

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Year Book

The Year Book in the course of the decade has become an integral part of college tradition. Its publication is eagerly anticipated by college staff with mixed feelings of dread and excitement. It is read and re-read by students and staff and its contents are discussed and quoted throughout the ensuing year.

For those not familiar with the Year Book, a few words of explanation. The Year Book is produced by each final year just prior to graduation and the latest edition, running to almost 200 pages, is an elaborate production.

The opening pages contain brief congratulatory messages and some predictable words of advice from the President, the Dean and Registrar and the Superintendent of Schools and a student editorial concludes the introduction. Photographs of college staff, accompanied by *ipse dixit* phrases or aptly chosen classical quotations are followed by photographs of each final year student with a brief account of his or her back-ground, interests, eccentricities and/or qualities of endearment. A recent innovation in the current issue is a

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number of cartoons depicting the teaching staff of the college and some of these are reproduced here; such is the ability of the artist, Mr. Cogan, that it is not felt necessary to identify his subjects. The Year Book also contains the home addresses of all the class and serves as a means of contact between classmates in later years. The Year Book is a student achievement, produced by a small committee from the final year and is in no way influenced

1973 as judged from the editorials, one reads that in 1959 the Year Book was produced "neither from fancy nor from any hope of the future, but for ourselves alone . . . (and) primarily as a means of remembering our classmates and teachers and also 'our' city, Dublin". Understandably, student emancipation has brought about a change in student philosophy and the 1973 student expresses concern for the future and delivers what he considers to

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by the college authorities. Finance for the project is raised by the students, revenue being obtained from advertising and social functions such as discotheques; there is a small grant from the college.

But there is more to the Year Book than meets the eye. Being an independent student production, it serves as a platform for student opinion and taken over the years is an interesting chronicle of student development. Comparing the aims of the 1965 issue with that of

be important messages for the college authorities; he attacks the scale of college fees, warning that if fees "become the criterion for entry, then inevitably standards throughout the course must fall", and he pleads for recognition in course planning, exclaiming that "attempts to change (the course), both through the Students' Union and by approaches to individuals were either not heard or else ignored and the course remains for the most part as it was when we entered the college". So much for editorial

comment, a deeper message is implicit in the quotations applied to college staff and it is frankly admitted in the 1973 edition that the Year Book is "an opportunity to get our own back at those who have been sitting on us for so many years". This it does do, and with an occasional exception, the students comment on his teacher is responsible, humorous and where appropriate laudatory. Nonetheless, many a teacher must, as a result, indulge in self-analysis and view himself as teacher and

look back and truly apply to themselves the descriptions of refreshing innocence which were once apt? And, on the lighter side, how many parents may have the Year Book cited against them by offspring accused of misdemeanours which are obviously inherited traits? This book may be for many students the mirror of the soul.

The Year Book is probably unique to the college. It is the product of a small institute and would lose its identity in the anonymity of

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individual in the light of student comment. It is not unreasonable to assume that the message from student to mentor has therapeutic implications and provided that humour remains the means of communication, we can take assurance with Swift that "satire, being levelled at all, is never resented for an offence by any".

From the student point of view there are also deeper, if less immediate, implications. How many graduates in the years hence can

a large university complex. It is worthy of credit, especially to those of each final year who undertake its production and it deserves encouragement and support to ensure its survival. Temptations to institute radical change in its format should probably be resisted.

Whatever else the Year Book may be, it will always serve as a nostalgic memento of days of work and achievement and, one hopes, of "wine and women, mirth and laughter", passed in the pleasant ambience of Dublin.