

HIGHER TUITION FEES

Education fees are going up. People are complaining. Private schools are under fire. We need a clear perspective about the cost of education, the purpose of education — and the role of private education in this country. Everyone is aware that the cost of education is going up, and will continue to go up in the foreseeable future. The need to upgrade education is also a well known fact. Therefore the only moot points in this higher tuition fees issue are on whether the tuition increase will go towards the improvement of the educational system in that particular school. It may be just as well, for parents and students, to be more demanding about the quality of the education they are getting. There may be a misgiving about a foreseeable chance of a proportionate increase in educational benefits from a raise in tuition. The fact is that a great proportion of the increase in costs has

been going towards better pay for teachers who have been clamoring for adequate compensation to the point of staging strikes.

The President and the department of education have in turn sought to scrutinize the present action of private schools. This is always good, except that government has always been quick to impose restrictions on private schools while being very slow with any kind of support. Most people have one misconception. This is that government education, or public schools, should be given all-out support by the government, but that government should be antagonistic towards private education. This probably harks back to our American period when the department of education bureaucracy was built on a strong antipathy for the religious-oriented private school. The fact is that today private education has assumed a function that is vital to the nation, one that

government has failed to fill. The increasing presence of private education in remote areas where only mission schools thrive or in higher education where a large proportion of students are in private schools, dramatically indicts the failure of government to fill this need.

Now, an institution like the UP is subsidized by government, and its quality is assured at a high cost of expenditure per student. The citizens on the other hand are entitled to education but find themselves turning to

private education because there are not enough schools. The government should consider supporting the parent or student who goes to a private school. Perhaps the tuition fees should be tax deductible. After all we are saying the government cost of education by actually paying tuition to private schools. Nobody wants a raise in tuitions. We should do something about it. But we should not take it out on private educators who are trying to improve education here. — *By Alfredo Roces in Manila Times, June 28, 1967.*