

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

## AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. CARNEGIE

THROUGH the institutions founded by your initiative and endowment, you recognize that the most valuable asset of society is the higher order of human quality. The Carnegie Institution seeks the exceptional man, and furnishes him exceptional opportunities for his chosen work. The Carnegie Foundation provides security for the devotees of the higher learning, so that their services may be more freely given to the interests of the higher living. You thus recognize that the most direct way to advance the cause of education is by advancing the status of the teaching profession. It is in the interests of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that this communication is addressed to you.

The benefits of the foundation took the estimable form of retiring allowances. The professor of an accredited institution acquired his right thereto through the same service that entitled him to his salary. His initiative, not subject to review, determined whether and when he shall avail himself thereof. The dignity and temper of the policy at once commanded respect and quieted apprehension. Participation in the foundation was made a privilege, not a charity. Lacking all centralization, our universities may well profit by the incentive of a disinterested institution, liberal-minded and of national scope. By the tentative exclusion of the state universities, such a career for the Carnegie Foundation was jeopardized. In response to friendly protest, and through your generosity, a change of policy prevailed. A situation that similarly involves a question of judgment is now impending.

An alternative between two equally honorable forms of retirement was provided: that on the basis of *age* relieved anxiety; that on the basis of *service* offered varied scope to opportunities too commonly forfeited in an exacting career. After but brief experience, the retention of one of the two stated benefits, and the more attractive, is held in the balance. The prospect of its being found wanting has

aroused widespread concern, intensely felt though academically expressed.

It is hardly necessary to repeat or review the public and private comments upon the propriety and the wisdom of this momentous step. Editorials, resolutions of associated professors and letters to the press have questioned the ethical propriety, even the legal warrant of the repeal. It is sufficient to record that any one acquainted with the officers of the foundation will promptly concede that if, in their opinion, withdrawal from an obligation were involved, the step would not have been so much as considered. It is unfortunate that the administration has used the reservation of the right to change the rules as a warrant for the action. This is sure to be misunderstood; only its friends and friendly critics know that the foundation may be assumed to agree with them, that far higher considerations than those of authority are here pertinent. There is, however, another point of view: that of the institutions and the individuals concerned. They may properly consider that through a mistake of judgment, a real injustice has resulted. It is at once natural and creditable that the professional class, to whom the foundation is dedicated—but most regrettably unrepresented in its administration—should feel that their interests have been slighted. More extensively than can be summarized, the plans of worthy men have looked to the use of the “service” retirement as the cherished consummation of their careers. Their projects involved sacrifice, for the allowance was small; but it was deemed secure. At present confidence has been impaired, and the term *foundation* deprived of its pertinence. A plea for “the advancement of teaching” urges the commanding appeal of justice and wisdom, and argues for a reversal of judgment.

The policy of the action can not be discussed in detail. The reasons assigned, with the utmost concession to their pertinence, seem bare and inadequate: nothing more serious than that a larger number of men have retired for less worthy reasons than was anticipated. Why not equally anticipate that the chief

faults on both sides—of too ready retirement, and of enforced retirement—may be amended without sacrifice of fundamental interests? The remedy proposed throws out the child with the bath in too drastic fashion. Some regard the “service” retirement as a most valuable provision; others question its value or its practicability. Where opinions differ, autocratic decision is premature. The retention of the provision for cases of disability may be gratefully noted; though the suggestion that the professor worthy to retire on his merits is a “rare” individual, seems superfluous. The summary action does away with the *right* to retire. The professor may be so fortunate or so unfortunate as to be granted it.

Such is the issue at hand. Those with confidence in the important mission of the Carnegie Foundation, and in the wisdom of its guidance, are unwilling to believe that financial reasons of future retrenchment—as has been variously implied, but in no manner officially admitted—have determined this regrettable abandonment of an estimable policy. The individual and collective protests that have been presented to the authorities indicate two essential steps. The injured sense of justice may be allayed and confidence restored by a temporary, or even a long-term, if not a complete reinstatement of the “service” retirement; this is imperative. Meanwhile, additional experience will suggest measures whereby the advantages without the shortcomings of the original provision will be preserved. Justice and wisdom and a loyalty to high purpose are the three saving graces of public institutions. May they all prevail!

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#### MEN OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICAL LIFE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: There is certainly at the present time a great opportunity for improvement in the relationship which exists between the scientist and men in practical life.

In looking over the catalogues of some of

the larger educational institutions, it is not an infrequent occurrence to see announcements, in their various departments of research, that the laboratories and all their facilities are open to men possessing the requisite qualifications for carrying on their independent investigations, while it is seldom that any one is found availing himself of this privilege, this being especially true of the middle western institutions.

The principle involved in these announcements is, without doubt, correct, if put into practise, but the fault seems to lie in the fact that the advantages to be derived from this are not clear to the outsider, and the men in the educational institutions do not take it upon themselves to make it so and to advertise this one of the most important functions of the schools, which are turning out engineers, professional men and men taking up research in pure and applied sciences.

It is well recognized that the association of the student with men who are enthusiastic and who are doing research, either practical or scientific, is one of the greatest stimulants that he can have. Above all, he is more likely to acquire the power of original thought and of handling an original problem in a better way and with more ease, the greater the number of men with whom he has the pleasure of association. This is especially true in practical lines where there are a large number of engineering students.

Although men engaged in instructional work in many of the leading colleges are expected to and do carry on scientific research, for the greater part there is nothing of a practical nature undertaken either by themselves or men working under their direction. This should not be the case in those institutions where the student is looking toward his college education as a means to an end. He should have the opportunity for association with men who are carrying on research of direct practical application.

There are advantages to the instructor that may be considered as nearly if not quite equal to those obtained by the student. The men who are engaged in teaching scientific