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Strong Points of College Quarter System Examined

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL, Assemblyman, 46th District

One of the hardy perennials in the field of education is the "quarter system." In order to avoid argument, I must start this discussion by defining "hardy perennial," because that phrase is frequently used in comments on the "quarter system."

The perennial is a plant that continues to live from year to year. All shrubs and trees and many herbs are commonly regarded as perennials by botany teachers. A hardy perennial is a shrub, tree or herb which is difficult to kill. Therefore, in ordinary American usage anything that lasts or is repeated from year to year or from time to time is a perennial and a hardy perennial is any subject that keeps popping up and will not lie down and play dead.

The "quarter system" in education simply refers to dividing the calendar year into four quarters of three months each, give or take a few days one way or another. There are high schools, colleges, and universities which use the quarter system.

ANY EDUCATIONAL institution which has the quarter system permits students to attend three quarters, roughly about nine months, and stay away for any three-months period they select. Those students who do not want to attend classes throughout the year usually select the summer quarter. If they attend classes for only three quarters each year, it requires the usual four years to complete a four-year course in a high school. Likewise, it requires four years to complete a four-year college program. Some junior colleges have the quarter system but I do not know how it operates.

The advantage to the students is that the quarter system makes it possible to complete a regular four-year college course in less time. There is no disadvantage to students because they are not required to attend any particular quarter session and they are not penalized by the high school or college authorities in advance what they intend to do. Obviously, the faculty likes to know how many students will appear so they can plan ahead.

WHEN THE quarter system is in operation, there is an advantage to the teachers, whether they are called instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, or full professors. The advantage is that the teachers can elect to teach during three quarters and receive the prevailing salary, or they can decide to teach throughout the calendar year and receive extra pay for the fourth quarter, or any quarter in excess of three quarters. There is no disadvantage to the teachers because they, like the students can be absent during any three-months period, and do what they want. They can go on vacation, take post-graduate courses, or stay home and prune the rose bushes, or whatever they want.

The advantage to the taxpayers is that the buildings, laboratories, gymnasiums, music halls, auditoriums, and other features of what some people call "the plant" are being used throughout the year. Since the "quarter system," when well managed, usually results in a majority of the

students attending throughout the calendar year, it is possible to educate more students at less cost to the students and the taxpayers.

ALL OF THE usual national, state, and religious holidays are observed in any educational institution operating under the quarter system, hence there is no reasonable objection to the quarter system when holidays are considered.

The quarter system is important to the readers of this column because recently most newspapers have printed a release from South Bay College, legally known as California State College at Palos Verdes, stating that it would operate under the quarter system when the first students are admitted. This generated a barrage of mail to me, for and against the quarter system. The California State Legislature, of which I have been a member for nearly fourteen years, rarely attempts to go into the internal operation of the tax-supported educational institutions.



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Students Hear Of Educational TV Operation

Representatives of South High attended a special district meeting of the California Scholarship Federation at Morningside High School last week. Purpose of the meeting was to discuss the operation of Channel 28, an educational television station.

Attending from the South High chapter were Michael Cruikshank, president; Carelton Eastlake, a representative, and John Jackson, a past president of the Spartan group.

Students were told of the objectives of the new educational channel and given brochures about the station's programming.

The total veteran population of the United States was 22,013,000 on June 30, 1964. It dropped from 22,186,000 on June 30, 1963, the Veterans Administration reported.



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