

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly, except June, July, and August, by the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the postoffice at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.



CONRAD T. LOGAN, *Editor*
HENRY A. CONVERSE, *Business Manager*
CLYDE P. SHORTS, *Circulation Manager*

ADVISORY BOARD
KATHERINE M. ANTHONY
OTTO F. FREDERIKSON
BESSIE J. LANIER

Manuscripts offered for publication from those interested in our state educational problems should be addressed to the editor of THE VIRGINIA TEACHER, State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

THE most important question requiring an answer today at the hands of the American people is, what are we going to do about our schools. If at this critical state we continue to deny educational opportunities to literally millions of our children, our country will suffer when these millions, grown shortly to be uneducated men and women, are called upon to undertake the responsibilities of government. We should set as a goal not mere literacy, but that every person in this country should be educated to his fullest possible capacity.

Every child should be given every possible opportunity in the schools to unfold to his utmost intellectual and spiritual capacity regardless of where along the long road of education that means any particular child should stop.

Economy in other directions for the sake of maintaining and improving our educational facilities would be only common sense. Here is the last place where we should economize and the first where we should increase our outlay. Our chief interest as a government is education, and unwise economy that will cut at the roots of our system of free and universal education

may prove to be a fatal economy. To be great and noble and free, America must be educated.—HAROLD ICKES, *United States Secretary of the Interior, in an address before the N. E. A. Convention at Chicago.*

REDUCE THE COST OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT; IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF AVERAGE TEACHER'S TRAINING

PRESIDENT Franklin D. Roosevelt, addressing the Women's Conference on Current Problems in New York on October 13, spoke in part on the subject of schools. He said:

"It is true, unfortunately, that the economic depression has left its serious mark not only on the science and practice of education but also on the very lives of many hundreds of thousands of children who are destined to become our future citizens.

"Every one of us has sought to reduce the cost of government. Every one of us believes that the cost of government, especially of local government, can be reduced still further by good business methods and the elimination of the wrong kind of politics. Nevertheless, with good business management and the doing away with extravagance and frills and the unnecessary elements of our educational practices, we must at the same time have the definite objective in every state and in every school district, of restoring the useful functions of education at least to their pre-depression level.

"We have today, for example, a large surplus of so-called qualified teachers—men and women who, even if we had full prosperity, would and probably should be unable to find work in the field of education. Even today we are turning out too many teachers each year. That is just as much an economic waste as building steel rail plants far beyond the capacity of railroads to use steel rails. It goes without saying that we should have enough teachers and not a large excess supply.

"It goes also without saying that the quality of our teaching in almost every state of which I have knowledge can be definitely and distinctly raised. The main point is that we need to make infinitely better the average education which the average child now receives, and that, through this education we will instill into the coming generation a realization of the part that the coming generation must play in working out what you have called "this crisis in history." This crisis can be met, but not in a day or a year, and education is a vital factor in the meeting of it.

"I am told that tonight I speak not only to the conference on current problems but to colleges and universities throughout the country, many federations of women's clubs, almost 2,000 organizations interested in education, public and private schools and state educational associations, numbering among their members many of the educational leaders of America.

"I mention this because, in closing, I want to enlist your support in the fight we are all of us making on the depression. When this fight is won, your problems will be solved. You can help your government—Federal, State and local—and we in government want your help and we count on it in days to come."

DON'T TRUMP THAT ACE

A buying drive is next on the program of recovery, we are assured. The public is to be all pepped up to put in motion the increased purchasing power presently to emerge from the NRA.

Crusades are likely to be more given to enthusiasm than to discretion, however. There is an important angle of the buying drive which isn't mentioned. Humbly and with due respect, we offer the suggestion to Messrs. Roosevelt, Johnson, and others, that a pay-your-bills drive be placed on the agenda.

Buying for cash is splendid. But it appears that not more than 5 per cent of the

nation's business is done with cash. So the urge to buy means the using of credit. Nothing is easier to use too freely. The retailer carries the consumer; the jobber, wholesaler, or manufacturer carries the retailer; the banks carry the wholesaler; the RFC (or the depositor, dammit) carries the banks; the taxpayer carries the RFC. The upshot of all that is likely to be that Jack and Bill and Fred do the buying and get the goods, and presently Tom and Ned and Jim foot the bills. To cite something even more direct and specific, it would be wise to say "Buy—but pay up your doctor's bill first." We cite this because letting the doctor wait happens to be a national habit—not one that recommends itself to fair-minded persons.

We seem to have a vague memory that playing fast and loose with the credit structure had a bit to do with the big bust. Tightening up credits is better timber for a stable economic structure than the ballyhoo to buy.

Naturally, no merchandiser objects to free and generous buying. But we would take the ballyhoo out of it. To buy is right, as we maintained back in 1930. To stampede into buying without a word of caution is essentially anti-social. We need the pink tinge of health, not the hectic flush of fever.

The Kalends.

THE IRONY OF IT

To teachers there cannot but be something ironic in this NRA business, which definitely provides that grocery clerks and soda fountain Hebes shall be guaranteed a salary of \$14.00 weekly, for those who are advised of the school situation in rural areas know that hundreds of teachers of rural schools are teaching this year at salaries ranging from \$16.50 to \$30.00 per month on an eight months basis. Possibly this could not be avoided, since teachers are essentially state employees and receive their income from tax sources. Yet it is still a tragic situation.

—*The Kansas Teacher.*