

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 SKELETON IN VIRGINIA'S CLOSET

More than 9,000 of Virginia's 17,036 public school teachers have salaries of less than \$720 a year, and more than 13,000 of them get less than \$1,000 a year, the State Department of Education has informed the General Assembly, according to the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*.

The report placed the groups in the various salary brackets as follows: Under \$720 yearly, 6,159 white teachers, 3,092 Negro teachers; \$720 to \$1,000 yearly, 3,190 whites and 704 Negroes; \$1,000 to \$1,500 yearly, 2,277 whites and 205 Negroes; \$1,500 to \$2,000 yearly, 1,009 whites and eight Negroes; \$2,000 to \$2,500 yearly, 289 whites and three Negroes; \$2,500 to \$3,000 yearly, 56 whites, no Negroes; \$3,000 to \$3,500 yearly, 24 whites; \$3,500 to \$4,000 yearly, seven whites, and between \$4,000 and \$5,000 yearly, three whites.

The figures apply to teachers, principals, and supervisors.

Practically all of those in the higher income brackets were listed as being in the cities. Richmond had altogether 40 receiv-

ing \$2,500 a year or more, Portsmouth had eight, Newport News five, Petersburg three, Norfolk two, Lynchburg two, Danville two, and Alexandria, Charlottesville, Hampton, Hopewell, Roanoke, South Norfolk and Suffolk, one each.

PROGRESS IN STANDING OF VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES

On the basis of reports received from 613 high school libraries of Virginia for 1934-35, the increasing importance of the school library is apparent. An enormously increased demand for materials of instruction has been created by the use of the new state course of study, it is pointed out by C. W. Dickinson, Jr., director of libraries and textbooks.

"In 476 schools the library was open all day; and 466 schools had separate library rooms. The average number of volumes in each school library was 1372. The average expenditure per school was \$84.72 for books and \$13.40 for supplies. Books were classified, cataloged, and accessioned in 447 school libraries. Only three counties and two cities failed to buy any library books through this office during the year.

"There was an average of three tables and eighteen chairs in each school library. Five hundred and seventy-four libraries had adequate shelving; 201 had pamphlet files; 347 had magazine racks; 460 had loan desks; 363 had catalog cases; and 465 had bulletin boards.

"An average of 14.5 students per school received at least twelve lessons in the use of the library during the year. Four hundred and ninety schools kept records of pupils' reading. The average number of magazine subscriptions per school was 10.2; and newspapers, 1.5. In 218 schools the library was used during vacations, and in 131 it was open to members of the community throughout the year.

"Thirty-five librarians who have com-

pleted a full year of training in library science served last year in the high schools of the state. The number of teacher-librarians who have secured six or more session hours credit in library science from different summer schools is increasing, though it is impossible to give exact figures. These teacher-librarians spent an average of two periods per day in the library. An average of 5.8 students assisted the librarian in each school, and there were seventy-seven library clubs."

FAMOUS RADIO ANNOUNCER IN PRAISE OF POETRY

There are those who speak of poetry with candid and unfeigned affection. There are those others who either blush or smirk at the mention of poetry. Such persons are either self-deceived or misled. For whatever else poetry may be, it is also a distillation of all that man has dreamed and hoped for. It is man's heart crying out in trouble or delight. It is man's world oscillating between rapture and tears. It is a courier running between light and darkness and bringing back to us reports of these separate horizons.

The indifference to and the active dislike of poetry is traceable to the dry and unprofitable manner in which it is taught in schools. Many of us still bear in our memories the wounds we suffered in our pathetic struggle against the onslaught of iambic pentameters. Many of us falling by the wayside thought we were through with poetry. But as we matured and grew richer with experience, we found that poetry was more than the measure of a certain number of beats to a line, and more than the Greek and Latin names used to describe those lines!

