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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

ANNUAL REPORT OF SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

Remarkable progress in 20 years' organized efforts to reduce the frequency of blindness in America, pointing to possible elimination of the principal diseases causing blindness and the reduction of eye injuries to a minimum, is shown in a summary of accomplishments being mailed to members of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

The greatest single achievement has been in the field of ophthalmia neonatorum, commonly known as "babies' sore eyes," the Society reports. As a result of adoption of laws, in most states, requiring doctors, nurses, or others in attendance to put prophylactic drops in the eyes of babies at birth and the constant educational activities of the Society, the report says, the frequency of ophthalmia neonatorum as a cause of blindness among those admitted to schools for the blind has diminished each year until now it is 64 per cent less than in 1908. Complete eradication of this source of blindness—once the most prolific of all causes—is said to be scientifically possible.

The Society is helping to safeguard the eyes of the next generation, the report points out, by following up its work for prevention of blindness at birth with demon-

strations of preschool eye tests, preschool clinics, and co-operation in establishment of sight-saving classes for the education of children with seriously defective vision. Using a recently perfected technique it is now possible to test, with some accuracy, the vision of children too young to read the letters on the charts used for adults. The sight of children as young as three and four years has been successfully tested in this way and in many cases conditions requiring immediate attention have been discovered and remedied.

Special "Sight-Saving Classes" in public schools, first advocated by the Society in 1911, have been established in 80 cities in 18 states. There are now 292 such classes in which, through the use of special large type books, movable desks, ideal lighting, and special teaching methods, children with little vision are not only given the same sort of education that children with full vision receive, but they are taught how to conserve their remaining sight. However, whereas there are less than 300 such classes, at least 5,000 are needed, declares William Fellowes Morgan, President of the Society, in a foreword to the report.

Hope is expressed in the report that at last the struggle of medical men with the scourge of trachoma, one of the great international sources of blindness, is being rewarded by some definite understanding of the causative factors of this disease of the eyes. Credit is given to Dr. Hideyo Noguchi of the Rockefeller Institute who died May 21 and whose research during the last year of his life helped toward solving the mystery of trachoma which has baffled medical men of the world for centuries.

Eye hazards of industrial occupations still constitute one of the most serious causes of blindness in America, the report emphasizes, despite the strides that have been made toward the prevention of accidents generally in industry. It has been estimated that about 15 per cent of the 100,000 blind

men and women in the United States lost their sight from this single source of blindness. Recognizing the importance of educating workers in dangerous occupations on care of the eyes, the Society has during the last year brought the essential facts concerning eye hygiene, the prevention of accidental injury to the eyes, and the importance of good lighting before approximately 3,000,00 men and women engaged in the most hazardous industries.

FOUNDATION PROVIDES LECTURES FOR HIGH SCHOOL

A fine arts foundation in the R. J. Reynolds High School, Winston-Salem, N. C., has been established by a local citizen, chairman of the board of city school commissioners. The specific purpose of the foundation is to bring to the city each year recognized leaders in different realms of activity, who through inspirational addresses and the power of their personality will be a constructive influence in the lives of students. Lecturers for the past year included representatives of two important educational institutions in the South, a distinguished American poet, a naturalist and writer on scientific subjects, an American sculptor, a prominent minister, and an internationally known medical missionary.

RESEARCH PROJECTS ENGAGE 300 OF UNIVERSITY GROUP

While six thousand students from fifty countries gathered at the University of Chicago for the opening of summer school, three hundred faculty members and advanced students of the regular school term prepared to leave for all parts of the world in the University's annual summer research migration, with their goals ranging from Siberia, Samoa, and Mongolia to the cultural centers of the Old World and the still older archaeological world of Asia Minor and Egypt.

Most widespread are the activities of the Anthropology Department. Paul Diffenderder, graduate student, will leave to study the ethnology of the Samoan Islands at Pago Pago; Alonzo Pond has gone with the Roy Chapman Andrews expedition to the Gobi Desert to study ancient man in China; Paul Martin will accompany the Carnegie Institution's expeditions to Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico, to unearth the Maya civilization; Paul Nesbit has already gone to Algiers to take charge of the work of the Logan-Beloit expedition; Wendell Bennett has left for Hawaii to study race relations there.

