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NEWS LETTER

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EDUCATION IN THE NEW ERA

CUES FOR COUNTRY PAPERS

It is estimated that 70 or 75 per cent of the subscribers and readers of county newspapers either live on the farms or are interested more or less directly in operating those farms. If this is true, it seems that to edit the county newspaper for its majority readers means to edit it largely with farmers and farm folks in mind, writes the agricultural editor of Clemson college, S. C. He goes on to say—

Such an editing of the country paper means that considerable space should be given to such things as the following:

News about the country people.

News about the business of the country: that is, farming.

News and suggestions about conveniences and comforts for farm and home.

News about community efforts, such as rural school development, cooperation for better social, religious, and economic conditions.

News about good roads and their value.

Educational stories of various kinds for country folks.

NEWSPAPER IDEALS

A dedication of the declared functions of a newspaper and its high purposes is chiseled in stone upon the lofty walls of the new building of The Detroit Michigan News. Quoting the President of the News, "These inscriptions are not hidden in the foundation to be forgotten, but placed where they are ever before the eye of all, a reminder of service rendered and those ideals we are all pledged to attain." The newspaper must be a:—

Mirror of the public mind; interpreter of the public intent; troubler of the public conscience.

Reflector of every human interest; friend of every righteous cause; encourager of every generous act.

Bearer of intelligence; dispeller of ignorance and prejudice; a light shining into all dark places.

Promoter of civic welfare and civic pride; bond of civic unity; protector of civic rights.

Scourge of evil doers; exposer of secret iniquities; unrelenting foe of privilege and corruption.

Voice of the lowly and oppressed; advocate of the friendless; righter of public and private wrongs.

Chronicler of acts; sifter of rumors and opinions; minister of the truth that makes men free.

Reporter of the new; remembrancer of the old and tried; herald of what is to come.

Defender of civic liberty; strengthener of loyalty; pillar and stay of democratic government.

Upbuilder of home; nourisher of the community spirit; the art, letters and science of the common people.—The Outlook

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

"The war has made plain to the multitudes of people what was known before to a few, that human testimony as a rule is untrustworthy, not because the witnesses intended to deceive but because they were unable to see, hear or describe correctly what happened in their presence. This inability to see, hear, touch, and describe accurately is by no means confined to ignorant or uneducated people. Many highly educated American professional men have never received any scientific training, have never used any instrument of precision. Their entire education dwelt in the region of language, literature, philosophy and history. Their habits of thought permit vagueness, obscurity, and inaccuracy, and their spoken or written statements have these same defects. These facts suggest strongly the urgent need of modifying profoundly the programs of American elementary and secondary schools. They must no longer cling almost exclusively to languages and literature and the elements of mathematics."

The writer of these lines is no enemy to the study of language and literature, of history and philosophy. He is ex-president C. W. Eliot, our most comprehensive thinker in the field of education. The whole of his address (Defects in American Education, in School and Society, Jan. 4, 1919) shows that what he had in mind is the value of the habit of going in all things to the original sources, to the concrete facts. Conclusions, which in the larger practice of science and life take the place of the simple facts, are good according to the number and validity of the facts on which they rest. This is the lesson which Eliot is teaching and which we all have to learn. And nowhere can it be learned so well as in the classes that deal with the phenomena of material science. Herein lie the general necessity and value, aside from the production of a few specialists (may their number increase!), of our laboratories. Mark Hopkins on one end of the log and Garfield on the other, if this combination ever did in some primitive, talk-dominated, world image forth a school or college, does so no longer.

But what a responsibility on the science classes! and how far all of them and the world must travel before they can measure up to what Eliot is asking of them. For what he is asking is that we learn directly from nature, that we uncover with our hands, and see with our own eyes, and describe in our own words, what we have done and seen. We grow up for eighteen years and scarce a boy or girl is there who has been subjected to any test other than that of giving back to the teacher what he(she) has been told orally or what is "in the book", a continuous practice of verbal memorization. And even in college, necessity in some degree perpetuates the method. Large classes and a scarcity of demonstrators make it difficult to bring the student constantly face to face with nature. Always the easier practice must still, in too high a degree, be followed, and the teacher or the text makes statements to him which he learns.

Not that he can learn in even the best managed science classes all the great facts, what are we apt to call the principles, at first hand—for that human life is too short. His direct experience must be filled out with the recorded observations of others, reduced to generalizations that are lit up by deductive theory and so made more usable for most minds. But how different this is from the teaching of science as if it were history, words and a colored chart in the one case portraying the course and character of the blood stream, as in the other case words and a map describe a campaign!

