

## THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### THE IMPORTANT STAUFFER REPORT

Special importance attaches to the report of Dr. William H. Stauffer, state tax economist, recently prepared at Governor Peery's request and now in process of printing for transmission to the Virginia General Assembly which is to meet on January 8.

The Stauffer Report, to judge by the advance newspaper summary, has made recommendations only after a comparative study of costs of operation and instruction in all of Virginia's ten state-supported colleges. And shot through all the recommendations there seems to be a consideration of the general good of the state; the recommendations are designed to insure the educational welfare of the state as a whole, not to provide private protection to entrenched groups.

The report proposes that state support of state colleges should "be based upon the number of Virginia students to be instructed in the several institutions." It points out that scholarships, fewer and more valuable, should be awarded only to superior students, undergraduate and Virginian.

It urges that differences in salaries and teaching loads in the several state institutions shall be "rationalized"—in other words, that variations should be based on reason, and not on tradition, sentiment, or prejudice.

Dr. Stauffer's principal recommendations, as reported in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* of December 15 last, were as follows:

(1) State appropriations to the various state-supported institutions of higher learning should be made in the future with consideration to the number of Virginia students in attendance rather than on the basis of total enrollment.

(2) The whole system of state scholarship aid should be drastically revised in such a way that (a) aid shall be limited to undergraduate Virginia students; (b) aid shall not be granted to more than 20 per cent of the Virginia students in each institution; (c) that scholarships shall be worth a great deal more than at present, amounting to one-half the instruction charges; (d) that these scholarships shall be awarded only on the basis of highly selective competitive examinations conducted by the State Board of Education, and (e) that they shall be renewable from year to year if the student's record is such as to justify such renewal.

(3) Control of state student loan funds should be taken entirely out of the hands of the state-supported colleges and universities and placed directly under the supervision of the state comptroller.

(4) This fund should provide for approximately 1,500 loan fund scholarships of an annual value not exceeding \$200 each, to be limited to Virginia students graduated from public, private and parochial high schools whose financial circumstances would not otherwise permit attendance at college, and to be awarded on the basis of competitive examinations set by the State Board of Education. "These loans should be properly guaranteed and should be paid back in installments beginning not later than the second year after graduation. Payment in

full should not extend beyond the sixth year following graduation."

(5) Further study should be made of variations in the teaching loads, salary scales and consequent unit costs of instruction in the various institutions with a view to rationalization.

(6) The overlapping and duplication of functions among the several institutions demands a reallocation of the functions respectively to be performed by each. However, the abolition of no institution is recommended.

(7) The University of Virginia school of education should be discontinued unless some reorganization is effected to bring down the costs of instruction to a reasonable level. This should be done either through enrollments sufficient to justify the present expenditure or through direct reductions in the instructional staff. In any event, "the charge to students in this department should immediately be raised to a level more nearly comparable with the costs of the service."

(8) For simplicity in accounting records, all charges imposed for the purpose of providing instruction should be combined into a single "tuition fee." Where special charges exist, unrelated to instruction, they should be kept separate.

(9) The practice of remitting college fees to students for services rendered should be discontinued, and payment made on a strictly commercial basis.

(10) Charges to out-of-state students should be materially increased in order that they may cover in all cases the costs of instruction to this group.

(11) Instruction charges to Virginia students, which range from nothing at all in some cases to 152 per cent of the cost in others, should be more nearly equalized.

(12) More complete records regarding all phases of the fiscal operations of the institutions of higher learning should be prepared for the information of the Governor and the General Assembly.

## THE READING TABLE

### FOOTPRINTS, RUNNING AWAY

LUCY GAYHEART. By Willa Cather. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. 231 pp. \$2.00.

The more a writer has to say, the less space he may take to say it. Thomas Wolfe, trying to compete, apparently, with Theodore Dreiser in elephantinity, takes 912 pages to record what the average person, busy with his own life, would prefer in 200. Robert Nathan's *Road of Ages*, a miniature epic in theme and significance, and reading almost like poetry, runs 232 pages; Thornton Wilder, writing *Heaven's My Destination*, one of the really important as well as most intriguing books of last year, uses 304 pages of large print; Willa Cather in flexible and gentle prose, employs 231 to tell the story of *Lucy Gayheart*.

If the book is romantic and dramatic, as some critics, more concerned, perhaps, for their own cleverness than for an honest review, assert, its romance and drama are afire with conviction. And life may be both romantic and dramatic; one knows it through Miss Cather if he does not in his own experience.

Not that Miss Cather strives for an effect. She is reporting, not producing, one. Yet every word counts. While her art is artless in its quiet convention, she never fails to be vivid and compelling. Her phrasing is simple and flawless, gleaming with its own inner light. Listen to this:

... When she looked off at that soft promise of spring, spring already happening in the colours of the sky before it had come on earth, such a longing awoke in her that it seemed as if it would break her heart. That happiness she had so lately found, where was it? Everything threatened it, the way of the world was against it. It had escaped her. She had lost it as one can lose a ravishing melody, remembering the mood of it, the kind of joy it gave, but unable to recall precisely the air itself. And she couldn't breathe in this other kind of life. It stifled her, woke in her a frantic fear—the fear of falling back into it forever. If only one could lose one's life and one's body and be nothing but one's desire; if the rest could melt away, and that could float with the gulls, out yonder where the blue and green were changing!