

DIPLOMA MILLS IN OUR SOCIETY

The Director of the Bureau of Private Schools, Mr. Narciso Albarracin, has ordered a resurvey of some private institutions of learning under his supervision, "to determine," according to a news report, "if conditions existing at the time of recognition of (the) courses offered or at the time of (the) approval of (the) status of colleges and universities are still being maintained."

Director Albarracin wants to know, in other words, which schools have developed into seats of learning and which have degenerated into diploma mills. It is important to make the distinction, for the limited facilities and personnel in the hands of the bureau should be used, perhaps exclusively, in the rigid policing of the diploma mills to put an end to their standing as filling stations and assembly lines.

The good ones among the private colleges and universities need not be guarded as if they were potential criminals, neither should they be subjected to such rules and regulations as will prevent them from entering upon unorthodox but progressive experimentations.

They are easily known by the quality of their laboratories and libraries and, more important, by the attitude of their governing bodies, and if they are worthy, they are a necessary adjunct to the educational system of the country.

It is the diploma mills — and these abound in the downtown area of the bustling city — which pose grave and eternal problems to the community. Their factory standards which dictate that no obstacles should be placed to the entry of as many students as possible and which prohibit the holding of any

sort of qualifying examinations are a major factor in the emergence of novel but hardly respectable values.

The students they turn out, by the very nature of the slipshod education to which these have been subjected, easily graduate into that class of citizens who live barely within the margin of the law.

Unfortunately, because of the increasingly vast number of the diploma school graduates, the government is compelled, if only for political reasons which are almost always confused with democratic principles in these parts, to draft them into the public service.

The result is an appalling inefficiency. This is manifested as much in corrupt practices as in the handling of routine matters, particularly those in which the unconnected people are involved.

The other more serious result is the transformation of diploma mill standards into social values against which the thinking and behavior of civil servants are usually judged.

In a way, the effort of Director Albarracin to do something to identify the sub-standard colleges and universities will go much deeper than his inspectors realize. The simple act, for instance, of enforcing the rule regarding the size of classes and the rule governing the qualifications and teaching load of instructors and professors might be the first long step toward reform and improvement.

It is unwise to predict that the Director will be heeded by the owners and operators of the diploma mills. After all, he will touch them where it will hurt most — the pocket-book.

Like any manufacturer, the diploma mill owners and operators are after the preservation of a high rate of profit. And this can be done only by lowering production cost, and this means keeping the sizes of classes inhumanly large and the wages of the teachers as close to the basement as possible.

It is comforting to imagine that the Director of

the Bureau of Private Schools has entered upon a crusade. For nothing but a crusade will clean large sector of private education. And nothing like a crusade will prevail against the powerful and politically influential groups which reap vast profits at the expense of students, and ultimately, of society.

But will a crusade against educational money-maker which are also a source of funds with which to corrupt the electorate in an election year gain any headway? The fact that this question must needs be asked illustrates to what extent the scale of values by which the people abide has deteriorated. — *I. P. Soliongco, Manila Chronicle, Feb. 15, 1969.*

OF GOVERNMENTS

Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and must therefore trust the governed — they must have no choice but to trust them. — *Thomas Jefferson*