Many teachers are thinking along the same line today, how in President Hadley's words "to make our courses more practical in the higher and truer sense", which means not to give them a more directly utilitarian character, to change them in the direction of immediate economic-hygienic use, but to improve them as instruments which are to open our eyes to the world in which we live, a world in which observation and reflection lead to the conclusions that are of chief value. Beside such teaching, whether in material science or elsewhere, the facile dispensing of information, second-many-hand information, which fills and of course must fill our evening lectures, our current topic talks at the women's clubs, and our semi-popular books, is within the walls of school or college a weak business, although as an extra-mural practice, in the various activities grouped together under extension work, it is doubtless the only method that is practicable.—H. V. Wilson.

PAYING THE TEACHER

We may talk as we like about progress in education, but if we fail to spend money for teachers there will be no progress. School boards who take a complaisant attitude about teachers' pay should read the National Education Association report on teachers' salaries. They will find there solemn words about the "threatened collapse of the teaching profession," sensational words used by men accustomed to weigh their utterances carefully.

In the new world of freedom and democracy that is emerging, intelligence, knowledge, and skill will count for more than in the old. Education becomes the chief business of legislatures and congresses representing the people.

Our Standard

In America we measure values in terms of dollars and cents, and men and women have formed the habit of selling their labor of whatever kind in the highest market they can command. It is only through increase of pay, therefore, that we may hope to improve to any large extent the character of the personnel of any profession or trade. It is only by very large increases in pay of teachers that we may hope to improve our schools appreciably. Small increases of 5, 10, or 20 per cent will not avail, for they will not be sufficient to hold in the schools men and women of superior ability. Teachers are now paid less for their work than any class of workmen, and the increase in their pay in the last few years has in nowise been in keeping with the increase in pay of other workmen, or with the increase in the cost of living. While the cost of living has increased approximately 80 per cent—food, 85 per cent; clothing, 106 per cent; drugs, 103 per cent; fuel, 53 per cent; and house furnishing goods, 75 per cent—the salaries of teachers have increased only about 12 per cent. The purchasing power of the salary of the teacher in our public schools is, therefore, only about 62 per cent of what it was four years ago. Mail carriers, policemen, unskilled laborers, cooks, telegraph messengers are paid much higher wages than are teachers. As a result many of the better teachers are leaving the schools and their places are taken by men and women of less native ability, less education and culture, and less training and experience. Many of the places are not filled at all. As an inevitable result the character of the schools is being lowered just at a time when it ought to be raised to a much higher standard.

Students now entering the normal schools to prepare for teaching are not of as good quality as formerly, which means that the standards of the schools must continue to fall. In some normal schools the enrollment is far less than in former years.

The Remedy

The only remedy is larger pay for teachers. If school boards, legislators, and county and city councils would immediately announce the policy of doubling the average salary of teachers within the next five years and of adding not less than 50 per cent more within the 10 years following the expiration of this period, so that at the end of 15 years the average salary of public school-teachers would be not less than $1500—about one and a half times larger than they receive at present—and then take steps for carrying out this policy, much good would be accomplished thereby at once. Such a policy and such a prospect would attract to the schools more men and women of superior ability and would hold them, working contentedly and, therefore, profitably for the children and the public welfare. Such increase in salary should carry with it an increase of not less than 25 per cent in the average length of the school term, which is now less than 160 days.

The Cost

To those who are not acquainted with past conditions and who have given the matter more intelligent thought, the increase recommended may seem large, but in fact it is not. It would in most states mean a range of salaries from $1,000 to $3,000. No person who is fit to take the time and money and opportunity of the children of this great democratic Republic for the purpose of fitting them for life, for making a living, and for virtuous citizenship should be asked to work for less than $1,000 a year in any community or in any state. No one who is unworthy of this minimum salary is fitted to do this work and no such person should be permitted to waste the time and money of the children and to fritter away their opportunity for education. At present the teachers in the public elementary and high schools of the United States are paid annually something less than $400,000,000. An increase of 150 per cent in salaries of teachers on the basis of the present number would make a total salary expenditure of less than $1,000,000,000. On the basis of the number of teachers that will probably be required in 15 years from now it will be less than $1,500,000,000, which is less than the annual expenditure for purely Federal governmental purposes before the war, and probably much less than half of what these expenses will be 15 years from now.

For the Children

It is not for the sake of the teachers that this policy is advocated. Schools are not maintained for the benefit of the teachers. If men and women of ability are not willing to teach for the pay offered them they can quit and do something else for a living, as hundreds of thousands of the best do. It is for the sake of the schools, the children and the prosperity of the people and the strength and safety of the Nation that the policy is advocated.—School Life.

EDUCATION MUST RESPOND

Can there be what William James once called a "moral equivalent of war"? Can we have in times of peace the same spirit of cooperation and sacrifice, the same deep recognition of individual obligation to the common weal, that a great national struggle so quickly develops?

This question now presses for an answer, and it is education that must respond. It is not too early to make a beginning. Peace does not mean that the battle for democracy has been permanently won. It does not mean that the responsibilities that our country has assumed for the cause of democracy can be laid down, or that we can return to the self-sufficiency of an earlier day. Problems that involve the welfare of others as well as of ourselves must be faced and solved by the American people. It is not too soon to impress upon the children now in school the fact that to meet these responsibilities in harmony with the ideals for which our soldiers have fought requires from them the keenest and clearest thinking of which they can make themselves capable.

