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INTRODUCING MADISON COLLEGE

ON March 8th Governor Price signed Senate Bill No. 14 which completed its passage through the two Houses of the General Assembly on February 17th. This bill provided that the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia, should, after June 12, 1938, be known as "Madison College." The many alumnae and other friends of the college may wish to know the significance of this change in name.

First of all, it can be stated most positively that the primary function of the college will continue to be the education of teachers. Every effort will be exercised to make of the college a better institution for the education of teachers than it has been in the past by utilizing the products of research and experimentation, by improving the background of fundamental subject-matter content, and by offering the most improved professional courses and student teaching experience. The college hopes to prepare teachers for an even better service to the Commonwealth than has been possible in the past.

The college has been given, however, in common with the other teachers' colleges of the state, the responsibility of offering other

types of education for the women of Virginia than that which is ordinarily comprehended in a teacher education program. The State Board of Education has authorized the four institutions mentioned above to give liberal arts education of the usual type leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree and the Bachelor of Science degree for those who may be interested in a general education rather than in professional education for teaching.

Certain vocational courses in home economics have also been authorized. These courses provide for professional careers as home economists, dietitians, home demonstration agents, nutrition specialists, and managers of institutions such as cafeterias, tea rooms, hotels, and college boarding halls.

The college has also been authorized to give courses in commercial or business education for those who may seek employment in business as well as those who may wish to prepare for teaching commercial subjects in secondary schools.

A two-year pre-nursing curriculum has also been authorized at each college with the objective in mind to give a well-grounded course in science, psychology, and other fundamental subjects for those who wish to enter hospitals to take further training for the profession of nursing.

The program of the teachers' colleges has been broadened because their board of control has found that they are registering more than three-fourths of all the women graduates of the high schools in Virginia who enter Virginia institutions of higher learning. It has appeared to the Board that it is manifestly unwise for such a large percentage of all the women of Virginia to enter the one profession of teaching and, in order to avoid this misdirection of vocational purposes, the broadening of the program of professional curricula in this college has been decided upon. This enlarged program of the teachers' colleges is a fundamental reason why two of these institutions have been designated by individual names and

why the other two teachers' colleges have been given the right, with the approval of the State Board of Education, to follow the same policy.

A second and very important reason for the change in name has been the desire for distinctiveness and individuality in the names of these colleges. The term "teachers' college" is a generic name and not one that is specific or distinctive. There have been four state teachers' colleges in Virginia and approximately seventy-five with this title in other parts of the United States. The four Virginia colleges can be distinguished from each other only by mentioning the city or town in which each is located. Even then, the colleges at Fredericksburg and Harrisonburg have been frequently confused. The inherent factors in the situation have precluded the institutions from using the name "Virginia" in their title, as the state institutions at Blacksburg, Lexington, and at Charlottesville have done. To call each institution the Virginia Teachers College would present the same difficulties as are found in the present situation. The colleges have desired to discourage sectionalism by avoiding the use of regional names that would make them in any sense simply local institutions. It has appeared to be the wise policy to a majority of the State Board of Education and an overwhelming majority of both Houses of the General Assembly to use the individual, distinctive titles for these colleges. In the two instances in which the names have been completely determined, great characters of Virginia history have been memorialized.

Apart from its historical significance, the name Madison seems to contain an element of dignity, of euphony, and of distinction which has most readily recommended itself to the college at Harrisonburg. Throughout America, there has grown a new appraisal of President James Madison, not only for his great work in the establishment of our Federal constitution but also for his outstanding efforts in behalf of both popular and higher education. Not only did

Madison stand for popular and higher education but, in his Seventh Message to Congress in 1815, he expressed his concern for the education of teachers for the schools of our country. This appears in the following statement concerning the establishment of a national seminary of learning in the District of Columbia:

"Such an institution claims the patronage of Congress as a monument of their solicitude for the advancement of knowledge, without which the blessings of liberty can not be fully enjoyed or long preserved; as a model instructive in the formation of other seminaries; as a nursery of enlightened preceptors, and as a central resort of youth and genius from every part of their country, diffusing on their return examples of those national feelings, those liberal sentiments, and those congenial manners which contribute cement to our Union and strength to the great political fabric of which that is the foundation."

Madison furthermore, in one of his state papers, gave expression to these sentiments which, in themselves, would be justification for the selection of his name for a teachers' college:

"A satisfactory plan for primary education is certainly a vital desideratum in our republics."

In another statement appear these significant words:

"A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or, perhaps, both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

Sydney Howard Gay, in his biography of James Madison in the American Statesmen series, puts Mr. Madison down as a champion of the higher education of women, an opinion almost unheard of in the advocacies of our national leaders. Mr. Gay has this to say about Mr. Madison, "The capacity of 'the female mind' for the highest education cannot, he said, 'be doubted, having been sufficiently illustrated by its works of genius, of erudition, and of science.' The capacity, he assumed, carried with it the right." Certainly, these convictions of Madison in regard to popular and higher education of women would furnish thorough justification for the selection of his name to adorn that of a state college for women in Virginia.

SAMUEL P. DUKE