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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

BATTLE FOR BOOKS

Teachers are not agreed among themselves as to what books they want. Teachers and school librarians are not agreed as to the number of copies to be ordered nor the type of school libraries to be maintained—a large main library or a main library with supplementary classroom libraries.

Just now we are passing through a period in which the old type of recitation is being discarded. Teachers no longer make day-to-day assignments in their classes, but base the procedure on unit assignments of a week or more. This necessitates a higher stage in the development of materials of instruction. Teachers should all become better research workers and discover the materials they need for their students. They cannot depend on some one else to do it for them.

Furthermore, each teacher's needs (books, maps, pictures, other visual aids) should be put into written form so that teachers, pupils, librarians, and administrators may know what they are,

What is the instrument through which a teacher can show what he or she needs in

the way of teaching-materials? It is the teacher's personal mimeographed syllabus of the courses which he offers. The day has passed when a good teacher's work could be adequately assessed by a supervisor or casually bobbing into the room to see how a recitation is going. If the teacher is modern he does not conduct recitations of the traditional type.—L. S. GERLOUGH, in *Sierra Educational News*.

WHAT IS "GETTING AHEAD?"

I think the depression has had one healthy effect. It has led to a more general questioning of the primacy of material values. Events have disclosed the demoralizing effect of making success in business the chief aim of life. But I think that still greater economic reconstruction must take place before material attainment and the acquisitive motive will be reduced to their place. It is difficult to produce a cooperative type of character in an economic system that lays chief stress upon competition, and wherein the most successful competitor is the one who is the most richly rewarded and who becomes almost the social hero and model. So I should put general economic change as the first and most important factor in producing a better kind of education for formation of character.

As long as society does not guarantee security of useful work, security for old age, and security of a decent home and of opportunity for education of all children by other means than acquisition of money, that long the very affection of parents for their children, their desire that children may have a better opportunity than their parents had, will compel parents to put great emphasis upon getting ahead in material ways, and their example will be a dominant factor in educating children.—JOHN DEWEY.

ON PULLING TOGETHER

While we are talking about exerting ourselves to build a new social order wherein

there shall be less confusion, less of cross purposes, less of selfish individualism, less of propagandizing for vested interests, and more true education for a socially co-operative society, we fail to set our own house in order, and do as well even as far less pretensions groups in maintaining consistent support on the part of our members for the basic and fundamental program of public education.

Let us forget for a moment these relatively inconsequential differences in interests that now serve as a basis of division and internal bickering between ourselves, and meet together in a concerted effort to see that America shall maintain a system of public education adequate to her present and future needs. Such a program transcends the petty issues that presently produce disharmony and discord.

Once we catch the large vision, we shall easily master the mechanical difficulties of effective organizations, and once again the teachers of America shall stand united in an effort to do their part to see that government of, by, and for the people does not perish while we quibble among ourselves for preferment in our profession.—SUPT. JOHN A. SEXSON, *President California Teachers Association.*

THE READING TABLE

AT WAR WITH ACADEMIC TRADITIONS IN AMERICA.
By A. Lawrence Lowell. Cambridge, Mass.:
Harvard University Press. 1934. 358 pp. \$4.00.

In this world of changing conceptions in policies and practices in education, perhaps no more significant volume has appeared than this by the eminent President-Emeritus of Harvard whose liberal and far-seeing attitude in his own administration is so succinctly and deftly set forth in its pages. The application, it is true, is directed to higher education and should prove invaluable to all college administrators because of the progressive principles and philosophy which underlie the brilliant attainments of the

author. But it has significance, too, for the lesser lights of the profession inasmuch as its breadth of vision incorporates all education. The book includes President Lowell's Inaugural Address and other important addresses, as well as extracts from his annual reports; it therefore involves such problems as the choice of electives, a higher appreciation of scholarship, the art of examination, etc.—important aspects of every college president's work.

He cuts through the crust of narrowness, tradition, and prejudice into the warm heart of the system—the individual to be educated—and directs his recommendations towards helping that one to live happily and adequately to the “fullest possible use of his natural faculties,” within the complexities of the world into which he has been brought. “But it must not be forgotten that all liberty and every privilege imply responsibilities.”

“The great defect in American education,” he says, “has been the lack of thoroughness,” and ascribes that lack to the briefness of time spent in the educative process, the insertion of less serious subjects in the place of more serious ones, and the lack of high standards in scholarship. He sees changes in trends in higher education more in the nature of emphases and attitudes on matters which are as old as education itself—these trends being “a less vocational objective, a greater correlation of knowledge, a recognition of the principle of self-education, and the stimulation of more vivid intellectual interests.”

Throughout this collection one sees education in its broadest scope, envisioning the highest good to mankind without the hampering bonds of tradition, and carrying constantly the keynote of finer scholarship.

B. J. L.

DEMOCRACY FACES THE FUTURE. By Samuel Everett. New York: Columbia University Press. 1935. 269 pp. \$2.50.

A member of the staff of Lincoln School,