

YALE SURVEYS STUDENT HABITS

University Tries to Learn What the Undergraduate Thinks About His Alma Mater And What He Himself Is Like

LAST Monday Yale University completed one of the most searching investigations of the undergraduate and his scholastic, athletic, recreational and other time-consuming activities ever undertaken by an American university. All students were required not only to answer a series of questions, but to tell the university authorities how long they spent at meals and in bed, the amounts of their allowances, earnings, the income of their families and why they wanted to go to college. Moreover, they were required to keep a time chart for a week, showing in detail their activities for every hour of the day and night from April 12 to April 19.

According to the university authorities the object of this experiment was to learn, for the first time, exactly what the undergraduates think about Yale and, incidentally, what the Yale undergraduate himself is like. The sole purpose of the questions regarding family income, &c., was to discover whether Yale is, as has been charged, a rich man's college. They point out that privacy will be maintained through keeping the identity of the author of each questionnaire a secret, the documents themselves merely carrying numbers, not names.

The university authorities do not profess to know what will be the consequences of the answers to the questionnaire. It is estimated that a revision of the course of study will be contemplated, if warranted by the returns. The revision will probably be

away from the present "lock-step system of education"—as President Angell put it in his memorable phrase—and an approximation to the English system of honors and pass courses.

For a number of years Yale has conducted honors courses, designed to aid the better students to progress by their own efforts, rather than keep pace with a slow-moving stereotyped course of lectures and examinations. But this system has never been applied integrally. Even the most brilliant honors men have been compelled to take some prescribed classroom courses, and their degrees have differed in no particular from those given to students who crammed their way through the final by resort to the tutoring schools.

Educational Mass-Production.

In fact, Yale for the last six years has been headed in the direction of educational mass-production. In 1920 the alumni presented their reorganization scheme, which destroyed much of the individuality of the two colleges, Academic and Sheffield Scientific School, by compelling students entering either to share a "common freshman year."

The questionnaire itself was calculated by competent authorities to require at least an hour's concentrated effort to fill in. Its preamble, as endorsed by the student committee, which conducted this Yale University Student Survey, solemnly warns the undergraduate that "any such ques-

tionnaire inevitably offers opportunity for waggishness, and it may often be easier to make a humorous reply than a helpful one. Please, however, do not try to be funny."

"The committee believe," continued the preamble, "that this survey means the beginning of a new era at Yale, and that the response of the student body to this opportunity of self-expression will effectively demonstrate the soundness and value to the university of student opinion. Your cooperation is sought as a means of encouraging a greater measure of student participation in future matters of university policy.

"The response of university authorities to present-day student demands for a greater measure of responsibility, more freedom from restrictions and a voice in the discussion of university affairs may be largely determined by the way in which students meet the challenge of this personnel investigation."

Checking Parents' Income.

The questions demand, among other things, enlightenment on what courses have, "either positively or negatively, definitely affected your life purpose," why the undergraduates went to Yale, what they want to do and what chance they have of doing it.

Among possible reasons for choosing a course were mentioned the personality of an instructor and relative ease and convenience of the hour of recitation. Among the items on the aide memoire respecting reasons for going to Yale were: The prestige of having a Yale degree, because it seemed "the thing to do," to earn more money, to "make" some society, or because of family tradition.

Comparative merits of Yale College and Sheffield Scientific School include dormitory accommodations, the "social system" and vocational and professional aims.

As to the questions concerning a student's income and his family's finances, which aroused some hostile

comment among the undergraduates, students were asked to check whether their family's income is \$3,000, \$5,000, &c., up to over \$50,000; to state their own allowance, earnings, whether they had to work Summer in order to pay college expenses, and what qualifications they think they possess for the careers they intend to try.

But the most minute inquisition into the habits of the Yale undergraduate was in the student time chart. This, covering a full week, was designed to account for every minute of the day and night and for every conceivable occupation. In fact, scholastic work was only a fraction of the total. Among the non-athletic organizations the student was required to account for his work in connection with publications, dramatics, musical clubs, debating, religious, Y. M. C. A., class committee, student council, fraternities and societies.

Pre-Volstead "Parties."

Organized athletics came next in importance, with not only major and minor sports, but the time spent in athletic management or in competing for athletic management. The "recreation and leisure" section included exercise and sports such as golf and tennis, reading (not in preparation for classroom work), lectures and concerts, theatres and movies, card-playing, "parties" (in the pre-Volstead sense), dances and social activities, informal discussions and that bugbear of the weeks before Tap Day, the "dope session," at which the undergraduate solemnly argues Bill Jones's chance to be tapped last man for Skull and Bones, or whether Wolf's Head or Elihu Club will provide a haven for Jim Smith.

For years the undergraduate has provided the pedagogic mind with a sort of psychological guinea pig. Anything and everything has been tried on the students of the various colleges, from hypnotism to straw votes on the solemn issues of the League of Nations, the prohibition law and the Presidential elections.