

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### EDUCATION GREAT FORCE NEEDED BEHIND OUT OF DOOR MOVEMENT

Need of rallying the educational forces of the country behind any out of door program was clearly shown at the sessions of the Out Door Recreation conference called by President Coolidge. This was brought out by the resolutions submitted by the committees appointed by Theodore Roosevelt, assistant secretary of the navy, who presided at the sessions.

For example the committee on formulation of an educational program for outdoor recreation pointed out the need of an educational campaign to make known and advertise to the American public those facilities in the nature of parks, forests, rivers, lakes, and playgrounds which are available or may be made available in the future.

Going further into the need of marshalling the educational forces of the country this committee's report says:

"This special educational committee believes appreciation and love of the outdoors should begin, with every other form of education, in the public and private schools of the land. New York State and California as examples at either end of our nation have built

up and fostered a greater appreciation of their outdoor facilities through the introduction of Nature Study as a part of their regular school curricula. Thus they have encouraged and stimulated an appreciation of Nature, together with an independence and originality of thought which makes for love of the outdoors and for the foundation of better citizenship. The educational committee urges upon the National Conference the passage of a definite resolution endorsing school Nature study and the extension of the Nature Study idea for every American school and every American family.

"This committee equally endorses the splendid Nature Study courses offered by many public libraries, museums and camps and recommends that all institutions of this character should follow the excellent example already set. It is urged that modern and up to date books and magazines on Natural History subjects be used, as the advance of science has demonstrated the error of many previous so-called authorities."

The committee on plants and flowers too saw the value of getting the educational forces of the country behind the movement and of starting with the child, for, in the resolutions of this committee, of which Mrs. Fairfax Harrison is the Chairman, in this paragraph: "To inculcate by the example and influence of all good citizens a healthy public sentiment for the wild life of the country, we urge that Nature Study be incorporated in public grade school work throughout the United States."

This was exactly what the American Nature Association is doing and in co-operation with Mrs. Mary K. Sherman, of the department of applied education of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the association is carrying on a campaign of education to this end. Mrs. Anna Botsford Comstock is directing the Nature Study lessons for the association. In commenting on the work of the conference, Charles Lathrop Pack, who is chairman of the committee on state parks and forests, says:

"The call of President Coolidge came at an opportune time. As never before, millions are now getting into the out of doors and closer to Nature. These millions must be

educated, not alone to the wonders of Nature but as to the direct bearing Nature has upon their daily lives. The extreme need of education along these lines is shown by the estimates that predict three million automobiles will be sold in 1924 and only twelve million books. That means only one book to every twelfth family. It also means that thousands upon thousands of newcomers will 'take to the road'. In the out of doors is the best national health insurance in the world. Let us build, through education, on this great opportunity."

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#### STANDARDS FOR JUDGING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

The purposes of a school health program include the following:

1. To develop Health Habits.
2. To impart Health Knowledge.
3. To achieve Physical Health and the best possible Development.
4. To create a Health Attitude.

While recognizing the desirability of developing every possible method for measuring the results of a school health program it must be recognized that there are fundamental benefits from such activities, which are not at present subject to physical measurement.

The following tests were suggested, however, which may be developed and applied in measuring certain results of Health Education.

Suggested Tests:

1. Health Habit Questions.
2. Recognition Tests.
3. Immunization Record for Smallpox and Diphtheria.
4. Physical Ability Tests.
5. Correction of Individual Physical Defects.
6. Thorough Physical Examination (doctor's rating of child).
7. Growth Records.
8. Sanitation Score Cards of School Buildings.

- (a) Construction
- (b) Use
- (c) Air conditions in room\*

A need is recognized for the further development of methods by which growth and the physical status of the child may be used in the measurement of health improvement.

A standardized method of recording the physical condition and physical defects of school children would be extremely useful.

All data regarding the relationship of groups of children to the normal weight for the height and age should carry with them when presented to the public, a statement showing how the data were collected, including the method of taking weight and height, the unit of measure used, the nature and the presence or absence of shoes or clothing, whether height or age were taken at the same time, and the method by which each was computed.

The use of growth as a means of interesting children in health should not be confused with the use of growth as a measure of health improvement or as a diagnostic agent.

Educators are urged to use such definite measures of the value of the health program as are available, to appreciate the limitations of those measurements which are not definite, but to remember at the same time the importance of the effect of health education upon attitude and school morale.

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#### SEPTEMBER IN THE COUNTRY

A FEW more days and then the call to return to the schoolroom will be answered by over 300,000 rural boys and girls throughout the land. Most of them will enter buildings freshly cleaned, some redecorated, to make them more pleasant and suitable "temples of learning." A few will enter new buildings dedicated "to the service of the community and to the common cause of a better life for all."

Most of this youthful throng are eager to return and join their school friends. Most of them will enter advanced grades with new fields of study to explore. Most of them

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\* See report of New York State Commission on Ventilation. Dutton 1923.

will have new teachers. About one-fifth of them will be entering school for the first time. A few of them will be entering school in new communities into which they have moved or to which they must go for advanced educational instruction.

Everything possible should be done to make the first week a red letter week for the beginners and the newcomers, to be remembered by them for the remainder of their lives. First impressions are lasting impressions. A favorable attitude towards school and community gained during these first few days will largely determine the wholeheartedness with which these pupils will enter into co-operation with the school and its enlarged society.

