

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly by the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the post office at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AT WASHINGTON, JULY 3, 1924

The Education Bill—We, the members of the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association, assembled in the National Capital reaffirm our devoted and unqualified support of the Education Bill now pending in Congress. We believe that Federal leadership as provided by the creation of a Department of Education with a Secretary in the President's Cabinet is essential to the development of the highest degree of efficiency in the schools of the Nation. We know that the Federal Government has an obligation to support research and investigation, and to disseminate information with regard to public education comparable to that undertaken by other Federal departments. We are convinced that the Nation should contribute to the development of a Nation-wide program for the removal of illiteracy, the Americanization of the foreign-born, the training of teachers, the development of a program of physical education, and the equalization of educational opportunity. This leadership, to be provided by a Secretary of Education in the President's Cabinet and the Federal aid required to promote the program of education on a broad scale, can and should be accomplished without any interference on the part of the Federal

Government in the constitutional rights of the States to organize, administer, supervise, and control their own schools. It is gratifying to note that the two great political parties have in their platform recognized that education is one of chief concerns of the Nation, and that the President of the United States is favorable to the establishment of a new department emphasizing the importance of education.

Private institutions—The National Education Association, while recognizing the American public school as the great nursery of broad and tolerant citizenship and of a democratic brotherhood, acknowledges also the contributions made to education by private institutions and enterprises, and recognizes that citizens have the right to educate their children in either public or private schools, when the educational standards of both are approved by the State educational authorities.

Professional ethics—We believe that the time has come in the development of the teaching profession for the preparation of a professional code of ethics to govern the general relation to society. In this, we should be following the practice found so necessary and beneficial to the great professions of medicine and law. To this end we suggest that the Secretary of the National Education Association correspond with the officials of the various State associations to encourage them in the preparation of professional codes, and we recommend that a special committee be appointed to prepare a national code of ethics for the teaching profession.

Status of teachers—The security of the professional status of teachers and supervisors has not been adequately provided for. Too often are teachers, principals, and superintendents dismissed without due notice or any adequate statement of the cause of such action. In the last year there have been reported numerous instances of teachers, principals, and superintendents who have failed of reappointment in utter disregard of professional and lay public opinion for no other than political reasons. The teachers of America were shocked at the action of the New York City Board of Education in failing to reappoint the faithful and efficient superintendent of schools of that city though he was practically unanimously endorsed for re-election by parents' associations and other civic bodies, and by the

teachers, principals, and district superintendents. We believe the time has come when this association should have definite and systematic investigations made of such cases by the Tenure Committee in order that this body may be in a position to recommend such remedial measures as will tend to take the schools of the country out of politics.

We recommend that the Tenure Committee of the National Education Association be empowered to give its active support to the association of any State in which there is pending legislation for the protection of teachers and supervisors and for the promotion of the efficiency of the service.

We again deplore the tendency of some States to reduce appropriations for teacher-training institutions and for the support of the public high and elementary schools. We call upon the State teachers' associations to exert every effort to improve standards of teacher-training institutions. If the schools are to be what the American people desire, better trained teachers must be promoted on merit, and not because of political influence.

The teachers' retirement systems must be improved in order that a teacher shall receive annuity that will be based upon living conditions.

We believe that there should be no discrimination in the schools as to sex, but that men and women teachers should be on the same basis—equal qualification, equal service, equal salary.

The teaching of the Constitution and the history of public education—Teachers welcome the co-operation of the American Bar Association and similar agencies in a task with which the schools have always been vitally concerned—"to establish and maintain the Constitution of the United States and the principles and ideals of our government in the minds and hearts of the people." We believe therefore that the Constitution should be taught in all the upper grades of the elementary schools.

We further maintain that in the schools instruction should be given in the history and ideals of our public-school system.

Character education—Our boys and girls are the greatest assets of the Nation. It is

essential that they shall receive proper character training. Honesty, integrity and truthfulness should be emphasized in all the work of the schools. We believe, however, that the responsibility for character building must fall primarily upon the home. At the same time, teachers must be precept and example in everything possible to develop the highest type of character in the boys and girls under their influence. We believe that religious education is fundamental in the development of character. Holding to these views, we urge that the school, the home, and the church co-operate fully in the training of our youth.

The day has come when parents, teachers, and leaders in religious, moral and educational work must co-operate for the protection of our boys and girls of high-school age. Manners and morals today need safeguarding and direction. Many forms of recreation now prevailing should be eliminated and all recreation should be supervised. We recommend as a preliminary step to this end that efforts be made to secure for high schools teachers whose sold duty shall be to give moral and social guidance to pupils, and to confer with parents and teachers regarding such forms of recreation as will prove wholesome.

