DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE LENGTH OF SERVICE PENSIONS OF THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION

EITHER as cause and effect or as a matter of mere time sequence, the writer has anticipated in this journal the most important actions taken by the trustees of the Carnegie Foundation at their two last annual meetings. There was printed in SCIENCE for April 24, 1908, correspondence with the president of the foundation urging that the pensions of widows of professors entitled to retiring allowances should be made a matter of right rather than a matter of optional favor, and at the meeting of the trustees in November this was done. It seems that this subject is not treated clearly by the president in his last annual report. Referring to the first adoption of the rules of the foundation he says:

> The underlying principles which seemed to be clear were these . . . (5) The retiring allowance system should embrace in its provisions the widows of teachers who under the rules had become eligible to retiring allowances. . . . A third rule provided for the pension for the widow of any teacher who, either on the ground of age or service, was entitled to a retiring allowance. These rules have now been in operation four years.

In the first annual report, however, it was explicitly pointed out that "In all cases, the granting of pensions to widows of professors stands upon a different basis than that of the awarding of retiring allowances to professors," and in the third annual report it is noted that "heretofore the pensions to widows have been only permissory."

I venture to note my service to my colleagues in this direction, as some of them think that I have performed a disservice in pointing out what seemed to me the dangers of the length of service pensions. In SCIENCE for April 2, 1909, I wrote:

> The reasons leading to the adoption of retirement after twenty-five years of service are obscure to me unless it is intended to relieve institutions of men whom they do not want to keep. . . . In order to reward a professor after long years of service, he should be relieved not of half of his salary and the privilege of teaching, but of so much routine instruction and administration as interfere with his research. . . . It may on the whole be regarded as fortunate that the Carnegie Foundation has not the means to continue these annuities for length of service. They will, I fear, tend to demoralize both the "humble and ill-compensated" professor and the "conspicuous" and much-tempted president.

My anticipations were soon justified by the troubles at the George Washington University, which retired on the foundation two of its professors against their will in order to save their salaries and because they did not agree with the policies of the administration, and which then was dropped from the list of institutions accepted by the foundation. I was, however, not less surprised than my colleagues to learn that the trustees of the Carnegie Foundation on November 17 had not only abolished the retiring allowance for length of service, but had made their action apply to those to whom the pensions had been promised.

This action would be absolutely incomprehensible if it were based on the grounds alleged by the president in his annual report, which has just now been printed. He does not even remotely refer to the financial inability of the foundation to carry out the obligations it had assumed, but bases his recommendation on the fact that he has unexpectedly discovered that presidents and professors take advantage of the rule, and that its effect is not "good" owing to "the opportunity which is thus opened to bring pressure to bear on the teacher, or by the tendency of the teacher assured of a retiring allowance to become ultra-critical toward the administration." This last clause throws a curious light on the administrative attitude—it would be dangerous to let the professor criticize the administration if thereby he risked losing only half of his salary and not all of it.

President Pritchett says: "The expectation that this rule would be taken advantage of almost wholly on the ground of disabilities has proved to be ill founded." But what warrant had the trustees for this expectation? The act of incorporation states that the object of the foundation is to provide retiring pensions for teachers who "by reason of long and meritorious service, or by reason of old age, disability or other sufficient reason shall be entitled to the assistance and aid of this corporation." The rule adopted in regard to the first of the two classes of pensions specified in the act of incorporation reads: "Any person who has had a service of twenty-five years as a professor and who is at the time a professor in an accepted institution, shall be entitled to a retiring allowance computed as follows."

The change in the attitude of the president of the foundation has been as sudden as it is complete. In a letter to him, written on March 21, 1908, I said that the wisdom of the length of service pension was doubtful, and in his reply, intended for publication in SCIENCE and printed in the issue of April 24, 1908, he wrote:

> The provision for permitting a retiring allowance to be gained upon length of service seems also to us to add much to the value of the retiring allowance system. Under this provision a professor may, at the end of twenty-five years, retire on a stated proportion of his salary, the proportion increasing with each year of service. It is not likely that many professors will avail themselves of this provision. The man whose heart is in his teaching will not wish to give it up until a much later period. There are, however, teachers to whom this provision will be specially attractive, and that is to those who desire to spend the remainder of their active lives in scholarly research or literary work rather than in teaching. I can imagine no better thing for an institution of learning than to have about it a group of men who are engaged in active research and who are not burdened with the load of teaching which falls to most American teachers. In this way the retiring allowance will contribute directly to research.

