

ABOUT — Skepticism Being Better than Paranoia.

It could be argued that what the world offers to this year's scientific or engineering graduate represents the greatest promise ever held out to his kind as individuals. Arguments on the other side are easier to find and they agitate and stimulate. What historian Richard Hofstadter calls the "paranoid style" is enjoying popularity in the United States. We can build black worries on all sides: Business life is enforced conformity; technology is dominating humanity instead of serving it; government for the people is perishing; and the free intellectual stimulation of the university has succumbed to the scramble for federal grants.

General day-to-day progress usually is stumbling and uneven. Worthy minds are inspired by and aspire to the high peaks of human works. The inclination to match this week's failures against mankind's better achievements—as they stood out against the poorer levels of their times—can bring discouragement and feelings of frustration.

We hear and see evidence that among college students there may be greater than usual discontent with the world. Students are reported discontented over too few opportunities for having a hand in making human society better. This is admirable insofar as the attitude is based on understanding. But viewing a mountain from one position doesn't tell much about how hard it would be to climb the unseen side. Some skepticism and probing to learn just what can be done should be a part of the approach of any technically trained person.

Society is changing and is likely to change with increasing speed. Such elements as business, technology's influence, government, and the university atmosphere all could stand some improvement. But all of these are likely to remain influential elements of society and, if they are to be improved, they will have to have the driving efforts of able people. Therein lie challenges to the worthiest of idealists who want to improve the human lot.

After baccalaureate (at Illinois) and doctoral (at North Carolina) degrees in chemistry, Dr. Richard L. Kenyon became a research chemist with DuPont. During four years of research, a strong interest in people and in professional communication persisted and ultimately led him to join the publications staff of the American Chemical Society. As a field editor of *Chemical and Engineering News* and *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, as managing editor of the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry*, as editor of *C & E N*, as editorial director of ACS's applied journals, and finally as Director of Publications for ACS, he has devoted two extremely fruitful decades to the challenging business of more accurate, more literate, more readable, and more exciting communication in the world of applied chemistry and chemical engineering.

Many of our readers doubtlessly have enjoyed Dr. Kenyon's scholarly, arresting editorials in *C & E N*. The message of a recent one was so timely a piece of mature opinion that we wished to have it respoken from our pages. It is reprinted from the Career Opportunities Supplement of the March 14, 1966, issue of *Chemical and Engineering News*. **CHEM ENG ED** is grateful to the American Chemical Society for permission to reprint it.

The new graduates at all levels of chemistry and chemical engineering probably are, on the average, the best trained ever. The demands for excellent training probably also will be the greatest ever. And not only will demands for high training be the greatest, but demands for breadth also are growing.

There appears to be exciting opportunity for competent, well-trained and educated chemists and chemical engineers far beyond the numbers that will be produced. This is true not only in the highest form of "pure" research, but in applied research, technology, commerce, politics, and a host of other pursuits. Those who want a feeling of contributing to the improvement of society should not turn their backs on what appears to be a slightly tawdry mess in comparison to one's ideal society. There lies a very real challenge.