Cornelius Osgood is off on a dangerous mission to the Canadian coast of the Arctic Ocean to live with the Hareskin Indians for a year; Charlotte Gower will leave for an obscure community in Sicily on a Social Science Research Fellowship to study it for a year; and Gerhart Laves will go with the expedition of the American Museum to study the fossilized finds of humans and animals of Folsem, New Mexico.

Ten members of the department will start the third year's work of a ten-year project for uncovering the life and culture of the precolumbian Indians of Illinois, in the mound districts. F. K. Li will study Indian language in the Mackenzie Valley and Harry Hoyer their language in Oklahoma.

Over one hundred and fifty will go to all parts of the United States, Canada, and Mexico from the Departments of Geography, Geology, and Botany on research field trips, most interesting of which will probably be the expedition of a geography group to an isolated community in the heart of agricultural Mexico, south of Mexico City, in a region which has never been scientifically described. The five expeditions of the University's Oriental Institute will continue their researches in Egypt and Asia Minor, with Professor Chiera compiling his Assyrian Dictionary at Bagdad and Professor J. M. P. Smith, editor of the Univer-

sity's revised Old Testament, working in Jerusalem.

Nine other University faculty people have foreign research fellowships, four in the political science department, one in psychology, one in history, one in finance, one in physics, one in astronomy and one in history. Twenty history students will be working on their theses outside Chicago, six of them in Europe. Four members of the English faculty will carry on work in literary source material in England. Dean Sophonisba Breckenridge of the Department of Social Service Administration will represent America at the Conference of Social Workers in Paris, and Professor Jerome Kerwin will represent the Association of American Municipalities at Seville, Spain.

EDUCATION IN ACTION

The thousands of volumes in the circulating branches of the New York Public library are about to shed their time-honored dull covers and blossom out in bright new bindings. After a year's experimenting in two branch libraries with gay bindings, library officials have determined that the public prefers its reading matter in bright covers and have selected some thirty new cover materials to replace the present dull reds, browns, blues and greens which, with continued usage, tend to become drab. The public library in New York city is the first in the country to experiment with the adopt bright colors for book covers. The purpose is merely to increase the exterior attractiveness of books so as to give the public added pleasure in its reading. The experiments proved that sample books in the new types of binding were much more in demand than the same books in the old bindings. The diversity of coloring also adds to the attractiveness of book shelves in the branch libraries.—*N. E. Journal of Education*.

Under the single salary schedule recently adopted for schools of Seattle, Wash., the

maximum for teachers possessing the bachelor's degree was increased from \$2,400 to \$2,700. The annual increment was raised from \$60 to \$100, and the number of increments was reduced from 11 to 8.

THE READING TABLE

NEWBERY MEDAL AWARDED

The John Newbery Medal given annually for the most distinguished children's book of the past year has recently been awarded to Dhan Gopal Mukerji for his book *Gay-Neck*. The presentation was made by Annabel Porter, chairman of the Children's Librarians Section of the American Library Association, at the fiftieth annual conference of the Association held in West Baden, Indiana.

John Newbery, in whose honor the medal is named, was an eighteenth century publisher and bookseller and one of the first publishers to devote attention to children's books. The medal is the gift of Frederic G. Melcher of New York City. Only citizens or residents of the United States are eligible to receive it.

Like all the author's other books *Gay-Neck* is permeated with the spirit of India, the land of Mr. Mukerji's birth. It is the story of a pigeon born in India and of his adventures there and in the World War. E. P. Dutton and Company publish the book.

Among those who have won the medal in former years are Hendrik Van Loon for *Story of Mankind*, Hugh Lofting for *The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle*, Charles Finger for *Tales from Silver Lands* and Will James for *Smoky*.

IMPORTANT JULY MAGAZINE ARTICLES

The ten outstanding magazine articles selected by the Franklin Square Council of Librarians from the July issues of magazines published in America are as follows: