

A & M Expansion Necessary To Accomodate Veterans 5/5/46

Like other ex "GI's" all over the United States who are flooding into colleges and universities to study with the aid of government funds, a large number of Florida's Negro veterans have enrolled in the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College in Tallahassee. Expansion of Florida's state college for Negroes has been necessary to accommodate the 269 ex-servicemen who wished to study there. A number of barracks have been renovated for unmarried veterans, who comprise approximately 50 per cent of the total number, and 40 housing units have been appropriated by the government for use next fall.

The biggest influx of veterans at Florida A and M has been to the Division of Mechanic Arts, according to M S Thomas, acting dean of that division, who says that this influx follows "a trend of Negroes into technical fields as a result of their army experiences." In this division three separate courses of study are available: one qualifying the student as a helper in the plumbing, painting, auto mechanics, and electricity trades; a two-year course in one of these with a trade diploma at completion, and a two-year course leading to a bachelor of science degree in trade or industrial education, building and construction, or advanced vocational training. The demand for technical courses exceeds the school's facilities at the present, but improvements of lighting, heating, ventilation, and shop arrangement are being made in the Mechanic Arts building.

In addition to the expansion which the presence of veterans at Florida A & M has necessitated, there are other plans for improvements on the library and a badly needed hospital. A special appropriation of \$500,000 for the erection of a physical education building and gymnasium, a dormitory for women, and for enlargement

of the cafeteria was secured when Dr W H Gray, president of A & M, made an appeal to the governor and cabinet of Florida recently.

Dr Gray obtained for A & M during the last state legislature a 67 per cent increase in appropriation over that of any other year. Two immediate benefits of this increase in A & M's budget were evident when the faculty salary scale was raised, and when 15 new teachers were employed. The appropriation also made possible the opening of a graduate school at Florida A and M, with work leading to the master's degree. An out-of-state scholarship program has been recently set up which will enable Negro students to pursue elsewhere the same courses offered at Florida's white colleges.

Five thousand dollars for faculty improvement was granted last year by the Florida General Education Board. As a result of the grant, the first of its kind in the history of the school, 28 members of the faculty of Florida A and M did graduate work last summer. The General Education Board has also granted six full year fellowships for members of the A and M faculty, and the faculty members to whom the fellowship went this year are all working for the PhD degree.

The 37 buildings of A and M College are located just outside Tallahassee on a 377 acre site overlooking the Capitol. The college, recently valued at \$1,950,000, is accredited by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Its enrollment is approximately 1,252 students.

Sunday News-Democrat

Issued every Sunday morning
in conjunction with the Daily Democrat
THE CAPITAL CITY PUBLISHING CO.