodities such as coal the purchasing power of the University has devolved upon the households of these great professors, thus enabling their real wages to approach that offered them by other institutions.

The Tar Heel stands now and for all time for dormitory stores, student enterprises, and whatever mercantiling activities the University may deem necessary for the continued health, comfort, and welfare of its community, and calls upon the student body to educate itself on this issue and stand by ready to fight any curtailment of their conveniences, so that the University may continue to so regulate price levels that every son and daughter of the state may be privileged to obtain an education whether he be rich or whether he be poor.—Jack D.

Strange Comparisons

We read in recent foreign dispatches that Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer of England's Labor government, has hinted that he will resign if members of his party continued to treat his work with suspicion. Washington reports tell us of President Hoover's statements which indicate that he will veto the bonus bill in order to throw the responsibility for the legislation back on the Congress. Here are strange cases.

The British Chancellor became world famous when he told conferees over the Reparation question England's position in regard to debt cancellation. Mr. Hoover has distinguished himself by his failure to control a Congress which is in name at least Republican. Throughout the entire debt reduction conference Mr. Snowden minced no words in stating his government's position. He spoke and was respected.

During the wranglings between the Congress and the White House Mr. Hoover has spoken, but strange to say he has been inclined to compromise with the Democratic-Insurgent's coalitions. These compromises have not heightened the President's prestige in the halls of Congress. While Mr. Snowden is not the head of his party and while Mr. Hoover does not appear to be the head of the Republican party, both are in positions to dictate to their parties. There is no compromise about the Chancellor; he makes his decisions and sticks to them. The great weakness of Mr. Hoover is that he allows a group of so-called Progressives or pseudo-Republicans to bully him into compromise. Whatever one's opinion of the legislation one cannot fail to notice the lack of force about Mr. Hoover's decision.

Frugality And Extravagance

Without being a pessimist, we may as well admit that these are times when the practice of frugality is particularly important. But before practicing frugality, we must first know what it is. An academic definition is probably easy enough. But practically, the trouble is that it's so much easier for us to see the other fellow's lack of frugality than to see our own. Somebody has defined extravagance as "the other fellow wasting his money on things in

which we are not interested." But when it comes to the question of frugality and extravagance, there's something that's more important than money, paradoxical as that may sound right now. And that thing's time.

We haven't the slightest intention of preaching, but while we're on the subject of frugality, it might not be a reproach to human intelligence if we bothered a little about this matter of wasting time. There's an old saying that if you want a thing done, get a busy man to do it.

This is by no means intended as a paean of praise for the drudge. Heaven forbid. In fact, if we don't waste any time while we work, we'll have plenty of time to play. But we won't have any time for either unless we're as careful in the use of each minute as we are in the use of each penny now that financial frugality has ceased to be a virtue because it has become a necessity.—V. A. D.

With Contemporaries

Abolish Examinations?

The trend of criticism of the times appears to be directing itself more and more against the age-worn institution of examinations as a means of determining the relative knowledge an undergraduate has acquired at the end of a term. With the tedious, wearying events of the last few weeks still fresh in mind, it might seem out of place to set down a few of the considerations which we believe excuse the examination system as it exists today, with all its psychological brutality and its inadequacies, as a standard of cultural measurement. When one considers the recent statement of the New York World that "examinations are a pretty sorry way to test knowledge and absurdly out of joint with the modern world," he is forced to admit that on the face of things the opinion might hold water.

On the other hand, there is not an ideal situation facing the educational world today. The hampering influence of the "four-year loafer" and misfit on his fellows is becoming generally recognized in educational circles. The need for a weeding-out process is essential if the universities and colleges are to be maintained as dispensaries of culture in the best meaning of the word. Herein then, lies the most cogent argument for the examination and here is a need, to eliminate the misfits from colleges, that no other agency has been invented to meet.

Aside from their value in this respect, examinations perform another function, in the urge they develop for the work by holding a threat over the head of the undergraduate. Even grades, however faulty and inexact they may be, provide a certain visible record of achievement, which serves as a kind of compensation for energy expended. It offers an opportunity of a sort for a man to check up on himself, to give direction to his efforts. Of course, too often examinations bring a rigid limiting influence that makes for fact-cramming but that type of test is here, at least, happily tending to disappear, giving rise to questions demanding more comprehensive, integrated knowledge. A third feature of examinations is the forced review of the course as a whole, which they necessitate. Again and again men will find that this retrospect gives unity and meaning to the subject that had been impossible to grasp during the weeks of more segmented study.

