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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

HOME EDUCATION

The Proposed Plan for Popular Certificate Courses and Academic Credit Courses to be Offered for Home Study by Correspondence by the United States Bureau of Education and Universities under Auspices of the National Committee on Home Education

Need.—The National Congress of Parents and Teachers and other associations have asked repeatedly that the universities give correspondence courses especially adapted to the need among parents for courses that are short, interesting, reliable, and helpful alike to persons with much or little education.

Also there is a general demand for academic credit courses which could be satisfied better if the universities offered certain courses in coöperation with the United States Bureau of Education, "credit to be given by the university and a joint certificate by the Bureau of Education and the universities," as Commissioner Tigert has suggested.

Present courses deficient.—University correspondence study courses now offered are often too technical, academic, long, and uninteresting to serve adequately mature

persons studying at home. Such courses are usually designed for college students regularly working for the bachelor's degree. Even as degree-credit courses they are frequently unnecessarily burdensome, too severe in requirements, calling for voluminous writing or note taking, and lacking originality and the stimulus of suggestion.

Commercial correspondence study courses usually have no authoritative recognition. Some are not of standard quality; some are fraudulent; many are too expensive.

Reading courses sometimes lack appeal because they are free and are not sufficiently differentiated from book lists. They are too impersonal. The reader of the books in a book list or "reading course" has practically no supervision and no contact with a qualified instructor who can encourage him and help to make the reading and study show tangible results.

There are too many unrelated, unauthorized, or anonymous book lists, reading courses, correspondence study "lessons," etc., so that most people are at loss to choose the best or even the worthy.

The two outstanding reading course projects—"Home reading courses" of the United States Bureau of Education and the "Reading with a purpose" series of the American Library Association—are excellent for the limited purpose of furnishing guides to good reading. The latter are exceptionally serviceable because of their excellent format and because the American Library Association has used effective methods to make them known. In some States the United States Bureau of Education Reading Courses are used by many persons as guides for reading and for club study programs. They would have more authority and prestige if they were sponsored by the National Committee on Home Education and the United States Bureau of Education, with the definite indorsement of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and possibly that also of the National University Extension Association.

New United States courses.—The present United States Home Reading Courses need not be changed, but new combination courses should be added under a new title, uniform for all. They should have a short, striking, descriptive title comparable to the "Reading with a purpose" caption devised by the American Library Association, such as the following:

National reading and study.

The national reading courses.

National home reading and study courses.

United States home reading courses.

National coöperative reading courses.

National reading circle courses.

United States home study courses.

National adult education courses.

Publicity and combination.—The plan here proposed is a combination of existing courses in one announcement. For publicity purposes it is best to use one designation for all courses, such as one of those listed above; but to secure the coöperation of State universities it may be necessary to distinguish sharply between credit and non-credit (academic and popular) courses by printing the announcements independently. However, it is proposed that reading and study courses, credit and non-credit courses, be combined in one plan of announcement and be under coöperative administration. In fact, three kinds of courses, roughly described below, should be offered:

1. *Reading courses* (Home Education). Free. The courses now offered by the United States Bureau of Education, which are in part administered or distributed by the special collaborators of the bureau through the extension divisions of 18 States and Hawaii. Certificates granted by the United States Bureau of Education for all ages.

2. *Popular Short-study courses.* Small enrollment fee. Some or all of the present reading courses (as above) revised to include instruction for study, lesson papers and final reports to be handled by the uni-

versities which agree to undertake the work. Special certificates to be granted by the universities for satisfactory study and completed assignments. Should be restricted to persons over 15 to 18 years of age. The books to be studied should be certain ones selected from those designated in the present home-reading courses and in addition one or two texts determined from year to year by the instructor assigned to teach the course.

The United States Bureau of Education would have no work or responsibility other than that of printing the course announcements (either a supplementary leaflet to go with the present home-reading courses or a new combined leaflet) and publicity. Also, the bureau would continue to supply certificates.

3. *Academic or College-credit courses.* Small fees. These are the regular university correspondence courses offered under special rules and fees differing in the various universities. Some of these courses could be combined in a nominal fashion with one or more home-reading courses; that is, the United States Bureau of Education could print a statement on certain home-reading courses to the effect that readers of the course may apply to certain universities for enrollment in a regular correspondence-study course based in part on this particular reading course, and that upon compliance with all requirements they may obtain university-degree credit.

