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# **EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA**

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## FOREWORD

**T**HE U. S. Office of Education has undertaken the preparation of a series of basic studies on education in a number of Central and South American countries under the sponsorship of the Interdepartmental Committee on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation. This series of studies is part of a program to promote understanding of educational conditions in the American republics and to encourage cooperation in the field of Inter-American education. The project, a part of a Government-wide program of cultural cooperation under the auspices of the Department of State, was begun in the fall of 1943. It involves travel by Office of Education specialists in the various countries for the purpose of gathering data first hand on their educational systems, and the preparation of reports from these data for publication.

*Education in Nicaragua* is based on data gathered by the author in Nicaragua in 1945 and supplemented since that year by materials supplied by education and other officials in that country.

To the many persons and organizations in Nicaragua and the United States who have aided in bringing this study to completion, the U. S. Office of Education expresses gratitude.

KENDRIC N. MARSHALL,

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## Chapter One

# Introduction

### *The Country*

**N**ICARAGUA, the largest of the Central American republics, lies between Honduras on the north and Costa Rica on the south, with coastlines of about 200 miles on the Pacific Ocean and 300 miles on the Caribbean Sea. Two mountain ranges extend through the country from northwest to southeast, the one near and parallel to the Pacific being studded with some 20 volcanic peaks. Between the mountain ranges are two lakes—Lake Nicaragua, 92 miles long by 34 miles wide, and Lake Managua, 32 by 16 miles, both about 135 feet above sea level.<sup>1</sup> Unlike her neighbors, which are highland countries, Nicaragua's most important cities and towns lie in a lowland belt that skirts the Pacific coast from north to south and then eastward to the Caribbean. Along the eastern coast is another stretch of lowlands, averaging about 75 miles in width, known as the Mosquito Coast. Between these two lowland areas, a wedge-shaped highland region extends up into Honduras.

The climate varies from tropical to temperate, according to altitude. In the western part of the country there are a wet and dry season, the latter being from December to April. In the east it rains throughout the year, with a mean annual precipitation of about 136 inches. A total of 94 rivers, with 78 major tributaries, drain the land. Twenty-three flow into the Caribbean, 18 into the Pacific, 8 into Lake Managua, and 45 into Lake Nicaragua. These rivers, many navigable to some extent, contribute greatly to the transportation system of the Republic, which includes about 395 miles of railroad (1943) and approximately 1,000 miles of highways.

### *History*

Nicaragua was discovered by Columbus on his fourth and last voyage to America. After sailing down the east coast to the Rio San Juan which, with Lake Nicaragua, today forms the major part of the country's southern boundary, Columbus landed and took possession for the king of Spain in September 1502. Twenty years later González Dávila and his men entered the region and reputedly con-

<sup>1</sup> Comercio Exterior de la América Latina. Report of the Comisión Arancelaria de los Estados Unidos. Parte II—Política y Relaciones Comerciales de cada uno de los Países Latino Americanos, Núm. 146. Washington, 1943.

verted some 15,000 natives to the Catholic faith, meeting resistance from only one chief. Among the friendly chiefs was Nicarsao, from whom the country is said to have derived its name.

In 1524, the same year that Pedro de Alvarado invaded what are now Guatemala and El Salvador, Francisco Hernández de Córdoba came to Nicaragua and founded the cities of Granada and León. (The Nicaraguan money unit, the córdoba, was named after this explorer.) These two cities became great political rivals: Granada, the conservative center of the country's wealth and aristocracy; León, the liberal center of intellectual activities. When Guatemala was made a captaincy general, a Spanish military district, Nicaragua was included in its jurisdiction.

Both the east and west coasts have been unsuccessfully attacked at one time or another in the past by freebooters and pirates—English, Dutch, and French. The English settled the east coast and by the middle of the seventeenth century controlled Bluefields and Cape Gracias a Dios. In 1687 the Mosquito Coast was declared an English protectorate by the Governor of Jamaica, and remained so until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when England finally recognized Nicaraguan sovereignty.

Nicaragua joined the other Central American colonies in declaring independence from Spain in 1821 and becoming a part of the Mexican Empire under Augustín de Iturbide. At the fall of the empire she joined the Central American Federation, with Conservative Granada as her capital city. In 1838 the Liberals succeeded in establishing Nicaragua as an independent republic with the seat of government in León.

Internal struggles continued and wars were fought with Honduras and El Salvador to maintain the country's independence. The Conservatives regained control and moved the capital back to Granada. Then the Liberals engaged the services of the Tennessean filibuster, William Walker, who soon had himself made president. At the time of the California gold rush in 1849, Cornelius Vanderbilt operated a transportation service between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean by way of the San Juan River, Lake Nicaragua, and a stage-coach run, and Walker interfered with Vanderbilt's business. Vanderbilt then is said to have given material aid to Walker's opponents, the Conservatives, and the Tennessean was driven out of the country. The route followed by Vanderbilt, which at times had been sought by different European powers as a natural isthmian canal, was being surveyed by United States Army engineers when the second World War broke out. Many Nicaraguans are confident that such a waterway will eventually supplement the Panama Canal.

Following Walker's expulsion, the two political parties worked together for a while, and in 1858 the capital was moved to its present location in Managua. For about 85 years, under the Conservatives, there was comparative peace, and progress was made in education, transportation, agriculture, and foreign relations. A revolution in 1893 placed José Santos Zelaya in power until 1901, when he retired in the face of internal and external difficulties.

In 1912, at the request of President Adolfo Díaz, United States Marines were brought in to maintain order. The marines stayed until 1925; but revolutions began as soon as they left, and they returned in 1927. President Calvin Coolidge then sent Col. Henry L. Stimson to Nicaragua to seek a way to peace. The different factions were brought together for an orderly election and Gen. José Moncada, a Liberal, was elected to the presidency. Augusto Sandino, the one leader who refused to accept Stimson's policy, harassed the Government and eluded the Marines until they were withdrawn in 1932.

Since January 1937 General Anastasio Somoza, a Liberal leader, has occupied the presidency. A new constitution was adopted in 1939, but it was set aside by martial law after Nicaragua's declaration of war on the Axis powers in December 1941 and was not put into effect again until December 1945.

### **Government**

Under the constitution of 1939,<sup>2</sup> by which the Republic is governed, executive authority is vested in the president, assisted by a cabinet of 7 members, 1 of whom is the Minister of Public Education. The president is elected for a 6-year term of office by direct popular vote and is ineligible for immediate reelection. Legislative power is exercised by a bicameral congress consisting of a senate of 15 members and a chamber of deputies of 40 members, all individually elected by popular ballot for 6-year terms.

Judiciary authority rests in a supreme court of justice made up of 5 magistrates and 2 alternates; 5 courts of appeals, each composed of 3 magistrates; a district court in each of the 15 departments (including the National District of Managua), and local courts in the municipalities. Justices of the supreme and the appeals courts are elected by the national congress; those of the lower courts are appointed by the supreme court. Many of these lower court justices are law students attending the university, young men who thus early enter the service of the Government and align themselves with one or the other of the two traditional political parties.

<sup>2</sup> Constitución Política y Leyes Constitutivas de Nicaragua. Managua, D. N., Talleres Nacionales, 1939.

The constitution provides for the equality of all citizens before the law; freedom of speech, religion, movement, petition, and the press; and the right to hold public meetings and to organize for peaceful purposes. It declares the inviolability of the home, property, and life of the citizen; and prohibits personal privileges, monopolies, usury, protection or restriction of special creeds, and the levying of special taxes or contributions on special groups.

### **People**

Officially estimated by the national department of statistics at 1,090,000 in December 1945, the population of Nicaragua is the smallest of the Central American republics. Fourteen percent live in Managua, the capital, and about 62 percent in the rural areas. Seven-eighths of the entire population live in the narrow lowlands along the Pacific Coast. In the jungles to the east are the Mosquito and the Zambo Indians, and thousands of Negroes imported originally from the British West Indies to work on the banana plantations. According to the census of 1940, mestizos constitute 68 percent of the people; 17 percent are of European origin, 10 percent Negroes, and 5 percent Indians. Of the total population over 7 years of age, 63 percent are classified as illiterate; but in 4 of the 15 political subdivisions, corresponding to our states, the percentage of illiteracy is in the 80's.\* Spanish is the official language. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, but other creeds enjoy liberty of worship.

### **Products**

Nicaragua is predominantly an agricultural and stock-raising country. Coffee and bananas have for years been the principal agricultural exports; but due to the Panama disease, the production of bananas has been drastically curtailed. Cacao, sugar, cotton, and tobacco are exported in small quantities. For home consumption, beans, corn, potatoes, rice, and wheat are grown. In the highlands, cattle, important since Colonial days in the nation's economy, are raised, and in the vast forests of the eastern regions valuable timber is cut for domestic use and export.

Although shortage of supplies and equipment has handicapped operations, gold mining has become increasingly important since the early 1930's. Gold has now replaced coffee as the principal export, although several of the larger mines receive all their supplies and equipment by air. Manufacturing industries are few and small. They include sugar refineries, tanneries, shoe factories, soap plants, and silk and cotton mills; but none of them can supply entirely the local demand.

\* Estadística, Año II, Nos. 9 y 10, Febrero 15 de 1945. Órgano de la Dirección General de Estadística de Nicaragua. Managua, 1945. p. 9.

### ***Educational Development***

As in other Central American Republics, educational development has been slow and difficult. The colonial authorities, centered in Guatemala, gave little attention to elementary schooling even in the region of Guatemala itself. A few classes were maintained in Nicaragua by church organizations and by private individuals, but only rudimentary instruction was provided in reading, writing, counting, and religion. According to a former head of the Advisory Board of the Ministry of Public Education,<sup>4</sup> the first real elementary school was opened in Managua by Don Gabriel Morales about 1837, just before Nicaragua became an independent republic.

Between 1857 and 1867, the government of General Tomás Martínez initiated State-supported education by founding elementary schools in most of the larger towns and cities of the Republic.<sup>5</sup> During the administration of Don Pedro Joaquín Chamorro (1875-79) elementary education was declared free and compulsory, and the Government undertook the provision of equipment and materials and the establishment of many new schools.

Public education underwent a marked change under the Government of General José Santos Zelaya (1893-1909). Elementary school buildings were provided in all parts of the Republic. Teachers' salaries in all schools were raised appreciably. Secondary education was made more practical, enrollments were greatly increased, and the quality of teaching was notably improved.

In 1910, a change in government brought further change in educational policy and practices.<sup>6</sup> The Comtian positivistic orientation introduced under Santos Zelaya, by which emphasis was placed on the study of the natural sciences and on the practical principles derived from phenomena, properties, and relationships of material rather than metaphysical things—on development of the concrete and familiar rather than the abstract and unknown—was discontinued by laws providing for an about face in education. The Catholic religion was established as a required school subject and, with the full support of the national government, various church orders were brought into the country to establish elementary, secondary, normal, and trade schools. Officials of the present Ministry of Public Education, who are today carrying on a program of educational development in the direction of practicality, believe that this action of the 1910 Government is related to the theoretical type of education that has characterized the schools of the Republic since that time.

<sup>4</sup> Edelberto Torres, Nicaragua. *La Educación en los Países de América Latina*. Anuario Educativo del Instituto Internacional del Teachers College, Columbia University. New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1942. p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> Nicaragua—Guía Ilustrada, 1948. Managua, Talleres Gráficos Pérez y Tipografía Rodríguez, 1948. p. 236.

<sup>6</sup> Edelberto Torres. *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

### ***Ministry of Public Instruction and Physical Education***

Education in Nicaragua today is administered, supervised, and largely supported by the Ministry of Public Instruction and Physical Education in Managua. Control is thus centralized in the capital, under the direction of a minister appointed by the President of the Republic. The minister is assisted by an undersecretary and a chief administrative officer, both of whom are also appointed by the President.

An advisory board composed of three members appointed by the minister provides professional or technical counsel concerning all aspects of the nation's education system. One of the members of this board in 1945-46 was a Spanish refugee who holds the degree of doctor of philosophy and letters from the University of Madrid. He teaches in the Central University of Nicaragua and in normal and secondary schools of the capital, and has written textbooks for civics, psychology, and sociology classes, conforming with the official curriculum guides established for those subjects. The advisory board draws up regulations to govern the functioning of schools and school personnel; it elaborates the courses of study and the curricula for the various educational levels; it approves textbooks, diplomas, certificates, and teachers' leaves of absence with pay; it names the examining boards for public and private secondary schools and thus, by remote control, since there are no secondary school supervisors in Nicaragua, it controls and supervises secondary education.

Other branches or sections of the Ministry have to do with supervision (inspection) of elementary schools, statistics, accounting, the teachers' register, and the study and recording of national culture and folklore.

