

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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Manuscripts offered for publication from those interested in our state educational problems should be addressed to the editors of *The Virginia Teacher*, State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

PUBLIC EDUCATION AN INVESTMENT, NOT A TAX

Principles and resolutions, adopted by the Shenandoah Valley teachers at their conference at Harrisonburg November 7-8, call for more financial support of schools, declare that public education of the youth is an investment and not a tax, urge more trained teachers, endorse the five points of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and promise co-operation with the Shenandoah Valley, Inc., for the development of the Valley.

DECLARATIONS

"We believe that universal education is in fact, as it is generally held to be, the chief and most important business of a democracy, and that in wisdom and fairness it must receive such support, moral and financial, as its sustaining and productive character justifies and must take such as are of tested value and as may be necessary to meet both individual and group needs in a more highly organized and more complex social and industrial life, such as ours now is.

"It is or ought to be self-evident that

money spent to preserve life, conserve health, promote true happiness and common understanding, and to increase wealth for all through increased knowledge and productive power is not essentially a tax, but an investment. Such, we hold, is money spent for public—not free—education; and there is abundant evidence to sustain the proposition.

"We believe it to be the inherent right of every child to have the chance to develop his powers to the fullest extent and to enjoy, under foreordained limitations, such privileges as are necessary to arouse ambition, ennoble character, and dignify humanity. We therefore assert that it is the duty of the State to study seriously the inequalities in the educational opportunities existing among the political subdivisions thereof and to exercise its authority and right to provide as far as possible a remedy therefor.

STAND BEHIND HIGH SCHOOLS

"We reject as utterly inadequate, unsound, and unworthy the opinion held in some quarters that education at public expense might properly be limited to something less than accepted standards of high school training, leaving the individual to work out his own educational destiny beyond the elementary school. Training of high school grade is quite as requisite for the tasks and issues of this generation as "common school" education seemed to the builders for their day and for the day within the range of their vision. Democracy is a transient thing without the means to support it. And the means must be adequate to and adapted to the times. Such a limitation, we maintain, would produce an unbalanced social and industrial situation, reduce immeasurably the efficiency of the community and of the nation, and ultimately defeat most, if not nearly all, of our larger and more vital objectives in the field of industry and of citizenship.

"Nostrums will not stand the analysis of

the high school mind, if it is free and moral, and it must function on at least a high school level in such an age as this to know where true freedom lies and to value it right. It is, therefore, our strongest belief that to have the people think generally on the intellectual scale of a fair high school graduate, to reason on the basis of his experiences in the process of acquiring fundamental knowledge, is to be assured that we shall have our fundamental institutions and doctrines preserved, our material resources husbanded and developed, and our place and service as a people greatly magnified. Less than the aim and purpose of having all who can take it secure motivated, adaptable, inspirational high school education at public expense would be dangerously experimental and retrogressive; for, notwithstanding the vaster difficulty now than ever before of forming correct conclusions on social, political, and economic questions of the most vital concern, it is to be noted that in the evolution of our democracy the people are mainly leading themselves and so-called leaders are but their temporary spokesmen. How absolutely essential, therefore, is it that the people themselves shall receive that sort of training necessary to the formation of correct judgments regarding their own personal problems not only, but on all questions affecting the public welfare.

URGES TRAINED TEACHERS

"We hold that the key to adequate safe and sane education is the thoroughly trained, safe, and sane teacher. We accept, as all but proverbial, applicable alike to educational, social, and economic problems, the statement of the great modern educator, Dr. Edward L. Thorndike, that 'the nation that lets incompetents and relatively incompetent persons teach it while the competent merely feed, clothe, and amuse it is committing national suicide.'

"And, since there is the most definite and definable relation between adequate and fair

compensation of teachers and the highest professional preparation and service, we deplore and condemn the tendency in some sections of our state to reduce the salaries of teachers. Efficient teachers have never been fairly compensated because, we believe, the essentially creative and productive character of their work has not been fully understood and appreciated. Such reduction in salaries is wholly unjustified on the plea of necessary retrenchment, or on the basis of living costs affecting teachers; will tend to drive out and keep out of the profession the most thoroughly trained and most capable persons; will be inimical to the best interests of the children of the state; will render impossible the more adequate preparation of teachers while in the service, through special summer school attendance; and will inevitably reduce efficiency in the industries which such retrenchment is intended to aid. It is false economy.

"The tax question, always difficult, is now a considerable one. We recognize as responsible and tax-paying citizens of the state the need for economical administration of the schools as well as all branches of government. But we believe that the people of the state and of the country ought to begin to differentiate more clearly between taxes raised for the primary and fundamental functions of a growing state and taxes raised for secondary and questionable state functions. Those primary and fundamental functions we believe to be adequate protection of property and life, the salutary enforcement of law, conservation of health, promotion of state-wide interests that obviously cannot be handled so well by the localities or by private agencies, and public education. And we view with great concern, as many other citizens do, the inroads upon the public revenues that should go more directly and more completely to these primary functions.

RESOLUTIONS

"Be it resolved,

"1—That we heartily endorse the move-

ment launched by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce to teach Virginia under the proposed five-point program and that we pledge to said organization our co-operation;

"2—That we assure the Shenandoah Valley, Inc., our most consistent, active, and enthusiastic support in its efforts to gain for the Valley of Virginia, within the State and abroad, the recognition to which it is entitled by reason of its scenic beauty, salubrious climate, fertility of soil, and the wonderful opportunity it presents to tourists, homeseekers, and investors.

"3—That we endorse and pledge our support to the program of the state officers of the Virginia Teachers' Association and affiliated bodies to conduct an informative campaign on education early in 1925 for the better understanding of the work and needs of the public schools and as a guide to the electorate on any proposed school legislation and in the selection of representatives in the General Assembly.

"4—That we express our appreciation to Dr. Walter Gifford for the excellent program arranged for the conference; to President S. P. Duke of the State Teachers College, and to his entire faculty for their great consideration shown the visiting teachers and school officials; to Supt. W. H. Keister of the Harrisonburg schools for the helpful observation program; and to the mayor and citizens of Harrisonburg for their cordial welcome and many courtesies during the conference."

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
ON ANNIVERSARY OF
SURRENDER OF CORNWALLIS
PLANNED

A SESQUICENTENNIAL celebration to observe the 150 anniversary of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia, is being sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Newport News, and plan-

ned to take place in 1931. It was on October 19, 1781, that Cornwallis surrendered, which action terminated the Revolutionary War and marked the beginning of the independence of the thirteen original colonies.

The proposed plans include the depicting of the early days of the colonies, scenes leading up to the surrender, with participation by the national government and the states, the army and navy, the French and British navies, and exhibits by historical societies.

At the present time, statements approving the proposed plan of the Newport News Kiwanis Club to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the most significant event in American history, have been received from the President of the United States, from United States congressmen and senators, from governors of states, from the British Embassy, from the French President, and also from the French Bureau of Information in this country, from educators, and from scores of civic, religious, patriotic, historical, fraternal, educational, and commercial organizations.

Bills have already been introduced in Congress, and a commission has been appointed, to look into the advisability of the national government acquiring a large area in and around Yorktown which will include the battlefield occupied by the American, British, and French armies at the time of Cornwallis' surrender, and to convert this area into a national park. The suggestion of the Newport News Kiwanis Club is that this commission plan to have the Yorktown National Park ready for occupancy by the time of the celebration of the sesquicentennial of the surrender, and that the dedication ceremonies of the Yorktown National Park form part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

It is proposed to have introduced in the coming session of Congress a bill which will provide for an appropriation of at least \$50,000.00 to cover the expenses of the na-

tional government's participation in the celebration. The state governments and organizations participating will make appropriations to cover their part in the celebration. It is also proposed to provide for a special design of postage stamp to be issued, which will give the celebration nationwide publicity and attract visitors from distant states.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

To All Secondary Schools of the United States, Junior, Senior, and Four-Year High Schools, Both Private and Public

THE American Child Health Association invites you to make a study of your school health program during the second half of the present school year and to submit it for comparison with the health programs of other secondary schools. The reason for such an undertaking is the very widespread interest in health education work in high schools as evidenced by frequent requests for information from high school teachers and principals.

The studies will be judged by a committee selected from prominent educators and professional workers in the health field. We propose, through a published report, to make available the conspicuously effective programs as selected by this committee, due credit being given for each contribution used.

The general points determining the judgments may be roughly indicated by the following statement of the factors considered important in a health program, such as permanency, scope, workability, and community and civic significance. In other words,

The value of a health program involves consideration of some of the following points:

1. Its relation to the rest of the school program.
2. The degree to which it is temporary or permanent in the general program of the school.
3. The percentage of teachers and pupils in the school included in or affected by it.
4. The practical results which may be measured objectively as compared with theoretical aims and required knowledge.
5. The degree to which the program in the school extends into the homes and communities.
6. The relationship between the amount of money expended, facilities provided, and results obtained. The spirit, purpose, and results of the program are of greater significance than the quantity of expenditure.
7. The extent to which this program in the schools would affect the later lives of the pupils as indicated by the program submitted.

One thousand dollars will be evenly divided among the three schools contributing the three leading programs. This sum of money is offered for the furtherance of education and is to be used by the schools to promote health projects. Each of the three leading schools will receive \$333.

If you are interested and would like to receive the details and definite outline of procedure, write at once to the Secretary of the High School Project, American CHILD HEALTH Association, 370 Eleventh Avenue, New York City.

This first indication of interest implies no responsibility on your part. If after receiving our detailed outline you wish to enroll formally, your application must reach us by January 10, 1925.

All-year schools have been discontinued in Newark, N. J. The attendance at summer sessions does not warrant the additional expense.