

'That Pretty Well Covers the Field'



EDITORIALS

*Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinion Of One Man
— And He May Be Wrong*

View With Alarm

A friend, who is either in the corner of or puzzled by the remarks of one Doctor Dennis H. Cooke, director of teacher education at High Point College, has sent me a copy of "A Commentary on Education and National Survival", accredited to this educator.

We suppose that we were favored with this commentary because it bitterly attacks community colleges which only proves something we suspected, to wit: That all educators are not educated.

Dr. Cooke avers and alleges, "For the most part, community colleges are second or third-rate, maybe even fourth-rate, institutions. By their very nature, they are almost required to admit any student from the community who has received any kind of high-school diploma or certificate irrespective of whether or not he is qualified to do college work. The bulk of the more able students will continue to seek admission to the established better quality institutions. Under these conditions the standards and quality of work done in these community colleges cannot and will not be first rate. What is more, sufficient pressures will be exerted on the four-year colleges that they will be compelled to admit to their third years the graduates of these community colleges. This will have tremendous effect in lowering the standards and quality of work done in these four-year colleges.

"While a case possibly could be made for the community college as a terminal, adult-education, vocational-type, institution, but never as a place to do the first two years of college and to prepare for the third year, the community college will not promote the cause of higher education in North Carolina."

Dr. Cooke has a lot more to say, including several hundred words on the superiority of Russian over American schools, but for this piece we are only concerned with exploring some of the myths he is spreading against community colleges.

Each of the faults Dr. Cooke ascribes to community colleges is the fault of a sloppy, coward administration. Harvard could be turned into a prep school for idiots by very simple administrative changes.

But the most important thing Dr. Cooke overlooks is not in the field of college administration, but is in the fundamental field of family economics. Whether one has a young

genius who wants to major in nuclear physics, or a low-order moron who wants to major in applied biology there is a certain little matter called money.

Professors are not confronted with this problem since their children may live at home and attend college. But a majority of the people of North Carolina do not live in college towns; so if their children get to college they have to commute daily over considerable distance — which is both expensive and dangerous, or they have to enroll as a boarding student, which is brutally expensive to the average family.

Dr. Cooke deplores the possibility that unfit students may be graduated from these community colleges and forced into the "better schools."

At present these unfit students are cluttering up the campuses of these "better schools," and at a price tag of from \$1200 to \$1800 per year to their parents.

If these poorly motivated, stupid or anti-education students persist in their parents' desire for them to "be educated" beyond the community college it is neither their fault nor their parent's fault if a "better school" lowers its academic standards in order to take their money.

For an educator to oppose community colleges today is as ridiculous as to oppose public high schools in every community. Such thinking as this of Dr. Cooke would reverse the hands of educational time and send all children away to boarding schools for their secondary and even grammar schooling.

If Dr. Cooke is well enough equipped to merit the title he holds he has no need to fear that his job will be sacrificed on the community college altar. But if his blindness in all phases of teacher education is equal to his blindness in the sphere of community colleges, then he had better begin looking a job in a less demanding field.

The Lenoir County Farm Bureau has passed a resolution opposing poundage quotas for tobacco. This is a short-sighted refusal on the part of our farm leaders to search for a way to improve the present system which has glutted the market with undesirable tobacco. Unless these bureau members can devise a method to combine quantity and quality production they should at least be willing to take a look at other proposals.

The Growth Rate Hoax

One of the politically manufactured ghosts that is dragged out about twice a year to frighten the meek taxpayer is the "Growth Rate Hoax."

We are told by a bureaucrat of the first echelon — even in pressing times of vote-seeking by the President himself, that Russia's growth rate is far greater than ours.

Firstly, we do not know what the Russian growth rate actually is. There is no yardstick common to the two economies that can be used to compare the two, and even if we did have an electronic computer that could equate the two we would have to feed it Russian figures.

Secondly, if one is foolish enough to assume that the Russians would ever give us accurate figures, then where would one begin in an effort to arrive at a sensible growth rate figure?

If a man is standing still and begins to move five miles an hour it is impossible to compute his growth rate. If that man is moving five miles an hour and speeds up to 10 miles per hour we assume that he has increased his speed 100 per cent.

Some extremely learned elders from our country have been permitted to see fragments of the Russian economy, and the stories they tell are rather like the fable of the three blind men who described the elephant.

