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RHODES AND HIS SCHOLARSHIPS

Growing Influence in American Life

SOME weeks ago *The Listener* collected opinions from a number of New Zealand Rhodes Scholars on the working of the Rhodes scheme. The other day we found that an American Rhodes Scholar, F. E. Taplin, was in Wellington. During part of the war Mr. Taplin served in New Zealand as Assistant Naval Attaché at the Legation in Wellington. He married a Wellington girl, Ngaio Thornton, and he is now back in this country with his wife and two daughters, and his mother, on a holiday visit.

Mr. Taplin went to Oxford with his Rhodes Scholarship in 1937, and studied at Queen's College. He is an associate of a legal firm in Cleveland, Ohio, and among his hobbies are music, fishing, mountaineering, and revisiting New Zealand. During his service here he took a holiday in the South Island, and crossed from the Hermitage to the Franz Josef by the Copland Pass. Now he is seeing New Zealand by car, from the Southern Lakes to the Bay of Islands.

Speaking of the American Rhodes Scholarships, Mr. Taplin referred to the story that when Cecil Rhodes drew up his will he did not know how many States there were; he thought there were only the original thirteen colonies. At any rate, to-day 32 Rhodes Scholars are chosen each year from eight groups of six States. There is a selection committee in each State, which sends two candidates to the Regional Committee, and from the twelve candidates the Regional Committee chooses four to go to Oxford.

We asked who took the initiative and how the committees were made up.*

"An individual notifies if he wishes to be a candidate. If he is attending a University not in his own State, he may choose to compete from the State of his University or from the State of his residence. My own University was Princeton, New Jersey, but my State was Ohio, and I decided to offer myself from Ohio. Candidates are generally fourth-year students. They are chosen in December and graduate in June, and go to Oxford the following autumn. The State and regional committees are composed predominantly of former Rhodes Scholars, with perhaps somebody else for chairman, a judge maybe. The members are invited to act by the American Secretary to the Rhodes Trustees."

"What qualifications are looked for, and how do the committees work?"

"The ideals of Rhodes are the guide. The selectors look for personality as well as for excellence in some particular field. They try to pick men who will mix well with the students at Oxford. They have the whole record of the candidates before them, and they ask them all sorts of questions, not necessarily academic. With each committee the process takes a day. A candidate may be interviewed for from a quarter of an hour to half an hour, and may be recalled for a second or third interview."



F. E. TAPLIN
"Things are changing in America."

"And how do these Rhodes Scholars get on at Oxford? Do they tend to seek the society of compatriots?"

"They get on very well. No, they don't form American groups to any great extent. You see, they are distributed throughout the colleges, three or four to each. They spend two years at Oxford, with the option of the third. They get a lot from Oxford. I had a grand time there, and I regard it as the most stimulating experience of my life."

"What strikes an American most about Oxford?"

"The cosmopolitan nature of the student body—men from all over the world; the degree of initiative left to the student, and the absence of regimentation in student life—a man can make of his Oxford experience as much as he wishes; the opportunity for travel during the long vacations—particularly on the Continent—an extremely broadening experience; the care with which Americans, British, and others mix with each other, and therefore learn to understand each other."

The Tutorial System

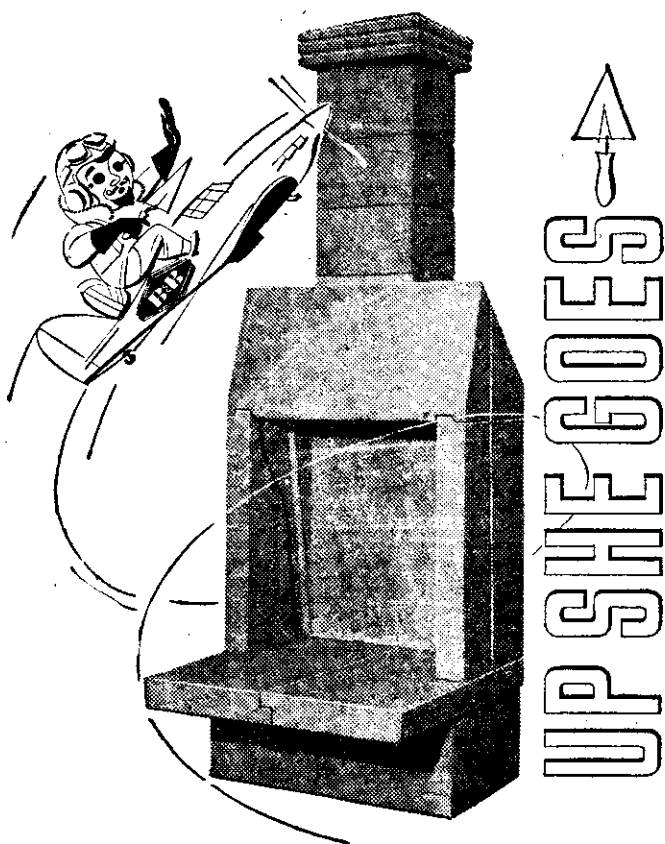
"How does the Oxford tutorial system impress the American? Is it a fact that Harvard and Yale, and perhaps other American universities have adopted a similar system?"

"The tutorial system promotes initiative on the part of the student. It stimulates the student to think for himself. The system is expensive but is justified by the stimulus resulting from close contact between teacher and student. Harvard and Yale have a modified tutorial system but the emphasis is not as individualistic as under the Oxford system. There is more emphasis in American universities on the classroom and lecture hall than at Oxford."

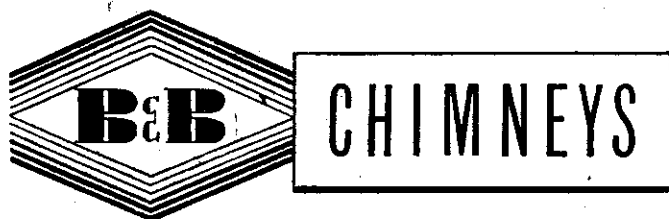
"What happens when they return to America? Presumably most of them do return. Do Rhodes Scholars enter public life in their own country?"

"Yes, nearly all of them return. Many of them take up academic life, but not so

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