

# EDISON QUESTIONS STIR UP A STORM

"Victims" of Test Say Only "Walking Encyclopedia" Could Answer Questionnaire.

## OFFICIAL LIST A SECRET

But Man Who Remembers 141 Questions Tells What They Were and Calls Them Silly.

Thomas A. Edison's examination questions for college graduates seeking employment as executives in his plant and the inventor's unfavorable opinion of college men because they couldn't answer the questions, have evoked many protests, both from "victims" of the examination and others. The general tenor of the comments is that the questions only could be answered by a walking encyclopedia and are a test of a man's memory and store of miscellaneous information, rather than of his knowledge, reasoning power or intelligence.

Several letters commenting indignantly upon the test have been received by THE NEW YORK TIMES. A typical one suggests that it was "not a Tom Edison but a Tom Foolery test." Another says that even a college graduate is a human being and is interested in other things besides the depth of the ocean, while a third accuses Mr. Edison of having been guilty of that conspicuous human frailty against which Socrates gave warning: Belief that because he knows one thing well, he knows all things well.

### Refuses to Make Questions Public.

An effort was made to get from Mr. Edison or his representatives both a reply to the critics and an authentic list of the questions. Mr. Edison was home because of a slight cold and would not talk. H. W. Meadowcroft, Mr. Edison's secretary, refused to make the questions public on the ground that future applicants would be enabled to cram for the examinations.

"The whole point of the test would be lost if its contents were published," Mr. Meadowcroft said. "I will say, however, that it covers pretty thoroughly a man's supply of general information. Mr. Edison originated the questionnaire three or four months ago and is well satisfied with the results. Only some thirty of the several hundred applicants have managed to pass the test, it is true, but those who did and thus became inspectors of the factory have made good in every case. The plan is to advance those men to executive and administrative positions if their future progress is satisfactory."

Though the official list remained a carefully guarded secret, known in its entirety only to Mr. Edison, Mr. Meadowcroft and a clerk, 141 of the questions were sent to THE TIMES yesterday by Charles Hansen, an unsuccessful candidate. No person who takes the examination is allowed to write down the questions or make notes of them, so Mr. Hansen's list is from memory and he makes no pretense of giving more than the substance and purport of the queries. The attitude of Mr. Edison and his aids made verification impossible.

### Here Is Hansen's List.

- This is the list:
- What countries bound France?
  - Where is the River Volga?
  - What country and city produce the finest china?
  - Where does the finest cotton grow?
  - What country consumed the most tea before the war?
  - What city in the United States is noted for its laundry machine making?
  - What city is the fur centre in the United States?
  - Can you play any musical instrument?
  - What country is the greatest textile producer?
  - Is Australia larger than Greenland in area?
  - Where is Copenhagen?
  - Where is Spitzbergen.
  - In what country other than Australia are kangaroos found?
  - What telescope is the largest in the world?
  - Who was Bessemer and what did he do?
  - Where do we get prunes from?
  - How many States in the Union?
  - Who was Paul Revere?
  - Who was Hancock?
  - Who was Plutarch?
  - Who was Hannibal?
  - Who was Danton?
  - Who was Solon?
  - Who was Frances Marion?
  - Who was Leonidas?
  - Where did we get Louisiana from?
  - Who was Pizarro?
  - Who was Bolivar?
  - What war material did Chile export to the Allies during the war?
  - Where does the most coffee come from?
  - Where is Korea?
  - Where is Manchuria?
  - Where was Napoleon born?
  - What is the highest rise of tide on the North Atlantic coast?
  - Who invented logarithms?
  - Who was Emperor of Mexico when Cortes landed?
  - Where is the Imperial Valley and what is it noted for?
  - In what cities are hats and shoes made?
  - Where is the Sargasso Sea?
  - What is the greatest depth ever reached in the ocean?
  - What is the name of a large inland body of water that has no outlet?
  - What is the capital of Pennsylvania?
  - What State is the largest? The next? Rhode Island is the smallest State.
  - What is the next and the next?
  - How far is it from New York to Buffalo by way of the New York Central Railroad?
  - How far is it from New York to San Francisco?
  - Of what State is Helena the capital?
  - What State has the largest copper mines?
  - What State has the largest amethyst mines?
  - What is the name of a famous violin maker?
  - Who invented the modern paper-making machine?
  - Who invented the typesetting machine?
  - Who invented the printing press?
  - On what principle is the telephone based?
  - Of what is brass made?
  - Where do we get tin from?
  - What ingredients are in the best white paint?
  - How is leather tanned?
  - How is artificial silk made?
  - What is a caisson?
  - What is coke?
  - How is celluloid made?
  - Where do we get shellac from?
  - What causes the tides?
  - To what is the change of seasons due?
  - What is the population of the following countries: Germany, Japan, England, Australia, Russia?
  - From what part of the North Atlantic do we get codfish?
  - Who discovered the south pole?
  - What is a monsoon?
  - Where is Magdalena Bay?
  - From where do we import figs?
  - From where do we get prunes?
  - From where do we get domestic sardines?
  - What railroad is the longest in the world?
  - Where is Tallahassee?
  - Where is Kenosha?
  - How fast does sound travel per foot per second?
  - How fast does light travel per foot per second?
  - What planet is it that has been re-

