

## Academic Efforts Pointed Way to Overcoming Handicap

The numbers game offers some amusement, but even the dullest player counting on his fingers realizes that the numbers themselves are meaningless. What counts are the things or the personalities the numbers represent. In other words, unless we are counting identical items (all stamped out by the same cookie cutter) mere quality has no meaning; only some conception of quality can have significance.

Thus when we come to examine the School's performance, mere numbers can tell little. It may be of some interest to note that over the past decade there has been persistent decline in the number coming to the School. Total enrollment peaked in fiscal 1965, ended June 30, at 2,957 but had slid to 1,515 by '69. Who were these people?

Concerned with numbers we are reminded that Napoleon graduated twenty-third in his class at the military academy. Dean Swift wanted to know "Who were the twenty two who preceded him?" It may be more interesting to note that the drop-out rate for the School's primary course hovered around 60% through the past decade, but it was reduced to 50% in the year ending this month. A latter-day Swift might infer there had been some improvement in the quality of instruction as well as in attendance.

For example, the primary course, long offered without charge, attracted as many as 1500 or more each fiscal year during the late '60s, but only four out of ten stayed. And repeated experience with the four who remained gave evidence of considerable ignorance of what George had to say.

When, in 1973, however, the subject matter was offered in modern idiom and publicized, not as the touchstone of all economic knowledge but as an inquiry pertinent to today's urban problems, sensible people were willing to pay a modest fee for the course. The result was fewer classes (the numbers were small) but a larger proportion of those who enrolled stayed in class. Although no objective test was applied, instructors reported that class discussion indicated a gratifying degree of understanding.

Much remains to be done. It is not sufficient to present George's ideas and ideals in today's language,

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## Academic Efforts *(Continued)*

to relate them to current social and financial problems in the way people think now. Some dynamic applications of what George proposed must be found or created. To go on talking about justice and about the denial of special privilege in abstract terms will be to continue under severe handicap.

One sympathetic scholar sums up the judgment of the market place of ideas that "the extravagant arguments of passionate advocates of site value taxation appear to be designed to repel rather than persuade . . . and to convince opponents that this was and is a crank cause." At least some encouragement can be taken from the latest activities of the School that are enabling it to live down the label of "the home for a crank cause."