

NEWSLETTER - April, 1958.- "How do you pick your students?"

We hear this question from each visitor and in hundreds of letters each year from boys who wish one of our scholarships.

Our selection methods have evolved throughout the years. Originally, Dr. Wilson Popenoe, now our Director Emeritus, relied upon recommendations from friends. Eventually this became too much of a job, since he knows nearly everyone in Latin America--too many boys were being recommended. He then supplemented this with a combination intelligence-achievement test which, through the years, has had a number of revisions.

The evolutionary process has continued. This year we have a new examination and have a standardized interview which was developed for us by an educational psychologist. And now we are interested not only in whether the boy is intensely interested in agriculture but whether he also excels at a sport or plays a musical instrument. We are looking for leaders and a diversity of aptitudes contributes towards leadership.

This year the date of the examinations was announced in newspaper articles, radio announcements and posters in the rural offices of a country's agricultural extension service. The boy was advised that he must have a birth certificate (we accept boys only between 18 and 21 years of age) and a letter from the Director of the last school he attended stating the amount of schooling he has completed and what his comportment was. We sent professors to 40 different cities throughout Latin America to give our exam. We want our own professors to give the oral interview (given only to those who do well on the written exam)--not only because they know best the type of students we want but because we want our professors to know as much of Latin America as possible so that their teaching will be adapted to it. Sometimes, a professor has little time to be away from classes for such a trip and it is a bit hurried. For instance:

Last February Prof. Luis E. Morcillo, our Dean, examined in Guatemala. It was quite a trip!

Monday, flew to Guatemala, all afternoon and evening made arrangements for examinations next day.

Tuesday, examined at 8:00 a.m., graded exams and gave personal interviews until 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, left Guatemala City 6:00 a.m., arrived Tiquisate, examined and interviewed from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., then drove to Quetzaltenango (arrived 10:00 p.m.)

Thursday: Examined and interviewed from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Evening free.

Friday: Chartered plane to fly to Coban, examined from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., then a chartered plane flew him to Zacapa. Evening free again!

Saturday: Examined from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and then drove from Zacapa to Guatemala City (6 hour drive) arriving in time for an alumni meeting.

In all, our professors examined 1514 eligible boys this year, from which we selected our 80 new students.