

Comment by the Editor

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS IN CENSUS

Fourteen men have occupied the position of president of the State University of Iowa during the seventy-nine years of its active existence. The average tenure, therefore, has been approximately five and a half years, but none of the presidents has served that length of time. The average of the first seven was three and a third years and the last seven averaged eight years, which is as insignificant in specific instances as it is interesting in general. On four occasions the president has been appointed in an "acting" capacity. A statistician might find comfort if not a conclusion in the antithetical information that the actual administration of the first president was limited to three brief summer visits, whereas the incumbency of the last is the longest of all.

Without exception the presidents of the University have been well educated — scholarly in temperament and training. The object and tradition of learning has always been exemplified in the chief executive of the institution. Four were clergymen and two were lawyers. All but one have been experienced teachers. Indeed, the first

ten gave instruction during their presidential tenure. Only five were previously engaged in college administration.

In terms of geographical source, to continue in the manner of a census report, five of the presidents have been alien to Iowa. Two were from New York, one from Pennsylvania, one from Illinois, and one from Nebraska. Their combined tenure spanned half the life of the University. Five, who served twenty-nine years, have been selected from the University faculty. Of the remaining four, two were Iowa clergymen, one a trustee of the University, and the other an alumnus.

Only one president has died in office. Another retired at the age of sixty-eight as president emeritus. The youngest to be entrusted with the position was thirty-three and the oldest sixty-six, and the average age of forty-seven is two years less than the median.

Whether it has been due to age, fashion, character, occupation, or some personal handicap, the fact is inescapable — eleven of the University presidents have concealed the basic features of their physiognomy beneath beards or mustaches.

J. E. B.