

## THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE GROWING IN POPULARITY

**T**HE high school departments of vocational agriculture, established in other states as in Virginia, are making such a record as to be impressive both locally and nationally, as set forth in reports received at the State Department of Education from many sources.

Although there are more than 2600 vocational high schools teaching agriculture in 47 states, Virginia alone has 86 departments in as many different high schools, with additional extension courses operated in 38 outlying high schools, taught by the instructors of the standard recognized departments of vocational agriculture. The enrollment for the current sessions in these Virginia courses is approximately 2243. Furthermore, in Virginia there are 490 adults pursuing evening classes.

Lately a movement was launched in Chicago to make each of the 21,000 farm implement and equipment dealers scattered over the United States a service station in aiding the schools teaching agriculture, to build up a better citizenship on the farms of tomorrow. This movement, it is said,

recognizes the fact that the "hired man" is being eliminated on farms with the inevitable result that the well trained farmer will insist upon labor-saving equipment to replace the "hired man" now so rapidly disappearing.

Homer Hancock, Commissioner of Agriculture for Tennessee, states that it is his close observation that boys receiving vocational instruction in agriculture, and vigorously conducting projects on their fathers' farms, and in a great many instances sharing the profits or losses from live stock and crops, are much more interested in solving farm problems and in making country life more attractive than those not receiving this training. He notes that the records of boys in vocational agriculture in production offers some very high standards for others who have a desire to excel.

In Virginia likewise, it is said, that the boys pursuing vocational agriculture not infrequently secure much larger yields and returns on their projects than their fathers in their own similar farm activities based on less scientific methods. In fact, it is reported that last year boys' projects netted a money return equal to sixty per cent of the total cost of instruction in vocational agriculture for the State as a whole, and totaled more than the combined contribution from State and Federal funds for vocational agriculture in the high schools of the State.

It is not surprising, therefore, according to Dabney S. Lancaster, State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture, that there are now on file at the State Department of Education more than twice as many applications for new departments of vocational agriculture to be installed next year than State and Federal funds will make possible. Furthermore, the striking fact has been indicated that few departments of vocational agriculture in Virginia have ever been discontinued when once started. It is said that they usually grow in popularity because of the increasing service which they can ren-

der. This is not alone due to the kind of instruction given but to the superior equipment for it, and to the superior character of the personnel engaged in the instruction, such conditions being due to the success with which the original plan as outlined has been followed.

### THE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

**T**HE revision of the secondary school curriculum, which has engaged the attention of the National Educational Association with increased intensity since 1913, has become, since the meeting of the Board of Superintendents at Cincinnati, February, 1925, one of the very foremost questions facing high school superintendents, principals and teachers. Only through earnest and continued co-operation on the part of administrators and experts can this problem be solved. Contributions to its solution have been made by several recent surveys of special subjects in the curriculum, notably one of mathematics, which was incorporated in a report on the "Reorganization of Mathematics in Secondary Education," published in 1923, and the Classical Investigation, which brought out the first volume of its findings in September, 1924. Both of these studies were conducted on a wide scale with adequate financial support on the part of the General Education Board.

The MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY, which has been under way since October, 1924, plans a wider field of inquiry. It is organized under the auspices of the American Council on Education, and receives financial support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The investigation which it has undertaken will include not only public and private secondary schools, but colleges and normal schools as well, since increasingly large numbers of students of French, German, Italian, and Spanish, crowd the elementary and secondary classes

of these higher institutions. Another feature, scarcely touched by previous investigations, will be the study of the facilities in American institutions for training teachers of modern languages. Hand in hand with this nation-wide inquiry goes a similar undertaking in Canada, under the auspices of the Canadian Conference of Universities, also financed by the Carnegie Corporation.

The organization of the MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY is thus intended to cover the entire continent and will also seek to draw lessons from European and Spanish-American practice. The STUDY is under the guidance of a general Committee on Direction and Control, with offices at 561 West 116th Street, New York City, and 58th Street and Ellis Avenue, Chicago. This committee is representative of the entire country as regards secondary schools, colleges, and teacher training institutions, as well as administrative agencies.

### EIGHTY-NINE SCHOOLS LISTED IN HEALTH PROGRAM STUDY

**H**EALTH education is assured a prominent place in the school curricula of the future. Judging from the eighty-nine public, parochial, and private schools that have enrolled in the School Health Program study being conducted by the American Child Health Association, the importance of health education is being emphasized. Schools as remote as the Virgin Islands have been heard from, and St. Thomas Junior High School, located on our Island possessions, has enrolled in the contest and will submit a program of the health work that is being carried on among its pupils. Besides the classification of schools entering the contest much interest has also been created by the geographical distribution of these schools. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia are represented in the enrollment.

In promoting this study the American Child Health Association aims primarily to gather all valuable data developing from health programs being directed by individual schools. The achievements and suggestions offered by the schools submitting programs will be published in a report to serve as a source of material for other schools in the country that need advice and assistance. The committee will announce the three winning schools at the beginning of the school year in September. The Association is offering one thousand dollars to be divided among the three schools contributing the most valuable programs. This award is to be used to further the health program of the school.

The salient points on which the committee will make their recommendations are: 1—Health Training and Instructions (the development of good health habits, desirable attitudes and practical health knowledge). 2—Hygienic Arrangement and Administration of the School Program for the Pupil and Teacher; 3—Physical Training Program; 4—Hygiene of the School Plant. The schools have been entered each under a code number in order that the committee may rate the schools with unbiased opinion.

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## BOOKS

### WHAT SHOULD ENGLISH TEACHERS TEACH

THE SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL ENGLISH, by Charles S. Pendleton. Nashville, Tenn.: Published by the author. 1924. Pp. 225. \$2.50 postpaid.

Is correct spelling the first end and aim for the teacher of English to hold to? Is speaking in complete sentences the second great objective? Is writing English which is grammatically correct the third?—Such is the group judgment of eighty trained teachers of English, teachers of professional standing, whose assistance Professor Pendleton had in the evaluation of the list of aims he submitted to them.

These aims the author collected to the number of 1581—count them! 1581—by drawing on the following sources: direct statements of English teachers, direct statements of other educators, articles pertaining to English in important educational periodicals, standard general writings on education, standard volumes on English and the teaching of English, state and city courses of study, and widely used school textbooks.

The mere accumulation of these aims is a noteworthy achievement, for the author has listed them as compactly-worded statements, expressed in terms of habits, abilities, skills, and attitudes. If efforts to define and focus the English curriculum lie just ahead of us, certainly those who undertake such a task will find in this study a solid beginning.

Indeed, one wonders, after an examination of the 1,581 aims, whether English teachers may not have been too zealous in their efforts to extend their usefulness. Surely, it is an astonishing accretion by which what we call "English" has grown in the last ten or fifteen years. "Taking in too much territory" is not only sometimes a tactical error; it may even be a blundering step that ends in scotching us.

Certainly the eighty representative teachers consulted in this investigation placed a large emphasis on the formal objectives of English teaching.—But what, we may ask, will it profit a pupil if he gain only formal correctness and miss the adventure, the joy, of self-expression?

English teachers everywhere need to ask themselves, "What price mechanics?"

C. T. LOGAN

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### A USEFUL OUTLINE

BACTERIA IN RELATION TO MAN, by Jean Broadhurst. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1925. Pp. XVI and 306.

This book is intended for use by classes in introductory microbiology and is especially adapted for use by home economics students. It is written in outline form and