EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

THE NATIONAL WEEK OF SONG

The plan for the seventh annual observance of the National Week of Song are now being made by song leaders in communities all over the country. This event has become one of great importance to all who love music, and especially singing. It is the one time in the year when the entire nation is invited to join in a musical program, and each year since its inception it has been participated in by millions of our people.

It has been endorsed by leaders of the Music Supervisors' National Conference, and by leaders of other musical organizations; by P. P. Claxton, until recently United States Commissioner of Education, by nearly every State Superintendent of Schools, and a long list of City and County Superintendents. Also by a host of others interested in helping to make America a singing nation. The list includes many noted musicians, in fact all who are personally acquainted with the aims and purposes of the movement are in hearty sympathy with it. For this reason the National Week of Song has been, and will continue to be a big success.

Because it is desired to make the observance of the event this year the most notable of all, you, the reader of this article, are urged to plan or to help plan for its observance in your community.

The date set for the event is always that week in February in which Washington's birthday occurs. This year it will begin on Sunday, February 19th, and end February 25th.

A detailed history of the movement and suggestions for its observance can be secured by addressing The National Week of Song, 430 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

SHALL SALARIES BE INCREASED?

The National Education Association has made public the following editorial which will appear in the February number of the Association's Journal.

If the question of increasing the salaries of teachers were put to a public thoroughly aware of the facts in the case the decision would be overwhelmingly favorable. Let us get clearly in mind these facts.

Education is frankly recognized by thinking people everywhere as the basis of successful democratic government. Numerous problems are now testing democratic governments as they have never been tested before. Therefore education now and in the future needs to be supported and developed as never before. Otherwise the whole structure of civilization is threatened with disaster. Education is at once insurance against danger and the key investment that makes possible greater development in the future.

At the heart of the whole scheme of education stands the teacher. If he is wise and strong and influential, sound educational practice will exercise a controlling influence upon the youth of the Nation and the foundations in good citizenship will be sure. Great buildings and large classes are futile except as they are vitalized by well-trained, conscientious, and capable teachers. To obtain such teachers it is necessary to have candidates who are strong and fit—the best is none too good for the Nation's children. To obtain such teachers it is necessary to have candidates who are strong and fit—the best is none too good for the Nation's children.

What inducement shall be offered the prospective teacher—the teacher who is to prepare today's children for citizenship in the greater Nation of tomorrow? There are two great inducements—the privilege of service and reasonable opportunity to enjoy
the things that go with economic independence. The privilege of service is a great appeal. It is a dominating influence in the lives of the best teachers. However, in the organization of modern society there are attractive opportunities for service in business and many other fields outside of teaching. Society cannot and should not rely entirely upon the appeal of service to maintain its system of education. Modern society is abundantly able to afford adequate education. It should be willing to pay the price.

What, then should be done with teachers’ salaries? Again let us recall the facts. Before the war, teaching had become notorious as a makeshift occupation. The war drew attention to the appalling situation and after a vigorous campaign by the National Education Association and other agencies salaries were advanced somewhat. In only a few cases were they advanced to levels which would insure a permanent supply of mature well-trained teachers. The great majority of American communities must face squarely and frankly the problem of still further increasing the salaries of their educational workers. This will require recognition of the primary importance of education. It may require a new emphasis on values. It will require careful study and reorganization of methods of revenue-raising. It will require State aid and Federal aid, but it must be done. Democracy in its great hour of trial cannot afford to undermine the source of its strength and security—the school. It cannot afford not to pay salaries that will insure to every child in the Nation a competent and well-trained teacher.

‘A POLICEMAN’S LIFE IS NOT A ’APPY ONE.’

Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to be a teacher in one of New York City’s schools! Within the last few days, the State Department of Education sent an order to the principals of all the city schools, to report not only on loyalty of all their teachers, but upon their morality as well! Just listen to the terms of this order, as quoted by the executive board of the Teachers’ Union! “List the name of each teacher under your jurisdiction; place a check mark in column one opposite the name of each teacher for whose morality, and loyalty as a citizen you can personally vouch; in column two, check the name of each teacher whom you can not vouch for from personal knowledge, but can do so on information that you consider thoroughly reliable; in column three, check the name of each teacher whom you can not vouch for from personal knowledge or reliable information, or of whose morality or loyalty to the Government of the United States or of the State of New York, you have reasonable doubts.’

