

Editorial Comment

The Elgin Protest

With the good must also often come the bad. The closing of the Elgin Watch Factory near the University campus has meant the end of employment for many Elgin workers long associated with the plant and Lincoln. It has meant a reduction in the job opportunities available in Lincoln and likewise the end of a large monthly payroll that benefited Lincoln businesses.

These are the negative or bad aspects of the closing of the Elgin plant. The good is the opportunity the University has to purchase the plant for \$725,000, and to eventually convert it into a classroom building to accommodate the expected surge of students in the 1960's.

But such transactions seldom come off without, to use the colloquial expression, a hitch. The hitch is an objection by a committee of former Elgin employees against the manner in which Elgin appears content to part with the plant. This committee contends that Elgin officials said they would do their best to see if another industry was interested in the plant if they closed down operations. The close down has come and Elgin officials have not kept their word, Ted Darby, committee chairman, says.

Darby calls the \$725,000 offer "phenomenally low" in view of the plant's \$1,735,000 assessed valuation in 1955. He objects that no other group had a chance to bid on the plant as a possible industrial site before Elgin officials verbally approved the purchase of the plant by the University.

It is understandable that a man does not like to lose his job. It is understandable that he will do his best to secure employment. But sometimes one fails to take into consideration the more distant good that may come from a transaction which is initially to his detriment. The purchase of the plant by the University would seem to be the best step forward not only for the school but for the city of Lincoln itself.

In the first place, a growing Univer-

sity should not be limited in elbow room if it is to keep pace with other colleges throughout the nation. Toward Elgin is about the only way left for the University to expand. This area should thus be acquired without hesitancy.

When the 1960's roll around this will mean that the University will not only be less crowded but that Lincoln will also be able to boast a better University than it could if it were not allowed to expand now. The school could immediately begin long range planning to make the plant area a congruent part of the rest of the campus.

Lincoln will also benefit by the eventual removal of industrial plants from the heart of the city to more suitable fringe areas. It is significant that one industrial official said that no businesses had shown interest in the building and that more than 5.5 million square feet of vacant industrial building is available in the United States. New companies, it appears, seem more interested in constructing their own industrial plants to more modern building specifications, such as one-story rambling buildings rather than compact several-story buildings.

Should another industry show its interest in the plant it is still felt that the University should compete with their bids because this is an area and a building which the school cannot afford to let slip through its fingers. The Board of Regents probably feels the same way.

The Chancellor is to be complimented for his "gentle" handling of this case by saying that the University would delay its offer for the plant. He, too, must realize that few other industries are interested in the site. And without a doubt he realizes that little good will be built up by ignoring unemployed persons' pleas.

The delay — if not prolonged (which surely it will not be)—will not hurt the University. But the delay should not become a stalemate.

From the Editor

private opinion ... dick shugrue

To add tinder to the fire, Nebraska Press Association president Jack Lough, publisher of the Albion News, said Saturday afternoon that high school students should be given an opportunity to study both speech and journalism in their four year English curriculum and get credit for the subjects.

Lough's argument was based on some pretty conclusive data he had dug up, some of which is obvious. He first of all stated that everyone has the job of effective communication facing him in such a complex world as ours. Putting knowledge to work is a task confronting all of us, and the study of speech and journalism has a very practical part in that job.

Lough further pointed out that 60 per cent of all high school graduates never get to college and, consequently, have a pressing need for effective communication skills as soon as they graduate.

Some of the persons advocating cutting speech and journalism courses from the high school curricula in our state could well go back to high school — Ph.D.'s or not—and learn how to speak the English language so that the listener isn't muddled by professional jargon or Faulknerian sentences.

Journalism, the language used by newspapers and radio commentators—is condemned by the advocates of the involved sentence, the elongated paragraph, the ridiculously extended idea.

While reading Joe Alex Morris' story of the United Press, Deadline Every Minute, published by Doubleday, I came across a quotation from a former United Press General News manager who said, "The biggest single service we can render our clients is to give them more news in fewer words." This, as far as

I'm concerned, applies to a paper like ours, or for that matter, to everyday conversation.

The less time it takes to get an idea across, the more compactly you can express an idea effectively, are the measures of your success to communicate in our whiz bang world.

Bluntly, we don't have time to pore over Henry James-styled essays. Moreover, communication shouldn't provide a challenge to the communicators, it should convey ideas. There is nothing lunkheaded about a simple sentence. There is nothing glorious about the compound-complex sentence. The har-hars coming from beraters of newspapers are coming from people who, themselves, have a hard time getting across to the average man.

I, for one, would like to accomplish a couple of things before my job here is over. 1) I'd like to find out what statistical evidence, if any, leads the English teachers to call for a cut of speech and journalism courses from a four-year English program. 2) I'd like to find out why, if the teaching of grammar is so important at the University, "funkies" are teaching some basic grammar courses rather than to the top people in the English departments. 3) I'd like to know what good Shakespeare or Shaw can be to a high school student who can't even read and analyze the newspaper and decide for himself what shape the world is in and why, or who can't get up on his feet in front of a political group or a school assembly and talk about Shaw.

I'm all for the English language, needless to say. But I'm all against a bunch of dunderheaded high school graduates who know plenty of words, plenty of literature, plenty of poetry, but can't even make sensible, intelligent conversation about what's going on around him.



My Weal Or Woe

by dick basoco

"Placement tests at the University in no way affect your grade."

This is a statement I have heard uttered by our administrators, and I have made this flat declaration to a number of high school students in various trips to schools around this part of the state myself.