It has always been my belief that the spoken poem, when presented sincerely and understandingly, could break down the old antagonisms, so that the listener might be reconditioned and re-educated to a fuller

appreciation of poetry. To this end I originated my series of Poet's Gold readings. Five years of such programs have convinced me that people have a natural appetite for poetry; and once having learned to listen, they will demand it out of a deep necessity.

The medium of radio is such that it requires of each poem the capacity to create an instantaneous emotional shock. There is no going back once the word is spoken. The highly involved and complex poem is too many-sided to be grasped in its entirety. Simpler poems are more successful on the air. The over-subtle poem is for the reading-room or library. But the poem that is read aloud must touch off an immediate response or it will fail of its purpose.

In thinking of my radio audience I know that to them poetry does not move on iambic feet, but marches rather to the blood's rhythm and the heart's high-stepping. And so to the many thousands who have listened to Poet's Gold, and whose appreciation has made this program possible, I offer my deep gratitude.

DAVID ROSS

HALF-BILLION FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS

PWA grants from the new works-relief appropriation, together with contributions of local communities, according to Public Works Administrator Harold L. Ickes, will result in a 1936 educational building program of \$303,337,064 which is expected to represent a major portion of all such work undertaken in 1936.

The Administrator pointed out that since PWA began making loans and grants in the summer of 1933 allotments have been made to more than 3,000 cities, towns, school districts, and other public bodies for school, college, and library construction estimated at nearly a half billion dollars. A considerable proportion of this program could not have been undertaken without the help of PWA.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Arrange the breakfast and lunch hours so that there is no rushing at home or to school.

Encourage punctuality and regular attendance, not permitting trifles to interfere.

See that the children are dressed simply, neatly, modestly, and suitably in accordance with the weather.

Insist upon the children under fourteen having at least ten hours' sleep.

Find out how much time should be devoted to home work, and see that it is done.

Provide a quiet place for home study, with good light and ventilation. Prevent interruptions as far as possible.

Show an interest in the children's school work, athletics, and other activities.

Do not criticize the teachers or school at all within the children's hearing. Always hear both sides of every question and ask the teacher about it.

Instil in the children habits of obedience and respect for authority.

Picture the school as a happy, desirable place, rather than as one children should dread.

Keep in mind that the school offers unlimited opportunities to those who take advantage of them, parents as well as pupils.

Plan to meet other parents in the school. It will help you understand your children better. Mothers should arouse the interest of fathers in the school activities and get their co-operation. If there is a parent-teacher association in your children's school, join it. If there is none, why not form one? Intelligent co-operation brings splendid results to all.—*United Parents Associations of Greater New York Schools.*

ADVICE TO THE CANNY

The pessimists tell us there is no escape from another terrible war, and that there is little hope of perpetuating present-day civ-

ilization; in a word, we are facing another long stretch of Dark Ages. But I recall how Jeremiah, the gloomiest prophet, while he foretold ruin for Israel, held on to a nice piece of real estate—thinking, no doubt, that things might not be so bad after all.—
HELEN KELLER.

A BULWARK: AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The schools of America have justified their existence and are continuing to do so by their contributions to the stability of our government. Ours is the oldest constitution under which any government now exists. Our first president 150 years ago said that it was essential that we should maintain institutions for the dissemination of knowledge. Upon the basis of this dissemination the government has been able to continue down through nigh onto a century and a half. Contrast what has occurred in other lands. Before the dawn of the French Revolution most Frenchmen were ignorant, unenlightened peasants. A revolution was necessary in the life of their nation and how did it come? By storm and bloodshed. Russians before 1917 were oppressed, ignorant, unenlightened peasants. A revolution in their life was necessary and how did it come? By a whirlwind with death and the slaughter of literally millions on all sides. In our own country some of the brightest, most scholarly minds of the land say that we are now in the midst of a revolution. And how is it coming? We have had no white terror; we have had no red terror. The troops have not been called out. Colonial soldiers of another race have not been sent against our people. We maintain that the public school system has contributed most powerfully toward the stability of our government which has continued and does continue through the most trying vicissitudes of national and individual life.

—SUPT. W. E. SHEFFER