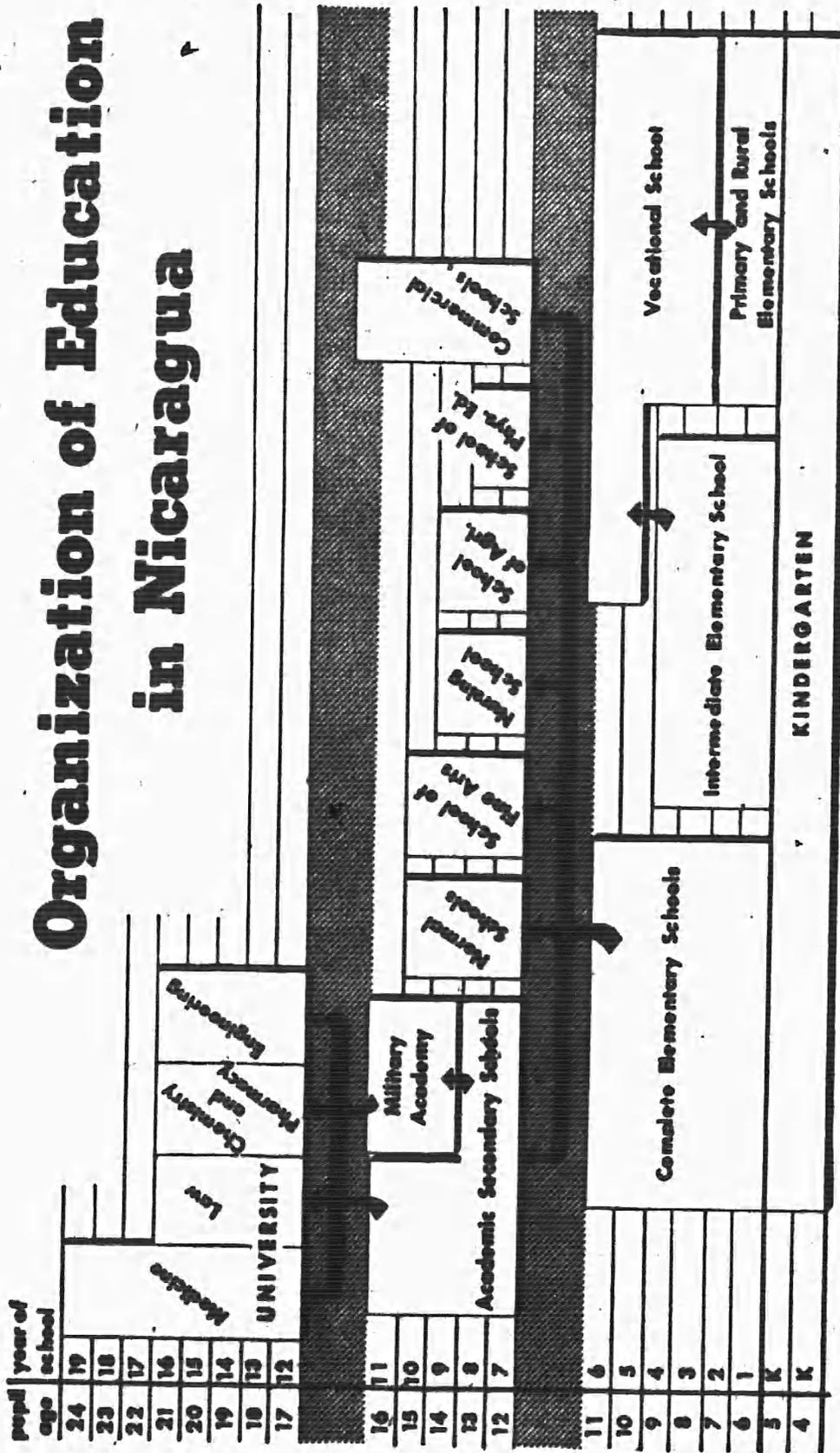
### ***Education and the National Constitution***

The political constitution of 1939, by which the Republic is again governed since the lifting of martial law in December 1945, declares public education at all levels to be a prime concern of the State, which is granted powers of supervision over all instruction in the Republic. Elementary education is declared compulsory, but due to lack of teachers and schools, compulsory education is not enforced. State-supported elementary education is free and nonsectarian. Moral and civic instruction is required in all schools. Public-school teaching is declared a public or civil service career, carrying with it for the teacher all the rights and benefits granted to other Government employees.

### ***Financial Support***

Financial support for public education in Nicaragua, as in all other Latin American republics where educational control is centralized in

# Organization of Education in Nicaragua



national ministries, is provided for annually in the national budget. An idea of the increased interest in this field may be gained from a comparison of the appropriation made for 1935-36 with that for 1945-46—220,000 córdobas<sup>7</sup> (\$44,000, U.S.) against 5,006,900 córdobas<sup>8</sup> (\$1,001,380, U.S.), or an increase of approximately 1,700 percent over the 10-year period. Of the 1945-46 funds, 2,502,840 córdobas were assigned to elementary education; 288,780 to secondary schools; 179,280 to normal schools; 231,600 to the universities; 998,000 to buildings, equipment, and materials; and 336,000 to scholarships.

The law governing the national budget provides that all unused salary items be turned into a surplus fund which the Ministry of Public Education shared in 1945 to the extent of approximately 2,000,000 córdobas. This additional amount, three-quarters of which is to be spent on school construction, brought the total for public education in 1945-46 to 7,006,900 córdobas, or \$1,401,380, U. S. currency—about 10 percent of the total national budget of 70,391,338.19 córdobas for the year.

<sup>7</sup> Figures obtained in the Accounting Section, Ministry of Public Education, Managua, December 1945.

<sup>8</sup> Presupuesto General de Egresos e Ingresos, correspondiente al Año Fiscal de 1945-46. Título VIII. Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público. Managua, Talleres Nacionales, 1945. p. 99.

## Chapter Two

# Elementary Education

**N**ICARAGUA'S national bureau of statistics has estimated that, due to the country's short average life span, 25 percent of the total population are of school age, or 6 to 15 years old. In other words, there are 272,500 children in Nicaragua who should be enrolled in the nation's schools. In 1945, however, school enrollments, including secondary and normal schools as well as elementary and kindergarten, totaled only about 69,000 pupils. On the basis of the official estimate, therefore, only one-quarter of the school-age population was actually enrolled. Average daily attendance was reported in the Ministry of Public Education to be 80 percent, fairly equally divided between the sexes.

In December 1945, Nicaragua had 953 schools of elementary level, with 65,000 pupils. Of these schools, 802 were national, with 51,481 pupils; 44 were municipal, with 1,489 pupils; and 107 were private, with 12,030 pupils. Elementary schools are further classified according to the number of grades of instruction provided: primary (elemental), 2 or 3 grades; intermediate (*graduada*), 4 grades; and complete (superior), 6 grades. Statistics showing the total number of schools of each of these types were not available, but officials in the Education Ministry estimated 50 complete, 60 intermediate, and 692 primary. Six hundred of the primary schools function in rural regions and are referred to as rural schools. Private schools are generally located in the larger towns and cities and provide from 4 to 6 years of elementary school instruction. A few maintain kindergarten classes also. The municipalities maintain all three types of schools, although only a few are complete.

### **Kindergartens**

Included among the 802 national elementary schools are 5 kindergartens. Three of these are located in Managua and 2 in Leon. A small percentage of the country's private schools maintain kindergartens along with their regular elementary school work and in this way practically insure a loyal clientele for the later years. Each kindergarten is in charge of a principal, assisted by 3 or 4 teachers. With a few exceptions these teachers have received some specialized training for the work in the Girls' Normal School in Managua or in the normal section of a private secondary school.

Children between 4 and 6 years of age are admitted for kindergarten work, although some schools provide an extra year of "preparatory instruction" for older pupils who are to enter elementary school proper the following year. Only a few hundred children were enrolled in the kindergartens in 1945.

The program is one of directed activities in which the general method and the materials employed are strongly Froebelian in character. Nevertheless, the influence of Montessori and others is also apparent. There are balls, blocks, color swatches, nests of prisms and cylinders and bowls, and materials for sewing, stringing, weaving, drawing, coloring, modeling, tying, buttoning, and other activities enjoyed by little children. Educational songs related to the various activities are sung lustily, and rhythm band participation is keenly enjoyed. Physical exercises, games, and dancing are held in the patio to the accompaniment of a piano or a victrola. For the "preparatory group" of 6- and 7-year-olds, reading and writing are taught and special games involving the fundamentals of arithmetic are played.

By and large, the teachers seemed capable and enthusiastic. Little opportunity, however, was given to the children to select their own activities or to develop them in their own way. Everything was ordered and managed by the teachers, and much of the various schools' programs was somewhat below the interest level of the 6- to 8-year olds, who might more profitably have been permitted to follow their own inclinations from time to time. Nevertheless, the children as a group seemed fairly content with the kindergarten situation and were having a good time while they learned. First-grade teachers who were questioned stated positively that boys and girls with kindergarten experience regularly excel in the various aspects of first-grade work and cause considerable less difficulty of disciplinary nature.

### ***Elementary Education Proper***

Elementary education in general aims to impart the basic knowledge essential to life in the more or less immediate community in which the school is located. Nicaragua's educational leaders realize that only a small percentage of the children enrolled in the first grade have access to the intermediate grades, and similarly, that only a small percentage of those who enter the intermediate grades will continue through the entire 6 grades. Consequently, an attempt is made at each level to provide as much as possible of the essential background of morality, citizenship, and general culture. In the fifth and sixth grades, preparation for secondary level education is emphasized, regardless of the intentions of the individual pupil in this direction.

The curriculum followed is that prescribed by the Ministry of Public Education for elementary schools throughout the Republic. The subjects taught are Spanish, arithmetic, geometry, geography, history,

nature study. (including elements of botany, zoology, physics, and chemistry), civics and morals, drawing, music, and physical education. Sewing and child care for girls, and a limited amount of manual arts for boys, are also provided.

For all schools—elementary, secondary, and normal—the school year runs 9 months, from June to February, inclusive. The elementary school day is from 8 to 11 a. m. and from 2 to 4 p. m. Class periods are of 45 minutes' duration, with 10- to 15-minute intervals.

As in other countries of Latin America, teacher dictation constitutes the bulk of the instruction provided. Textbooks other than readers are virtually nonexistent. The pupils copy down in their notebooks what the teacher dictates, with such other materials as outlines, tabulations, charts, maps, sketches, and the like, that the teacher may place on the blackboard. Arithmetic problems and their solution; history, geography, science, and language information; and many pages of poetry are all copied in the pupils' notebooks for future study.

Here and there may be found a teacher who permits questions and encourages pupils to give answers in their own words, rather than verbatim from the note book. In some schools in the larger cities a great deal of competent teaching is done. Science instruction sometimes includes both demonstration by the teacher and simple experiments by the pupils; the study of history and geography is related to current events, both at home and abroad; memorization of grammatical rules is replaced by exercises in the use of good, clear language; instead of long lists of animal and plant classifications, understanding of similarities and differences between the types and varieties receives the emphasis. In some of these better schools, animals are tended, bees are kept, and vegetables and flowers are grown, and much of real educational value is derived from these activities. In the great majority of schools, however, the teacher's statements and explanations are expected to suffice: the pupils memorize the answers that they copy in their notebooks.

*Primary elementary and rural schools.*—The chief difference between the primary elementary schools and the rural schools is that the primary schools are located in towns and villages and the sexes are taught separately. Rural schools are generally coeducational, one-room, one-teacher, two-grade schools in sparsely settled country areas. In both, the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic are stressed. Textbooks are rare; equipment and instructional materials almost nonexistent. Attendance is consequently very poor. The village or town schools often have a separate room for each grade and sometimes admit both boys and girls in the same room. In a few, a slight amount of training in agriculture and the minor industries supplements the three R's in the program, but as the overwhelming majority of teachers are untrained women, this practice is extremely uncommon.

Plans have been going forward since 1944 to increase the effectiveness of rural education in both types of school. Nicaragua is essentially an agricultural country and the Government aims to fulfill a national need by providing an education designed to serve the rural masses through the diffusion of improved methods in agriculture and related industries, stock breeding, and elementary practices of modern health and sanitation. Rural cooperatives are among the means being considered for the development of this new program. With the cooperation of the Inter-American Educational Foundation in Washington, the Nicaraguan Ministry of Public Education will soon open a rural normal school for the training of specialized teachers to carry on the new type of instruction. Funds have already been made available, and in 1945, the location of the new normal school was in process of selection.

*Municipal schools.*—The various municipalities of the Republic maintain 44 elementary schools, enrolling in 1945, a total of 1,489 pupils. The municipal schools follow the curriculum and other regulations officially established by the Ministry for elementary schools. With a limited amount of aid on the part of the Ministry, the municipalities provide buildings, materials, and teachers for their schools.

*Private schools.*—Private individuals and religious organizations maintained 107 schools in 1945, with enrollments totaling 12,030 pupils. Like the municipal schools, private schools comply with official regulations, follow the official course of studies, and submit to official supervision and examinations. In this way they become accredited schools, and their graduates enjoy the same rights and privileges as those of the public schools. State scholarships are granted to many students in these schools, especially in communities where there are no public schools of the same instructional level.

In many cases the private school offers advantages not generally found in the public or national schools. Text books are often provided in all classes; a variety of instructional materials, visual aids, and library facilities are made available; greater social and economic homogeneity is usually found in the student body, and broader cultural background in the teaching staff. As most of these private schools are conducted by religious orders, religion is given a more prominent place in the program than is the case in the public schools.

*Parent organization schools.*—In addition to the various kinds of schools already referred to, there are perhaps a half dozen schools that have been organized and are maintained by parent groups. Members contribute to school support according to the number of sons and daughters enrolled. The Ministry of Public Education provides salaries for one or more teachers in each of these schools, grants scholarships for particularly needy pupils, and extends supervisory service for the instructors. In the city of Rivas, the parents' school comprises the

full 6-year elementary course and the first 3 years of the 5-year secondary course. Enrollment figures for these schools were not available.

*Examinations.*—Final annual examinations in the first 4 grades of elementary education were suppressed in 1940. Instead, weekly and monthly marks are assigned by the teachers in attendance, conduct, application, progress, and outstanding abilities. Each month a report of the pupil's standing is sent to the parents or guardians. At 3-month intervals an oral examination is administered, which may be supplemented with the writing of a short composition or with practical exercises.