THE EMISSARY OF GOOD WILL AND EDUCATION

The Virginia State Chamber of Commerce merits the support of every one interested in the progress and welfare of the State. Its plans for the future of Virginia comprise a definite program of work, behind which every good citizen must feel the urge to place himself. That it is a business organization deserving of the highest confidence is evidenced not alone in the

personnel of its membership and its officers, but in its remarkable program of achievement. It would indeed have amply justified itself, if only its past achievements were taken into consideration. Among its outstanding accomplishments should at least be noticed that—

1. It has promulgated the progressive spirit of the New Virginia to the nation and to the world;

2. It has interpreted Virginia for Virginians, thus uniting all sections of the State in the common cause of All-Virginia;

3. It has effected the right sort of advertising and publicity of its resources and advantages;

4. It has enunciated the economic relationship of Virginia and many other important centers of commerce and industry;

5. It has sponsored a movement for the utilization of Virginia port facilities and the use of Virginia agricultural and manufactured products;

6. It has developed coöperation in the protection and the development of the forest resources of the State;

7. It has aided agricultural development and settlement;

8. It has led the agitation for a constructive tax-reform in Virginia;

9. It has taken a prominent part in the movement for the development of the State's water power resources;

10. It has stimulated efforts for the application of economy and efficiency in handling public affairs;

11. It has conducted a State-wide and National publicity campaign for the establishment of the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

But the State Chamber of Commerce is not content with past accomplishments; it has a program of vision that will bring a greater measure of All-Virginia service than ever before. It should have the support of all who have the good of Virginia at heart.

ARE YOU A SCIENTIST?

Although the term "scientist" means literally one who knows, the modern connotation of the word is perhaps more accurately expressed by the statement that a scientist is one who knows in part, maintains an open-minded attitude, and honestly desires to know the whole truth. The scientist is doubtless especially endowed with two characteristics, an insatiable curiosity and an absolute honesty in facing the truth as he finds it. Children, because of their curiosity, are often referred to as human question marks, but many of us seem to have lost that characteristic in large part, if not entirely, by the time we reach adulthood. We seem to be quite willing to accept things as they are without being curious as to why they are so or whether they could be changed merely because someone else has used them. The major argument frequently advanced to Superintendent John Jones by the representative of a book company as the reason he should change the present text used in his schools to one published by this particular company is the number of cities which now use the latter book. Too often the argument advanced by the superintendent to convince his board that a certain policy should be inaugurated is that the other towns or cities of his class are now doing it. The prestige of numbers or the consensus of opinion seems to be a satisfactory answer to the question why.

Again, many of us are interested in the truth of a proposition or an investigation to the extent that it substantiates the belief that we already hold. The conclusions have been reached before the investigation has been made, and the facts revealed by the investigation are acceptable only to the extent that they agree with these conclusions. In so far as we are uncritical in our attitude, and satisfied to continue present procedure without raising questions of reason or of value or efficiency, we are not evidencing the scientific spirit. We are not

scientists. To the extent that we refuse to follow truth when it conflicts with previous conceptions, we are not scientists.

A scientist can never be lazy or mentally inert. The eternal "why" is continually demanding an answer. The search for truth and the modification of practice in terms of the truth are daily activities. The true scientist can no more rest complacently on his findings of today that natural laws can contradict themselves.

School teachers in the classroom, principals in charge of their buildings, superintendents in charge of school systems have a multitude of problems, nearly all of which are complex. The danger which besets each one is that routine will absorb all the time and energy and crush out the questioning spirit. Many, no doubt, of the thousands of teachers and administrators in our schools are but faintly endowed with the scientific spirit. Perhaps some do not have it at all. The progress of the development of education as a science, however, is dependent upon the activities of those with something of the spirit of the true scientist. Some time each day or week in connection with some problem, each teacher or administrator should be keenly conscious of a dissatisfaction with things as they are. The dissatisfaction should express itself in an earnest quest for some information, more light on the problem, and not in self-pity or complaint. A consciousness of the problem, a questioning attitude concerning the value of the method or policy involved, a curiosity which is satisfied only with more knowledge, these are hopeful characteristics in any one connected with educational work. To the extent that you find these characteristics in yourself, to the extent that you follow the promptings earnestly and honestly, to that extent may you feel that you are a scientist.—*Educational Research Bulletin*.

