

# 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.



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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### THE LOGIC OF CONSOLIDATION

Commenting on the proposal of Senator Norris to reduce the number of school superintendents in Virginia, Joseph H. Saunders, superintendent of schools in Newport News and a member of the State Board of Education, made the sort of pointed suggestion which it is always hard for the political-minded to understand. Said Mr. Saunders:

"I see no objection to the Norris Plan, provided it is made to apply to all other state and local officials. If a district is small enough to be supervised by one school superintendent, it is likewise small enough to have only one treasurer, one sheriff, one clerk, etc. Consolidation of counties into one school unit is neither wise nor economical unless the district is united into a single taxing unit; for the superintendent cannot in such a district carry out a unified program of education if he has to deal with different sets of school boards and supervisors. In some of the consolidations that have been made, I understand there is grave dissatisfaction on the part of the patrons affected.

"At the time our counties were formed transportation facilities were very crude and

inadequate. Then it took practically all day for one to make a journey from the outer edges of the county to the county seat, but today with our modern transportation facilities one can traverse the limits of a number of counties in an hour's time. As an illustration of what I mean, in the territory lying between the James and York rivers beginning with the upper limits of James City County and extending to Chesapeake Bay there are eight complete sets of local government, eight sets of officials whose salaries are paid from the taxes of the people, and yet one can go from any point in this territory to any other point in it in one hour's time. This entire territory could very conveniently be consolidated into two or three governments with a corresponding reduction in the cost of government and an increase in efficiency, or, if there were no reduction in cost, the same tax rate now levied would provide revenue for the extension of service now rendered.

"If these consolidated local governments were made single tax-units, a more efficient school system at less cost could be evolved; but if they are maintained as separate tax units nothing is gained and much is lost by including them in a single school division, especially if the superintendent is expected to supervise classroom instruction."

### PEOPLE WITHOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

The number of people in Virginia without local public library service is approximately 1,700,000, or 70 per cent of Virginia's total 1930 population of 2,421,851.

This lamentable condition is paralleled in only four other states: in Mississippi 71% of the people are without public library service; in West Virginia, 76%; in North Dakota, 79%; and in Arkansas, 91%.

On the other hand, local public library service is available to every resident of Massachusetts and Delaware. In New Hampshire less than one per cent are without this service; in California only two per

cent are without, in Connecticut three per cent, in Vermont six per cent.

Here is a challenge to public officials of all sorts—from governors and senators to county supervisors, justices of the peace, and even teachers! While Massachusetts meets its responsibility 100 per cent, Virginia's governmental units have been content to leave 70 per cent of its citizens without local library service.

It is the function of the public library to supply to the adult population of a state what the public schools provide for the young people. Government—which is above all a device for giving to all the people by co-operative means benefits which individually they could not enjoy—has a definite responsibility.

While politicians wrangle over congressional districts and their re-alignments, while petty office-holders seek to insure the continuance of Virginia's 100 counties in their ancient form, let citizens remember that 64 of these 100 counties are without a single library. When citizens make their demand insistent, then our leaders will endorse and support public libraries.

In the entire United States 38 per cent of the citizens are without library facilities; in Virginia 70 per cent are without library facilities. Do citizens of Virginia desire libraries?

#### TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Many schools have full-time librarians who are college graduates and who have had professional training in library science, according to the findings of the National Survey of Secondary Education in its study of library conditions in 390 schools. The report indicates, however, that most of the smaller schools employ teacher-librarians. In a number of these schools the teacher-librarians have had library training and at the same time their teaching loads are reduced so that they may devote a major portion of their time to library work.

Among the outstanding recommendations which conclude the report are the following: (1) a need for both extensive and intensive study of library standards which have been set up by states and other school accrediting bodies; (2) extensive study to determine the effect of newer methods of classroom teaching on the use of the secondary school library; (3) a series of studies to appraise the methods of encouraging recreational reading; (4) a study of the effect which regularly scheduled free reading has on the pupils' recreational reading habits; (5) continued study of the relation of the library to the study hall; (6) an investigation of co-operation between school and public libraries; (7) further inquiry into methods of selecting books for the high school library; (8) investigation of the entire problem of instruction in the use of books and of libraries; (9) careful investigation of training secondary school librarians, and (10) continued study of practices, devices and procedures successfully used in outstanding secondary school libraries.—*The Nation's Schools*.

Much disorder and disturbance in school is due to the fact that active and healthy pupils can find no interest nor desire for what is offered them. Inattention and trouble arise when a pupil is deprived of everything of his own world and antagonism is the only result of forced attention. All such school irregularity exists because we nag and urge these pupils to do something which by nature they can never master. In a few short years these same pupils will be citizens voting school appropriations and their attitudes will be shaped a good deal by their memories of their days in school.—HENRY L. FARR, in *School and Society*.

Minister, announcing a special attraction for the evening service: "Come early if you wish a back seat."