Everything should be done to inspire in our children a love for and sympathy with the children of other nations. We therefore endorse the efforts to secure help throughout the American children for the destitute and orphan children of foreign lands.

National conference on outdoor recreation—The National Education Association heartily endorses the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation and believe it will furnish a wholesome opportunity for the proper development of our youth physically and morally.

Literacy tests—We believe that the reading and writing of English understandingly should be a qualification for citizenship and also a qualification for voting.

We, therefore, urge upon Congress and the President the wisdom of adding the ability to read and write English understandingly, as an additional qualification for citizenship and that such a test be administered by existing federal agencies in conjunction with the Bureau of Education.

We further recommend to such States as

are not already provided with a literacy test for voting that they adopt such a test of reading and writing English understandingly, to be administered by the educational authorities of the State.

International relations—The National Education Association is opposed to war except as a means of national defense. We strongly urge that our nation shall take steps to prevent any more wars. We ask that by agreement and co-operation, the American Government shall lead in securing from the civilized world a complete deunciation of war as a means for the settlement of international differences. For this purpose our Government should endeavor to secure the establishment of co-operative tribunals to regulate international relations.

Child-labor amendment — Believing in Governmental responsibility, we endorsed in our last Convention an amendment to the Constitution empowering Congress to make laws regarding child labor. We now advocate the prompt ratification by the States of the Child Labor Amendment passed by the present Congress and urge the members of this Association to make every effort to obtain its ratification by the legislatures of their respective states at their earliest possible date.

Narcotic education service—We give our hearty endorsement to the Bureau of Education for having agreed to establish a Narcotic Education Service recognizing that in narcotic addiction, especially in the spread of the use of heroin among the youth, there is a grave peril to the boys and girls of America. We urge the National Education Association and the departments and boards of education of States, counties, and municipalities to co-operate fully with this service.

Law enforcement—We regret that in many communities there has developed a spirit of disregard of laws, especially those dealing with personal conduct. This attitude is reacting unfavorably upon the youth of America by causing laxness in respect for and enforcement of law. Teachers everywhere should endeavor to inspire respect for law and should advocate strict enforcement thereof. We refer in particular to National and State laws forbidding the liquor traffic and the distribution of obscene literature, posters, and pictures. This is equally true with regard to the enforcement of laws in many

States forbidding the sale of cigarettes to children.

American Education Week—In order to bear in upon the consciousness of all citizens the importance of education in our national life, we urge the widest observance of American Education Week in the schools, churches, and civic centers of all communities.

The Territories of Alaska and Hawaii—The National Education Association recommends to the Congress of the United States that the teachers in the territories of Alaska and Hawaii be not required to pay Federal income tax.

Schools of the District of Columbia—The National Education Association reaffirms the resolution passed at the Oakland-San Francisco meeting of 1923 relative to the schools of the Nation's Capital. We heartily endorse the action of the present Congress of the United States in passing a salary schedule providing increases for officials, teachers, and other employees of the public schools of the District of Columbia. The National Education Association urges that Congress, at its next session, pass legislation which will enable the educational authorities of Washington to institute and carry to completion an adequate program of school buildings.

Resolution of thanks—We express our sincere appreciation of the courtesy and hospitality extended to the members of the Association by the teachers, the civic organizations, and by private citizens of Washington, of the State of Virginia, and other nearby States. We acknowledge the great service rendered to the teachers and the cause of education by the intelligent and public-spirited reports of our deliberations, published not only by the local press but by many other great papers of the Nation. We heartily thank our Government for its generous assignment of band music to the many occasions when the teachers met in convention.

We are deeply sensible of the honor conferred upon the Nation's teachers by the President of the United States in consenting to address their representatives on the Nation's birthday. We feel that such public recognition of the dignity and importance of the profession of teaching by our Chief Magistrate at this and future conventions of the National Education Association would give inspiration and stimulus to teachers in their great endeavor.

KINDERGARTENS AND THE FOREIGN BORN

"Is it true, teacher, you not coming back next year?" asked the Greek cobbler when I called for my shoes.

And when I answered in the affirmative, "Ah, too bad, too bad; my wife she all the time cry."

I had been in charge of the kindergarten and primary work in a small New England city. I found that we had a large foreign-born population and that neither state nor city had made any provision for teaching these children the English language except as they picked it up from association with other children.

This of course meant the loss of much valuable time, as many of them would leave school and go to work as soon as the law permitted. It meant embarrassment and constraint on the part of these children who, simply because they did not understand the language, were compelled to remain in the grade with children who were younger and perhaps their mental inferiors. It meant many misunderstandings with teachers who could not realize that the child did not know what was expected of him, because he could not understand the questions asked or instructions given.