In the fifth and sixth years, there are 2 of these 3-month period examinations, followed by a final at the end of the school year. Each of these examinations consists of a written composition and the solution of an arithmetic and a geometry problem for the entire group simultaneously, and an individual oral test based on the other school subjects to check on the pupil's reasoning power and mental agility. Grades in the final examinations are averaged with those of the 3-month periods, all on the basis of a 0- to 10-point scale. Specifically, 0 to 6 is failure; 6 to 7.50 poor; 7.50 to 8.50, good; 8.50 to 9.50, very good; and 9.50 to 10, excellent. A final (combined) grade of at least 7.50 is required for passing. The final examination is administered by a board composed of the grade teacher and two members appointed by the Minister of Public Education.

*Physical plant.*—Few Nicaraguan schools occupy buildings constructed expressly for educational purposes. Former convents, office buildings, and private residences house well over three-quarters of the nation's schools, and the vast majority have undergone only slight remodeling to make them more suitable for educational purposes. With scattered exceptions, the urban school is an old colonial rubble masonry edifice of one or two stories, in which the classrooms and offices face on an open gallery surrounding a patio. In some instances there are several patios, at least one of which is planted with tropical trees, shrubs, and flowers. The others are ordinarily used as playgrounds for the pupils.

The classrooms are generally of ample size and, in the cities and larger towns, fairly well equipped with blackboards, maps, spheres, and other instructional aids. Ventilation is usually good, but lighting is often inadequate and uneven, particularly in the rainy season. Libraries and laboratories are not regarded as indispensable attributes of the teaching and learning processes. A small collection of books—rarely more than a few hundred volumes even in the complete 6-year schools—and some simple apparatus brought to the school by the teacher for demonstration purposes in connection with physics and chemistry lessons, are the standard provision in this field. Practically all schools maintain a museum in which the pupils display Indian

relics, samples of rocks, metals, seeds, cereals, birds' eggs, and other articles of educational interest and value.

As already stated, the rural school is commonly a one-room building in a rural valley or a tiny hamlet, far removed from the amenities of modern civilization. More often than not, it is inexpensively constructed of wood or adobe, with a door and one or two small windows. Old desks, or benches and tables made by the parents, constitute the furnishings. A small blackboard, a map of Nicaragua and perhaps another of Central America, and framed pictures of President Somoza and of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Buen Vecino (Good Neighbor), are uniform equipment. A few rural schools in the more prosperous regions, and those located in the vicinity of cities and towns, have larger and better buildings and somewhat more extensive equipment and materials. Under the new program stressing rural education that the Ministry is launching, new school buildings were under construction late in 1945, each with a small piece of adjoining land for practical agricultural exercises.

### **Elementary School Teachers**

Statistics for 1944-45 show that there were 1,835 teachers in the national or public elementary schools, 63 in the municipal schools, and 532 in private schools. Of the total of 2,340 teachers, 73 percent were women. In December 1945, officials in the national Ministry estimated that there were about 2,600 teachers in the country's elementary schools at that time.

Nicaragua's elementary school teachers are divided into 4 classes, according to their professional preparation. First-class teachers are those who hold the diploma and title of Elementary School Teacher (*Maestro de Educación Primaria*), conferred upon completion of the 4-year national normal school course. Teachers who have completed only 2 or 3 years of the course, or who hold a diploma conferred by a nonofficial normal school, comprise the second class. Third-class teachers are those who hold no normal school diploma of any kind, but who have passed a special examination of competence and have been awarded a certificate of teaching ability. Holders of the bachelor's degree, conferred upon completion of the 5-year academic secondary school course, are exempted from this examination, but are required to show a minimum of 3 years of successful teaching experience. The fourth class, the empiricals, is made up of teachers who hold none of the above-mentioned titles or certificates, variously estimated at from 65 to 85 percent of the total number of teachers in the Republic.

*Salaries.*—The basic salary of Nicaragua's elementary school teachers is 90 córdobas (\$18, U.S.) a month in the capital and 80 córdobas (\$16, U.S.) in other parts of the country, except in Bluefields, Corinto, and San Juan del Sur, where because of remoteness,

climate, and unfavorable living conditions, it has been placed at 100 córdobas. First-class teachers, and university graduates—lawyers, doctors, engineers, and pharmacists—who have taught in the public schools at least 5 years, receive an additional 60 córdobas a month. Second-class teachers and third-class teachers holding the baccalaureate and the certificate of teaching ability receive an additional 30 córdobas. The nonbachelor third-class teachers receive 20 córdobas above the basic salary. Empiricals, or noncertificated teachers are paid the basic salary only.

Besides this recognition of profession preparation, there are further salary increases according to length of service: 5 to 10 years of service, 10 percent of the basic salary; 10 to 20 years, 20 percent; 20 to 30 years, 30 percent; and over 30 years, 45 percent. Thus, a first-class teacher in Leon, for example, who has served for 9 years, receives monthly the 80 córdobas, basic; the additional 60 córdobas corresponding to the class she belongs to; and the 8 córdobas more for length of service—a total salary of 148 córdobas a month, or \$29.60, U.S. currency.

### ***Elementary School Supervision***

Supervision of the elementary schools of the Republic is in charge of a general supervisor and a corps of 19 departmental supervisors, all of whom are appointed by the Minister of Public Education. Because of their size, 3 of the 15 departments into which the country is divided have each a special supervisor for schools in rural areas. As there is no institution for the training of supervisors in Nicaragua, the selection of personnel for this work is made on the basis of successful teaching experience or of general interest in education. In 1945, 11 of the 20 supervisors were normal school graduates; 4 were lawyers and physicians; and 5 held no degree or title of any kind.

Salaries vary with living conditions in the different regions of the Republic. In Managua, the capital, the salary is 300 córdobas a month; elsewhere, it ranges from 200 to 250 córdobas. Supervisors holding 4-year normal-school diplomas receive an additional 60 córdobas a month. In those cases where schools in rural regions must be visited, travel, room, and meals are paid by the Ministry.

In general, the supervisor is concerned with the technical and administrative activities of all public elementary schools and with the technical aspects of the private schools. Official regulations require a minimum of three visits a year to each school for inspection of the school plant, observation of teaching methods and procedures, check-up on compliance with the official programs of study, suggestions for the improvement of instruction, and the conducting of demonstration classes when judged advisable. Other duties of the supervisor include the distribution of materials and equipment provided by the Ministry; the proposal of teacher discharges, transfers, and promo-

tions; the preparation of panels for membership on examination boards; the filing of monthly and annual reports of all supervisory activities; and an annual statistical report of school conditions, with recommendations for betterment. As there are no special supervisors for secondary and normal schools, the elementary supervisors are called upon from time to time to serve also in that capacity.

In March 1945, the first conference of school supervisors ever held in Nicaragua was convened by Dr. Mariano Fiallos Gil, then Minister of Public Education. During the 3-day meeting, ideas were exchanged, fundamental school problems were discussed, a unified philosophy was adopted, and the spirit of cooperation between the Ministry and the supervisors was greatly strengthened. Topics discussed included school management, attendance, instructional materials, methods of teaching, the literacy campaign, parent organizations, and school and social hygiene. It was resolved that although in Nicaragua, as in other countries of the world, secondary and higher education have been receiving major emphasis and support, the elementary school is the true basis of national culture and merits increased attention. The essential purpose of school supervision was declared to be the friendly orientation and guidance of the teacher in her daily work, and to judge by the observations of several teachers in the schools visited by the writer, supervisors are beginning to give attention to the cultivation of friendly and helpful relations with the teachers and to minimize the former practice of a mere inspection of the school situation.

### ***Plans for Elementary School Reform***

As intimated at various points in this description of the elementary schools, Nicaragua's educators are determined to bring about a thoroughgoing reform in the country's school system. In the past, reform movements have resulted in more or less superficial changes, generally in the shape of a mere reshuffling of the various school subjects at the different age levels. The philosophy, the content, the methods, all remained as before—intellectualistic, theoretical, impractical, and almost wholly alien to the conditions and peculiar problems of Nicaraguan life.<sup>1</sup>

According to the head of the Advisory Board of the Ministry, there must now be a fundamental change in the entire system. Elementary education must be oriented away from verbalism and memorization, and toward activity principles and practices conducive to the development of the whole child, physically, mentally and morally. Knowledge and skills must continue to be acquired from the study of the conventional school subjects, but in a more practical manner.

<sup>1</sup> Marino Valle Quintero. *Reforma Educacional. Publicaciones. Núm. 6, de la Secretaría de Educación Pública. Managua, Octubre 1945. pp. 19-21.*

Emphasis must be laid on the formation of desirable habits related to health and hygiene, sanitation, social cooperation and responsibility, and objective thinking. The school must be made a living organism which reaches out into the community, uniting and cooperating with the home and other social and cultural institutions in the region.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the literacy campaign and the program for the improvement of rural education, work has begun on the writing of textbooks in national history and geography; lunches are being provided for needy children in some schools; parent organizations are being stimulated to more active cooperation with the schools; and supervisors have been instructed to work with the teachers for the development of specific health habits among the pupils. Baths, haircuts, and first-aid services are being planned for the public schools, as are also pupil vaccination and more general medical services. A cooking school in which girls would be taught to utilize the country's agricultural products to greater advantage, and a school of farm management for boys, were being considered in 1945.

Under the auspices of the Inter-American Educational Foundation, 3 specialists in elementary education spent approximately 8 months visiting schools in the capital and other large population centers of Nicaragua. They studied the official program of studies, observed the work of the teachers, and explained and demonstrated the newer teaching methods to selected groups. And now, partly as a consequence of this traveling workshop, the Ministry of Public Education plans a reform in teacher training to the end that the reform in elementary education may be brought to fruition by sympathetic and properly prepared personnel.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

## *Chapter Three*

# **Secondary Level Education**

**I**NSTRUCTION at the secondary level is provided in Nicaragua in 5 national institutes, 18 private secondary schools (colegios), 2 national and 1 private normal schools, and 23 commercial schools. All these schools require completion of the 6-year elementary school for admission. The total enrollment in 1945-46 amounted to 6,089 students.

### ***National Institutes and Private Colegios***

Academic secondary education is provided in the national institutes and the private colegios. Instruction in these schools has the triple aim of giving the student a background of general culture, developing his various abilities, and preparing him for the university. For the most part, university preparation receives the most pronounced emphasis.

Institutions of both types are administered under Government regulations<sup>1</sup> by principals approved by the Minister of Public Education, and a council of teachers. The Minister also approves all administrative and instructional personnel. In the national institutes and a number of the private secondary schools there is also a vice principal, a secretary-treasurer, an inspector general, a school physician, and a librarian who also has charge of the laboratories and the school museum of natural history. Under the inspector general, a corps of inspectors or monitors is maintained, the number depending on the size of the student body. These monitors check student order, morality, courtesy, and attendance; supervise student behavior during parades and processions outside the school; accompany the students on educational excursions to factories, the country, exhibits, and concerts; and, in general, serve as models of gentlemanly deportment at all times.

The teachers' council, composed of the director and the teachers, meets once every 3 months for the discussion of matters related to instruction, conduct, discipline, and other interests of the school. Extra meetings of the council may be called by the director or upon written request of 4 or more of the members.

<sup>1</sup> Ministerio de Educación Pública. Reglamento General de los Institutos Nacionales y Colegios de Enseñanza Secundaria de la República. Managua, D. N., Julio de 1940.

The scholastic year consists of 9 months, from the first of June to the last of February. Admission requirements are completion of the 6-year elementary school, a minimum age of 13 years, good health, and an entrance examination covering such sixth-grade subjects as arithmetic, Spanish composition, geography and history, natural science, and a few questions of a vocational character.

Small charges are made for registration and final examinations, in the latter case the receipts being divided among the 3<sup>d</sup> examiners and the school—each one-fourth. Private schools, of course, charge for tuition, board, room, and examinations. The Baptist School in Managua, for example, makes the following monthly charges, which may be regarded as average for the private schools of the country: Elementary school registration, 4 córdobas; secondary, 5; elementary school tuition, from 6 to 10 córdobas, depending on the school grade; and secondary, 18 to 20; board and lodging, 90 córdobas; and board only, 40 córdobas. An examination fee of 2 córdobas is charged in all secondary schools for each subject in which examinations are taken. For the baccalaureate examination the fee is regularly 30 córdobas. With the Nicaraguan córdoba equivalent to 20 cents, U. S. currency, these fees are not regarded as exorbitant, even by the Nicaraguans.

As in other Latin American Republics, the curriculum of the secondary school proper in Nicaragua is prescribed by law and all schools, both public and private, are required to follow it. In general, the 5-year course of studies closely resembles that of academic secondary schools in the other countries of Central and South America. All subjects are required for all students—33 hours a week throughout the year. Much more history and geography is required than in United States schools, and there is no choosing among the numerous mathematics and science courses: each student takes all the courses provided, regardless of individual interests or abilities. Psychology, philosophy, sociology, political economy, and cosmography, which in the United States are generally regarded as college subjects, are secondary school studies in Nicaragua. Table 1 presents the course of studies for the degree of bachelor of science and literature in effect in 1945 with minor modifications.

Despite the heavy 33-hour a week schedule of studies required, the students engage in a number of extraclass activities. Athletics, particularly baseball, basketball, soccer, and track, are popular, and interscholastic meets and games are held throughout the year. At times a school will book a game with a nonschool organization in the same or another town.

The writer accompanied a group of some 25 baseball players and fans of the Ramfrez Goyena Central National Institute in Managua to the mountain town of Jinotega, about 60 kilometers from the capital.

