Rapid Improvement in Virginia's Educational Rating

The Virginia public schools gained almost 20 points in educational efficiency between 1918 and 1922, as shown in a rating of all the states by index numbers involving the same factors as used by Dr. Leonard P. Ayres of the Russell Sage Foundation in rating the states for 1918, according to the calculations of Dr. Frank M. Phillips of George Washington University which have just appeared in the American School Board Journal. As far as the public schools are concerned this gives Virginia a new position in educational leadership among the southern states, and also changes its standing slightly among all the states.

For the first time in more than a score of years Virginia ranks ahead of all the following states educationally, at least as far as this method of ranking states is concerned: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Based on an average of five academic factors and five financial factors Virginia, in 1918, was given an index number of 35.26, the index number of 100 being the assumed standard of normal excellence. The index number for 1922, according to Dr. Phillips, was 54.56, a net gain for the four-year period of 19.3 points or a gain in points of more than 50 per cent. This gives Virginia a rank of 39 among the 48 states and the District of Columbia. Virginia's rank in 1918 was 40.

The new ratings give the neighboring states the following ranking: Maryland 33d, West Virginia 38th, and North Carolina 42d, among all the states and District of Columbia.

In the opinion of State Superintendent Harris Hart several important considerations must be borne in mind in any estimate of the relative ranking of a southern state with other states in the Nation. In the first place, owing to the racial conditions, it is necessary for a southern state to operate a dual school system—one for the whites and one for the negroes. This is a large factor in comparison with any state which operates a solitary system. The second most important consideration is the fact that practically every southern state suffers in comparison with other states because of the relatively small sums available for education. The ranking of Virginia for instance is pulled down primarily by the five financial factors showing financial income, and not by the educational factors which represent educational output.

Somewhat the same condition holds now, it is pointed out, as was revealed by the census of 1910 which disclosed the fact that for every 1000 male adults in the south there were about 1200 children to be educated; for every 1,000 for the eleven states constituting the eastern tier of states about 900 to be educated; and for the western states approximately 500 to be trained. Again, in the southern section, for every child of school age there was a property valuation of only about $3,000; for every child in the east a valuation of approximately $9,000; and for the western states
for every child of school age there was a property valuation of over $12,000. When these fundamental considerations are kept in mind, the fact that Virginia in recent years has shown a gain of 20 points in a measure based upon 100 points ought to be reasonably gratifying to the taxpayers of the state, it is thought.

LIBRARIES TO HELP IN ADULT EDUCATION

A DEPARTMENT of adult education for every library is strongly recommended by the Council of the American Library Association. The purpose of such a department would be to prepare courses of reading for individual students and to supply books for such courses; to furnish books needed by students enrolled in adult education classes of all sorts; and to maintain a bureau of information about adult education opportunities. The man or woman who must study independently will find such a department of tremendous value and the number of such students will necessarily continue to be large. As the situation has been, however, the individual who can not or prefers not to tie himself to the fixed hours and routine of study classes has been wholly unprovided for. This plan will meet the needs of another important group of workers and serves as an illustration of the intelligent functioning of the modern library in furthering the interests of education.

SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

COLUMBIA University announces its first annual School Publications Contest to be held in New York, on March 13 and 14, 1925.

This is open to all high schools and private schools of secondary grade east of the Mississippi publishing either a magazine or a newspaper or both. Schools are asked to send delegates to this two-day convention, or, if unable to attend in person, to send copies of their publication.

The leading men and women in literature, journalism, and business will address the general and sectional meetings and the delegates will be able to secure valuable assistance in the solution of their problems from these authorities. A school publication could scarcely do a better thing for the interests of its paper than to pay the expenses of a representative at this meeting; the values to a school and its publication would likely be difficult to estimate.

Additional information may be obtained by application to the secretary, Joseph M. Murphy, Columbia Scholastic Press Association, Columbia University, New York City.

SOME NEW TEACHER TENURE LEGISLATION

OVER a hundred ten thousand teachers were needed in 1922-1923 to replace teachers leaving the profession. This figure is based on estimates from State Superintendents of Public Instruction in forty-six states, according to a Research Bulletin of the National Education Association. The number of teachers leaving the profession in one year represents more than a seventh of the total teaching positions in these states. In some sections of the country more than a half the teachers are new in their positions each year. The Research Bulletin shows that the median tenure in the public schools of the United States is four years, and the median rural teacher tenure is but two years. This large teacher turnover means that our children are taught by a constantly changing procession of teachers.

To improve this condition twelve states have already passed teacher tenure laws, which provide indefinite tenure for teachers during efficient service and good behavior. The principal features of these state teacher tenure laws listed in the Research Bulletin are:
1. A probationary period from one to three years.
2. Valid reasons for discontinuing a teacher in his position: (a) Immoral or unprofessional conduct, (b) inefficiency or incapacity, (c) evident unfitness for teaching, (d) insubordination, violation of or refusal to obey reasonable rules and regulations prescribed by government of schools, and (e) willful neglect of duty.
3. Reasonable notice of intention to prefer charges against teacher, and right of counsel for teacher.

The general purpose of teacher tenure legislation, according to the Bulletin, is to protect the schools and the teaching body from political attack, to guarantee the able and efficient teacher security in position as long as efficiency and good behavior continue, and to weed out the inefficient teacher.

The data presented summarize the opinions of over one thousand individual teachers as to what they themselves consider just causes for dismissal. These are the four causes named by the large majority of teachers: (1) manifest or proved physical disability, (2) proved lapse of moral character, (3) proved insubordination to reasonable rules and regulations of employing authority, and (4) continued inability to maintain discipline.

Teachers protected by tenure tend to set for themselves high standards of professional achievement and growth, according to evidence presented.

The Research Bulletin raises these questions: Shall our public school teachers be regarded as hirelings with no guarantee of remaining in office over a year and shall teachers be faced constantly with the uncertainty of an annual election? Would school boards exercise greater care in making appointments, if teachers were guaranteed tenure? Isn't tenure legislation, that is satisfactory to both teachers and patrons, the best means of reducing teacher turnover?

**BOOKS**

**PASSING THE BUCK—EDUCATIONALY**


These leaves offer just what their name implies, practice in English fundamentals. Definite goals are set up and checked upon, so that the student is at all times aware of his standing. And the consequences! Well, the student's old saw about letting the teacher do the worrying has come home to roost. Come home very gracefully, it is true, but nevertheless come home! For the student knows from the outset that an average of 90 per cent on the series will exempt him from further practice. So he takes the assignments rather seriously, often using two or three references instead of one. But if he misses the coveted 90 per cent on the initial test? Another chance is coming; so like the bridge player when stakes are high, he doubles and redoubles—his efforts. Why not? He knows from the initial test just where his weaknesses lie; he knows from the suggested references just where to look for help; and he knows that in this case opportunity does knock a second time. One wonders how many hours of desultory work would be required to equal one hour of the white hot concentration the student brings to a job thus motivated. Some day the psychologists will tell us; then we will devise schemes for checking in all learning and settle the problem of the crowded curriculum by eliminating the problem of the rarefied study hour!

The leaves come stapled as a pamphlet for the teacher, and in looseleaf form for the student so that he does not meet the tests ahead of time. The introductory pages are given the student at the outset; a test is given each class period; the assignment for the next test is printed at the end of each