

The topics for Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, announced by Max J. Herzberg, program chairman, are "Socializing Trends in Secondary Education as they Affect English Teaching," and "Matter and Manner in English Teaching." Dean Henry W. Holmes of Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Dr. H. Wayne Driggs of New York University, Professor William Y. Tindall of Columbia University, Jules F. Seebach, program director of the Mutual Broadcasting Company, and others will be heard at the conferences.

An additional program feature will be a spelling bee to be conducted by Paul Wing of the National Broadcasting Company. Mr. Herzberg has also arranged to have available for teachers attending the National Council conferences a limited number of guest tickets for broadcasts of the leading radio companies.

An exhibit of early English books and of autograph manuscripts of English authors will be held by the Morgan Library for visiting English teachers during the convention week. The New York Public Library, The Grolier Club, and Teachers College Library will also have special exhibits.

THE TEACHER'S LETTER BOX

Dear Letter Box:

My eighth-grade boys seem to be getting worse and worse in class. They are so smart-alecky; and when I tell them they must stay in or give them any other form of punishment, it only makes them worse. Some of them need a whipping, but my principal says corporal punishment isn't permitted. What advice can you give us?

SALLIE SMITH

Dear Miss Smith:

Someone has said that mischief is the pupil's protection against idleness and boredom, and after long years of observation I agree with him. So that is the place I should begin in working with these eighth grade boys. That is, I would make the school-work so real and worthwhile that there would be neither time nor desire for "smart-alecky" conduct.

Now for some practical suggestions for first steps. Study your children, especially the ones that seem to be the leaders. Make written notes as to their interests *outside of school*. Then study your community thoroughly, listing all educative opportunities, aesthetic, social, historical, and industrial. Pour over the Aims of Education in *Tentative Course of Study* until you have definite plans for guiding each and every one of your pupils. From the list of objects and processes in your environment check off those which best meet these three conditions:

1. They relate to the interests of eighth-grade pupils in general and yours in particular.
2. They offer opportunity to use at least some of the subject matter in the books available.
3. They furnish a starting point for activities needed to provide best possible growth.

Your next step is to get some real jobs started. There is no set way. Take the pupils into your confidence, hunt something that needs to be done in the school or community, make a rough plan, collect needed information, get together and discuss your partial results, and so on. That is, go at it with the children's help and in a simple, natural way. To illustrate what I mean by things needed, you might study methods used for heating homes. You might map your community for places of interest and get ready to give accurate, complete directions to visitors. Your county newspaper would welcome a series of short articles about such places. Your county fair would make a place for kodak collections, picture maps, homemade guide books, and collections of old objects.

Such activities as described above cannot be well done without much subject matter. Nor can the pupils do an honest job characterized by good craftsmanship without growth in fundamental work tools such as computing, drawing, speaking, and reading.

You will notice that I have discussed your discipline problems in terms of the work going on. But interwoven with this is the other basic attack, making your classroom into a place where children and teacher live together. One quick way to get this feeling of "oneness," of group solidarity, is to find everybody a job. And do give the "smartest aleck" of all one of real responsibility. Then get him off for a conference. Ask him for his ideas and use them whenever it is at all possible. Have him present his plans to the group. Then let him feel that you are absolutely depending upon him. You'll soon have a fellow-worker instead of a mischief-maker.

Punishment with the least trace of getting even or repaying almost unfailingly makes things worse. In fact, any discipline in terms of relationship with the teacher is weak. There are only two justifications for interfering with a child's behavior—to make a better learning situation for the group or to guide him into wiser use of his own time and thereby secure better growth conditions for him. Once the teacher honestly believes this, she attacks her management problems very differently. And almost immediately children sense her changed attitude and begin to co-operate. This results gradually in a friendly, homey sort of relationship where the group morale is the strongest factor in good conduct. Don't think it won't work with your boys, because it will. But two new books might help you into the state of faith necessary to budge this particular mountain. They are: Dewey, *Education and Experience* (The Macmillan Company), and Wetzell, *The Biography of a High School* (American Book Company).

THE READING TABLE

RISING THUNDER. The Story of Jack Jouett of Virginia. By Hildegard Hawthorne. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1937. 272 pp. \$2.00.

This fictionalized biography paints the background of the Revolution through the

exploits of one of its lesser known heroes. In a forty-mile ride over rough country in the dead of night, Jack Jouett warned the Virginia Assembly of Tarleton's raid and saved many of the greatest Revolutionary leaders. This little-publicized ride received tardy recognition in Jouett's lifetime and, as the author points out in a foreword, is receiving tardy praise in this book. Perhaps if a raconteur such as Longfellow had chosen this true story of heroism for a poem, instead of Paul Revere's Ride (which never occurred), Jack Jouett would be as famous in history as he deserves to be.

Jouett's actual deeds are the thread which holds the story together. Even more important is the picture of Colonial life which forms the background. Although there is no proof of the details of his life as shown here, the happenings are told convincingly, and battles are correctly placed in time. The great leaders of the day, many of whom Jouett doubtless knew, are accurately drawn.

The author, Hildegard Hawthorne, who is a grand-daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, has told a stirring story simply and vividly.

A. F. B.

TALKS TO BEGINNING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. By Dorothy Dakin, Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. 1937. 478 pp.

This book presents for the untried teacher of high school English a clear conception of the evident everyday problems in a small high school, and procedures for their immediate management. In correlating English with other subjects, Miss Dakin has constructed a beneficial plan for those teachers who may discover this an annoying problem. She deals with disciplinary problems, with extracurricular activities, and with personal relations both in and out of school, as well as such routine matters as grammar, theme writing and theme correction, and the teaching of types of literature.

L. P.