

A SCHOOL FOR STUDY OF GOVERNMENT

The rapid growth of interest in government is evidenced by plans for two institutions for instruction in public affairs now being developed in Washington, D. C. One, in which small groups of students will serve as "internes" in government departments for short periods, under the eyes of educators, was described on this page last week. The second is described below. It is expected to open this Summer.

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WHEN President Roosevelt, in a recent widely quoted address, said that he took "special interest in the announcement * * * of the creation of a School of Public Affairs by the American University," he inspired many persons to ask what this School of Public Affairs is.

The answer is easily given. It is a new department in the American University at Washington, D. C., the organization of which is now proceeding, and which is to make available not only to its own students but to selected students of other institutions a first-hand knowledge of the processes of government as they are actually carried on in the United States.

Short-term courses will be organized to deal (1) with the broad problems of government; (2) with technical problems of administra-

New Unit at Washington To Try Innovations

tion; and (3) with the particular interests of individual students as they look toward a vocation in public affairs. These courses will be pursued, not by the text-book and theoretical method, but by that of the laboratory. Trained academic minds, side by side with experienced public administrators of various fields, will pool for the students the wisdom of research and of practical training. The organization of the School of Public Affairs is being worked out with that specific end in view.

The chief administrative officer of the school will be a visiting dean, who will be invited to serve for a year. The opportunities for new contacts and understandings will make a year's leave of absence from his own university for such a term attractive. The visiting dean will be, of course, a man eminent in the field of the social sciences. With him will be associated the permanent executive director of the school, those members of the permanent faculty of the American University assigned to this project and annually a corps of visiting professors invited from their various universities in much the same manner as the visiting dean.

Such a faculty will offer the student body unusual opportunities for instruction in the customary lecture method. In addition there will be government officials, industrial and labor leaders and qualified representatives of the consumers' groups, who will conduct round-table discussions in which, without embarrassment, the most searching inquiries into contemporary political, industrial and social processes will be pursued.

Official Aid Pledged.

At the national capital, that is to say, there is to be a laboratory in the field of public affairs, in which able minds versed with the doctrines of what government and the social order ought to be, and how they ought to function, fuse their viewpoints, as David Lawrence, one of the university's trustees, has said, with the viewpoints of those who are responsible for what government and the social order actually are and do.

In connection with this plan President Roosevelt's recent remarks are of special significance. "I can assure you," he said, "of the hearty cooperation of the administration in all its branches."

It is not proposed, however, to limit the instruction in the American University's School of Public Affairs to the classroom. It will be supplemented in a fashion possible only in Washington. Students will have the opportunity of observing at close range the actual operation of the Federal Government. They will study whatever work is closest to their special interests.

Those, for instance, who are preparing for a legislative career or have a special interest in legislative processes will attend important Congressional committee hearings.

They will see the manner in which committees deal with bills; they will follow proposed legislation from its initiation, through the various committees, conferences and debates, until it is finally defeated or enacted into law. In studying the process, they will observe not only the formal steps, but the informal, including the work of lobbies, and see the effects they have on the ultimate legislation.

The organization and personnel of the School of Public Affairs, moreover, safeguard it from what might be a regimented education. Its visiting dean and professors, with terms of service not exceeding a year, will make the school secure from the uncritical acceptance of contemporary policies, programs and organization. Each year, not only new instructors but instructors from different parts of the nation and with different points of view, will bring their insights and predilections to bear upon public affairs as centered in the national capital. Industrial and labor leaders, themselves an ever-changing personnel, will bring still other viewpoints and convictions.

A School for the Country.

Such a school of public affairs, drawing its faculty from the universities of the country at large and its practical insights from the government itself, would fail of its largest service and undoubted obligation if it confined its advantages to the students enrolled in one university.

Accordingly, other colleges and universities will be invited to send to the School of Public Affairs selected students in the field of the political sciences for such time as they may wish.

While the courses in the new school will be short, they will be numerous enough and closely related enough to make possible and profitable a year or two of consecutive study; yet they will be self-contained enough to make three months of work valuable. The results of the work of visiting students will be made concrete through such tests as are acceptable to the institutions from which they come; after which they may return to their own universities with credit toward degrees for their study at the American University School of Public Affairs.



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