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should be considered remedial in nature, that is, languages should be taught primarily in elementary and high schools.) To determine roughly whether or not an adequate language background is being taught during pre-graduate training, a search of college transcripts of the present Dartmouth graduate students was made. The results showed that in the physics department 82% of the students had the background equivalent to our graduate language requirement (4 semesters in one language or 2 semesters in each of two languages), while the remaining 18% met half of the requirement. These values are to be compared with those of the graduate school as a whole, which were 60% and 26% respectively. In interpreting these results the following remarks are pertinent: (i) high-school records for approximately 50% of the students were also incorporated into the compilation; (ii) only passing grades in German, French, Spanish and Russian were considered; (iii) foreign students were included, English having been considered a foreign language. It must be kept in mind that these results are in part a reflection of the graduate-school language requirement. This task, however, should be taken over by undergraduate language entrance requirements.

In summary then it was, and still is, our express opinion that our former language requirement could not be justified, either from a professional or cultural viewpoint.

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Books needed

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LEON BOTSTEIN
Franconia College
Franconia, New Hampshire

From the other side

The message told to us today—
the future is so bleak,
From front to back in book and journal
"Too Many!" is the shriek.
"Too many, too many" on they chant
"We've PhD's galore,
The market's bad and getting worse
And chaos is in store."

But others stand, straight and tall
With emotion they behold
What makes the heart beat hard and fast
And can't be bought with gold.
They've sat transformed in a master's class,
Merriman, Lipsich and many more.
The master's light that burned so bright
In them is all aglow.

The romance there was strong and deep
And still it does not die;
As they read from the master's books
The hours like seconds fly.
Linked with itself and with the world—
Rich beauty now appears.
Without the dollar, alone it stands
Camouflaged by fears.

"Too many?" No! one can't deny
This satisfying treasure
From the heart and soul of man
For its beauty and his pleasure.
So to science, as lean years come
To math pure and applied,
The future looks dark and gray
Only from the dollar side.

WESLEY A. DARBRO
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Origin of the barn

I have heard a vague tale that the unit of nuclear cross section, the barn, originated in a conversation during the Second World War at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Is this really true? If so, what are the correct details surrounding the incident? If some knowledgeable reader will send the correct version of the birth of the barn either to me or the editor, they will do johnny-come-latelys like myself a favor. Thanks!

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