

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly by the State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the post office at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.

James C. Johnston, Editor

Henry A. Converse, Manager

## Advisory Board

John W. Wayland	Elizabeth P. Cleveland
Conrad T. Logan	Katherine M. Anthony
Mary Lancaster Smith	Annette Louise Houston
Rosa P. Heidelberg	Jo B. Warren

## IX

### EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

#### THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SCHOOL TEACHER

Nearly every great war has wrought far reaching changes in the social or economic or political status of the peoples engaged in the conflict. Often, too, it has enhanced the prestige and power of particular rulers, or ruling houses, in the victorious nations. The recent European war on the contrary has not inured to the benefit of kings, emperors, czars and ruling dynasties, but has rather enhanced the lot in life of the average or the common man. The masses, the proletariat, the bourgeoisie have emerged from the war with an improved financial status, with an enlarged social sphere and undoubtedly with a larger amount of civil liberty and with a more significant and more direct participation in their own governments.

These democratic tendencies have been felt among school teachers along with other people and popular movements have sprung up among teachers in one form or another to improve their economic, social and professional status.

#### THE TEACHERS' COUNCIL

One manifestation of these movements is the establishment in some communities of the Teachers' Council, a semi-official council of teachers to sit with school boards and ad-

ministrative officials and give them the benefit of their opinion in the determination of school policies and procedure.

Undoubtedly much good can come from such an arrangement, but there are some dangers that must be guarded against. The first is a natural tendency of any such advisory body to get ambitious for more power, to undertake more than advisory functions, in the end to supplant properly constituted authorities. The second danger is that such movements may make teachers feel as they have been made to feel in some communities, that the supervisory and administrative force are antagonistic and opposed to the interests of the classroom teachers in the school. In some cases this grief has been created and the schools have suffered.

#### SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THE A. F. L.

In some cities in Virginia small bodies of teachers have formed organizations and have affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Such teachers will be interested in the decision of Commissioner Finnegan of Pennsylvania. Mr. Finnegan, without mincing words or straddling the fence, decided that the teachers in a certain Pennsylvania town that affiliated with the American Federation of Labor had disqualified themselves for service in the public schools, as their alignment with one particular class in society rendered them incapable of teaching impartially all the children of all people.

#### VIRGINIA AND THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION'S REPORT

Although numerous organizations and individuals have attacked the educational ranking given the various states by the report of Col. Ayres of the Russell Sage Foundation, the report has withstood these attacks with little loss of prestige. The factors used in determining the relative rating of the various states are the following: 1, Percent of school population attending school daily; 2, Average days attended by each child of school age; 3, Average number of days schools were kept open; 4, Percent that high school attendance was of total attendance; 5, Percent that boys were of girls in high schools; 6, Average expenditure per child in average attendance; 7, Average expenditure per child of school age; 8, Average expenditure per teacher employed;

9, Expenditure per pupil for purposes other than teachers' salaries; 10, Expenditure per teacher employed for salaries. We do not know what factors should enter into the determination of a rating that would be absolute, but we are interested in knowing Virginia's rank among the states as far as the above mentioned factors are concerned. In 1890 Virginia stood 38th among the states; in 1900, with Oklahoma added Virginia stood 42nd; in 1910 Virginia stood 41st; in 1918 with the Canal Zone, Hawaii and Porto Rico (all of which stood higher than Virginia) added to the list Virginia stood 43d. If we omit Oklahoma, the Canal Zone, Porto Rico and Hawaii and take only the forty-seven states and the District of Columbia, used in the computation for 1890 reincluded, Virginia's rank would be as follows: 1890, 38th; 1900, 41st; 1910, 40th; 1918, 39th. All we can say, therefore, is that judged from the above mentioned standpoints the ranking of Virginia is low educationally and she is improving this relatively low standing very slowly. This need not be the case, as the State of Iowa ranked 30th in 1910 and 7th in 1918.

#### SOME SIGNIFICANT FACTS

The United States Bureau of Education has recently issued Bulletin, 1920, No. 11, giving detailed statistics of various school systems based on data collected for the year 1917-18. The percentage of children of school age not enrolled in school in Virginia in 1917-18 was 26.5 per cent; in Connecticut, 1.1 per cent, while Wyoming, California, Arizona, and Montana had enrollments in excess of the listed school population. Virginia had 6.1 per cent of its total enrollment against 18.1 per cent in New Hampshire and 19 per cent in California. In the length of the school term Virginia provided for its school children as a whole 141 days of schooling against 186 days in South Dakota, 187 in New York and 193 in Rhode Island. Of the schooling provided 7.1 per cent was wasted in Indiana because of poor attendance, while in Virginia 32.1 per cent was wasted. This wasted educational effort in Virginia represented a financial loss of \$2,665,747. For the same year the average annual salary paid teachers in the District of Columbia was \$1,052, in California, \$1,012, in New York, \$976, in Arizona, \$952, in Washington, \$922, in New

Jersey \$911., and in Virginia \$385. The value of school property for each child enrolled in Virginia in 1917-18 was \$39.20, while in Nevada the value was \$166.67, in New York \$157.36 and in Massachusetts \$149.96. The annual cost of education per pupil enrolled in Virginia schools in 1917-18 was for all purposes \$17.26, in Montana \$76.30, in Nevada \$55.29 and in Washington \$58.07. For each \$100 of taxable wealth Virginia spent 24.2 cents for schools, while Massachusetts spent 39.2 cents, Utah 49.4 cents, and Idaho 50.1 cents.

#### THE REMEDY

The only remedy for such a situation lies in larger revenues for public schools and a strong compulsory attendance law. These are the two paramount needs for Virginia's public schools.

#### A RARE OPPORTUNITY

At the regular election in November we shall have an opportunity to vote for two amendments to the State Constitution that will remedy this situation. The first is an amendment to Section 136 of the Constitution, looking to the removal from the Constitution of the limitation on local taxation for school purposes, leaving the matter to the Legislature. The second is an amendment to Section 138 removing the constitutional limitations on the compulsory attendance law. Every citizen of Virginia that has the interest of the Commonwealth at heart should strive earnestly and vigorously to secure the passage of these two constitutional amendments.

S. P. D.

#### IS MATERIAL SUCCESS ALL?

Is it any wonder that people who learn at home and in their social environment to think only of material success have little regard for the civic virtues, and that these people through ignorance and illiteracy, and through the lack of higher ideals, become an easy prey to the disturbers of the peace, to the lawless, and to the enemies of the republic?—T. W. Gosling, in *School and Society*.