

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

ESTABLISHED AS THE EVENING PLAIN DEALER IN 1845 MORNING AND SUNDAY
EDITIONS FOUNDED IN 1885 BY L. E. HOLDEN

LARGEST MORNING AND SUNDAY CIRCULATION IN OHIO

B. P. BOLE, PRESIDENT JOHN S. MCCARRENS, VICE PRES & GEN'L MGR. PAUL BELLAMY, EDITOR

January 8, 1938.

Mr. James B. Conant,
President of Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear President Conant:

I am greatly obliged to you for sending me the excerpt from your annual report. Like many other newspaper men and particularly those of Harvard extraction, I have been much interested in the Nieman Bequest and confess to a growing curiosity as to what the Overseers and Corporation would do with it.

I am glad that you have decided not to erect another trade school. Your plan to grant fellowships sounds very promising to me. At any rate it will do no harm to proceed on this line for a moderate period of time and watch results. The only difficulty in the plan, as I see it, is this: - the unwillingness of newspaper executives to spare from active service for a year any of their specially gifted young chaps. I admit that I would think twice about it. I have, for example, a number of three-year olds at the present time who look specially good. I should hate to lose any one of them for a year. Possibly this is merely an instinctive shying away from a new idea. On second thought, I believe it is.

This one thing I know, however: namely, that newspapers of the future must have better trained men than they have ever had in the past. The formal professions and business have outstripped us in this particular. Let me give you an example. This newspaper, which is not as large as certain journals in New York and Chicago but ranks as one of the important papers of the country, possesses five regular editorial writers and calls upon other members of its staff for occasional editorials. Our chief editorial writer must hold himself in readiness to write editorials on local government and political affairs, on state government

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and political affairs and on the national government and political affairs. This is a tremendous field. Another of our editorial writers is responsible for the whole field of finance, industry and trade. Another is responsible for labor relations and relief, which have come to be a tremendously important field. Another deals with foreign affairs, by which I mean everything outside the United States. The fifth is a utility man.

You will see at once how impossible a situation I have described. It is impossible for any man to be a real authority in so large a field. It would be like a teacher applying for a position on the Harvard faculty on the ground that he was an expert on history. If he narrowed it down to say that he was an expert in English history, you would reply that it was impossible for anyone to be really competent in so large a field. If he said he really thought he knew something about the reign of Queen Elizabeth, you would be inclined to consider this possible.

I think the newspapers of the country have been getting away with murder, to use the cant expression, in this particular. I think that before many years have passed, our editorial writers and our news writers will have to specialize to a far greater degree than is possible under present conditions. And as I look at it, here is where the Harvard fellowships will come in.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Bellamy

PB:C

January 13, 1938

Mr. Paul Bellamy
Cleveland Plain Dealer
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Mr. Bellamy:

Thank you so much for your letter in regard to the Hieman bequest. I am glad that on the whole you approve of the experiment which we have outlined.

I quite agree that the point which you raise in your second paragraph is the greatest difficulty which we shall have to meet. I have had an opportunity of discussing our plans with a number of newspapermen, and that question has been raised continually. How serious this obstacle will be, time alone can tell.

We shall watch with great interest the applications which come in this first year. I feel sure that if the plan can once be launched it may gather volume as it proceeds and that the papers will be more willing to release their men. Your comments about the desperate situation in regard to the newspapers indicate that we may have hit on something here which will be of great value if only people feel that they can take advantage of the opportunities.

I trust that you will be willing to write me from time to time any comments you may have concerning the development of this project and, indeed, on any other matters.

With deep appreciation of your kindness.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES E. CORLIFF