

HIGHER EDUCATION -- THEME OF OUR TIME

Florida residents heard more about higher education before and during the 1963 Legislature than ever before in history. In the next few months the subject will be coming up for public discussion throughout the State as the campaign gets under way for approval of a constitutional amendment for bond financing of university, junior college and vocational technical buildings.

Why all this sudden and intense interest in higher education? This is a question many people are asking as they note the increasing emphasis on this subject.

It was no accident that higher education developed into one of the dominant themes of the 1963 Florida Legislature. Higher education is the dominant theme of our time.

Throughout the nation there is a critical appraisal of colleges and universities, public and private, to determine how they stack up with regard to quality and capacity. In state after state there is a feverish effort to add more classrooms and to step up the quality, particularly in the fields of science and engineering.

In his opening address to the Legislature, Governor Farris Bryant remarked that "by far the most critical need that we face in this coming biennium is the need to make sufficient provision for the higher education of the young people of Florida."

There are two basic reasons for this growing emphasis. One is the exploding college and university enrollments. The other is the revolution in technology and new knowledge generated by activities in the fields of space, defense

and science-based industries.

The launching of the Russian Sputnik in the 1950s ushered the United States almost overnight into the Space Age at breakneck speed.

Along with the intense developments in defense and space came a new trend in growth-type industries in which brainpower, rather than natural resources of coal and iron, hold the key. New growth type industries began to migrate to areas with strong university setups where they could utilize the brainpower of outstanding scientists, mathematicians and engineers.

Leading economists anticipate that economic development and industrial growth in the future will stem increasingly from advanced education and progress in scientific research.

Migration of industry resulting from developments in science and technology is causing headaches and unemployment problems for many sections of the country with obsolete type industry. At the same time, it is bringing vast opportunity for other states which prepare for it.

These new trends in industry offer opportunity for Florida particularly. This State, long established as a tourist playground and vegetable and citrus growing area, is beginning to blossom into an industrial state as well. The accent in Florida is in the growth-type industries which not only fit more neatly into the attractive Florida landscape but offer the greatest potential for future development.

Industrial growth is a necessity for the future economic prosperity of Florida. This State no longer can be dependent upon an agrarian economy coupled with our traditional tourism business.

Within a comparatively short period of less than 10 years Florida has developed into the ninth most populous state in the nation. By 1970 it will

become No. 6. Florida is attracting national prominence politically, economically and socially. Unhappily, however, from this prominence and growth stems problems, and from unsolved problems can stem crises. Florida may well be on the threshold of its greatest era, or in converse, of its backward slide should it fail to realize its great potential.

Accelerated industrial growth must be the essential element to the realization of our potential. If Florida does in fact succeed in its drive toward industrial prominence then the stability of its tourist business, its agrarian economy and the other facets of Florida business which have so long served us well, not only will be preserved but will grow and prosper as the industrial development continues.

As this type of growth proceeds, the tax coffers of the State and its cities, towns, municipalities and counties will begin to fill, affording every geographical area of the State a sound financial basis upon which each such area will wax strong and be in position to afford the facilities its citizens need and desire.

In its March report to Congress on "Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization and Training" the U. S. Department of Labor forecast that between 1960 and 1970 Florida would have the largest percentage increase in the nation in its labor force -- 1,271,000 workers or a gain of 67.4 per cent.

This prediction is good and bad news alike for Florida. If jobs are provided for this vast new group of workers then it means prosperity; if the jobs aren't provided then it will mean a swelling of the ranks of the unemployed and an economic decline in Florida.

We know that a greater emphasis will be placed on college training for occupations in the future, requiring higher skills. As Florida grows industrially, more job opportunities will be created in industrial establishments and

in other industry groups which develop out of the economic spurt generated by industrial growth.

Florida, whether she wants it or not, is caught up in a higher education race in which state after state is pushing ahead rapidly. It is a race in which Florida can ill afford to lag behind.

Let's take a look at where Florida stands in relation to the rest of the nation in her contribution to higher education and in the number of its college age population in college.

In the year 1962 fewer than one out of three of Florida's college age population of 18, 19, 20 and 21 year olds were attending college. The figures show that 31 per cent of the college age population in this State was actually in college. The national average was 41.6 per cent. California had 58.7 per cent -- almost two out of three of its college age population in college.

This lag was even more acute at the upper level in the junior and senior classes. In 1962, of every 100 young people 20 and 21 years old, only 15 of those in Florida were in college. The average for the nation was 29. California had 35.

Compounding Florida's problem is the fact that its population growth rate has been running at the highest level percentage-wise in the nation. Projections of the U. S. Census Bureau's 1960 figures show that the number of Floridians in the college age group will increase conservatively from 243,483 to 478,000 between 1960 and 1970, or almost double. The average estimated gain for the nation as a whole will be 57 per cent.

