



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1958. In fifteen days we will see the boys of the 13th graduating class leave the Escuela Agricola Panamericana. And, as usual, we wonder whether we have done all we could for them during their three years at the school.

We know the courses we taught them were, at the time, the best we would give them, and we did our best to see that they gave their best to these courses.

We covered the gamut of agriculture. But how broad really was their education?

A week doesn't go by without a visitor lamenting that we are offering no history courses to our students or no economics and sociology or not even one course in "government". And, of course, every professor has at least one additional course he would like to offer if we could "just find the time to offer it". But, alas, there are but 24 hours in a day (to which our students say, "Thank Heavens!").

A broad education sometimes implies a "well rounded" man and, thus, something to be desired. However, being "well rounded" can mean being so rounded that one rolls every time he is given a conventional push--a roll without conviction but in strict conformity with his group.

Such a person we have not trained!

The new graduate has had three years within an "international community". Not only have his fellow students ranged from Mexico to Bolivia (and his professors also have come from some 9 different countries), but his fellow students have represented every major cultural group in the western hemisphere. Three years of such living has given the graduate an understanding of the social and economic forces which have shaped his culture in a way which we could never formally teach it in the classroom.

No such experience can make a "conventional" thinker out of him!

As a matter of fact, such living will almost certainly change any point of view he "conventionally" held, back in his home town. It's been, then, a broadening experience.

As the graduate leaves us, we wonder whether we have done our best for him. We wonder, and we shall always wonder, which means we will continually be changing our curriculum. Each graduating class, then, will always vary a little in its technical training--the result of an ever-striving for a better trained agriculturalist.

But the experience we offer in international community living will never, we hope, be changed. For this reason, those in this 13th graduating class will carry back to their individual homes, as have the preceding 12 classes, a personal understanding of their neighbor's problems and hopes--an understanding which can come only through associations obtained within a community such as ours at the Escuela Agricola Panamericana.