



MARCH 1957. Following our twelfth graduation last month we have been engaged in lining up new students. It has been interesting to note how many applicants, this year, are what our boys call "paracaidistas" (parachutists). These are ones who have not written us for information regarding the requirements for admission; they just drop in out of the "clear blue" and ask to be given the entrance examination. We have no particular objection to this system, now that we have an entrance examination which works so well. We sit the boys down and tell them, Now, you take plenty of time and use your heads, this is not just a matter of filling the blanks, it is a matter of using your heads.

We find the job extremely interesting. Our examination is not based on previous education. It is an intelligence test based on experience in the United States but adapted to Latin American conditions. For example, we don't have a picture of a steamship with the smoke blowing forward and ask them what is wrong with it. Quite a few of our applicants have never seen a ship.

Some boys who have been through high school make lower grades than some who have only had six years of primary school, - and this is not meant as a reflection on high schools here or elsewhere. Once in a while - and this statement is based on our ten years' experience with the examination - a boy who gets 90 or above flunks in his classroom work. He just simply does not study. What can we do about this? We have given the problem a lot of thought and would welcome suggestions.

More students have trouble with mathematics than with any other classroom subject. We suspect this is normal. Every once in a while we have a student who simply can not assimilate mathematics (as they say in Spanish) but who is keenly interested in agriculture and who is almost certain to develop into a good practical farmer. What should we do in such cases? We are inclined to give the boy some practical training and send him home as a useful citizen -without a diploma, of course, which we can only give those who have made acceptable grades in classroom work.

The entrance examination brings out a lot of interesting things. Since we only have to give a few hundred such examinations each year, we do not have to use punch card machines. We like to study each examination personally. Can the boy use his head, or has he just been careless? For example, what would you do in the following case: A man starts walking from home and he goes six miles due East, then he turns sharp right and walks five miles, then he turns left and walks three miles, then right again and walks seven miles. In what direction is he now going? And the boy replies, "I dont know, but if I were that guy I would go home by the nearest route and get into bed because I would be very tired."

On the other hand, when you get a batch of eleven examinations among which are two scores above 90 and three below 35, you seem to be on pretty safe ground. Which reminds us of a case we had some years ago. A boy from a small town was given up as hopeless. We sent him home, which resulted in a meeting of the town council. We received an official document which said: "Whereas, some boys learn rapidly, and some boys learn slowly, and Whereas, Pedro Garcia belongs in the second category, you are hereby-ordered to take him back and give him more time."