Then I saw the figures. Last semester 949 grades were given in English B. With 91 individuals failing the course, the percentage of flunks was 1 out of 10. Six-sevenths of the people in B got a mark of 5 or below. There were 28 sevens, 5 eights, and zero, that's spelled z-e-r-o, nines.

I couldn't quite get a picture of the ideal bell shaped curve for grade distribution out of these figures, so I determined to find out why, if the placement tests don't determine your grade, out of nearly a thousand students there wasn't a single one who was superior enough to get a 9.

It was sort of frustrating. Every time I started to raise a great hue and cry about the injustice of it all to a member of the English department, I got referred to this individual by the name of Dudley Bailey. Mr. Bailey is in charge of the freshman English program and, I was told, was the logical person to see.

So last week I "screwed my courage to the sticking point" and trundled in to see this awesome man who holds the fate of some 2,000 freshmen a year in his hands.

With all the cunning acquired in nearly a semester of yellow journalism, I asked him if he didn't think it was odd that out of 950 students not one single 9 was given. Tapping his pipe in his ash tray, Mr. Bailey replied that no, he wasn't surprised.

Before I even had an opportunity to snap "why" with all the ferocity of a Perry Mason with a witness on the stand, he genially went on to explain that if the placement system is working accurately, and the English department feels that it is, there should be no 8's or 9's because the top English students, the ones who have the ability to do 8 or 9 work, have been sectioned into English 3. Therefore, the grades in B should be expected to be heavier at the lower end of the grade curve.

Thinking that he had answered that question rather nicely, I asked Mr. Bailey if it was really fair to grade the B students according to English 3 standards. Not to do so, said he, would be unfair to the English 3 students. It seems that on the University's grade records English B and 3 are simply "Freshman English" and no differentiation is made between the two. Anyone looking at the records cannot tell who was in B and who was in 3. If B and 3 were not graded on the same standard, a person could have an 8 in "Freshman English" after taking B, and another could have an 8 on the same books but having taken English 3. No one will dispute the fact that the two grades, derived from different standards, would hardly be equivalent. Yet the observer would not be able to tell there was a difference and would naturally think the students had the same ability in English.

My complaint deals not with whether or not grading all freshmen English students

by the same standard is fair, but that the English B student is not aware of the fact. This would account for the complaint that "I was doing a lot better than the rest of the kids in English B and still only got a 6."

Maybe that's true; maybe you are doing better than your B, 1 and 2 classmates; but how well are you doing compared to English 3 students? And English 3 is used as the standard for grading because this is the level of ability that the English department feels that it has the right to expect from graduates of accredited Nebraska high schools.

Is it too much to expect? I hope not. And I wasn't wrong after all. Placement tests do not affect your grade. They simply show you you are likely to get.

"Most students so placed," says the English department about B students, "are not likely to demonstrate better than average command of the language."

So when you get a 5 out of B or 1, don't feel you're being discriminated against; you're getting what you deserve by English 3 standards.

At Other Colleges:

Syracuse Student Pickets Militarism

A graduate student in anthropology at Syracuse University last week broke her silent protest against growing militarism in the United States and staged a 1-woman picket of the Syracuse ROTC review parade.

About 150 spectators were startled to see the coed marching back and forth in front of the reviewing stand and through the ranks as the cadets were at attention during the playing of the national anthem.

Mickey Albert, Syracuse Daily Orange reporter, said the crowd jeered at her actions with such statements as "get a passport and leave," "spreading Russian propaganda," and "you can't talk to someone insane."

Albert said Mrs. Sachs seemed shaken and upset after the picketing and said her purpose was not to make a demonstration or to fight with anybody.

Mrs. Sachs told him: "Marching is exciting and has an appeal in and of itself. There is something magnetic about an army marching and a band playing. But at every military parade, there ought to be at least one person protesting. That's why I was there.

"The purpose of an army is to wage war; it is the training of young men to kill. You see little boys playing with wooden and tin soldiers, and when they grow up, they want to play real soldier. I wish they didn't want to play soldier. It frightens me to think that they are playing with real weapons and bombs. I wonder if they realize that they are no longer playing with toys?"

Mrs. Sachs said she continued her protest march during the national anthem because: "Nationalism or chauvinism is the stuff of which militarism arises. Love of our country should be subordinate to love of humanity—love of country is not a good enough reason for killing people. People today have to seriously consider at which point killing is important.

"I feel what is of value in

Americanism is the humanistic outlook—the value of human life, and this is what we seem to be overlooking.

"No one is looking for an alternative for war. We are too busy preparing for it, but there has to be one, and military might just isn't the answer.

"If the time and effort being put into militarism—bigger and better weapons and bombs—were put into looking for an alternative for peace, we would get somewhere.

"I feel that the general public and the generals sincerely want peace, but don't know just how to go about achieving it; perhaps now, the generals are even starting to believe what they say about the necessity of maintaining a strong army.

"If this is the case then, we are in a very dangerous position. I have a 13-month-old daughter, who I don't want to die because of war and/or radiation.

"Our only hope is that we will come to the realization that we are going to have to take a chance—we are going to have to be willing to gamble on the inherent worth of humanity."

The Vice Chancellor of the school, who was on the reviewing stand, said "since this is America, Mrs. Sachs, and anyone else has the right to their opinions, and their protests. She did not disturb us at all; we just ignored the incident."

Jim Carleton, assistant dean of men, said the demonstration was "in exceedingly poor taste," according to the Syracuse student paper.

Good For Grins

A maid being interviewed explained that she left her last position because she couldn't stand the way the master and mistress were always quarreling. "That must have been unpleasant," remarked the prospective employer. "Yes, sir," the girl declared, "they was at it all the time. When it wasn't me and him, it was me and her!" (The Reader's Digest)

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Solution On Page 4

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