Since 1957 particularly, Florida has been falling behind in providing university buildings to keep up with the expansion of enrollment and expansion of knowledge. We are now faced with the situation where construction of needed

buildings cannot be delayed longer because the projections indicate that the major impact of the college enrollment explosion will be felt in the next three years as the war babies begin reaching college age.

Conservative projections made on the basis of actual enrollment figures from the State Department of Education show that the number of high school graduates will jump from 43,914 in 1962-63 to 52,136 in 1963-64 and 60,333 in 1964-65. This heavy increase will continue so that by 1970 the State will have an estimated 218,000 students enrolled in its public and private institutions of higher learning.

Four enrollment projections have been made for the Board of Control since 1956. Each has been higher than the preceding one. A first projection in 1956 placed the 1970 enrollment in Florida's public and private colleges and universities at 132,000. The figure was raised later to 158,000, then revised upward to 172,000. Another projection, made in January of this year by Florida State University's Institute for Social Research, placed the 1970 total enrollment at 185,000. The Space Era Education Study completed shortly before the 1963 Legislature by a group of outstanding educators, scientists and engineers forecast that the 1970 enrollment might hit 218,000.

The 1963 Legislature took steps to overcome Florida's lag in higher educational facilities. It created a new upperlevel State college in the Pensacola area to open in 1967. This will be the first of a new system of State colleges to fill the gap between the junior colleges and the State universities. Three new junior colleges were authorized in Okaloosa, Polk and Monroe counties.

The Legislature also authorized a new State university in the strategic East Central Florida area where the nation's missile test center and related industrial complex is located. The bill authorizing the university said that

nine counties were to be considered as a site. They are Flagler, Orange, Seminole, Lake, Brevard, Volusia, Osceola, Indian River and St. Lucie. The bond program to be voted upon November 5 provides \$200,000 for planning of construction of the new university.

Another law enacted by the 1963 Legislature authorized an extension of the University of Florida College of Engineering to be located in East Central Florida. The Legislature provided \$1,511,000 in State funds and it is expected that this will be supplemented by federal funds. This facility, which would be engaged in graduate and research work, likely will be located on the site of the new university. A survey is now under way to determine the site and a selection will be made before the end of the year.

Another important bill enacted by the 1963 Legislature authorizes the Board of Control to create Divisions of Sponsored Research in State universities. This bill provides the universities more freedom in budgeting and spending in performing research under grants from the federal government, business and industry. It is expected that the bill will be the means of stepping up sponsored research programs at the universities and helping to attract new industry.

The 1963 Legislature appropriated \$113,960,024 for operation of the State universities the next two years. While this was some \$23 million more than the Legislature provided two years ago, the universities said the amount wasn't enough to meet their actual needs. The Board of Control had asked for \$142 million for operation of the universities.

The 1963 Legislature also appropriated \$13 million from general revenue for new buildings at the universities and \$17 million for buildings at the junior colleges. The Board of Control has placed the accumulated needs of the State universities for new buildings at more than \$100 million. The junior colleges

have set their capital outlay needs at \$58 million.

The bond amendment to be voted on November 5 is a constitutional plan of borrowing to finance university, junior college and vocational technical school construction on an orderly, continuing basis. The plan is modeled after the 1952 amendment which earmarked a portion of automobile tag receipts as a basis for issuing Board of Education bonds for construction of public school buildings.

The amendment limits to \$75 million the amount of bonds which can be issued during the 1963-65 biennium. In any succeeding biennium, no more than \$50 million in bonds may be issued, except by two-thirds vote of the members elected to each house of the Legislature. The amendment earmarks proceeds of the revenues derived from the utilities gross receipts tax for retirement of the bonds and provides that any general revenue funds spent on buildings in 1963-65 will be refunded from bond proceeds.

The Legislature placed several important safeguards around the borrowing. Interest on the proposed bonds can't exceed 4.5 per cent. Bonds must be sold through public bidding. Any discount must be less than two per cent and the State Board of Administration will be fiscal adviser for the bond issue, saving about \$1 million in fees. In addition, no project can be financed under the bond program unless it has been approved by a vote of three-fifths of the elected members of each house of the Legislature. Finally, the State Bond Review Board must review the bonds to be issued under the program to determine their fiscal soundness and whether such financing has legislative approval.

It is an established economic principle that it is sound to borrow when the rate of return is greater than the cost of borrowing.

The bond program would allow Florida to meet today's needs today. Human capital is the major resource on which Florida's progress must be built. The

college graduate over his lifetime will earn from \$100,000 to \$175,000 more than the high school graduate. Most of the college and university construction will bring in side benefits, such as grants and other support from the federal government and various research foundations.

Florida in the next few years has a tremendous challenge in providing adequately for higher education and meeting the opportunities facing this State. Should the responsible and progressive-minded citizens in Florida accept wholeheartedly this challenge, then we will have insured not only the future of Florida but will have laid the foundation for the greatest era of development this State has ever seen.