

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL
 Assemblyman, 46th District
 Roy Simpson, director, State Department of Education, reports that enrollments of students in the public high schools of California who took foreign language courses increased 204 per cent during the recent 10-year period, although enrollments in general courses of instruction increased only 118 per cent. He reports that during the year 1961, 40 per cent of the students enrolled in the public high schools of California were enrolled in at least one course of instruction in a foreign language and some of the 40 per cent took more than one foreign language.

Doctor Simpson compares this 40 per cent enrollment with the year 1951, when only 29 per cent of the students of the public high schools of California took courses in foreign languages.

DOCTOR SIMPSON says that during 1961, there were 195,878 students enrolled in Spanish classes, and that during the 10-year period beginning with 1951 and ending in 1961, Spanish has remained the most popular foreign language. He reports that the next most popular foreign language is French, with 81,271 enrollments.

German was third and Italian was fourth in popularity with students as determined by the number of enrollments. Russian, Hebrew and Chinese are studied by comparatively small numbers of students, according to the Simpson report.

PERSONALLY, I had two years of Latin in high school and often have regretted that I did not take four years of Latin because when I entered college and began to study Spanish I found that the Latin I had studied made Spanish comparatively easy to learn to read and write.

Furthermore, I found that the small background of Latin made English courses more interesting because so many words in the English language are of Latin derivation. Knowing the Latin origin of English words gave them a deeper meaning to me.

AT THE NAVAL Academy, I took all the Spanish offered, which was two and one-half years, and I also took Spanish at the State University of Iowa. Although I never learned to speak Spanish without giving it an Iowa accent, it was very useful during my naval and Marine Corps service because I was able to acquire many friends in the Spanish-speaking countries. It was a surprise to find how many people in the Spanish-speaking countries knew English fluently but would go out of their way to be kind to an American who at least made an effort to speak their language.

When I started writing books on firearms and aviation, I discovered that much information was not published in English but could be found only in French, German and Italian books and magazines. I did not take courses in these languages but bought foreign language dictionaries and managed to read what I needed to know. Once more, the small amount of Latin I had in high school was helpful in translating French and Italian publications, although it was of no value in trying to read German.

These personal experiences are given here because many people in Los Angeles County have written to me about making certain languages compulsory subjects through the enactment of State laws.

STRANGELY enough, not one person during my nearly 12 years in the California State Legislature has even mentioned Latin as either a voluntary or a compulsory subject in the public schools of California. Therefore, I shall appreciate it very much if you will write to me at Room 4001, State Capitol, Sacramento 14, Calif., and tell me your views on foreign language courses.

Please tell me what languages should be compulsory and which voluntary and if compulsory, how many hours per week and for how many weeks. We cannot do anything important about for-

eign languages during the current 1962 Budget Session, but during the General Session which begins in January, 1963, there will be bills introduced by various legislators on language study and I need to know the desires of those I represent.

THERE IS A Committee on California State Government Organization and Economy, sometimes called the "Little

Hoover Commission" because its purpose is to accomplish for California what a federal commission developed by former President Herbert Hoover has been doing for the United States.

I am not a member of the new committee but have several close personal friends on it. Therefore, if you have suggestions regarding the operation of State departments, bureaus, commissions, etc., to in-

crease efficiency and still save money, please mail your ideas to me and I shall personally

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