Table 1. Plan of studies, academic secondary school

Subject	Hours a week per year					
	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
	2	3	4	5	6	7
Arithmetic.....	5					5
Algebra.....		5				5
Geometry.....			5			5
Trigonometry.....				3		3
Cosmography.....					3	3
Elements of geography.....	3					3
World geography.....		3				3
American geography.....			3			3
Central American geography.....				3		3
Old World history.....	3					3
History of Nicaragua.....		3				3
History of America.....			3			3
History of Central America.....				3		3
Sociology.....				3		3
Spanish grammar and syntax.....	5	5			3	13
Literature.....			5	5		10
English.....	3	3	3	3		9
French.....			3	3	3	9
Geology and mineralogy.....	3					3
Botany.....		3				3
Zoology.....			3			3
Anatomy, physiology and hygiene.....			3			3
Inorganic chemistry.....				5		5
Organic chemistry.....					5	5
Physics.....				5		5
Eugenics.....				5	2	7
Moral education.....	3					3
Civics.....		3				3
Political economy.....					3	3
Philosophy (psychology and logic).....				3		3
Philosophy (ethics and history of philosophy).....					3	3
Drawing.....	3	3				6
Music.....	2	2	3			7
Physical education.....	3	3	3	3	1	13
Agriculture (sewing, for girls).....					3	3
Free activities.....					2	2
Total.....	55	35	30	35	35	185

Transportation, by Government Highway Department truck, was supplied to the school free of charge, with the driver. The opposing team was made up of lawyers, engineers, businessmen, and several ex-professional players, and the school team lost the game by a single run. The friendliness, equanimity, and sportsmanship displayed by both players and supporters were described by the physical education teacher-coach of the school team as a salutary development resulting from the numerous games played by the United States Marines during their missions in Nicaragua.

Other activities of secondary school students, besides those related to organized sports, include excursions to sites of old Indian towns, where they find many rare specimens of indigenous culture; visits to art exhibits, music concerts, factories, public offices, and other schools; and various types of entertainment programs in which they take active part.

Instruction in the national institutes of secondary education is carried on largely by professional men of the city—lawyers, doctors,

engineers, and pharmacists—who devote from 8 to 12 hours a week to teaching. The rest of their time is given to the practice of their respective professions. A few of the teachers, notably those who have charge of such subjects as Spanish grammar and composition, history and geography, music and physical education, are graduates of the normal school and hold the title of elementary school teacher. By dint of their outstanding work at the lower level they have been promoted to secondary school work. Salaries are paid at the rate of 11 córdobas a month per hour a week taught: several of the teachers in the National Institute in Managua receive 330 córdobas, or \$66, U. S. currency, a month for 30 hours a week of teaching.

The lecture method is dominant in secondary school teaching, but at the same time there are obvious efforts on the part of some instructors to vitalize their work in some degree. If the teachers had time to prepare for their classes, rather than rely almost entirely on their reactions to the official outline of the course after the class period has begun, the results would probably be different. As it is, in the majority of instances, the teacher hastens to the school from his law or other office, arrives barely in time for his class, and proceeds to talk at random on the topic indicated in the outline, or to read or dictate from notes related to the subject and written down a year or more before. Some, however, start a discussion among the students and guide it so that learning progressively takes place through the students' own activity. Others employ the question and answer method, allowing students themselves to ask questions and others to make explanations or to supply acceptable answers. In several of the classes visited, the students were encouraged to answer questions in their own words, rather than merely to repeat the teacher's dictation verbatim, as is a common practice in Latin American education. And as already pointed out, some teachers take or send their students to visit factories, public offices, concerts, and other places of educational interest, and require individual reports of the excursions and their relation to the topic under study.

Libraries and laboratories are universally inadequate in Nicaraguan secondary schools, both public and private. In the private institutions, which are maintained almost exclusively by religious organizations, library holdings are generally more numerous than in the national institutes—in a few schools, such as the Instituto Pedagógico in Managua and the Colegio Centro-América in Granada, totaling as many as 10,000 volumes. But the books are largely of a religious character, primarily for the use of the teachers, and only rarely allowed to be taken out by the students.

Laboratories consist chiefly of physics apparatus, a few chemical elements and acids, and a collection of stones, metals, and stuffed

animals and fowl. Laboratory exercises usually take the form of teacher demonstration, although in a few schools selected students sometimes are permitted to repeat simple experiments after the demonstration. According to the directors of several schools, however, the 33-hour weekly program required by school law leaves little time for student participation in laboratory activities. There seems to be a growing tendency on the part of Nicaraguan educators, particularly those who have visited or studied in the United States, to have secondary education become more practical, and the increasing number of students attending school at this level is viewed as a strong justification of this desire.

### ***Private Schools***

As a general rule, the private schools (colegios) maintain both elementary and secondary divisions. The Pedagogical Institute, for example, conducted in Managua by the Christian Brothers, had 225 secondary and 600 elementary school pupils in 1945, in addition to a free elementary school in which 175 children were enrolled without charge. A sister school maintained in Diriamba had an enrollment of 500 pupils, equally divided between elementary and secondary sections. The Central American Colegio in Granada, administered by the Jesuits, provides what is widely declared to be the best secondary school instruction in the Republic, and also maintains the last four grades of elementary education. Enrollment statistics relating to this school for 1945 were not available, but in 1942, out of a total of 272 students, 106 were in the elementary grades. The Central American Colegio is further renowned for its collection of huge Indian gods and monuments, which are stationed around the central patio, and for its relatively superior science laboratory equipment. All the above private schools, incidentally, employ textbooks in the secondary school classes and to some extent in the elementary also. The official curriculum established by the Government for the public schools is followed in the private schools, and final examinations at the end of the course are taken in a national institute of secondary education.

*The Baptist School.*—The Baptist School (Colegio Bautista) in Managua is sponsored by the Baptist Home Mission Society in the United States. Established some 20 years ago, this school for the past 4 or 5 years has had a capacity enrollment of approximately 700 pupils—550 in the elementary division and 150 in the secondary. Four of the teachers are North Americans; 25 are Nicaraguans or other nationals. Of the 11 secondary school teachers, 9 are full-time instructors with at least secondary school diplomas; One is a lawyer, 1 a merchant, 1 a university student of engineering, and 1 a student in a business school. For the elementary grades there are 6 graduates

of the school itself, holding the secondary school baccalaureate, 6 graduates of the normal school, and 2 teachers who have not completed either secondary or normal school, but who have had long teaching experience.

The school occupies a campus of about 4 acres. The buildings, originally used by a coffee company, include an elementary school building with a large assembly hall and 13 classrooms, and a secondary school section with a boys' dormitory, an assembly hall, five classrooms, and the office. A dormitory for girls is located about two blocks from the campus. There is also a good-sized athletic field.

The official elementary and secondary school curricula are followed, with the addition of 1 hour a week of Bible study. Once a week the high-school students have complete charge of the 15-minute daily assembly period. For each of the 5 years of secondary school there is a separate classroom, the teachers of the various subjects moving from one to another as required by their schedules. Because textbooks which cover the materials prescribed by the official curriculum are not available, there is little difference between the instruction in this school and that of other Nicaraguan schools. Instruction is in Spanish, but English is emphasized as a foreign language. The laboratory is poorly equipped and used almost exclusively for demonstration purposes. The library, which contains more than 2,000 books and magazines, is in charge of a student librarian who studies library science in the American Library in Managua.

Tests are given every 2 or 3 months. Final examinations consisting of 1 hour of written work and a half hour of oral testing in each subject, follow 2 weeks of review and are given by a board of three members appointed by the Minister of Education. One of the members is the teacher of the subject, who prepares three questions from which the student selects one for his examination. A 2-córdoba fee is charged for each subject and a 30-córdoba fee for the diploma examination at the end of the secondary school course. Grade certificates and the graduates' diplomas are provided free of charge in this school. The examination grade is averaged with the average of the various test scores to determine the final grade for the year.

### ***Total Academic Secondary School Enrollments***

In 1945 the national institutes and private colegios enrolled a total of 3,445 students,<sup>2</sup> which represents an increase of 100 percent over the preceding year's enrollment of 1,725.<sup>3</sup> Statistics showing the number of girls in secondary schools were not available, but the percentage is said to be relatively low. At the termination of the 1944 school year,

<sup>2</sup> Special report. Department of Statistics, Ministry of Public Education, Managua, D. N., November 21, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Informe del Ministro de Educación Pública. Managua, D. N., 1945 (unpublished).

101 students received the degree of bachelor of science and literature,<sup>8</sup> which corresponds roughly to the high-school diploma granted in the United States.

### **Normal Schools**

Teacher training is provided at secondary school level in Nicaragua, and has been granted year for year equivalence of studies with the academic schools. The Girls' Central Normal School and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Boys' Central Normal School, both State schools in Managua, prepare the great majority of the country's fully certified elementary school teachers. The rest are trained in the Santa Rosa Girls' Normal School in Leon, and in normal education sections in the Divina Pastora Girls' School in Managua and the Bethlehemite School in Chinandega—all three, private institutions.

In 1945 the total enrollment in normal education was slightly more than 300 students. The girls' school in Managua had 180, with an average attendance of 160; the boys' school, 90, with an attendance of 87. Enrollments in all the private schools together were estimated by ministerial officials at 50 students. Practically all students in the State schools hold full scholarships which include tuition, board, room, laundry, and medical attention. In the private schools, charges are the same as for regular secondary education.

Each State normal school maintains a complete 6-year elementary school for purposes of demonstration and practice teaching. Private schools providing normal education utilize their regular elementary school divisions for this phase of teacher training. In 1945, the girls' school in Managua had 340 pupils in its elementary school division; the boys' school, 267. The girls' school also maintained a 3-year kindergarten with 110 children.

Admission requirements are identical with those of the regular secondary school. Normal school scholarships are awarded on the basis of elementary school scholastic and conduct records and the recommendation of the sixth grade principal. After graduation, the newly certificated teacher is required to teach in an official or an accredited private school for a number of years equal to the time the scholarship was held.

In general, the curriculum in the Boys' Normal is the same as that of the Girls' Normal, and provides for 4 years of instruction. The main differences between the normal school program and that of the corresponding years of regular secondary education, are that fewer hours a week are devoted to mathematics, national language, and science, and courses in education are added. These professional courses are: Principles of education, methods of teaching, special methods,

<sup>8</sup> Informe del Ministro de Educación Pública. Managua, D. N., 1945 (unpublished).

educational psychology, and practice teaching. In the girls' school, home economics is provided in addition to the regularly prescribed manual arts work in which the students learn to construct numerous kinds of teaching materials and school equipment. In the fourth or senior year, a special course in nursing, first-aid, and child-care is also offered, students who complete the course being awarded a Red Cross certificate. Two years of English and 1 of French are required in both State normal schools.

In all regular courses the lecture method is employed. Textbooks are used in French and English and in a few of the science, history, literature, and expressive reading classes; but the greater part of the instruction is based on notes prepared by the teachers. There are no laboratory facilities in the girls' school and rather inadequate facilities in the boys' school. The libraries have less than 500 volumes each. Moreover, despite the fact that, in general, readers are the only textbooks employed in the elementary schools of the Republic, practically all student teaching in the girls' school is done on the basis of textbooks in the hands of the practice school pupils. The boys' school is more practical in this respect. According to the supervisor (inspector) of elementary schools in the nation's capitol, the normal schools of the country sorely lack trained and skilled instructors of modern educational psychology and teaching methods because there is no institution in the Republic in which such teachers can be trained.

*Special activities in the girls' school.*—The Girls' Normal School has several organizations through the activities of which the students receive valuable training of a practical nature. ABC is a student club which publishes a monthly newspaper and engages in such other cultural activities as entertainment programs and music and dancing recitals. All officers of this club are elected by the students. The principal of the school is general director of the Junior Red Cross in Nicaragua, and the students have a chapter which works in the poorer sections of Managua. Funds for this organization come from the sale of tickets for entertainment programs and contributions from other school organizations. A student consumers' cooperative sells all kinds of school materials, clothing, toilet articles, and knickknacks to the students, the earnings being distributed among the purchasers at the end of the school year. Members of the graduating class pool their earnings and purchase a class gift for the school. In 1944, a radio was acquired in this manner. A student labor cooperative borrows money from the consumers' cooperative for the purchase of materials from which articles are processed in the home economics classes—canned goods, children's clothing, aprons, handkerchiefs, napkins, artificial flowers, etc. These articles are then sold, and the proceeds divided equally among the Junior Red Cross, the consumers' cooperative, a

school party, and a student who, in the judgment of a tribunal of teachers, produced the best piece of work in the home economics class.

Friday evening or Saturday afternoon, the students present a program of music, dancing, and recitations in honor of individuals or organizations that have in some way helped the school. On Sunday the principal, who celebrated her fiftieth year of teaching in 1945, holds informal discussions with the students about current events, personal problems, and other topics of interest.

Students of the fourth and last year of the Girls' Normal conduct an evening school for domestic servants in Managua. Free instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and civics is given 2 or 3 nights a week. The Ministry of Public Education provides most of the materials, the student-teachers themselves buying the rest with funds derived from bazaars and entertainment programs in which soft drinks, cookies, and candy are sold. In 1945, the enrollment was 25 adults; average attendance, 20.

*Titles conferred.*—Monthly and final examinations in the normal schools conform to the regulations established for regular secondary schools. Upon completion of the 4-year course of studies, the students take a final examination which includes a literary composition, a written discussion of an educational topic, and a demonstration of teaching ability. Private school candidates for the diploma or title are required to take this examination in a State school. The literary theme may be written in advance, like a thesis; but the educational topic and the demonstration class must be developed in the presence of an examining board consisting of a member of the Advisory Council of the Education Ministry, the professor of teaching method, and another member approved by the Minister of Public Education. The grades assigned are *excellent*, *approved*, and *failure*. Successful candidates receive the diploma and title of Elementary School Teacher (*Maestro de Educación Primaria*). In rare instances, students completing only 2 or 3 years of the normal school course are granted the title of Primary School Teacher (*Maestro de Educación Elemental*).