cently measured and found to be of enormous size?

What large river in the United States is it that flows from south to north?

Where are the Straits of Messina?

In what country are earthquakes frequent?

What mountain is the highest in the world?

Where do we import cork from?

Name six big business men in the United States.

Who is called the father of railways?

Where was Lincoln born?

Who stated the following: "Four-score and seven years ago." &c.?

What business do you like best?

Are you experienced in any of the following: Salesmanship, clerk, stenography, bookkeeping?

Name a few kinds of wood used in making furniture, and the highest priced?

What kind of wood is the lightest?

What kind of wood is the heaviest?

Of what kind of wood are axe handles made?

Of what kind of wood are kerosene barrels made?

What part of Germany do we get toys from?

What States bound West Virginia?

Where do we get peanuts from?

What is the capital of Alabama?

Who wrote the "Star-Spangled Banner"?

Who wrote "Home, Sweet Home"?

Who composed "Il Trovatore"?

Who was Cleopatra?

Where are condors to be found?

What voltage is used on street cars?

Who discovered the law of gravitation?

What cereal is used all over the world?

Where is the Assuan Dam?

What country produces the most nickel?

What is the distance between the earth and the sun?

Who invented photography?

Where do we get wool from?

What is felt?

What States produce phosphates?

Why is cast iron called pig iron?

Name three principal acids?

Name three principal alkalis?

Name three powerful poisons?

Who discovered radium?

Who discovered the X-ray?

What is the weight of air in a room 20x30x10?

Where is platinum found?

With what metal is platinum associated when found?

How is sulphuric acid made?

Who discovered how to vulcanize rubber?

Where do we get sulphur from?

Where do we import rubber from?

Who invented the cotton gin?

What is the price of 12 grs. of gold?

What is vulcanite and how made?

What is glucose and how made?

What is the difference between anthracite and bituminous coal?

Where do we get benzol from?

Of what is glass made?

How is window glass made?

What is porcelain?

What kind of a machine is used in cutting the facets on diamonds?

What country makes the best optical lenses and what city?

Where do we get borax from?

What is a foot pound?

### Calls Examination Silly.

Mr. Hansen calls attention to the fact that he was able to remember so nearly all the questions, remarks that that is "not so bad for an ignorant college graduate," expresses the opinion that the examination is more appropriate for a high school boy than a college man, and says:

"I want you and the public to judge whether a full blooded man who has been out of college and out in the business world for the past ten years could average 50 per cent. on this silly examination."

Another letter received yesterday described the experience of a man who answered Mr. Edison's advertisement for a production engineer, was told that his qualifications were satisfactory and then was required to answer a questionnaire, after which he was to have had a personal interview with the inventor.

"I finally completed my answers to the sixty or more questions," he writes. "During this time Mr. Edison paced back and forth, irritably demanding why certain results were not being obtained in his factory and denouncing what he termed bone-headed moves on the part of his executives, while the latter shouted their excuses into his deaf ears. My written answers were given to him, and after a few moments of waiting I was told I had failed and was 'given the air' with the other fellows who had also failed."

### Answers Safest in Textbooks.

"Aside from several silly catch questions, the majority were ones embracing formulas that are always safest when left in standard textbooks. Any attempt to memorize formulas and little used specifications is, without a doubt, disastrous, and may be compared to a man operating a large business by his memory rather than by bookkeeping."

Some of the questions were:

"What is a Chinese windlass? If six brick were placed on a glass plate, would it require more effort to move them if placed side by side or on top of one another? If a ball weighing one pound is dropped from a height of one foot on an anvil what force in pounds would it create when striking the anvil? What pinch pressure at the driving wheels does a 25-ton locomotive require when drawing a load of 100 tons on level track?"