

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

INCREASED DEMAND FOR LIBRARY SERVICE

Libraries were created by our democratic society in order that every citizen might have throughout life the means of self-education." This proposition was developed at its recent mid-winter conference by the Council of the American Library Association. The statement continued:

"More people used libraries, more books were borrowed from libraries, and more books were used in library reading rooms in 1932 than ever before. Sample reports from 33 cities representing only one-tenth of the total population of the United States show that the number of books borrowed from their libraries in 1932 was 81,663,423, an increase of 37 per cent since 1929.

"Economic and social insecurity has led men and women to attempt to understand through reading the fundamental and current problems which confront them as citizens. Books on the business of earning a living are in great demand. So also are the books of many kinds which contribute to the maintenance of a spirit of hope.

"Library expenditures are a small part of the public budget. With few exceptions li-

braries have been operated without extravagance, with an intelligent regard to the public interest and the tax-payer's burden. It is nevertheless the duty of library administrators to re-evaluate the library's services in terms of present conditions, to distinguish sharply between essentials and non-essentials, and to seek new ways of carrying on the most necessary activities at the lowest possible cost.

"Libraries are more needed today than ever before. There is much to learn which was not taught when the present-day adult was at school. Never was the average adult driven to the printed page and to the library so repeatedly in order to become reasonably well informed about matters which are of vital concern to him. In the interest of an intelligent, understanding citizenship the library's essential services must be maintained."

ESSENTIAL IDEALS IN UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES

Teachers of Virginia will find great interest in the list of ideals and attitudes which were used as a measuring instrument in the recent survey of the schools of Chicago. Members of the survey staff regarded them as central considerations in teaching in the upper elementary grades. They are offered as embodying the point of view of the best modern educational philosophies:

1. The majority has a right to make decisions in a democracy.
2. The minority has the right of free speech in attempting to convert the majority.
3. Change is both an inevitable and a desirable accompaniment of growth.
4. A good citizen has learned to co-operate in groups of his fellows, each individual contributing to the welfare of the group and benefiting as the group benefits.
5. The good citizen puts his trust in

thinking as the intelligent method, both of learning and of solving his own or the state's problems.

6. Self-appraisal is an essential attribute of a good citizen.
7. Self-direction is an essential attribute of a good citizen.
8. Self-control is an essential attribute of a good citizen.

AUDUBON BIRD PICTURES AND LEAFLETS FOR BIRD-STUDY

The National Association of Audubon Societies is again furnishing colored bird-pictures and leaflets to school teachers and pupils of the United States and Canada.

The plan is very simple. The teacher may explain to the pupils that they are going to form a Junior Audubon Club and have a few lessons, from time to time, about some of the more common North American birds. The teacher will also explain that each child wishing to be enrolled must bring a fee of ten cents in return for which he will receive a set of six beautifully colored bird-pictures made from original paintings by America's leading bird-artists. Accompanying each of these pictures, there also will be a leaflet with four pages of text, written by well-known authorities on bird-life. This will tell in an entertaining way about the habits of the birds, their courtship, their songs, their nests, their food, their winter and summer homes, their travels, their enemies, and many other facts of interest. There is furnished, too, with each leaflet an outline drawing of the bird which the pupil may fill in by copying from the colored plate. Every child in addition receives a beautiful Audubon Button of some favorite bird in color which is a badge of membership in the Club. A new set of pictures and leaflets is furnished every year to all who wish to repeat this plan of bird-study.

The teacher may explain this bird-study plan to the pupils, collect their ten-cent fees, and send them in; and the material will be

forwarded immediately. If preferred, however, a circular of explanation, "An Announcement to Teachers," together with sample leaflet will be sent to any teacher making request of T. Gilbert Pearson, President, National Association of Audubon Societies, 1775 Broadway, New York City.

TAXES

The present tax stringency is directing painful attention toward the bases of taxation for school purposes. In the simple social life of the American people of a century ago when the average voter owned real property, the local real-estate tax was probably as good a tax as any to use to support the public schools. In 1932 the ownership of real estate is concentrated in a comparatively small percentage of the population, and a large percentage of the voters pay no real estate taxes except indirectly through rents. In times of depression rents are lowered to a point where the owner is not able to secure both taxes and the customary interest on capital from the renter.

As a result of this condition, the owners of real estate have organized into a fighting organization, national in scope and reaching into thousands of localities, to effect the lowering of taxes for all purposes including the schools. Their propaganda is vigorous and effective. They have a case.

Real estate has ceased to be the major form of wealth in modern life. During the last century wealth has also taken the form of the so-called intangibles, stocks, bonds, royalties, and the like, which in the main are not carrying their share of the burden of taxation as they should in justice be doing.

The local taxing unit for school purposes cannot get at the wealth within its boundaries. The millionaire who owns intangibles may be taxed only on the home he owns for support of the local schools. These considerations are causing the public to ex-

amine nervously the bases of taxation to find better methods of contacting the wealth of the nation. Even in these hard times there is plenty of wealth to support public enterprises. The sums of money spent for tobacco and cosmetics are far in excess of the amounts spent upon the education of children. The trouble is that our taxing methods do not reach all the sources of wealth—they make real estate bear too great a burden.