It is the opinion of many of Nicaragua's schoolmen, including normal school teachers who teach in both State schools, that the 4-year normal school course does not train effective teachers. They point out that the entrance age of 12 years is too low for the type of instruction required; that the general subject matter developed is incomplete; that the time devoted to training in instructional skills is inadequate; and that the students complete the course at too early an age.

In connection with age, attention may be drawn to the fact of the 60 senior class students of normal education in 1945, 75 percent were 15 to 19 years of age. At the same time, 14 percent of the 817 pupils in the practice schools were of the same ages or older. The practice school pupils are selected from the regular city schools of Managua.

on the basis of high marks; and as a fairly high correlation has been found to exist between youth and intelligence in a given grade, it is quite likely that the percentage of overage pupils in the regular elementary schools of the country is considerably higher than the 14 percent found in the practice schools.

Normal school teachers are largely normal school graduates, holding the title of elementary school teacher, who have rendered exceptionally capable service in elementary school work. As in the case of the regular secondary school, however, there are also university graduates—doctors, lawyers, and engineers—who engage in a few hours a week of teaching on the side. Several are professors in the Central University of Nicaragua in Managua. Monthly salaries are paid as follows: Director, 480 córdobas; director of the practice school, 380; teachers, 60 córdobas for each subject taught daily; and 30 to 35 córdobas for subjects taught on alternate days.

For the maintenance of the 2 State normal schools the Government appropriated the sum of 352,060 córdobas, or \$70,416, U. S., for the year 1945-46.

### ***Commercial Education***

Commercial education in Nicaragua is provided in 23 private commercial schools. There are 12 in Managua; 3 each in Granada, Masaya, and Chinandega; and 2 in Leon. Three of the Managua schools are sections in private colegios. The total enrollment in this field of education in 1945 was 2,349 students. The 3 largest schools enrolled 458, 333, and 273 students, respectively.

The school year coincides ordinarily with that established for the public schools, June to February, inclusive; but exceptions due to climatic and other conditions occur. As approximately 80 percent of the students work at least part of the day, morning, afternoon, and night classes are held. Except in the private Catholic colegios for girls, commercial education is coeducational.

Administration is in the hands of the owners, who are usually the directors. The various curricula and regulations concerning admission, examinations, teaching staff, physical plant, and equipment are set up by the Ministry of Public Education. Schools which comply with these regulations, submit to official supervision or inspection, and turn in annual reports, are authorized to grant diplomas and titles.

The courses of study lead to the titles of business accountant and of public accountant and auditor, and to the diploma of commercial or of parliamentary secretary. For the title of business accountant a 4-year course of 27 hours a week is provided. For the title of public accountant and auditor, requirements are: (1) The title of business accountant; (2) satisfactory completion of a 2-year, 20-hour a week

specialization course; (3) upright character; (4) a minimum of 1 year of practical experience in a first-class banking or business establishment; and (5) an original thesis dealing with an economic, fiscal, or banking problem. A 2-year course of 25 hours a week is required for each of the secretarial diplomas. The plans of study established by the Ministry of Public Education for commercial schools are presented in table 2.

Table 3.—Plans of studies, commercial schools

Subject	Hours a week, per school year									
	Commercial secretary		Parliamentary secretary		Business accountant				Public accountant and auditor	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
I	9	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Spanish.....	5	5	5	5	3	3	—	—	—	—
English.....	5	3	5	3	3	3	—	—	—	—
Business arithmetic.....	5	—	5	—	5	—	—	—	—	—
Business algebra.....	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	—
Accounting and bookkeeping.....	—	3	—	—	5	5	5	5	—	—
Economic and commercial geography.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Commercial theory.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Commercial correspondence.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Business organization and management.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—
Commercial law.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—
Statistics.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	—
Typewriting.....	5	5	5	3	5	—	—	—	—	—
Penmanship.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Banking operations and practice.....	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
History of commerce.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Political economy.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
Finance.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—
Public finance.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
Fiscal legislation and customs.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5	—
Stenography.....	5	5	5	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
Financial and commercial states.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
Administrative law.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
Auditing.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
History of economic doctrines.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Civil Code and proceedings.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Thesis preparation.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
Office organization and practice.....	—	4	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Practice work.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>

The titles of accountants and auditors are signed by the President of the Republic, the Minister of Public Education, and the director of the respective school. Other diplomas and certificates are signed only by the Minister of Public Education, excepting those having to do with only one or two subjects, which are signed by the director of the school. All are printed by the Government Printing Office and are delivered to the successful candidate upon payment of the 5-córdoba fee required by law.

For admission to business accountant title studies, or to the courses in stenography and typing (the secretarial courses), the student must

be at least 18 years of age and have completed the 6-year elementary school. Fees vary somewhat among schools, but the following are fairly typical: Annual registration, 20 córdobas (\$4, U. S.); tuition, 25 córdobas a month for regular commercial courses, and 20 a month for the secretarial courses; and 5 a month for typing and stenography classes only. Fees of 1 córdoba for each subject examination and 4 córdobas for each general private and thesis examination are also charged. According to school law, teachers receive their salaries 12 months in the year, so that student fees are payable even during the vacation period.

Teachers of commercial subjects are mostly graduates who hold the title of bookkeeper or accountant. Language courses are generally taught by academic secondary school teachers, university men, or other individuals who have acquired a knowledge of English. Salaries correspond with those of secondary school teachers, and are paid on the basis of the number of class hours taught per week.

Instruction in general may be said to be somewhat more practical than in either the regular secondary school or the normal school. Because the students know what they need and want, and are therefore willing to work toward that end, the assignments are understood and actually worked out, rather than merely memorized. Articles 34 and 35 of the law governing commercial education\* list some 32 different types of positions that are open to bookkeepers and accountants who hold legally valid titles.

As a result of the fullness of the official commercial study program, many of the students register for only one or two subjects at a time. When, in the opinion of the director of the school, these students have achieved mastery in a certain field, they are granted certificates which are signed only by the director, but which are helpful to the holder in getting a promotion or a better position.

Examinations are administered by a board of three members approved by the Minister of Public Education. One member is the teacher of the subject and at least one other must be an outsider, not connected with the school. The examinations may be written or practical, according to the nature of the subject; but in either case the chairman of the examining board may call for supplementary oral questioning. The examination for the title consists of two parts: one, a private comprehensive test over the entire professional course, lasting at least an hour; the other, a defense of the thesis.

Grades are assigned on a scale of 1 to 100. Each examiner assigns a grade, and an average of 75 is required for passing. In typing, the examinations are graded according to established tables indicating

\*Plan de Estudios para las Escuelas Nacionales de Comercio y Programas para las Mismas. Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Educación Física. Managua, Talleres Nacionales, Julio de 1946.

creditable performance in dictation, copying, tabulating, and speed. In all final grades, the practical exercises completed by the student during his period of study are taken into consideration. Twenty-two accountants were graduated in 1944.

Buildings occupied by the commercial schools in Nicaragua are of the same type described in connection with other institutions of learning. Most of the schools are equipped with typewriters and have adding machines, calculators, and other apparatus used in business education.

## Chapter Four

# Special Schools

### *Military Academy*<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE MILITARY Academy of Nicaragua was opened in 1940, with curriculum, discipline, and general training based on the standards of West Point. Col. C. L. Mullins, Jr., class of 1917 at West Point, one-man military mission of the United States of Nicaragua, was the founder and first director or superintendent. The Academy colors and standard were a gift from the United States Military Academy.

The chief of the United States Military Mission to Nicaragua is unique among such missions in Latin America in that he is appointed an active officer in the Nicaraguan Army, with rank of brigadier general, and is entrusted with Nicaraguan Government funds for the operation of the Military Academy. He occupies a command position in the Nicaraguan Army and deals directly with the President of the Republic, instead of with the Minister of War.

The school operates on the Campo de Marte in Managua, where the United States Marines were stationed during their detail in the country. Instruction is given by 11 Nicaraguan officers who have both tactical and professional duties, and 4 civilian professors who have charge of most of the nonmilitary subjects. There is also a company of the National Guard and a drum and bugle corps. Most of the officers have visited the United States and Panama on tours of observation.

A 3-year course is provided for 100 cadets, but there are only 2 classes at any one time. One year there are third and second classmen, the former being the graduating class; the next year there are second and first classes, and the following year, third and first. Instruction begins about June 15. About December 1, semester examinations start and "turn-out writs" are issued. Then the cadets have 2 weeks on the range and in field exercises, which are followed by Christmas leave. Classes are resumed about January 2, and graduation is held on May 27—Nicaragua's Army Day. Because of the 2-class, 3-year course system followed, graduation is held only 2 out of every 3 years. Graduates are commissioned as first lieutenants in the National Guard,

<sup>1</sup> This discussion of the Military Academy is based on a brief visit in the school, supplemented by a report submitted by Col. Leroy Bartlett, Jr., G. S. C., Chief, U. S. Military Mission to Nicaragua and superintendent of the Academy. December 1945.

and when vacancies exist, several may be selected for pilot training in the Nicaragua Air Force.

For admission to the Military School, the applicant must have completed the second year of academic secondary education and must pass a physical examination. Instruction, textbooks, board, lodging, uniforms, equipment, laundry, medical and dental attention are all furnished free, and an allowance of 26 córdobas (\$5.20, U. S.) a month is granted each cadet for incidentals. The textbooks, except for geography and history, in which courses Nicaraguan books are used, are International Correspondence School texts.

A special course in radio communication is provided for a few students who take nothing else but this course and English. When completed, the I. C. S. awards a diploma. The Military Academy is also taking over the National Guard Radio School, which prepares telegraph keymen for radio, telegraph, and telephone services of the Government. Admission to this 1-year course requires completion of the 6-year elementary school and an age of 16 to 20 years. In 1945 enrollment consisted of 25 students, all selected privates in the National Guard, who received their regular pay of 80 córdobas a month during their stay in the school. Those who complete the requirements receive the title of radio operator and are made corporals in the National Guard. Radio equipment to the value of \$1,000, U. S. currency, has been ordered for this instruction.

Instruction in the Military School proper includes both military and nonmilitary subjects, as follows:

Subjects	First semester		Second semester		Total hours	
	Weeks	Hours a week	Weeks	Hours a week	First semester	Second semester
I	3	3	6	5	6	7
Military.....	24	11	18	11	264	198
Nonmilitary.....	22	23¼	18	23¼	495	495

The nonmilitary subjects are: *First year*—Arithmetic, algebra, plane geometry, history I and II, Spanish I and II, and English I and II; *second year*—analytic and solid geometry, trigonometry, history III and geography, Spanish III, civics and economics, and English III and IV; *third year*—calculus and civil law, mechanics and electricity, English V and VI, and physics and chemistry.

Military subjects, subject to change by order of the superintendent, include: *First year*—motor vehicle theory, operation and PM, military surveying and preparation of sketch maps in the field, time-labor-material problems in field fortifications, communications, explosives and demolitions, infantry battalion tactics, bayonet training, and

camouflage; *second year*—antitank defenses, mines and booby traps, the 87-mm AT gun and the 60-mm mortar, hand grenades, infantry company tactics, jungle warfare, and air photo reading; *third year*—close order drill, extended order, scouting and patrolling, hygiene, hygiene and sanitation, map reading, ballistics and characteristics of infantry weapons, caliber .22 rifle marksmanship, squad and platoon tactics, field fortifications, nomenclature, care and functioning of submarine guns, heavy machine guns, automatic rifle, interior guard duty, and rigging.

Because of their adaptability to the terrain and topography of the country, courses in jungle warfare are heavily emphasized. Field training, held in the dry season (December to April), is scheduled for a different locality each year, so that the cadets may become tactically familiar with the varying terrain and with possible theaters of action or garrisons where they may be stationed after graduation. In September 1945 the cadets and officers trained for a month with the 295th United States Infantry in Panama. A week was devoted to exercises in the Canal Zone Jungle Training Center, and high praise was given the cadets for their military bearing, discipline, courtesy, and concept of the military.

The buildings and grounds of the Military Academy are maintained in good order, and new barracks and extension of several old buildings for laboratory purposes are in process of construction. Both library and laboratory facilities are inadequate; but in line with the program of making all instruction more practical, improvement is under way. For physics alone, some \$600 worth of equipment was on order late in 1945, and further purchases were being arranged for other science departments.

### ***National School of Nursing***

Opened in 1943, with the joint sponsorship of the Nicaraguan Department of Health and the Inter-American Cooperative Public Health Service, the National School of Nursing is located in Managua, a short distance from the General Hospital and across the street from the new concrete Health Department building. For purposes of general administration there is a board of directors, composed of the director general of public health, the superintendent of the General Hospital, the dean of the medical school of the Central University of Nicaragua, the director of the Inter-American Cooperative Public Health Service, the Mother Superior of the Catholic order which cooperates in the running of the hospital, a practicing physician, and a secretary. The President of the Republic and the Archbishop of Managua are honorary members.

Technical administration is in charge of a director, assistant director, a subdirector, and 6 supervisors, all of whom are graduate nurses. The subdirector, or supervisor of nurses, and the 6 supervisors handle all

the practical work in the hospital. Medical doctors, many of whom have studied in the United States, provide instruction in the theoretical and technical subjects. For the school's practical exercises, 78 of the 500 beds in the General Hospital are used, these beds and everything connected with them—upkeep and professional use—being entirely in charge of the Nursing School authorities.

Admission to nurse training is granted to unmarried girls between 17 and 27 years of age who have completed the 6-year elementary school, who reveal an earnest desire to enter the nursing profession, and who are free from home or other responsibilities which might interfere with their studies. Preference is shown, however, to candidates who have completed 2 or 3 years of regular secondary education. The school provides instruction, uniforms, street clothes, laundry, room, meals, refreshments at 10:30 a. m. and 3:30 p. m., and a small allowance for miscellaneous expenses. Everything is free, as practically all the girls come from poor or only moderately well-to-do families. During the first half year, beginners receive 5 córdobas a month; in the second half, 10 córdobas. Second-year students have an allowance of 15 córdobas a month, and third year, 20. In all, 46 students were in training in 1945.

The course of studies conforms to the requirements for the training of nurses in the United States and other countries. In the first half-year the students devote the major portion of their time to classwork, and only 2 hours a day to hospital service. Afterwards, throughout the remainder of the 3-year course, a minimum of 6 hours a day is spent in the hospital, and only 2 or 3 hours in classwork. Theory and practice are closely related at all times.

All study courses and practical exercises are required of all students. Following is a list of the courses provided, which are taken a certain number of hours each, the number varying from 5 hours for dermatology and for anesthetics to 45 hours each for chemistry and microbiology:

Anatomy and physiology, microbiology, chemistry, history of nursing, ethics, psychology, personal hygiene, materia medica, dietetics, nursing principles and practices, supervised practice, hospital economics, bandaging, epidemiology, observation of special cases, massage, pharmacology and therapeutics, dietetic therapy, medicine, pathology, immunology, surgery, anesthetics, orthopedics, parasitology, public health, community sanitation, vital statistics, dermatology, obstetrics, surgical asepais, podiatric, neurology and psychiatry, contagious diseases, maternal and children's clinic, antivenereal clinic, antitubercular clinic, eyes-nose-throat ailments, professional adaptation, and visiting nursing.

A United States nursing manual has been translated into Spanish expressly for this school. There is a good library of reference works, nursing materials, and all the books and magazines published in

Spanish by the United States Public Health Service and other related agencies, which the director of nursing service considers adequate to the school's needs. While a laboratory is being built, use is made of the national department of Public Health laboratories.

According to the director, who is a graduate nurse from the United States, excellent relationships exist between the nursing school, the department of health, the general hospital, and other organizations of the Republic. The country's physicians and surgeons are said to be convinced of the value of the type of work being done by the student nurses—statistical reports, temperature and progress charts, graphs of various kinds, and numerous practical nursing services formerly not a part of Nicaragua's hospital care—and declare that the school's curriculum, organization, supervision, and general spirit make it one of the leading schools of its kind in Latin America.

### ***National School of Agriculture***

The National School of Agriculture, founded in Chinandega in 1880 and administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, offers a 3-year course for the title of agricultural and veterinary expert (*perito agrícola y experto en veterinaria*). Technical administration is the responsibility of a director and a superintendent. Eight teachers, all of whom are required to have at least the title of expert, have charge of the instruction and receive full maintenance in the school in addition to their salaries.

Admission is granted to physically sound young men between 15 and 22 years of age, who have completed the 6-year elementary school not more than 2 years prior to their acceptance. An entrance examination is given, but applicants who have had 2 or more years of regular secondary education are exempted. The students come from all departments of the Republic, with full Government scholarships covering board, room, clothing, medical care, and instruction. In 1945 the enrollment totaled 24 students.

The school year is from May 1 to February 28, with holidays identical with those of other schools of the Republic. Classwork takes up 24 hours a week, 2 hours are devoted to military training, and the rest is spent in agricultural practices and care of the stock on the small tracts of land belonging to the school, or on neighboring farms. When the conditions of the fields or crops make it advisable, the students work Sundays and other holidays.

The course of studies is as follows:

*First year.*—Agronomy I (soils), botany I, general zootechnics, veterinary I, horticulture and fruit growing, entomology, arithmetic, and animal anatomy and physiology;

*Second year.*—Agronomy II (fertilizers), botany II, special zootechnics, veterinary II, physics, algebra, general chemistry, and cultivations I;

*Third year.*—Microbiology and phytopathology, veterinary III, cultivations II, apiculture, rural administration and bookkeeping, agricultural chemistry, and geometry and topography.

Monthly examinations are given by the teachers of the different subjects; finals, by a board of 3 members appointed by the Minister of Agriculture. All examinations are individual and include 10 minutes of oral questioning, followed by written and practical exercises, according to the nature of the subject. Grading is on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 excellent, 9 very good, 8 good, and 7 failure. Failure in more than two subjects results in the student's withdrawal from the school. For the title, a special oral, written, and practical examination is required, together with a thesis. Should the student fail in his title examination, he is given one more chance a year later.

After receiving the title of expert, each graduate is required to serve 3 years in Government work at the prevailing salary rate for the position he is given. The terms of the contract signed in connection with the scholarship held by each student requires this service, and the Ministry of Agriculture is required by law to employ all graduates of the school. The majority of these young men are made inspectors in the departments, at 235 córdobas (\$47, U. S.) a month, which they augment by charges for the vaccination of stock and for other local services. Some of the graduates are given employment in the Ministry, and a few, the most outstanding, become professors in the school itself.

The national budget for the fiscal year 1945-46 assigned 62,520 córdobas (\$12,504, U. S.) for the maintenance of the National School of Agriculture. Teachers' salaries totaled 29,280 córdobas, or nearly half of the appropriation. In this same year, 150,000 córdobas (\$30,000, U. S.) were appropriated for the establishment of a new agricultural school in the capital city of Managua.

### ***San Juan de Dios Asylum Trade School***

Maintained in Leon through a subvention of the National Government, a lottery, the sale of its own products, and contributions from local individuals and organizations, the San Juan de Dios Asylum Trade School, conducted by the Catholic Church, is said to be the only vocational institution in the Republic.

Instruction is provided in printing, bookbinding, leatherworking, carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring, and broommaking. In the afternoon, an hour and a half of academic instruction is given in Spanish grammar, arithmetic, history and geography, civics, and other elementary school subjects. Instrumental music is also provided, nearly half of the student body belonging to the school band—reputed to be the most complete school band in the country.

A fairly well-equipped shop is maintained for practical instruction in each speciality, with a shop foreman and 3 padres for each shop. Upon completion of the requirements in any one of the specialties, ranging from 2 to 5 years each, the student is awarded a diploma or a certificate of competence in that particular trade. The shoes, trousers, suits, harness, suitcases, pocketbooks, chairs, tables, wardrobes, and other articles made by the students are either made to order or for sale at specified times in the school store. The proceeds are used to help defray the running expenses of the school.

In 1945, between 80 and 100 boys were enrolled in this school, many of them on tuition, room, and board grants extended by the National Government.

### ***National School of Physical Education***

Physical education in Nicaraguan schools consists largely of calisthenics, soldier-like marching, and sports. Except in a few of the large population centers, however, little emphasis is placed on this aspect of the child's development. Organized, systematic, graded physical exercises for all school children have not been adopted. In the national capital, where there are 38 elementary schools enrolling some 7,500 children, 5 special teachers handle all physical education work. In the departmental capitals and some of the other towns and cities, special teachers are also employed for this type of instruction; but in the small towns and villages the offering is limited to classes in anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, and what the individual teacher can manage to include in an already busy day.

Within the past year or so, nevertheless, the Ministry of Public Instruction and Physical Education, which is the official name of the Ministry of Public Education, has been stimulating interest and activity in the physical aspect of Nicaraguan education. By a decree of August 22, 1945, all regular secondary schools in the country, both public and private, were required to provide organized instruction and to give annual-final examinations in this field; and the National School of Physical Education was founded in Managua for the training of specialized teachers, with the national director of physical education in charge of the instruction.

That same year, National Olympic Games were planned. Each department was to hold local Olympics and send the local champions to the national capital to represent their respective localities in the National Olympics originally scheduled for December 10 to 18. All transportation, board, and lodging in Managua were to be provided by the Ministry of Public Education. Because of some unfortunate developments, however, the final games were postponed indefinitely.

Meanwhile, the National School of Physical Education is providing a 2-year coeducational course of evening classes, leading to the title

of national physical education teacher. Minimum requirements for entrance are that the applicant shall have completed the 6-year elementary school, present a certificate of physical fitness from the Department of Public Health, and be at least 15 years of age. The 50 or 60 students enrolled for the first year's instruction, however, included normal school seniors and men and women teachers of the public and private schools of the capital. The Ministry supplied each student with a free pair of tennis shoes, and in December 1945, was planning to provide free uniforms as well.

One-hour classes are conducted 6 days a week in the girls' normal school. Immediately across the street, the national gymnasium affords convenient facilities for the practical exercises which are held on alternate nights. A total of 8 hours a week is distributed among 3 courses. Two hours are devoted to instruction in anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, in charge of a medical doctor; 2 hours, to methods of teaching physical education, under a normal school graduate; and 4 hours to military and physical education theory and practices, under an Argentine normal school graduate. In the second year, starting June 1, 1945, the same three courses are continued for the same number of hours a week, but practical exercises are to supplement theory in the anatomy, physiology, and hygiene course, and the 4-hour course is to emphasize sports, their gradation, and the commands employed in the teaching of all aspects of physical education.

It is planned to require the secondary schools of the country to employ the graduates of this school to carry out their physical education programs, and there is consequently much enthusiasm on the part of both the teachers and the students in the new school. When the secondary schools are all provided with trained teachers, which will be possible with the first graduating class, attention is to be directed toward the extension of more organized physical education instruction in the elementary schools.

### **The American School**

The American School in Managua operates under a charter granted in 1944 to the American School Association of Nicaragua by the National Government. Support of the new school has been greatly facilitated by annual \$4,000 grants-in-aid from the Inter-American Schools Service, Washington, D. C., and the Ministry of Public Education has given official recognition to the work of the school as equivalent to that of corresponding grades in the regular elementary schools of the Republic.

Opening in June 1944 with 2 teachers and 23 pupils, the American School had 102 pupils, including 14 North American children, and 6 teachers. Three of the teachers were North Americans, 1 of them being the principal. The American teachers are employed on a

2-year contract and receive round-trip transportation and \$1,800 a year, which is scarcely enough to cover board and room in Managua at the present time. The Nicaraguan teachers are paid 250 and 400 córdobas a month, or \$70 and \$80, U. S. currency, which is more than twice the salary paid teachers in the other schools; so that the American School is able to secure able Nicaraguan personnel for its staff.

The school is located at the southern edge of the city, at the foot of Tiscapa Hill, on the summit of which the President's Palace stands. A fairly large 2-story building, with an adjoining yard containing a small swimming pool and many varieties of tropical plants and flowers, houses a kindergarten and grades 1 to 7, inclusive, of elementary school. A sizable library of North American school and children's books is being brought together, and the wealth of similar materials in the American Library in Managua (page 50) has been placed at the school's command.

The curriculum was originally based on the methods of the Calvert School in Baltimore, which have been extended by correspondence throughout the world. This method, however, was found impractical for large groups of children; so that in 1945 the Calvert system was being employed only as a guide in the intermediate grades. According to the principal, the curriculum is now comparable to that of the public schools in California.

Almost complete freedom is allowed the principal in the management of the school and in the determination of the curriculum. Children are classified or graded in the light of their preparation, whether their learning was acquired in or out of school. Tuition charges are 40 córdobas (\$8, U. S.) a month for kindergartners, and 50 córdobas a month for elementary school pupils. In 1945 the school operated a bus for transporting children who lived at a distance from the school, but the monthly 27.50 córdobas charged was regarded as excessive by most of the parents involved.

In general, the teachers, including the principal, expressed satisfaction with the teaching and learning situation in this new school, particularly in the kindergarten and the first two or three grades of elementary education. The principal has noted, however, that the pupils of the higher grades, both Nicaraguan and North American, tend to insist on memorizing their lessons, and that there is considerable difficulty in getting them to cooperate and share with each other, either in school work or on the playground. Both of these weaknesses are said to diminish in gratifying degree by the end of the school year.

### ***Schools in the Atlantic Coast Region***

As stated earlier, the Atlantic coast region of Nicaragua was early settled by the English, who controlled it until near the end of the 19th

century, when the Nicaraguan Government acquired definite sovereignty. Today it comprises the department of Zelaya, of which Bluefields is the capital and principal port. To the north is Puerto Cabezas, another important seaport, but because of almost continuous rain, low-lying swamps, and dense jungles, communication between the two cities is extremely difficult. For the same reasons, these cities are isolated from the populous areas of the Pacific coast and other parts of the Republic.

Life in this Atlantic coast region has developed almost exclusively around the exportation of lumber and bananas by foreign companies. The population consists of Negroes, Indians, whites, orientals, and combinations of these races. There are Catholics, Moravians, Anglicans, Baptists, and Adventists, as well as Arabs, Jews, and Chinese. Spanish is the prevailing language, but English is commonly spoken in the business houses and, until very recently, in the schools.

Education in this region has been provided to a limited extent in rural and public and private elementary schools. English was the chief language used in the larger urban schools in Bluefields until 1940, when the Government ruled in favor of Spanish. In his report to the National Congress at the close of the school year 1940-41, the Minister of Public Education included the following statement:

One of the most pressing problems confronting us in the schools of the Atlantic coast region is that of the language. The majority of the people, particularly in Bluefields, have no knowledge of Spanish; their language is English. Religious organizations of various creeds maintain schools more for the winning of converts than for the true purposes of general education. It must be admitted that these groups have realized a valuable educational work, which has spread to the most remote regions of the area. The Moravians and the Anglicans have excellent colegios, and several other schools are operated and supported by the Catholic Mission. Nevertheless, in the majority of these colegios, the teachers do not speak Spanish; so that the atmosphere in the school is not Nicaraguan.\*

*Moravian School.*—Maintained by Moravians from the United States, this school in Bluefields provides nine grades of instruction corresponding somewhat to grades in the United States. For the first six grades there is a teacher for each grade; in the last three, teaching is departmentalized. The wooden building is the property of the Moravian order. Charges are very low, varying with the economic circumstances of the pupils' parents. By special arrangement with the national Ministry of Public Education, by which the school authorities are given *carta blanca*, except in the language employed, the program of studies and the methods of subject matter presentation are patterned after those most generally used in the United States.