And so I had called together twelve little children from the three lower grades, four of Greek parentage, two German, two Polish and four Italian.

These children were given places in the kindergarten, where by means of games and stories, pictures and handwork, together with a few minutes of individual instruction each day, they soon learned to understand and speak English very well. If a child had something which he wished to tell the class and was unable to express himself, he was given a colored pencil and told to draw a picture, or to take the clay and mould it. When I had grasped his meaning I put it into simple English which I repeated to him very slowly, enunciating clearly. I had him repeat it after me several times, then tell the class.

In a surprisingly short time they were able to go on with the work of their grades, because of having the advantage of a few months in the kindergarten. This they probably

could not have had in any other city in the state because the state has no kindergarten law. Like many other states less than ten per cent of its children have kindergarten training.

Do you not know of some one who would be glad to work for more kindergartens?

Have them write for help and advice to the National Kindergarten Association, 8 West 40th Street, New York City.

BERTHA HAYWARD HIGGINS.

DENVER SCHOOLS SEEK BEST ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

In a curriculum revision for her junior and senior high schools, Denver is procuring professional aid from the big universities. Educators who have given practically all their time to a particular field have gone to Denver to aid the local committee and to make suggestions which it is hoped will meet the demands of modern scientific education.

Specialists from Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, Chicago, and other universities and teachers' colleges are assisting in the organization of courses in the various departments.

FIFTEEN STATES PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

Special legal provision for the education of crippled children has been made in 15 States of the Union, according to information recently compiled in the Bureau of Education. Seven of these States, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin, have established State schools for the education of crippled children; six States, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York, provide State aid for the establishment of special classes for such children; in Vermont the school authorities may provide for the instruction of crippled children at their homes; and in Oregon school districts having one or more crippled children must provide for the instruction "in a manner most suitable to advance their general education or civic or vocational intelligence."

SOME CITIES PAY TEACHERS' SALARIES ALL THE YEAR

Teachers' salaries are usually paid in 10 installments, and the teachers are expected to save enough during the school term to pay their expenses during the vacation. This usually involves no inconvenience, but occasionally instances of hardship have occurred as a result of the practice. An increasing number of cities have therefore adopted the plan of making salary payments monthly throughout the year. Among the large cities which pursue this plan are Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, Memphis, New York, San Antonio, Seattle, and Tacoma.

LEGISLATURES GIVING MORE ATTENTION TO CHILD WELFARE

Child welfare is receiving a great deal of attention from State legislatures. Many legislatures have recently provided for State child welfare commissions, and in a number of States the laws have authorized the organization of county welfare commissions. A phase of welfare which has appeared in several recent laws is the "children's code commission." This is a body created by the legislature to study child welfare and suggest a revision in codified form of all the State's laws relating to children. Among the States which have recently created children's code commissions are New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Florida, Kentucky, North Dakota and Utah.

AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL GOOD WILL

In connection with the program of the education of 50,000 orphan children in the Near East, Prof. George M. Wilcox, formerly Principal of the Silver Bay School, Silver Bay, N. Y., sailed this week for Athens to become educational director of Near East Relief in Greece and Turkey. The problem of training the boys and girls under its care is now the first concern of the American relief organization in the event, which has saved the lives of approximately one million people since its beginning in 1919, and which is now the sole support of 50,000 war orphans in Armenia, Greece and Syria.

"The group of children under the care of the Near East Relief present a strategic opportunity for developing ideas of international good will, toleration and co-operation that may change that region from a center of strife and hatred to one in which the rights of other peoples are respected," said Prof. Wilcox in taking up his work. "It is a remarkable opportunity for the spirit of America—brotherhood, democracy, opportunity—to take root."

Prof. Wilcox will carry out the educational program already set up and approved by Prof. Paul Monroe of Columbia University, Commissioner Graves of New York, Dr. John Finley and other educators who have visited the Near East and inspected the work done by the Near East Relief. The first object of all education in American institutions must be to equip the children for self support. Stress is therefore laid on training in agriculture and industry which will provide a sure livelihood for these dependent boys and girls at an early age. All of the children are given a rudimentary education in the classrooms and those of most promise are being educated for the teaching profession. As teachers are sorely needed throughout the Near East this specialized work is extremely important.

To combine the actual and industrial training in such a way as to bring the best results at a minimum cost in time and money to Near East Relief is the plan Prof. Wilcox will work out.

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

ADULT READERS

READER FOR NEW AMERICANS, Books One and Two, by John A. Long. New York: American Book Co. 1923. Pp. 224 and 208.

These books are intended for adults learning to read, especially immigrants. Book One is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the experiences around the home, and the second with the new citizen's larger life in the community. Book Two enlarges this experience and deals with national citizenship. Book One is encyclopedic at the first, remin-