This is rather an apology for

examinations than a defense of them. We appreciate the weaknesses of the system but we also recognize the needs that it meets, however inadequately. Under the present educational conditions these needs must be met, and until a better means is offered or until these conditions themselves are radically changed, we feel that examinations will remain.—Daily Princetonian.

Ann Arbor Liquor

Metropolitan papers have lapped up the report of the activities of the federal agents among the fraternity houses at the University of Michigan. Five fraternity houses have been padlocked until September 1, and the college has handed down an order placing them on "social probation" for the ensuing school year.

We can do nothing but sympathize with the 79 men who are to face legal action. We can do nothing but applaud the statement made by a level-headed Michigan congressman whose comment follows:

"From all appearances the raid was staged to get the fullest publicity, and I do not think the university or its student body should be subjected to the criticism that is bound to follow. All of the trouble could very easily have been corrected by the university authorities themselves and the harmful publicity avoided."

Seated at our distant editorial desk, it appears to us to have been another case of bungling on the part of the federal agents. Again this mountain of federal authority has labored and has brought forth an insignificant mouse. It is a commonly accepted fact that drinking is more or less prevalent on college campuses, especially at a time of house party festivities. Taken by and large, there is nothing horribly pernicious about it. We believe that.

We realize our happy position when we hark back to the situation of the minions stationed about the dormitories of recent date. We appreciate our position of being an institution not under the pursed-lip supervision of a state board of education. We appreciate more sincerely the quiet and well-balanced attitude that prevails among the administrative offices. And enthusiastically we wave our tattered banner that proclaims to the world our somewhat trite but none the less effective motto: "Nothing to excess."—Daily Dartmouth.

Feet

Of Clay

Crash! And down comes another of America's greatest men. Or so Edgar Lee Masters would have him topple from a position he long has held as The Emancipator. For more than 65 years American people have hailed Abraham Lincoln as one of the greatest statesmen, presidents and leaders.

But now, six days before the 122nd birthday of that martyr of slavery, comes a large and wordy volume by a one-book author, dragging Lincoln through the mire, calling him "a slick and crafty politician, cold, mannerless, unkept, at times neurotic and superstitious."

Masters' book, published yesterday, bears the trite title of "Lincoln, the Man," and portrays Lincoln as much the same sort of simple-minded citizen that Rupert Hughes showed George Washington to be. Hughes' efforts caused some what of a flurry several days ago, but has been heard from but little since.

"Hero worshippers," American people have been called, and perhaps hero worshippers they are, but what of that? Men who do things out of the ordinary deserve special mention for

it. Even if Lincoln lived the way Masters claims, it makes little difference to the millions of people who will celebrate his birthday next Thursday. Lincoln is remembered for what he did, not for the way he lived.

Masters claims that Lincoln could have prevented the Civil war merely by letting the southern states secede. "They would have been back in the Union within five years," he says. How peacefully they would have entered is still a question, however.

Masters picked an ideal subject to arouse the interest of the American people, and he needed it to increase his popularity. After the "Spoon River Anthology" had lost a little of its early attractiveness, little, if anything, was heard of its author. "Lincoln, the Man" will undoubtedly put him "back in the swim."

After "Babbitt" and "Main Street" had played out their term, Sinclair Lewis accused America of being too commercialistic to appreciate literature or any other "cultured" field. Rupert Hughes has been less popular since his book defaming Washington appeared.

Masters denies to Lincoln practically every virtue attributed to him by America, excepting his sense of humor. Masters' fate, of course, hangs in the balance, but it is a pretty safe prediction, that Americans will still be hero worshippers and that they will still observe February 12 as the birthday of one of their greatest men, long after Edgar Lee Masters and his book have died.—Oregon Barometer.

FIREMEN DECIDE TO WEAR BADGES

The volunteer fire company of Chapel Hill met last Tuesday night at seven o'clock in the fire station to take up certain business concerning their coming year's work.

It was decided that a record of the attendance to fires should be kept throughout the year to show which firemen were constant. A board will be put up in the fire house, and after each fire the men will return and chalk their names on it. A permanent record will be taken from this and the men will be checked upon.

Another decision reached was that all firemen will be given a badge so that at fires they can be recognized. On several occasions when fires have broken out the house would be plundered by loafers while the firemen were working to extinguish the blaze. By wearing badges, they will know who to put out, and may prevent loss of household goods. These badges of identification will be ordered immediately.

Ireland does have snakes! A snake three feet long was found by a child at play. It is being exhibited at Dublin.

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