But the final proof of any pudding is the tasting: Russian housing, farming, transportation, and education are moving at a rate faster than they were 44 years ago when a series of revolutions coming at the end of a paralyzing defeat by Germany had brought Russia to a halt.

If a magic wand could freeze the United States in its tracks this moment the Russians could not reach the point where we now stand in a hundred years. Firstly they don't have a motivating economy and secondly they do not have sufficient arable soil and the climate to feed and clothe their people in the standard America takes for granted.

A Soft Touch

Americans find it difficult to understand how the Red Chinese can pour a sufficient number of men and equipment over 20,000-foot mountain passes to overrun a nation of nearly 400 million population.

India has always been a soft touch for invaders. It always will be. The passive resistance and intellectual persuasions that caused England to surrender its dominance over India does not prevail upon hungry bellies and restless armies that swarm from one corner to the other of Red China.

India's religion, its lack of an adequate transportation system, its feudal economy and its naive leadership all convert it into an easy touch for any burglar.

Throughout its long history India has never resisted but has — until the British — assimilated. India is such a huge mass of humanity that it never has developed any real sense of nationalism. The hourly fight for survival is foremost in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people. To a degree the Chinese have suffered, and suffer this same problem. But the religion of communism has replace the serenity of Buddhism and Confucian philosophy in China.

Bringing India under Chinese dominance raises the ancient threat of the "Yellow Peril" with their billion population. The contempt with which the yellow races hold all others — including the negroid — is perhaps only equalled by the white man's poor regard for the negro.

But a billion people represent more a problem than a threat. There has not been a day in the modern history of the world

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PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

BY JACK RIDER

Last week at a meeting of the Kinston School Board an interesting discussion was held on the specific subject of academic awards, and a lot of things were said on both sides of the fence that cleared away debris that generally clutters up such discussions.

Another meeting is scheduled to be held next week (November 26th) between the school board and the faculty advisory council of Grainger High School, in which this subject will be pursued further. The school board put this subject in motion with a request for more recognition of scholarship. The advisory council accelerated the motion of the subject by coming up with a long list of reasons why it opposed additional academic honors.

And in the midst of its reasons — a majority of which were good — the council tossed in one that infuriated the school board. It had to do with the business of saving face for the stupid or lazy student. I completely share the irritation of the school board. Board Member John Page said it bluntly and effectively, "I thought this 'progressive' education nonsense had been rooted out of our schools. But I see it hasn't!"

Such notions die slowly. They are born in the perfectly human desire to spare the feelings of the less fortunate, and the parents of the less fortunate. But it is my confirmed view that postponing a date with the inevitable is neither kindly nor wise.

This kind of reasoning has caused the election of a Grainger High School marshal who was taking no advance or accelerated courses, while at the same time denying a marshalship to a brilliant student who had made a "2" in physical education. This kind of sloppy, lazy faculty work has seen the perfectly good system of point grading eliminated in favor of less precise ways of grading.

To illustrate how unfair this lazy system now in use at Grainger High School is consider: A grade of "1" is from 96 to 100, a grade of "2" is from 90 to 95, a grade of "3" is from 80 to 89, a grade of "4" is from 75 to 79 and a grade of "5" is from zero to 74. One pupil may take three tests on which his real grades were zero, 75, and 80, and yet he will get on his report card the same grade as a student who took the same three tests and made 74, 79, and 89.

Yet when a child is being taught to think for himself, and to fight for the things he believes he has earned he is accused of being more interested in grades than in subject matter. Which is rather like the general assembly saying to the teacher, who wants more money, "You are more interested in the material things than in your profession."

The day our schools begin turning out children who DO NOT CARE about high grades, high salaries, better homes, better clothing; that is the day that Khrushchev's promise will have come true. I don't think that day will arrive, because the human spirit will not be confined behind the walls of mediocrity. Birds fly because they have wings. Brilliant students soar because they have the intellectual wings to soar with. The school that tries to pull feathers from the wings of one to glue to another is helping neither. Nothing breeds the inferiority complex so much as being inferior, but even the inferior among us can be stimulated to greater effort when we know our limitations, and leading us to believe that we can fly as high or as fast as another will not stimulate us to anything except failure and frustration.

on which the yellow races did not outnumber all the other peoples of the world by a very wide margin. The Mongolian hordes did sweep across Europe, and they may again, but in this modern era they will need more than horses and bigger to carry them.