

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

THE COST OF SCHOOL BOOKS

Cost of textbooks furnished free to pupils by city schools in the United States average \$1.58 per pupil, according to information made available on September 1, at the Division of Statistics, Federal Office of Education. The total cost exceeds \$4,000,000 annually. Data have been compiled by the Office of Education from 227 cities within 14 states and the District of Columbia where text-books are distributed to pupils free.

According to information supplied to the *U. S. Daily*, the cities range from 10,000 population to over 100,000, and are divided into three groups, the first embracing all over 100,000, the second those between 30,000 and 100,000 and the third between 10,000 and 30,000. The schools include the elementary, the junior high and the high school. More than 2,500,000 pupils are enrolled in the schools of the 227 cities.

On the basis of pupil enrolment, the per capita cost of text-books computed for the three educational levels shows an increase for each population group and in each level of a group. The group of largest cities shows the smallest costs. In the elementary schools for the first group of cities, the text-

book cost per pupil is given as \$1.17, which is based on an elementary enrolment of 38,861 pupils in the average city group.

In the second population group, the elementary enrolment for the average city is 6,479 pupils, while the *per capita* cost for the elementary school text-books for the second group is \$1.21. In the third group the elementary enrolment of the average city is 2,732 pupils, and the cost is \$1.34.

The larger the enrolment unit, the smaller is the *per capita* cost for text-books. A like condition holds true for the junior high school and for the high school, except as between the high school units of the second and third groups where the costs are the same.

Per capita costs for junior high schools follow: For the first group of cities \$1.92, for the second, \$2.03, and for the third, \$2.06. For high schools, the cost for the first group is \$2.63, and \$2.87 for the second and third groups, respectively.

A total of 1,732,085 elementary pupils is shown in the 227 cities studied, 356,381 junior high school pupils and 451,634 high school pupils. A total of 2,540,100 pupils is represented in all levels of education of the cities furnishing text-books free.

—*School and Society.*

RIDING OUT THE STORM

Looking forward to the financial problems of the year that lies ahead, the Committee on Educational Finance of the American Council on Education reports as follows:

"Tax-supported institutions, with the drying up of revenue from taxation, will doubtless resort more generally than is now the case to special fees for special services. If this practice becomes at all prevalent, it will aid not only the state institution but indirectly the institution under private control, by enabling the latter to collect a larger share of the cost of education from the student. On the other hand, a reduction in

wages will make it increasingly difficult for the average man to pay the cost of his children's higher education and will increase the demand for scholarships, loans, and special aid. The failure of college and professional school graduates to find jobs will have a tendency to diminish the present general demand for higher education. The reduction in the number of teaching positions will leave many prospective teachers unemployed and have a tendency to reduce the scale of salaries, at least in the lower ranks. Some of the weaker colleges will be forced to become junior colleges, some will be forced to consolidate with other institutions, and a few will be forced to close. The prudent administrator who practices every economy, postpones capital expenditures, avoids the broad and easy road of increased indebtedness, will doubtless ride out the storm with safety and find his institution unified and strengthened by the enforced retrenchments, and ready for the new day of promise which will eventually follow the storm."

TEACHING OVERPAID?

Cost of public elementary and secondary education is 2.4 per cent of the total national income. Teaching has always been an underpaid profession. It has never been able to compete in economic attractiveness with other important occupations. The average salary of teachers in the United States is 71 per cent of the average salary of all gainfully occupied persons and 65 per cent of the average salary of all salaried employes. (Average salary of gainfully occupied persons: \$1920. Of salaried employes: \$2075. Of teachers, principals, and supervisors: \$1364.)—*Compiled by Research Division, National Education Association.*

"WE CALL THIS ECONOMY"

"By all means let us stop waste, but let us be sure it is real waste we are stopping. Almost three-fourths of the expenditures of

the federal government are absorbed by our military costs and obligations growing out of past wars and yet throughout the nation we are trying to balance budgets by cutting the heart out of the only things that make government a creative social agency in this complicated world. We slash scientific bureaus, we trim down our support of social service and regulatory bureaus, we squeeze education, we fire visiting nurses, we starve libraries, we drastically reduce hospital staffs, and we call this economy and actually think we are intelligent in calling it that. Real economy waits upon far sighted statesmanship that will effect deep going local, state, and national as well as international reforms. Indiscriminate budget slashing may set us back socially for a generation."—*Glenn Frank, president of the University of Wisconsin.*

"SEEN IN THE PUBLIC PRINTS"

"The state, we are told, must pay 38 cents per inmate in the seven penal institutions, whereas the College of William and Mary, V. P. I., and V. M. I., incurred an average net debt to the state of only 9.1 cents per average student.

"A comparison between costs of convicts and college students—to be sure, it is precisely the situation in which the question was asked: Which do you prefer—herring or billiards?"—Excerpt from an editorial, "The Higher Statistics," in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Nov. 19, 1932.

Halmann's "Will o' The Wisp," Zona Gale's "Neighbors," and Pertwee's "Evening Dress Indispensable" are being offered as a bill of one-act plays by the Players' Club of the University of Richmond.

Owen Davis's "The Nervous Wreck" is being produced by the V. M. I. Dramatic Club in Jackson Memorial Hall on December 10.

Professor Howard W. Odum, Kenan