Isn’t that a nice sweet-smelling job for the principal of a school to have on his hands? Does not also such a plan of espionage keep the teacher in a fine self-respecting position? The reports are secret; no teacher can know that he is under surveillance or complaint. In our poor judgment, all such morality and loyalty as is cultivated or cultivable by these despicably immoral and disloyal means—disloyal to every decent instinct that ever a human being was born with—is not worth the powder it would need to blow it to its native Tophet. Nor is the education of any children condemned to breathe the pestilent atmosphere engendered by such a system worth more. We would not give the thousandth part of an Austrian kronen for as much of such morality, loyalty and education as could be ranged and regimentated between New York and Albany. When the late Mayor Gaynor was told that criminals could not be detected by honorable means, he dryly said, “Then don’t.” It is worth remembering, by the way, that England once had a Secretary of State who refused to employ spies or to open letters—a gentleman, in other words. This was Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, and he took office on 1 January, 1642.

The Freeman

IS THE MOVIE A CONTINUATION SCHOOL?

Speaking at Baltimore recently, the new Commissioner of Education, Dr. James J. Tigert, said:

“There are about 20,000,000 children in the country’s schools today, while there are 20,000,000 persons every day in the motion-picture theatres. Visual forms of demonstration are more effective than the printed word, and the things learned in a motion-picture theatre make a deeper impression upon a more influential audience than the instructions of a teacher.
"It is easy to see why the movies are having a greater effect upon our citizens, present and to come, than all the schools combined."

ABOLISHING COLLEGE EXAMS

A new terror may await the fearsome student instead of the bed of roses that the removal of the examination test promises. Just what the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania may propose as a substitute for the "mid-years" and "finals" that they have announced abolished will be awaited with interest by academic authorities all over the country. "Examinations were introduced, not for the purpose of instruction," says the Boston Daily Globe, "but to drive the worst laggards out of town," and "the device has attained a certain moderate success." Thus:

"Biennially a batch of exceptionally stupid youths is ejected from the lower classes. But it is amazing to what an extent the examinations have failed to get rid of many who have no Intellectual right to share in the benefits of educational foundations."

"The system inevitably tends to encourage the student to give back to the examiner what the examiner wants. The word is passed around that a certain professor is 'hipped' on this or that point, and the student in his hour of trial frames his answers to suit the man who reads the papers.

"Oral instruction is a poor way in which to impart facts, for facts may be acquired much better from books. The lecturer, when successful, stimulates the minds of those who sit in front of him. But if students are worrying at an impending examination, instead of thinking about the subject, it is difficult for any teacher, however brilliant, to set their minds in motion."

"The examination system has no more friends than has a detective bureau. That is what it really is, a device to entrap the unworthy. To those students who hunger and thirst after knowledge it contributes nothing. A very large proportion of the academic authorities are ready to drop the examination, if only they can be shown some means by which the college can be protected from permanent occupation by the barbarians."

"It is a patent fact that for a number of years the worth of examinations has been doubted by many educational specialists, by parents, and by students who are in a position to understand just how little an examiner can tell concerning the attainments of the examined."—Literary Digest

SPRING OF EDUCATION

Recent pronouncements by President Warren G. Harding bearing on the importance of public education are of special interest to those who still hope his influence may at length be found behind the Towner-Sterling bill.

In his last message to Congress President Harding mentions a difficulty that this bill is designed to care for:

"Through the eradication of illiteracy and the diffusion of education mankind has reached a stage where we may fairly say that in the United States equality of opportunity has been attained, though all are not prepared to embrace. There is indeed too great a divergence between the economic conditions of the most and least favored classes in the community. But even that divergence has now come to the point where we bracket the very poor and the very rich together as the least fortunate classes. Our efforts may well be directed to improving the status of both.

