Lohwater Sees Choice: Competition Or Oblivion

By FRYAR CALHOUN

Speaking to an intent audience in Wiess College Tuesday night, Dr. A. J. Lohwater of the mathematics department added to his already controversial reputation in a frank discussion of Rice’s problems as he sees them.

Dr. Lohwater reiterated many of the views which he expressed earlier this year in Will Rice College (Thresher, March 10): that conflict of ideas and open discussion of controversy comprise the lifeblood of a university, that the “intellectual eunuchs” in educational fields are largely responsible for student disillusionment, and that youth should be a time of criticism and inspection of ideas rather than one of conformity and acceptance.

LOHWATER, WHO is leaving the school this year, expressed the opinion that Rice is at a crossroads and that the choice of the new president will determine whether the university takes a turn for the better or “passes on to oblivion.”

He continued that the new president, before he accepts the position, must obtain certain concessions which will enable him to stock the faculty with really outstanding professors. According to Lohwater, the administration must be willing to pay well for good men, to search for promising young educators, and to examine closely the contribution of each faculty member to the university.

HE SAID THAT cleaning out the “deadwood” in the present faculty would be profitable. In reply to a question, Lohwater commented that the number of Rice professors who could hold permanent positions at a really first-rate university “could be counted on the fingers of both hands.”

The question, he said, is whether Rice is to compete—academically—in the Southwest Conference or in the Ivy League. In order to improve the University, Lohwater added, several changes must be made: the tradition-bound policies of the administration must be challenged, the faculty must begin to express their own opinions rather than bowing meekly to the wishes of the board, and the students must find an active voice in a student newspaper which, he said, is now nonexistent.