

## THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### TRAINING "CAREER MEN"

The universities are now seriously turning their attention to the training of public servants and are justified in doing so both because the need has now become a permanent one and because opportunities for honorable and useful careers are opening in increasing numbers. This is particularly true of governmental careers at present, and in all probability will be true of public careers in the future, though politics is still a very hazardous game in America. There is no doubt that the universities will develop brainy, keen, and efficient public servants. They can choose the most brilliant youths of each generation and give them that structure and polish which only the artistic scholar can produce with choice material.

It is to be hoped, however, that in developing their minds the universities will develop their sensitivity to the currents of feeling in the hearts of the people. With some people political sensitivity is a gift. The Irish are supposed to have it as a racial characteristic. But with most people it is an achievement born of the desire to understand and the will to mix enthusiastically in politics. The curriculum for public officers

should include a substantial practicum in mixing with voters to sense their feelings, in reading widely in newspapers and magazines to catch the drift of editorial opinion, in developing hunches and intuitions, and in mixing in politics to learn how so to modify their programs as to save the essentials if they are right and translate them into political action. This is a difficult course to offer in a university, but it is essential. To be an ace, the brain-truster must know his people.—*Educational Research Bulletin*.

## THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

Although I hate all sweeping historical generalizations, I will venture to say that the business of education is more important at this moment than it ever has been in the past. Although I loathe all prophecy, I will say that the world seems to be rushing toward the destruction of liberty of conscience, of worship, of speech, and of thought. The world seems to be rushing, in other words, toward the abolition of those processes which, since the time of the Greeks, have accounted for the advance of civilization. This tendency, together with the concomitant tendency to hatred and war, will not be without its effects on our own country. Already we see signs of the growth of bigotry and repression. We see ignorance and prejudice exploited by the most shameless propaganda. We see battle-lines drawn that may determine the fate of our form of government, and of your generation.

So I say that the business of education is more important now than it ever has been before. Education is intellectual and spiritual preparation. Never have the times called as they do today for disciplined reason, for clear and independent thought. No political organization is any better than the citizens that compose it. No governmental system can make stupid citizens intelligent. And democracy, to which we adhere, cannot survive without intelligent

citizens.—*President Robert M. Hutchins, University of Chicago, in his welcoming address to freshmen.*

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### GUARDING THE COLLEGE DEGREE

Frank H. Bowles, acting director of admissions, in his annual report to the president of Columbia University, warns that American colleges must restore their system of "selective admission" to insure the worth of the degree, according to the *New York Times*.

Mr. Bowles attributed the collapse of the selective admission system to "shaky finances" in many schools during the depression, and to the crushing burden of debts inherited by many schools from the previous period of prosperity.

Depression expedients for bolstering enrolment have become "more or less permanent parts of the educational picture," writes Mr. Bowles, and now it is difficult to relinquish depression recruiting policies. The result, he says, will be that the "value of the degrees now being awarded by many institutions generally considered to be doing sound academic work will be seriously affected."—*The Phi Delta Kappan*.

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### WHAT'S REALLY THE MATTER WITH ENGLISH!

For the college students who murder the King's English, a language professor at Hamilton, N. Y., has at least four explanations. Dr. L. L. Rockwell, director of the school of languages and literature at Colgate University, said "the trouble with English is not with the teachers; it's with English itself."

"English," he said, "has at least four things the matter with it." He enumerated them:

"English is really used every day. No one expects students of algebra to go out and do their problems on the sidewalks, but English students are barely out of the class-

room before they show what they haven't learned.

"English as a language is one of the most treacherous of our social tools. Words change their meaning almost every time they're used.

"Students have to waste endless time learning the worst system of spelling in the western world, so they haven't much time left for really important things.

"Too many people know too much about English and what they know is wrong."

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### THE CURRICULUM A RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY DEMANDS

In every period of our national life the curriculum of the common school has been planned to teach the children those things which the home, the church, and the community through its various activities could not teach as well. The curriculum of any period therefore is a reflection of the needs of the children during that period, an index of the service which the community demands and the school renders. In the pioneer life of the Puritan the school played little part. The chief motive for education was a religious one and the home, the church, and the community carried the responsibility, leaving to the school a meager curriculum of the three R's together with lessons from the Bible and Prayer Book. A curriculum of the three R's therefore was ample for the school of the pioneer age.

*Charles L. Spain*

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The real test of civilization is the proper use of leisure, just as the use of one's diversion is a true key to the character of a man.—*Professor William Lyon Phelps*.

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Modern civilization seems to be incapable of producing people endowed with imagination, intelligence, and courage. In practically every country there is a decrease in the intellectual and moral calibre of those who carry the responsibility of public affairs.—*Alexis Carrel*.