\* Informe presentado por el Señor Ministro de Instrucción Pública y Educación Física al Congreso Nacional—1940-1941. Managua, Talleres Nacionales, 1942. p. XL.

Most of the textbooks are North American publications, which lend themselves to flexible instruction rather than to dictation procedure. National geography and history books are commonly Nicaraguan. In 1945, the Moravian School had an enrollment of slightly more than 200 white, Negro, and mulatto children.

*Cristóbal Colón Colegio.*—The National Government maintains the Cristóbal Colón Colegio in Bluefields, which provides a wide variety of educational opportunities for the children of the city. The colegio includes a 4-year coeducational national institute which combines academic secondary, normal, and commercial offerings; a vocational section of arts and trades in which carpentry, bookbinding, and agriculture are taught; a 6-year (complete) elementary school for boys, and an annexed 6-year elementary and home economics school for girls.

According to several former teachers of this school, the sons of well-to-do parents formerly had to seek their secondary and higher education in other parts of the Republic or in foreign countries. Other less economically fortunate children either concluded their formal schooling in the elementary grades, or pursued secondary level studies in institutions which did not prepare them for admission to Nicaraguan universities. To remedy this situation, the national institute of the Cristóbal Colón Colegio was reorganized in 1943 with the help of the director and the first graduating class of the Boys' Central Normal School (now the Franklin D. Roosevelt Boys' Central Normal School) in Managua. Today, it conforms to the requirements for university entrance and confers the baccalaureate degree, the title and diploma of elementary school teacher, the title and diploma of business accountant, and the certificate in typing and stenography.

In addition to an academic secondary school course of studies that is closely similar to that officially prescribed for the national institutes and private secondary schools of the Republic, candidates for the teacher's certificate or for the business title are required to take certain courses in the major field chosen. The education courses provided are: Principles of education I and II, general method, special methods, manual arts, educational psychology, practice teaching, and nursing and child care. The commercial courses are: Typing and stenography I and II; bookkeeping I, II, III, and IV; history of commerce; mercantile law I and II; and administrative law and public finance. By 1947-48, a full 5-year course comparable to that of other secondary schools of the Republic is expected to be in operation.

The private schools of Bluefields, which provide only elementary school instruction, have been granted permission to send their students to the Cristóbal Colón Colegio for secondary school work. If these schools adopt the official secondary school plan of studies and

have adequate enrollments, the Ministry will provide one or two secondary school teachers to help them in developing acceptable secondary school instruction. In the latter case, the students will be required to take final examinations administered by a board appointed by the Minister of Public Education, as is the practice in the case of other private schools of the country.

\* Informe, 1942-43. Managua, Talleres Nacionales, Abril de 1943. p. 104.

## *Chapter Five*

# Higher Education

**H**IGHER EDUCATION in Nicaragua is provided in the Central University of Nicaragua, in Managua, the University of Leon, in Leon, and the University of Granada, in Granada. The University of Leon, oldest and best known of the three, was founded just before the country declared its independence from Spain, receiving legal authorization in 1812 for faculties of medicine, law, and theology. Some 50 years later the University of Granada was founded, with faculties in medicine and law, and the rivalry that has existed between the two cities—liberal Leon and conservative Granada—was intensified in their universities. Each catered largely to the young men of the respective town and to those of the present capital and other cities who, it is said, chose their university according to liberal or conservative political preferences. Neither of these institutions, however, maintained itself abreast of developments in higher education, and in 1941, through the initiative and under the direction of the National Government, the Central University of Nicaragua was founded to provide the different types and the high quality of higher education deemed desirable and necessary for the effective professional training of the nation's youth.

Supported financially and morally by the National Government; located in the capital where it enjoyed ready access to Government activities, records, and personnel, as well as to cultural and other facilities common to a modern city; and unhampered by tradition, the new university faced a promising future. Because the constitution under which the Republic is governed gives the Government powers of supervision over all educational institutions in the land, and because the Education Law requires that regulations and practices of private institutions conform to those established for public or State institutions, the new Central University was tacitly accepted as the leader and model for instruction at the university level.

### *Central University of Nicaragua*

*Organization and administration.*—Following the pattern of universities in other Latin American countries, the Central University was organized into faculties, of which there were four in 1945—medicine, law, pharmacy, and engineering. Each faculty comprised the teaching staff, students, alumni, individuals whose degrees or titles

were officially recognized, and all property and equipment pertaining to the dependant school or schools. A dean and a directive council were charged with the internal administration, determination of the plans of study, requirements for admission and degrees, and other details of faculty management.

For the University as a whole there was a sort of board of trustees, the *Patronato*, which consisted of the President of the Republic, as chairman, the Minister of Public Education, as vice chairman, the rector of the University, a secretary, a treasurer, and four other members. The secretary, treasurer, and four voting members of the Board were appointed by the President of the Republic, on the recommendation of persons prominent in the cultural, economic, and judicial life of the country. The *Patronato* was the legal representative of the University.

Technical administration was the responsibility of the rector, assisted by the university council—a body composed of the rector, the deans of the faculties, and the general secretary of the university. A university assembly, made up of the rector, the university council, the combined staffs of the faculties, and a representative of the student body, determined the general policy and practices of the University and the several faculties.

*Instructional staff.*—Two grades of instructors were recognized—regular and substitute. Regular professors (*profesores titulares*) were those appointed to teach a specific subject or group of subjects; substitute professors (*suplantes*), those appointed to replace the regular professors when for any reason they were absent. Both types were appointed with the approval of the Minister of Public Education, on recommendation of the rector or of the dean of the respective Faculty. In 1945 there were 70 professors, all regular, in the four Faculties. With few exceptions, all were professional men—lawyers, physicians, pharmacists, and engineers—who devoted from 3 to 12 hours a week to teaching.

*Admission.*—For admission to university study, the applicant was required to have obtained the degree of bachelor of science and literature (*bachiller en ciencias y letras*) in an accredited secondary school of the Republic, or an equivalent diploma from a school in a foreign country. Good health and character were also required. Admission was granted to both sexes. For registration in the upper classes, satisfactory completion of the work of the preceding year was required. A nominal matriculation fee was charged in addition to examination and diploma fees.

*Courses of study.*—In 1946, all faculties, except that of medicine, provided 5-year courses of study. The faculties of law, medicine, and pharmacy conferred the degree of doctor; the faculty of engin-

ering, the degree of civil engineer. The faculty of medicine provided a 7-year course of study, after which, by a law passed in 1945, each candidate for the degree was required to practice medicine for 6 months in a town where there was no regular physician, and then to serve 6 months more as intern in an approved hospital. Prior to the passing of this law, 12 months were spent as intern in a hospital before the degree was conferred. In 1946 also, the course in pharmacy was extended from 4 to 5 years and the school of engineering was elevated to full Faculty standing.

In the following table, the number of professors, enrollment, length of course, and the degree conferred by each Faculty are shown (statistics for 1945):

Faculty	Teachers	Enrollment		Length of course (years)	Degree
		Men	Women		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Law.....	14	104	4	5	Doctor of law
Medicine.....	20	120	8	7	Doctor of medicine
Pharmacy.....	13	26	7	5	Doctor of pharmacy
Engineering.....	13	44	6	5	Civil engineer
Total.....	70	298	19		

As in other Latin American University schools, the subjects of study were all required and all strictly professional. A general cultural background was assumed to have been acquired in the 5-year secondary school (instituto nacional or colegio); so that there were no philosophy, history, literature, sociology, psychology, or foreign language courses from which the student might elect a part of his higher education. There was no college of liberal arts and no college of education. In 1945 a special class in English language was inaugurated for the benefit of medical and engineering students, but in December of that year only 15 students were enrolled for this instruction.

The university year was from June 1 to February 28. Classes were suspended for a 15-day vacation in September and on national and religious holidays. Ordinarily, 50-minute periods were held three times a week, but in the law school there were many 6-hour-a-week courses and in the engineering school class periods were 1½ hours. Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 give the plans of study in effect in 1945. The fifth year in pharmacy had not yet been determined at the time this study was made. Some of the subjects formerly provided in earlier years were to be modified and given a new place in the general plan, and a few courses, largely of a practical nature, were to be added.

Table 3.—Course of studies, Faculty of Law

Subject	Hours a week, per year				
	I	II	III	IV	V
1	2	3	4	5	6
Introduction to law.....	3	—	—	—	—
Roman law.....	3	—	—	—	—
Sociology.....	3	6	—	—	—
History of law.....	3	—	—	—	—
Civil law.....	3	—	—	—	—
Criminal law and penal code.....	3	6	6	6	—
Political economy.....	—	6	—	—	—
Social law.....	—	6	—	—	—
Constitutional law.....	—	4	—	—	—
Administrative law.....	—	6	—	—	—
Public finance.....	—	—	6	—	—
Criminal proceedings.....	—	—	6	—	—
Mining law.....	—	—	3	—	—
Commercial law.....	—	—	3	—	—
Civil proceedings.....	—	—	—	3	—
Public and diplomatic international law.....	—	—	—	—	6
Legal medicine.....	—	—	—	3	—
Philosophy of law.....	—	—	—	3	—
Notary practice.....	—	—	—	—	3
Private international law.....	—	—	—	—	3
Military law and police regulations.....	—	—	—	—	3
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 4.—Course of study, Faculty of Medicine

Subject	Hours a week, per year							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Biology.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Medical physics.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Medical chemistry.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Medical sociology and botany.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Anatomy and dissection of animals.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Descriptive anatomy.....	—	6	6	—	—	—	—	—
Dissection.....	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—
Parasitology.....	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Histology and embryology.....	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Physiology.....	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Professional ethics—History of medicine.....	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Bacteriology.....	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Propedaeutic surgical clinic.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Propedaeutic medical clinic.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Surgical pathology.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Medical pathology.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
General pathology.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Materia medica and pharmacology.....	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Operative medicine.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Therapeutics.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Hygiene and preventive medicine.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Toxicology and legal medicine.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Pathological anatomy.....	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
Surgical clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Medical clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Obstetrics.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Gynecology.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Tropical pathology.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Dermatology and venereal diseases.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Pediatrics and child care.....	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Obstetrical clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Gynecological clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Pediatric clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Emergency clinic.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Ophthalmology, psychiatry, X-ray.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>—</b>

<sup>1</sup> Internship and medical practice in small towns.

<sup>2</sup> 1/2 year each.

Table 5.—Course of study, Faculty of Engineering

Subject	1½-hour periods a week, per year				
	I	II	III	IV	V
1	2	2	4	5	6
Descriptive geometry.....	3	---	---	---	---
Analytic geometry.....	3	---	---	---	---
Higher algebra.....	3	---	---	---	---
Physics.....	3	3	---	---	---
Chemistry.....	3	3	---	---	---
Mechanical drawing.....	3	---	---	---	---
Infinitesimal calculus.....	3	---	---	---	---
Rational mechanics.....	---	3	---	---	---
Topography.....	---	3	---	---	---
Industrial chemistry.....	---	3	---	---	---
Resistance of materials.....	---	3	---	---	---
Construction materials.....	---	---	3	3	---
Steam engines.....	---	---	3	3	---
Astronomy and geodesy.....	---	---	3	---	---
Electrotechnics.....	---	---	3	---	---
Geology and mineralogy.....	---	---	3	---	---
Hydraulics.....	---	---	3	---	---
Highways.....	---	---	---	3	3
Construction.....	---	---	---	3	3
Internal combustion engines.....	---	---	---	3	3
Railroads.....	---	---	---	3	3
Foundations, bridges, and tunnels.....	---	---	---	3	3
Architecture.....	---	---	---	---	3
Legislation.....	---	---	---	---	3
Total.....	18	15	28	15	15

Table 6.—Course of study, Faculty of Pharmacy

Subject	Hours a week, per year				
	I	II	III	IV	V <sup>1</sup>
1	2	3	4	5	6
Basic principles of chemistry.....	3	---	---	---	---
Pharmaceutical botany.....	3	---	---	---	---
Mineral chemistry.....	3	3	---	---	---
Applied physics.....	3	---	---	---	---
Anatomy and physiology.....	3	---	---	---	---
Organic chemistry.....	3	---	---	---	---
Quantitative analysis.....	---	3	3	---	---
Microscopic biology.....	---	3	---	---	---
Legislation, deontology, history.....	---	3	---	---	---
Pharmaceutical sociology.....	---	3	---	---	---
Chemical pharmacy.....	---	3	---	---	---
Galenic pharmacy.....	---	---	3	3	---
Quantitative analysis.....	---	---	3	3	---
Materia medica.....	---	---	3	3	---
Parasitology.....	---	---	3	---	---
Operative pharmacy.....	---	---	3	---	---
Mineralogy and geology.....	---	---	3	3	---
Biological chemistry.....	---	---	---	3	---
Hygiene and first aid.....	---	---	---	3	---
Total.....	18	15	21	21	---

<sup>1</sup> In process of determination.

