



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY 1956. We shall have to wait until next month to tell you about our eleventh graduation, because it did not take place until 3 March. The Director had a tough time preparing his preliminary remarks, because some of our professors said it would be our "onceava" graduation, others said it was the "décima primera" and others the "undécima". We finally had to submit the problem to the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española which said "undécima". It would be so much simpler if we could stick to the old Maya system of ten fingers and ten toes, and if you need more than that, you just multiply by twenty.

Final examinations took place during the month, and as usual, the subjects which gave a little trouble were mathematics and biology. These, of course, with reference to the first-year students. We are glad to say that the third year boys got by, which brings us to the major subject of this News Letter.

We have cut down our "Examen de Capacidad" or intelligence test to fifty questions, after having tried in previous years 60, 75 and 100. We have retained those questions which seem to have the greatest value. We have eliminated the "knowledge" questions, with three exceptions, one of which is based on orthography. This question consists of twenty simple words, most of which are misspelled, and you are supposed to correct the errors. Up to now -- and we have given the exam to nearly 200 applicants, -- only one has known why a female of the horse persuasion is a yegua and not a llegua, and cocina (kitchen) is not spelled with s.

But to come down to more important matters: Out of sixty exams given to boys in a certain Central American country, four obtained grades of 92 and 96. (In each case they would have been two points higher if they had remembered that you dont spell cocina with s and that a female of the horse persuasion is not a llegua). Five applicants were in the 80's; fifteen in the 70's; fifteen in the 60's; ten in the 50's; six in the 40's; four in the 30's; and three in the 20's.

Now, what are you going to do when you have to examine 500 or more applicants, and you have some such record as the above? We think almost anyone will agree that you have to reject the boys in the 20's and 30's and 40's. What are you going to do with the boy who says, "I know this is an intelligence test, and when I saw that question, If three oranges cost ten cents, what will a dozen and a half cost, I was sure there must be some catch in it, so I didnt answer."

After a number of years, we are still finding that there is not a high positive correlation between the grade made in this test and the number of years the boy has been in school. Nor the number of years he has been out of school (sometimes the boys say, "I havent been in school for the past four years and have forgotten most of what I learned").

We still have -- and we hope we shall continue to have -- cases of the following nature: A boy who is a born agriculturist, and a hard worker, but simply cannot handle mathematics. While such boys may not be able to qualify for diplomas, some we have trained have made excellent agriculturists. Which should not be interpreted as saying that farmers are not better farmers if they have brains.