Speaking at the Birmingham Semi-Centennial October 27, President Harding recognizes the bigness of the problem of education:

"Every consideration, it seems to me, brings us back at last to the question of education. When I speak of education as a part of this race question, I do not want the States or the nation to attempt to educate people, whether white or black, into something they are not fitted to be. I have no sympathy with the half-baked altruism that would overstock us with doctors and lawyers, of whatever color, and leave us in need of people fit and willing to do the manual work of a workaday world. But I would like to see an education that would fit every man not only to do his particular work as well as possible, but to rise to a higher plane if he would deserve it. For that sort of education I have no fears, whether it be given to a black man or a white man. From that sort of education, I believe, black men, white men, the whole nation would draw immeasurable benefits."

ROCKINGHAM DOES FINE LEAGUE WORK

"The following is a condensed report of the Community Leagues in Rockingham County. Miss Lina Sanger is the County President and she says the state is going to hear from Rockingham. Six hundred and forty-seven leagues reported at the Virginia Educational Conference. They raised last year over $200,000 for local improvement:"
Bridgewater League—Bought books for library; repaired roof and cleared grounds; $60.00 to music teacher; raised $85.41.

Dayton League—Raised money for school.

Lacey Spring League—Raised money for school; raised $857.47; put seats in auditorium; bought piano and library.

Pleasant Hill League—Planted trees; built toilet; bought chairs, books, and cleared school building; raised $200.00; lectures. Very active.

Singer Glen League—Raised money for school.

Tenth Legion League—Raised $1,000.00 for school lot; improvements to school.

The Bridgewater league was awarded a pennant for distinguished work done during the year. The other Rockingham leagues are at Broadway, Dovesville, Elkton, Hill Top, Mount Crawford, Orebaugh, Rock Bar. The leagues stand for betterment in educational and civic work.

Higher Standards—Higher Salaries

Salaries of county superintendents in Pennsylvania will now range from $2,500 to $4,000, and salaries of assistant county superintendents have been increased from $1,500 to $2,500. And—

Hereafter a county superintendent must be a graduate of an approved college or university or state normal school, and in addition thereto he must have had six years of experience in school work, three of which must have been in an administrative capacity.

Write Dr. Tigert Your Opinion of School Life

Commissioner John J. Tigert, through the Bureau of Education, has issued a statement concerning the suspension of School Life in which he points out that this publication has been very useful to the cause of education in the United States. He asks the readers of School Life to inform him if the magazine has been of value to them.

"As you undoubtedly know," he says, "the principal function of the United States Bureau of Education is to collect and diffuse educational information. The question now is whether School Life is an effective means of performing that function."

It is sincerely to be hoped that the resolution authorizing the continued publication of School Life will be passed by the House of Representatives, for the magazine has been a valuable medium by which the Department may disseminate the information which it gathers.

VIII

Quotation

Educational Crisis

Many Pressing Problems Are Set Forth in U. S. Commissioner's Annual Report

A crisis exists in American education which is fully as acute as that which exists in the business world; the extent of illiteracy among native Americans, the inability of large numbers of people to understand our language or to appreciate our institutions and ideals, the failure to provide proper training for young people on the farms, the lack of efficient means of physical education and the necessity for better methods of school financing are among the most serious problems that confront Americans of this generation, according to statements of James Tigert, United States Commissioner of Education, in his annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1921. The Bureau of Education is constantly called upon for advice in all these matters, the Commissioner says.

More than two-thirds of the schools of the United States are rural schools. Notwithstanding the efforts that have been put forth in their behalf during recent years, they still constitute the most unsatisfactory part of our public school system, the report states. It is in the country that the greater part of the illiteracy among the native Americans is to be found. There is urgent need for authoritative studies of organization, administration, courses of study, methods of teaching, and adaptation of work of rural schools to the life and needs of the communities which they serve, it is declared. The report of these studies should interpret to taxpayers and legislators, as well as to teachers and school officers, the plans and methods which are proved to be most effective and economical, and should constantly hold up such standards and ideals as are reasonably attainable, the Commissioner asserts.

The Bureau of Education has done much in this direction, but it has not approached the limit of its possibilities. The Commissioner urges that its facilities be extended and its staff increased.

Important and Vital Factors

The establishment of health and correct health habits and the best types of physical education must be considered most import-