**Methods.**—Teaching in the Central University was mostly by the lecture method. Textbooks were not required, although a few students purchased a limited number. Two good reasons for the textbook situation were advanced: first, the scarcity of appropriate texts in Span-

ish; and, second, the prohibitive cost of those books that were available.<sup>1</sup> The most common practice was for students to take rather full notes individually, pool them with those of their classmates, and then synthesize them in a comprehensive but abbreviated statement for future study. Questions by the students, explanations by the professors, class discussions and practical exercises were said to be increasing in favor, especially in the schools of medicine and pharmacy where considerable hospital and laboratory work was required. Law students visited the courts in the capital and many were employed in law or other offices during the day. Future engineers received little practical training: the engineering laboratory had not yet been equipped with the apparatus and machines necessary for effective mechanical training.

*Examinations.*—In general, monthly tests were administered by the individual professors, and final examinations at the close of the semester or year by an examining board appointed by the directive council of the faculty. Grades were assigned according to a scale of 1 to 10 points, 7 being the required minimum for passing.

In all faculties, except that of medicine, a thesis and special examinations were required for the degree and title. A private examination covering the materials of the entire course and administered by a special examining board was followed by a defense of the student's thesis in public. The medical school had discontinued this thesis defense because theses in this school were based on the candidate's activities and experiences as an intern in a hospital or as a practicing physician in a small town, and must deal with three topics each in medicine and surgery and two each in maternity and children's diseases—case reports, rather than true thesis development. Diplomas and titles were conferred at regular commencement exercises by the rector of the university or by the dean of the respective faculty.

Holders of degrees or certificates obtained in foreign countries could have them evaluated by the advisory council of the Ministry of Public Education, after which the Minister rendered final judgment of their equivalence. Students holding the "bachelor of arts degree from a high school in an Anglo-Saxon country," i. e., the high-school diploma, could be legally admitted to university study by passing the baccalaureate examinations prescribed for Nicaragua's secondary school graduates.<sup>2</sup> Foreign degrees from institutions in countries whose degrees do not correspond with those conferred in Nicaragua, were evaluated in the light of the course of studies and the content materials involved. Reciprocity was granted in university study and diplomas.

<sup>1</sup> Textbook prices are said to cost from \$10 to \$20, U.S. currency, which is approximately the salary received per month by white-collar workers in Managua.

<sup>2</sup> *Ley de Equivalencias. In Reglamentos y Leyes de Instrucción Pública. Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Educación Física. Managua, 1940. p. 28.*

*School of Fine Arts.*—In a former dwelling of colonial type 3 or 4 blocks away from the university proper, the Central University maintained a school of fine arts which provided instruction in music and art. Music instruction had not yet been organized by years; classes were provided as needed in music theory, voice, violin, and piano, according to the previous training of the students. Instruction in art comprised 4 years of training. During the first 2 years, anatomical art, history of art, and perspective were each studied an hour a week, and modeling, drawing, and painting, each 2 hours a week. In the third year anatomical art and perspective were discontinued and increased attention was given to practical work. The last year was devoted entirely to intensive work in the student's major field—drawing, painting, or sculpture.

A limited amount of general knowledge was included in the theory classes, and from time to time lectures were scheduled on such topics as "The moral life" and "Philosophical orientation," in an effort to eradicate the idea of Bohemianism in the future artists of the Republic.

This school had been operating since 1941, with an average of 150 students a year. The students were largely workers. Classes were held from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m., and all instruction was free of charge. The school provided materials for modeling and sculpture work, but musical instruments other than the piano, drawing paper, paints, and the like had to be purchased by the students.

Completion of 6 years of elementary education was required for admission, but many students had had 2 or 3 years of secondary school. Fifty of the 88 enrolled in 1945 were taking music under 3 teachers; the rest were studying plastic arts, in which field there were 6 teachers. Three of the latter instructors had just returned from art study in the United States and were giving their services without charge.

*Student activities.*—Students of the Central University enjoyed few advantages of campus life as it is known in the United States. Most of them had their homes in Managua and as there were no university dormitories, those who came from other cities and towns were obliged to live in boarding houses, small hotels, or with friends or relatives. Moreover, most students worked during the day, so that they spent only a limited amount of time at the university. The medical students, who were scheduled for many hours of laboratory and clinical activities, were noteworthy exceptions.

The Central University of Nicaragua was a new institution and as yet no active student organizations had been formed. Such groups as had so far sprung up had been confined chiefly to the individual faculties, but an association of all students was being planned late in 1945. Following the tradition of other Latin American universities, there was a strong interest in political and social events and trends, and it

was around this interest that a national organization of university students was taking shape.

*Physical facilities.*—The Central University was quartered largely in a roomy old concrete building in the downtown section of Managua. Although not constructed specifically for educational purposes, the classrooms and offices were well-lighted, well-ventilated, and, for the time being, of ample size. Increases in enrollments were expected to require early expansion. Some classes were held in other buildings of the same general type in the immediate neighborhood. A large laboratory for medicine and pharmacy, and a smaller one for engineering, were gradually being equipped.

A small library of less than 20,000 volumes served the institution. Books were cataloged in alphabetical order in sections corresponding to the different Faculties. A special appropriation was included annually in the university budget for new books and reviews; and exchanges and gifts were helping to meet the needs in this field. The library was open daily from 9 a. m. to 12 m. and from 3 to 6 p. m. During the last 3 months of the university year, it was also open from 7 to 10 p. m., to permit the students to prepare for examinations. Removal of books from the library was prohibited.

*The American Library.*—The American Library in Managua cooperated materially with the Central University. This library, founded in 1942 and operated until December 31, 1946, by the American Library Association under contract with the United States Department of State, has more than 10,000 Spanish and English volumes cataloged and is one of the few institutions in the Republic actively engaged in the acquisition of new books. Operated directly by the Department of State since January 1, 1947, it maintains an adult department, a magazine room, and a children's section which provides a story hour, games, and coloring activities, as well as a lively circulation service. To overcome the great losses occasioned by wear and tear on the paper-backed books produced by Latin American publishers, the library installed its own bindery and saved \$600 in the first 4 months.

The American Library has a music room where well-attended concerts are given, largely with recordings borrowed from the American Embassy collection. In the halls and corridors exhibitions of American art are held from time to time, and two rooms on the second floor are used daily for English classes. More than 17,000 persons, including secondary school and university students and professors, visit the library monthly to take advantage of the regular and extracurricular services provided, and a significant contribution is thus made to the program for the promotion of cultural relations.

*English-teaching program.*—In conjunction with the American Library (Biblioteca Americana de Nicaragua) in Managua, the Department of State maintains an English-teaching program. More than

500 students attend classes in the capital, while another 500 are enrolled in branch classes in Matagalpa, Rivas, Jinotepa, Leon, and Granada.

The Department of State provides the services of an experienced teacher of English as a foreign language, who is responsible for administering the program. The student body, composed mainly of adults, participates in a number of complementary activities connected with the program. Classes in Spanish and shorthand are also provided for local North Americans and for Nicaraguans interested in receiving business training.

### *Universities of Leon and Granada*

Although these two universities are older and better known in other American countries than the Central University in Managua, they are private or municipal institutions and much more local in their influence. Limited budgetary commitments are said to have adversely affected the teaching staffs and physical facilities of both schools. Because of a ruling of the Minister of Public Education to the effect that medical students of the University of Granada must take their final examinations at the Central University, a degree of uncertainty in regard to academic freedom has developed in that and the other faculties of the two institutions. As a consequence, they are adapting their courses of study and other requirements to the model set by the Central University.

The University of Leon, which is also known as la Universidad de Occidente y Septentrión, maintains Faculties of law, medicine, and pharmacy. The University of Granada, or la Universidad de Oriente y Mediodía, has Faculties of law and medicine, the latter with schools of medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry. Neither institution has a rector—only deans of the various faculties, who are responsible for the effective administration of the schools in their charge.

Entrance requirements, courses of study, examinations, degrees and titles, and instructional methods are all practically identical with those established for the Central University. As already pointed out, regulations governing the nation's universities emanate from the Ministry of Public Education and thus an official standard is set. Tuition charges, which are somewhat higher than in the Central University, are offset to some extent, in the case of worthy and needy students, by scholarships granted annually by the municipal authorities.

Enrollments in 1944 were as follows: In the University of Leon, 84 in medicine and pharmacy and 99 in law; in the University of Granada, 65 in medicine and pharmacy and 48 in law. This same year, the University of Leon conferred 5 degrees in law, 10 in medicine, 8 in pharmacy, and 1 in obstetrics; the University of Granada

conferred 5 in law, 5 in medicine, and 6 in pharmacy. The new Central University conferred 9 in law and 10 in medicine.

In 1945, both universities occupied old, greatly run-down colonial buildings that were entirely unadapted to educational purposes. The libraries were small in Leon, but still smaller in Granada—in neither institution consisting of more than 10,000 volumes in the law school and considerably fewer in the medical school. The University of Leon has one full case of English books, but according to university authorities, the volumes are rarely used because only 3 years of English instruction are provided in the secondary schools of the Republic, and those 3 are the first 3 years of the 5-year course.

The medical and pharmaceutical laboratories, judged by United States standards, are recognized as totally inadequate. In Leon there are moderate quantities of equipment and materials, but they are stored in glass-doored cabinets and not effectively used. In Granada, a room about 8 feet square contains some 30 jars of acids, salts, and other chemical materials, and a fine apothecary scale in a glass case. Across the patio, another room contains specimens of anatomical, anthropological, and other related subject matter.

### ***Support of Higher Education***

All three universities receive State aid in the form of subventions through the Ministry of Public Education. For the year 1945-46, for example, the Central University was allotted 159,600 córdobas, or \$31,920, U.S.; the University of Leon received 42,000 córdobas, or \$8,400; and the University of Granada 80,000 córdobas, or \$6,000.<sup>2</sup> Other funds came from bequests, contributions, fees, and special appropriations from the national and municipal governments.

When the Central University of Nicaragua was founded in 1941, it was believed in many quarters of the Republic that the Government intended to force the closing of the Universities of Leon and Granada. A former director of the advisory council of the Ministry of Public Education pointed out that in view of the fact that the country had not been able to maintain two universities properly, it was hardly likely that three could be so maintained.<sup>4</sup> In 1945, however, the Government appropriated the sum of 250,000 córdobas (\$50,000, U.S.) for the construction of a handsome concrete building for the University of Leon,<sup>5</sup> and today it is widely believed that this latter institution, situated as it is in the city that for centuries has been regarded

<sup>2</sup> Presupuesto General correspondiente al Año Fiscal de 1945-46. Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público. Managua, Talleres Nacionales, 1945. p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Edelberto Torres. Nicaragua. In *La Educación en los Países de América Latina*. Anuario Educativo del Instituto Internacional del Teachers College. I. L. Kandel, ed. New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1942. p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> Presupuesto General, 1945-46. p. 157.

as the cultural center of the nation, is to be made the State-recognized center of university activity in the Republic.

### ***Recent Developments in Nicaraguan Higher Education***

Recent events have tended to strengthen this growing belief in a pending modification of Government relationship to higher education in Nicaragua. Martial law was lifted in the Republic in 1945, but a strong feeling of antagonism to everything military remained. The newly organized National Federation of University Students issued a proclamation, constituting itself the champion of civil liberty and democracy in the country and demanding that the Chief Executive, having returned their constitutional rights to the people, should also permit the return to Nicaragua of all exiled persons—university students in particular, and should set free those who were being held in political prisons.

In June 1946 the Government ordered the engineering students of the Central University to report to the Military Academy for their classes. The students refused, threatening to strike, and the order was canceled. Later in the same month, a disagreement over a student demonstration, involving the rector of the Central University—a medical doctor with the rank of major in the Army (Guardia Nacional)—led to a brief clash between the students and the police. As a result of this occurrence, the Government closed the University schools of medicine, law, and pharmacy and authorized the Universities of Leon and Granada to accept the students who desired to transfer. Only the Engineering School and the School of Fine Arts continued to operate.

Supported morally and materially by other students, and by the National Bar Association and friends, former students of the Central University formed a corporation under the name of The Free University of Nicaragua, Inc. For the financial support of this institution, 600 shares were issued at the rate of 25 córdobas (\$5, U.S. currency) per share. The Free University (Universidad Libre) was thus made independent of Government support and control: it is a "nonprofit organization for the exclusive purpose of maintaining and encouraging higher and professional education in Nicaragua." It is administered cooperatively by a University Council composed of the rector and the dean and a student representative of each of the three Faculties of medicine; law; and of natural sciences, chemistry, and pharmacy. Dr. Salvador Mendieta, first rector of the Central University in 1941 and 1942, was elected rector of the new institution by the University Council, which also elected the deans and approved the appointment of the teaching staff.

The Free University of Nicaragua occupies an old rented building in Managua. There are 11 classrooms with folding chairs and port-

able blackboards. Library and laboratory facilities are negligible. The programs and subjects of study are based on those established by the National Government for the Central University. All teaching is provided by former professors of the Central University, the Universities of Leon and Granada, and doctors, lawyers, and pharmacists of the capital, who donate their services free of charge.

The Free University apparently has functioned effectively since its opening August 8, 1946, and 600 more shares are to be issued to finance its second academic year. Some 150 students, most of whom are continuing studies begun in the Central University, pay a tuition fee of 10 córdobas (\$2, U.S. currency) each, and have declared their intention to register for the new session in June, despite the fact that their studies have been denied legal validity by the Government.

In September 1946 a new rector was appointed for the Central University. The new rector stated that he would do everything in his power to reopen the other schools of the institution in order that students might return and thus receive legal credit for their work. Nevertheless, the supporters of the Free University continued their efforts for the establishment of an autonomous institution that would be partially supported by the Government, but completely independent of State control. The abolishment of the Central University and of the University of Granada in favor of an autonomous institution housed in the new building in Leon was being favorably discussed early in 1947. In April 1947 word was received that the name of the University of León had been changed to National University of Nicaragua.

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