Gideonse Urges A Labor Period

Brooklyn Head Proposes One Semester in a Camp of C. C. Pattern

A semester of planned labor-camp activity somewhere in the country far from the student's normal environment would improve the curriculum of almost any college, Harry David Gideonse, president of Brooklyn College, said in his annual report to the Board of Higher Education, made public yesterday.

Citing the educational significance of the Federal C. C. camps as "far greater than any immediate contribution to conservation and relief," Mr. Gideonse expresses the belief that it is a "pity" for this type of education to be isolated from the intellectual variety and "restricted to a less privileged group." Possessing the cry of "war hysteria" he writes, "this suggestion was made by him as far back as 1932 in Northwestern University.

He bases his conclusion upon the "impossible to achieve the pre-Nadi Weimar Republic's labor camps which have been taken over by its other purposes. Little chance is seen for any such project to be immediately begun, according to the report, the pattern of our society's organization is now too rigidly set for any such suggestions, except to be called "playful fashion." But Mr. Gideonse says that the cities colleges would well use this and other means to expand the physical education programs.

Calls Such Activity a Balance

He sees such labor-camp activity as a balance for the cultivation of only intellectual pursuits. Pointing out that the strict liberal arts and science program of Brooklyn has its "virtue," in comparison to the "sloppy vocationalism that has crept into colleges all over the land," he nevertheless says that this type of curriculum was designed for an earlier period.

The time might be ripe to reconsider whether this strictly intellectual program has relevance under present social and economic need, the report says.

It was with this in mind, Mr. Gideonse writes, that a survey of 7,000 graduates was undertaken to determine what effect this perhaps outdated curriculum had on their lives.

In editing the lack of physical education emphasis in the city colleges as compared with colleges elsewhere, the report says that undergraduates here have greater need for this type of activity than do the "sturdy farm stock that is the core of the enrollment at Minnesota, Iowa or Wisconsin."
Warns of Youth Decline

A major problem to be faced, "with considerations of national defense foremost in the minds of our generation," is the problem of youth. For a long while, the sharp decline in the number of young people, which all studies have shown to be related with revenue, has given a new urgency to our concern about the quality of work done with the young people of the various states.

For warns that too few have seen that this decline in youth may make them "one of the nation's scarcest resources." "There are probably 4,000,000 young men and women out of school who need of jobs and totally unemployed," he mentions, "this is the most scarse in this group than in any other category, and the possibilities for industrial and social disintegration are of course tremendous," he asserts.

"Apart from their legitimate educational functions the schools have undoubtedly played the unplanned role of a society's defense valve in this connection. Too many of us are at present preoccupied with the immediate distress of the post-war group.

"The few of us have seen the man in writing on the wall which tells in unmistakable terms of an early future in which the scarce young men and women will be one of the nation's scarcest resources."

The key to the answer is "good management which could husband such scarce resources so that the return may match the product of a more guarded and casual generation."

Sees Educational Challenge

In this he declares "it will have to be in the educational imagination and foresight. There is an educational challenge to the city college, "the public or the student body. All of the students, Mr. Gideon writes, see the reason for the unfortunate state of affairs in universities and colleges when the minimum percentages of the student body are activities."

Comparing a specific incident where a large group, numerically predominant, is only 1 percent of the student body at Brooklyn College, takes part in any incident, Mr. Gideon states that Williams, for instance, such a group would not immediately cause the whole college to be labeled, but at Brooklyn it is charged to the "red" inclinations of all students.

He calls the student body "characteristic" that such demonstrations get full press notices, but the true reason is the student body due to the student elected council taking action against a left group, in disgust of the compromise."

He sees a need for decentralization of duties so that the president might not be an educator as well as administrator, not a "bottle neck or final cog in the McCormick machine."

He denies that there is any de-leterious policy of teaching atheism in courses. He writes that education has a definite responsibility to encourage student initiative and discussion and organizations.

Citing the effect which the college has had on the community, he points out it has become a "heavy "fan mail" wherein a community that has been "extremely generous" to a new young college president comments on every phase of his and the college's activities.