MEETING THE CRUCIAL ISSUE IN EDUCATION

"To create the fine fabric of civilized, democratic society requires the sacrifice, struggle, and patience of generations of human beings. To destroy it takes but a short period of ruthless reaction. Machine guns, strategically placed, can silence the most courageous and able minds. Fires can make short order of books which represent the patient study of millions of human beings through generations of searching for truth. Concentration camps can isolate critical intelligence and by harsh example force the expression of uniform opinions and views. Penalties and threats can throttle the use of the means of communication to broadcast facts or opinions on which human welfare may depend.

"Once the great principles of majority rule and minority rights have been trampled underfoot, peaceful and orderly and self-enriching social progress is impossible. Once the power of the few to control and exploit the many is unchecked and unlimited, we can expect a repetition of the unbridled arrogance of tyranny. The history of despotism is a reliable prophet of the old social catastrophe which may be expected. Contemporaneous events warn us of the conditions of war and poverty which accompany the methods of dictatorship.

"Upon the educators in the remaining democracies falls the historic responsibility of giving new vitality and power to popular institutions through the educative process. This is the crucial issue before us."

—Dr. John W. Studebaker, U. S. Commissioner of Education.

MINIMUM LIBRARY EQUIPMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

What books should the small high school with a very limited appropriation provide for its English students? This question has been answered for the first time in a recent report of the National Council of Teachers of English. The compilation was made by a committee headed by Professor George F. Reynolds of the University of Colorado.

Two lists are given—one for the smallest high school and another of additional books which the report states "the smallest high school should have, and all high schools of more than 100 students must have to make satisfactory provision for their students." There is no A list of recommended books, since many such lists are already obtainable, including those prepared by the Recreational Reading Committee of the National Council, "Home Reading" for senior high school and "Leisure Reading" for junior high school.

The C list, setting forth the minimum library equipment which the smallest high school must have for its English students to do satisfactory work, includes 112 books, reference books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, and histories being taken for granted. The recommended books may be bought at retail prices for $137, exclusive of works of fiction, many of which are to be had in several editions at varying prices. The B list calls for 95 other books and suggests, besides, that there should be about
half as many contemporary novels as there are students. A group of sectional books, to be selected from a list prepared by the state association of teachers of English, is advised.

Superintendents, teachers, and librarians who wish a copy of the report may obtain it upon request by sending five cents in stamps to the National Council of Teachers of English, 211 West 68th Street, Chicago, Illinois.

FROM HENRY THOREAU'S JOURNAL
March 31, 1853 (AET. 35) Whatever your sex or position, life is a battle in which you are to show your pluck, and woe be to the coward. Whether passed on a bed of sickness or a tented field, it is ever the same fair play and admits no foolish distinction. Despair and postponement are cowardice and defeat. Men were born to succeed, not to fail.

THE TEACHER'S LETTER BOX
Editor's Note: Because so many letters asking for help on practical problems of the elementary school come to the desk of the Director of the Harrisonburg Training School, we have asked Miss Katherine M. Anthony to let The Virginia Teacher publish each month a few of these requests with her replies.

While not attempting to compete with Emily Post or Kathleen Norris or Beatrice Fairfax, she has agreed to summarize a few requests each month and to give her answers. Perhaps the citation of sources and references along with other advice on how to do will even add a Frederic J. Haskin touch.

Dear Letter Box:
I am a new county supervisor and like it just fine. But there aren’t enough hours in the day to get the work done. That is why I’m in a real jam just now. A group of upper grade teachers wants a list of new textbooks and workbooks in social studies. Do you have such a list on hand? And will you add just a word of comment about each book?

Old Student.

Dear Old Student:
First of all, your teachers should know the Rugg Social Science Series, Ginn and Company. There are to be eight of these books, two per year for each of the last four years of the elementary school. The six books now ready are: The First Book of the Earth, Nature Peoples, Communities of Men, Peoples and Countries, The Building of America, and Man at Work: His Industries. The two books now in preparation are: Man at Work: His Arts and Crafts and The Story of Civilization.

Any teacher who is working for an understanding of the “major functions of social life” will find these books indispensable for her children. And, incidentally, reading them herself should help the teacher who has not yet caught the vision.

Another noteworthy new series is Social Studies by Bruner-Smith, Charles E. Merrill Company. It has as its purpose “to provide a new type of history on the level of the pupil in the intermediate grades,” and offers “the vital story of how man has become what he is from what he was.” Book One contains four units, The Story of Agriculture, The Story of Fire, The Story of the Sea and The Story of Writing. Book Two contains three units, The Growth of the City, Feeding the Millions, and The Story of Clothing. The company announces a third book, which may be off the press—although I have not seen it.

These Bruner-Smith materials tie up very closely with the objectives of the Virginia program. Moreover, their careful provision of relevant detail for each general idea and their simplicity in style should make them a real learning aid for both pupil and teacher.

Some of your teachers may be looking for a new series of elementary history texts. Here the Macmillan Company offers Edna McGuire’s three volumes, Glimpses into the Long Ago, A Brave Young Land, and A Full-Grown Nation. These are beautiful books with a larger-than-usual page, clear type, and superb illustrations by George M. Richards. They are not as well written as are some of the