

help of everyone in the State to carry the work to completion. It is a most worthy cause and one for which the teachers of the State will be proud, justly proud, when it shall have been finished. We need only ask them how many times they have asked or thought: "What will become of me if I become ill?" "Where would I go should an illness overtake me?" and many others, to know that they realize to the fullest what the Preventorium will mean to them. And may I remind you that the Preventorium is not for the teachers only, but for all those engaged in educational work, which means that all will have a part in the building. The Preventorium will be erected at Charlottesville on the University of Virginia grounds. It will cost about forty thousand dollars. It will contain about forty beds and accommodate forty on sleeping porches. It will be under the control of the Medical Board of the University of Virginia Hospital, and a permanent board of control appointed by the V. S. T. A. A thorough physical examination, any necessary operation, one week in the University Hospital will be given those who apply, and at a cost not to exceed \$25.00. (The cost of this week elsewhere under ordinary circumstances might easily amount to several hundred dollars.) After this week under the special care of the University physicians, a bed in the Preventorium will be ready for those who need additional rest and treatment. If the week in the hospital is unnecessary, a few weeks of rest in the Preventorium may prevent a long illness or a nervous breakdown. The Preventorium gives us the opportunity of paying a debt we have long owed those of our profession who have broken down in service and need our help. It is here that any teacher or school official in the State of Virginia may go and receive that expert medical assistance that will renew physical vigor, prolong life, and make retirement unnecessary. It is perhaps the greatest and most needed piece of work ever undertaken by the Virginia State Teachers Association for the welfare of its members. Your bed will be ready if you need it. Help make it and if you are fortunate enough never to use it, pass it on to one of your profession who may need it. Your individual contribution is four dollars. This added to your help and sympathetic support will result

in that which will open the doors of hope to all. Your chairman is Superintendent Shelburn. Give him your check or make your pledge as soon as possible that sufficient funds may be in hand to assure the breaking of the ground as soon as winter is over. No worthier cause was ever undertaken by the teachers of the Commonwealth.

LULU D. METZ

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT IN A FIFTH GRADE

**M**Y decision to institute student government arose from the desire to maintain a more natural form of class discipline, and to inspire the principles of co-operation and citizenship.

When the plan was proposed and outlined to the children, it was accepted by them with great enthusiasm. The idea of taking care of themselves, as they expressed it, appealed to them strongly. After we had discussed it at some length, they wished to establish some laws; so each child thought out and wrote such laws as he felt were necessary in school.

When these were brought up for consideration some were voted out as unnecessary by the class, and some of course were duplicated. Those which the children voted to keep were the nine following:

- (1) No drinks of water when in line.
- (2) No unnecessary talking when Miss Magruder is out of the room.
- (3) No talking when it will disturb others.
- (4) No eating in school.
- (5) No playing with toys during class.
- (6) Always walk up and down the stairs.
- (7) Keep floor and desks neat.
- (8) Keep lines straight and quiet.
- (9) Do not talk when another person is speaking.

These were accepted as written by the children and copied into the books which they had bought for that purpose.

I then suggested the need of officers who would see that the laws were obeyed. The

children finally decided that there should be a student council member in each row, responsible for the people in his row, and elected by them.

When this had been done, one boy suggested that some member of the council might prove to be weak. The children then decided that there should be one person elected president of the student council. (They have since changed his title to "Mayor" as our government seems to suggest city government to them.) It is his duty to call council meetings at any recess period when the council finds it necessary, and to discharge any council member for inefficiency.

The following laws were suggested by the children and added to the original list when the need for them arose.

(10) "Obey your council member cheerfully"—was added when some council member found it unpleasant to speak to one or two children who did not respond as cordially as they might. We observed that the *best* council members were those who made others *wish* to adopt their suggestions.

Number 11—"Stand straight when speaking"—was suggested by a child who noted that I was forced frequently to remind several of the children to stand on both feet when speaking.

Number 12—"No paper must be thrown on the lawn"—was added when there was an appeal to each grade to help keep the surroundings neat.

Number 13—"Do not leave the room unless necessary"—was made a law when the children were put on their honor not to leave the room unnecessarily, and given the privilege of leaving the room without asking permission.

Number 14—"Try to be polite at all times"—seems to be a repetition of numbers 3, 4, and 9, but to the children, it covers all the little forms of good breeding not mentioned in those laws. They made it especially for conduct on the playground, at home, and on the street. It is applicable to their manner of speaking to each other, of contradicting another, of laughing at the mistakes of others, etc. To be brief, any act which hurts the feeling of somebody, or makes him unhappy is considered a failure to keep law fourteen.

The last law, Number 15—"I have done nothing dishonest"—was not found necessary until January, when a boy who came to us from another school was found cheating on an examination. He was deprived of student government privileges for a time by the student council and assured that he must prove to the class in a definite way that he was sorry before he could be trusted again. He has already found a chance to act honorably in a situation in which he might easily have behaved dishonorably undetected.

The punishments which the student council inflicts are in proportion to the broken law and consist in depriving the delinquent of some of the student government privileges. This has been found sufficient punishment. We do not detain the children after school nor at recess, since "plenty of exercise in the open air" is one of our most prominent health laws.

Each morning following opening exercises we devote ten minutes to marking the laws for the previous day. One pupil reads the laws aloud and the children who have broken a law stand while it is being read. If any person feels that he is unfairly judged in being asked to mark a certain law, the point is settled before the next law is read.

When the children's reports are due, each child consults his law book for the past six weeks and gives me his deportment grade. A new mayor and council are then elected to serve during the next six weeks.

I have always before felt that deportment was an indefinite thing to mark and a hard matter to judge fairly. This plan enables the children to understand their deportment grade and it becomes as definite to them as any other grade.

While one year is not sufficient for the full development of a self-governed class, it is certainly the best plan I have found "to train for citizenship inculcating respect for law and order, and developing the habit of obedience to properly constituted authority." (*See Virginia Code of Ethics*).

MARGARET V. MAGRUDER