Dr. David Starr Jordan, one of the trustees, is much franker than the president. He writes to the *Evening Post* that it seemed "financially impossible" for the foundation to meet the demands made on it under the rule. This is certainly a valid ground for not admitting to its privileges additional institutions or those not yet professors; but according to law resort must be had to the bankruptcy court when financial obligations can not be met. Whether the foundation is liable to those who have been financially injured by the change in the rule is an open question. Probably the only precedent is the case of Professor Capps against the University of Chicago, in which it was decided that a university can not alter its statutes to the financial disadvantage of a professor. It seems that it might be urged that the foundation has made an implicit contract with the professor. To encourage the advancement of teaching it promises certain rewards to those who perform certain services. Those who have performed the services can perhaps recover at law the payment promised. But whatever the legal obligation may be, the moral responsibility is obvious. President Pritchett writes that the "change will command the approval of the great body of devoted and able teachers." When he learns of his extraordinary error, he will, it may be hoped, recommend such modification of the new rule as will be accepted as equitable by those concerned.

The president of the foundation writes: "It is part of the invariable policy of the Carnegie Foundation to place in the hands of those interested in education the fullest details respecting the foundation and its administration." But it is not clear that the foundation has been entirely frank in the present instance. The official statement in regard to the rules signed by the secretary of the board of trustees reads:

> The rules as thus amended provide a retiring allowance for a teacher on two distinct grounds: (1) to a teacher of specified service on reaching the age of sixty-five; (2) to a teacher after twenty-five years of service in case of physical disability.
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> Although these are the general rules governing retirement, the trustees are nevertheless willing to grant a retiring allowance after the years of service set forth in Rule 1 [Rule 2?] to the rare professor whose proved ability for research promises a fruitful contribution to the advancement of knowledge if he were able to devote his entire time to study or research; and the trustees may also grant a retiring allowance after the years of service set forth in Rule 1 [*sic*] to the executive head of an institution who has displayed distin-

guished ability as a teacher and educational administrator.

Dr. Jordan has printed the actual resolution adopted by the trustees, as follows:

It was also on motion, duly made and seconded, resolved that first, the executive committee be instructed to safeguard the interests of the following classes of cases: (*a*) those who have research work in view and have shown themselves unmistakably fit to pursue it; (*b*) those whose twenty-five years of service includes service as a college president; and (*c*) those in whose mind a definite expectation has been created by official action that they will be accorded the benefits of the foundation within the year 1910; and that, secondly, the executive committee be authorized to formulate regulations in accordance with these instructions.

It is difficult to reconcile the statement under (*a*) with the announcement of the secretary. In the case of (*b*) one can only reconcile the two versions by assuming that the presidents who make up the board believe that there can be no college president who has not "displayed distinguished ability as a teacher and educational administrator." It is not easy to guess a creditable reason for not having made (*c*) public, for it would not be honorable to conceal it in order to save the money due to those who might apply under the resolution if it were known to them.

It is certainly odd that a board of trustees consisting of university and college presidents should increase the maximum pension from $3,000 to $4,000, which can practically only be of advantage to the comparatively highly-salaried president, and should retain the privilege of retiring after twenty-five years, when this is denied to the professors through the financial inability of the foundation. But perhaps they assume that higher education can be best advanced by retiring the president whenever possible.

The lack of foresight and expert knowledge displayed by the president and trustees of the foundation is truly astounding. Mr. Carnegie wrote in his original letter to the trustees:

I have, therefore, transferred to you and your successors, as trustees, $10,000,000, 5 per cent. first mortgage bonds of the United States Steel Corporation, the revenue from which is to provide retiring pensions for the teachers of universities, colleges and technical schools in our country, Canada and Newfoundland under such conditions as you may adopt from time to time. Expert calculation shows that the revenue will be ample for the purpose.

In making his additional gift for tax-supported institutions, he wrote to the president:

I understand from you that if all the state universities should apply and be admitted, five millions more of five per cent. bonds would be required.

As a matter of fact, a million dollars will not support an adequate pension fund in a single large university—Yale already draws $35,000 a year—and if the state universities continue to develop, as at present, and retirement at sixty-five is made obligatory, five million dollars will not permanently suffice for a single university.

The increase in the appropriations of the foundation for pensions this year is $162,815, and the total appropriation for pensions is $466,320. The total income of the foundation last year was $544,355, and the administrative expenses were $53,584.85. After Mr. Carnegie gives the additional five million dollars, the income will soon be exhausted, even though one of the two objects of the foundation, as stated in the act of incorporation, may be abandoned.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Food Inspection and Analysis: For the Use of Public Analysts, Health Officers, Sanitary Chemists and Food Economists. By Albert E. Leach, S.B., Chief of the Denver Food and Drug Inspection Laboratory, Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, formerly Chief Analyst of the Massachusetts State Board of Health. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Cloth, $6\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{8}$, pp. 954, Fig. 120; Pl. XL. New York, John Wiley & Sons; London, Chapman & Hall, Limited. 1909.

In 1904 the first edition of this book was published, and speedily found acceptance be-