One method that is being tried to relieve real estate is that of decreasing the proportion of school costs borne by local real estate and increasing state support. In Ohio, for instance, a governor's commission proposes to reduce local property taxes by 20 per cent and make up the sums necessary for the support of schools from state taxes. This means the tapping of new sources of state revenue of which there are a dozen or more—by income taxes if it is desired to make those with large incomes bear the burden, or by sales taxes if it is believed that everyone should directly contribute to the support of the schools.

The principle of equalization of opportunity has long been accepted by many states, but the plan has been applied chiefly in very poor districts. At the present time there is a strong trend in the direction of equalization in all districts by making the state rather than the local district the collector of taxes. This movement is equitable to all concerned and should be supported by school men, not because the schools will get more money but because taxes will be more fairly distributed.—W. W. CHAR-TERS, in the *Educational Research Bulletin*.

RADIO SPEAKERS ON SCHOOLS

A series of radio programs under the personal direction of Miss Florence Hale, first vice-president of the N. E. A., has been undertaken for the year 1933 under the general title, "Our American Schools."

These programs are broadcast over a na-

tion-wide network of the National Broadcasting Company each Sunday evening from 6:30 to 7:00 p. m., Eastern Standard Time. The February programs are as follows:

February 5—"A New Method of Financing Schools," William John Cooper, United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D. C. "Legislation for Teacher Welfare," Augustus O. Thomas, Secretary-General, World Federation of Education Associations, Washington, D. C.

February 12—"Education as a National Asset and Responsibility," Robert M. Hutchins, President, University of Chicago.

February 19—"Better Education for Better Parents," Mrs. B. F. Langworthy, Vice-President, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Winnetka, Ill. "The Primary Purpose of Free Public Education," William J. Bogan, Supt. of Schools, Chicago, Ill.

February 26—"Perspective," Carroll R. Reed, Superintendent of Schools, Minneapolis, Minn. "The Superintendent Studies His Problem," Milton C. Potter, Superintendent of Schools, Milwaukee, Wis.

March 5—"Why Teach Current Events in Our Schools," Anne Hard, Lecturer and Author. "Questions You Have Asked About Teacher Legislation," Richard R. Foster, Research Division of the National Education Association.

March 12—"Is Education Becoming a Step-Child?" Hon. Aaron Sapiro, New York City.

Other programs will follow each Sunday evening, 6:30-7:00 p. m., EST.

AMERICAN SPEECH NOW A QUARTERLY

American Speech has just been taken over by the Columbia University Press; it will be published quarterly under the editorship of William Cabell Greet and Mrs. Jane Dorsey Zimmerman. Formerly published first monthly and later bi-monthly by War-

wick and York under the editorship of Louise Pound and Kemp Malone, the magazine will continue to enjoy Professor Pound's support through a Miscellany Department.

American Speech concerns itself with problems of linguistic usage, including pronunciation, vocabulary, local dialects, place names, slang, phonetics, etc.

A NARROW CURRICULUM A SOCIAL MENACE

"There are no more dangerous elements in our society than those well-meaning though often selfish persons who would restrict the curriculum of the schools to the three R's, who cry out against the "fads and frills" and go so far as to include in the "fads and frills" such basic elements as education in art, in music, in health, and in social, political, and economic understanding. While the mastery of the tools of learning is essential to social living, it is nevertheless true that the three R's by no means comprise all the fundamentals of education. The development of innate abilities and interests, of high standards of taste and appreciation, of social understanding, of wholesome social attitudes and habits, the cultivation of a mind at once appreciative and critical of the society of which it is a part—these are fundamentals of education. Those who would restrict the schools to a narrow curriculum are inviting nothing short of social disaster."—Report of the Survey of the Chicago Schools (III, 16).

Schoolhouses vary from large, splendid, stately, and useful buildings housing 10,000 pupils to sorry, rotting shacks. Although the one-room school for seven or eight classes is giving way in favor of consolidated schools at the rate of 2,300 per year, there are still 148,000 one-room schools in the United States.

SEEN IN THE PUBLIC PRINTS

Replying to an article recently published in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, which cited income and appropriation figures for colleges and public schools to show that the state contributes roughly 24 per cent to the public schools as against 34 per cent of every dollar going to the higher institutions, Lewis Williams, Richmond attorney and member of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, said any conclusion that the colleges are getting the lion's share at the expense of the schools is incorrect on its face.

"The 34 per cent of its dollar which the higher institutional group receives from the state is the only public money it does receive, and the balance, 66 per cent of the incomes of the colleges and universities, is derived from endowment incomes or from admission fees.

"In other words, the schools are getting 100 per cent of their incomes from the state, while the colleges are getting just a little over a third from the state.

"The success of the public schools as a source of education for the mass of people depends directly on teachers turned out by the colleges and universities. The rapid development of the school system in Virginia demands an adequate supply of well-trained teachers. If you cut down on the colleges, either in appropriations or in the number, the blow is immediately transferred to the schools.

"The whole thing will run in a vicious circle. First, you lower the quality of the colleges; that, in turn, lowers the quality of teaching in the public schools, and that faces the colleges with the problem of under-trained boys and girls seeking entrance."

Elementary schools must be kept open as long, if not longer, than high schools in the Virginia public school system, according to a decision of the State Board of Education