Just as first impressions largely determine the attitude of the pupils, so do they affect the teacher. The teacher should become an integral part of the community during her period of tenure. Most teachers realize this and are glad to respond to the welcome extended them by the community. The teacher will not only be happier but she, in increased service, will repay the community for any efforts expended in her behalf.

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#### THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES SPEAKS FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

Friends of country children and believers in education generally are greatly heartened by the Fourth of July address of the President of the United States delivered before the National Education Association in Washington, D. C. Among other things, the President said that one of the chief rights of an American citizen is the right to an education; that the country, which offers so many advantages denied to those reared on the pavements and among crowded buildings, ought no longer to be handicapped by poor school facilities. "The resources exist," said President Coolidge, "with which they can be provided if they are adequately marshalled and employed." This is the contention that friends of good schools for rural children have long been making. The endorsement of the President of the United States should bring us nearer to our goal.

#### AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK IN THE COUNTRY

Profiting by their past experience, many rural teachers too far from libraries and the county superintendent to get direct help with their American Education Week programs are getting information early enough this year so they can intelligently co-operate with public-spirited citizens and organizations in making American Education Week productive of lasting improvement in school betterment. Many such teachers attending summer schools will find much useful material in the normal school libraries; and direct suggestions will be given them, if they request it, by their instructors in school management classes.

County superintendents also are preparing their teachers for better service along this line. In their addresses before summer school audiences and institutes they have an opportunity to show how normal schools and other institutions can perform better service by demonstrating the kind of songs, speeches, slides, pictures and posters which the teachers next November can profitably use in their programs. Charts and maps depicting conditions existing in the counties of the State in regard to such matters as standardization of rural schools, the growth of consolidation, and the achievements of rural supervision can be used to advantage to arouse school patrons to a greater willingness to spend money on schools.

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#### EDUCATION AND THE BALLOT BOX

No doubt a good many parents living on farms are still debating whether or not they will send the boys and girls to high schools, who, last spring, completed the courses offered in the small district schools. Only one month remains in which to make this decision. Upon it rests the future welfare, not only of the boys and girls, but to a considerable extent that of the nation itself, for within a few years these boys and girls will be voters. By means of the ballot they will help decide upon the officers who shall administer the laws of our States and Nation and so upon the nature of the laws by which we shall be governed.

On the Fourth of July President Coolidge said in an address before the teachers of the United States, meeting in Washington, ". . . America has . . . placed the power of government squarely, securely, and entirely in the hands of the people. For all changes which they may desire, for all grievances which they may suffer, the ballot box furnishes a complete method and remedy. Into their hands has been committed complete jurisdiction and control over all the functions of government. . . The body politic has little chance of choosing patriotic officials who can administer its financial affairs with wisdom and safety, unless there is a general diffusion of knowledge and information on elementary economic subjects sufficient to create and adequately to guide public opinion."

Practically every President from Washington to Coolidge has warned us that the improvement of American institutions depends upon the intelligence of the voters. Think of this, mothers and fathers, living on the farms, before you decide not to give your boys and girls and the nations' future voters the advantages of a high school education.

### CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

#### READING, THE HEART OF THE CURRICULUM

THE HEART OF THE CURRICULUM, by E. Ehrlich Smith. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company. 1924. Pp. 363. \$1.50.

Mr. Smith has a vision for the grammar school—a better citizenship. Because his plan for achieving this has been evolved from years of teaching experience it is practical; because it has been checked with the best contemporary thought in education it is remarkably free from error. As the name of the book suggests, he sees reading as the central activity of upper grammar grades. He thinks that abandoning memorization of textbook lessons for wide reading of worthwhile material will in itself go far towards vitalizing the entire school. For when children read freely in different books on a problem of common interest, they need a place for the interchange of ideas, the socialized recitation.

And once the class becomes a creative group, formal repression yields to co-operative control and the modern ideal in discipline is achieved. Furthermore, this kind of procedure gives the class constant experience in subjecting its opinions to the test of data and one has only to think of the weight of public opinion in a democracy such as ours to realize that this is training in the very essence of citizenship.

Like the author's "Teaching Geography by Problems," the book abounds in concrete suggestions. The lists of poems and of stories for each of the elementary grades represent all important types of children's literature. Suggestions for teaching children to use books are practical—his sanity in regard to vocabulary building is an inspiration. Much illustrative material is given, a good part of it being original accounts of lessons. Part Four consists entirely of big units of subject matter in the social studies organized around current problems. The bibliography here is worth the price of the book. But possibly the best thing in this list of helps is the abundance of schemes for silent reading lessons. For instance, he has illustrations of adapting standard test forms such as "true-false" and "completion sentences" for use in the grammar grades.

One notable feature of the book is Mr. Smith's saturation with the grade library idea. Here he makes no compromise—the school must have a working laboratory of books.

The book is very uneven in its organization. The magnet idea of reading as a core for the school activity gives unity between chapters. But this is not always true within the chapters, partly because of an excessive use of enumerated points. For sometimes these points overlap and the reader is lost in the maze. Moreover, Mr. Smith's sentences are not always easy to read. But there is such a wealth of practical help that the reader will be amply repaid for the careful reading necessary.

KATHERINE M. ANTHONY.