AWAKENING TO SMOKE DAMAGE

Publication during the year of statements from smoke inspectors, scientists and engineers of the tremendous damage to health and property caused by the burning of coal in the raw state, have materially accelerated the change from solid fuels to gas.

Smoke, according to a specialist employed by the city of Cincinnati, costs the country \$1,870,000,000 a year. To remedy this condition, he suggested two methods in fuel utilization: pulverize or carbonize. When the real market value of gas and its by-products is understood, he said, the prodigious daily waste of our valuable natural resources will stop.

Estimates place the cost of last winter's smoke pall in New York at \$15 to \$20 a family, with Cincinnati paying an extra \$170,000 a year for laundering shirts and collars and Pittsburgh adding \$16 per capita to the laundry bill. It was said 90,000 tons of soot fall every year in Chicago.

INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN IN HOSPITALS

Educational work for crippled children, white and colored, is conducted in hospitals of Richmond, Va., through co-operation of the State department of public instruction and the Crippled Children's Hospital Association, a volunteer organization. Since institution of the work in the three hospitals owned and operated by the Medical College of Virginia more than 500 children have been enrolled in classes. Remarkable progress has been made by some of the children in both regular school studies and handicraft, which is taught by a volunteer teacher. Principals and teachers throughout the State are requested to notify the county nurse, the Red Cross, or the State board of health of crippled children in their vicinity, in order that arrangements may be made, with parents' consent, for correction of defects.

FIRST HITTITE EXPLORATIONS IN ASIA MINOR BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

After traveling some 2,600 miles in the heart of Asia Minor during the last three months, Mr. H. H. von der Osten, field director of Hittite explorations for the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, has just returned to America. His trip was one of exploration only, chiefly in the region between Angora, the new capital of Turkey, and Kaisariyeh. In this center of the ancient Hittite civilization, so unvisited by scientists heretofore that only three Hittite cities there were known, Mr. von der Osten has discovered fifty-five sites: cities, towns, or castles. Some of the city mounds show as many as eight different periods of occupancy, ranging from prehistoric down to Moslem times.

Hillocks and artificial mounds scattered along the stream valleys were found to link up into a complete system of signal posts, each one visible from at least two others, guarding this region from invaders. Some of the castles most strategically located were provided with stepped tunnels down through the hill along which troops might be maneuvered unseen by the enemy. A three-story subterranean temple, too, was discovered, together with the procession road leading thither.

Mr. von der Osten was accompanied and assisted by his wife. He succeeded in accomplishing many of his trips by auto, though roads in central Asia Minor are still largely unimproved or lacking. The Turkish government is, however, making progress in this as in other lines. Its officials were most courteous and helpful in forwarding the work of the expedition.

The director of the University's Oriental Institute is James Henry Breasted, chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures, and the secretary is Thomas G. Allen, of the same department.

INSTITUTION'S LOCATION BASED ON SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

We have recently had an unusual educational exhibit in Montana. The Nineteenth Legislative Assembly of Montana authorized the establishment of a so-called Eastern Montana Normal School; that is, it was a normal school to be established east of the one hundred and tenth meridian. Due to some rather careful planning, the legislature accepted a proposition providing for the use of a scientific commission to survey the eastern portion of the State and recommend the location which seemed to insure suitable and most satisfactory returns from the standpoint of training teachers for the schools of Montana. As a result of that legislation a survey commission was chosen and its recommendations were accepted. In other words, an institution of higher education was located purely as a result of a commission's scientific survey. There were 12 or more contestants for the site, but the work of the commission was so outstanding that the adoption of the report met with almost universal approval.—*Melvin A. Brannon, Chancellor of the University of Montana.*

BOOKS

SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL. By Henry C. Morrison. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1926. Pp. 661. \$4.00.

Dr. Morrison offers no integration of views of other educators; rather he unfolds step by step his own educational philosophy developed in years of practical school work—the last six years as superintendent of the laboratory schools of the University of Chicago. The book is quite long, but it is cogent and clear; it is expensive, but it is a bargain at that.

Dr Morrison puts the teacher too much in the foreground, to my way of thinking;