If education was at any time merely a privilege, that time has passed in our country. If to strive for knowledge and insight can ever be a duty, it is a duty today.—National School Service.

SOCIAL MEANS AND ENDS

What we are really talking about is social agencies and institutions, but the phrase was too long for a head-line. They are related as means to ends; or, better still, as environment to organism. The distinction is important to clear thinking.

The organized social agencies of the United States—public, semi-public, and private—are already some 500 in number, and they multiply like mushrooms overnight. They are mothers' clubs, child welfare bureaus, school betterment associations, social settlement federations, public welfare boards, social hygiene associations, social science conferences, Y. M. and Y. W. C. A's., rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, farmers' unions and granges, anti-saloon leagues, short ballot organizations, community councils, country-life conferences, and so on and on.

They are all without avail unless they inform and stimulate our fundamental social institutions—the home, the school, the church, the state—to rise to higher and higher levels of life. This is their use and their only use.

Social institutions are few. Social agencies are numberless: they are many or few, effective or futile, abiding or disappearing according to the level of intelligence and the measure of consecrated, untiring leadership in this or that area.

Social institutions are tabernacles in which the race lives and moves and has its being, and which it has fashioned for itself out of itself, quite as the oyster secretes a shell out of its own substance. They grow naturally out of the nature of human nature, and they will last on and on, in one form or another, on some level high or low, as long as human nature lasts.

New Era Concerns

What is the level of our social institutions today and what will it be tomorrow? What are the ideals of home life, education, religion, and civic rule in communities, states and nation? Are they lofty or low? What are the tendencies—downward or upward? Are they quick with the life abundant? Are they seasoned with decay? Are they riping or rotting, in Shakespeare's phrase?

And what effect will the great war have upon the social institutions of America? It is a fundamental inquiry and there is no other of equal importance to our civilization.

Will the rapidly developing urban and industrial life of the state and the nation strengthen or weaken the family group? Will the country home remain what it long has been—the safest place on earth in which to rear children? Will our schools develop social mindedness and social efficiency? Will our fifty different kinds of religious faith in North Carolina catch John's vision? Can commonwealth mean common weal in the new democracy? Can civic rule be informed by the righteousness that exalteth a people—righteousness economic and social as well as civic? Can public office come to mean devoted public service? Will democracy in very truth mean equal opportunities for all and special privileges to none in national life and among the nations of the earth?

Our Social Agencies

So far, organized social agencies are few or relatively few in North Carolina—a social service conference, two county welfare boards, a few town and county health departments, some seventy public health nurses, two college extension bureaus, home and farm demonstration service in 95 counties, Y. M. and Y. W. C. A's. in our larger cities, city chambers of commerce more or less alive, vigorous rotary clubs, school betterment associations, women's clubs, town and school libraries, farmers' unions, the benevolent enterprises of the state, and such like other agencies of social culture or business advantage.

Their proper purpose is to re-inforce, not to supplant, the abiding social institutions of the state; to quicken and strengthen home life, academic culture, religion, and civic rule in North Carolina. If they are not doing these things they are useless and mischievous or worse.

What I am saying or trying to say is that our social agencies as they rapidly appear in North Carolina will need to have objective purposes clearly visioned and activities definitely promotive of noble homes in larger number, more and better schools of every grade and kind, stronger churches, and increasing reverence for law and order.

The Drift in Carolina

The people of North Carolina are drifting out of country conditions into town and factory centers. We are still a rural people in excessive measure, but in 1910 our villages, towns and cities were increasing in number and size more rapidly than in thirty-six other states of the Union. Four years of war have immensely increased the speed of this social transformation. It is the most tremendous single fact in our recent history.

Will the social institutions of town life North Carolina be equal to the increased burdens of social responsibility? Will our country civilization survive the wholesale loss of country populations? Will the increased value of farm products and the sudden prosperity of the countryside mean country homes with more comforts, conveniences, and luxuries, country churches better supported and better adjusted to country life, a larger willingness to vote local taxes for better school houses, longer terms, better salaries, and better teachers, and a larger measure of intelligence and courage spent upon law and order, and efficient civic rule? Shall we be coarsened or ennobled by the enormous increase of wealth in North Carolina during these four years of war?

In the last eighteen months we have invested 150 million dollars in liberty bonds and war stamps. Are we willing to invest just as liberally in church college endowment funds, and in taxes for public agencies of progress and prosperity?

We have suddenly discovered that we are rich in purse. It remains to be seen whether or not we are incurably afflicted with poverty of spirit.

The support we give to our social institutions, to our civic agencies of public welfare, and to our social agencies of well-being will tell the tale, and the gait we strike this first year of the new peace era will be bright with hope or dark with despair for long years to come in North Carolina.—E. C. B.