EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

A general survey of the educational system of the United States by a representative commission is advocated in a volume issued by the National Industrial Conference Board. General principles to govern federal participation in education are recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Education. The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has appointed a committee to propose new standards for the accrediting of colleges. The state institutions of higher education in Mississippi are dropped by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools because they have undergone a political upheaval. Athletics continues to disturb colleges and universities. Standard tests and personal problems are given a substantial subvention to be administered by the American Council on Education. Curriculum revision is undertaken on a national scale. School supervision is studied. Education by radio and adult education make progress. New York University carries on extension courses with the help of an aeroplane. The care and protection of children receives wide attention as a result of the White House Conference.

ADJUSTING EDUCATION TO PRACTICAL LIFE

Near the close of the year 1929 the National Industrial Conference Board issued a book entitled Public Education as Affecting the Adjustment of Youth to Life. This book was prepared by a group of business men and educators, who had met a number of times in conference and had discussed in detail the criticisms made by employers and by students of American society of the products of American schools. The book emphasizes the necessity of meeting the criticisms of public education by adopting plans of education which are based on careful scientific studies. It goes farther and recommends the organization of a national commission, including parents, industrialists, representatives of labor, persons interested in welfare problems, and educators, to make a survey of schools and of the needs of practical life and to devise a plan of educational procedure free from the defects exhibited by the present system.

This book is a forceful, concrete expression of an attitude which is very general. There is a widespread belief that the present educational system is not as effective as it should be and that the costs of education, which have mounted rapidly in recent years, are not justified by the quality of service rendered by educational institu-
tions. Much discussion has been aroused by the book during the year past, and a movement has been inaugurated, sponsored by leading citizens, to carry through the program recommended.

The argument for participation by various classes of citizens in an inquiry of far-reaching social importance is set forth in the book in the following paragraph:

It is obvious, however, that such concerted effort in the field of comprehensive educational investigation cannot properly be undertaken, or even sponsored, by a body of representatives of any single interest or by any limited group of interests in our society, for either would fail to understand all the educational issues in their many ramifications and, moreover, would not command the fullest confidence of the whole community. This would apply likewise to an organization of employers in American industry or commerce, whether it be a trade association in its narrower sense or an industrial or business organization in its broader meaning. It would be true, too, of any organization representative essentially of the employees in American industry and commerce, whether in the nature of a trade union or otherwise. Further, an industrial organization engaged in scientific-research activity, such as the National Industrial Conference Board, could not properly attempt a comprehensive educational survey such as is needed, either under its own direction or with its own resources alone, for its primary interests lie in a specified field of industrial-economic research. A similar difficulty would arise in respect to sponsorship and direction of the proposed broad educational survey by any association of teachers or educators, for they are organized primarily to represent the professional point of view and to maintain professional interests. Objection might also be made to an investigation conducted solely under the auspices of any of the various educational foundations or jointly by several of them, for these foundations are designed primarily to concern themselves with special technical questions of organization and methods, from a professional point of view, and do not broadly reflect the diverse interests concerned in the public educational problem. Within this category, also, are social-service groups, associations of parents, and like bodies.

FEDERAL PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

A committee created by Secretary Wilbur of the Department of the Interior, known as the National Advisory Committee on Education, has been preparing during the past year a report dealing with the problem of federal participation in education. This Committee has issued a preliminary statement of principles based on a series of conferences conducted by the director of investigations, Dr. Henry Suzzallo.
The problem with which this Committee is dealing can be explained by saying that the federal government has been drifting in the direction of greatly increased participation in public education through special grants and through the establishment of agencies which have of late assumed large directive powers. This drift is apparently not the result of any clearly defined policy on the part of Congress; it is the result of a series of campaigns waged by special interests to control education in the states through federal subventions. Furthermore, with every addition to the territory of the United States, social and educational obligations are thrust on a federal government which has no definite colonial policy and no centralized agency for the formulation of such a policy. The result is that the United States is today conducting education in dependent territories through the Department of the Interior, the Department of War, and the Department of the Navy.

The National Advisory Committee on Education is unanimous in its advocacy of a greatly enlarged national program of educational research. There are types of information needed to direct American education which only a national agency can collect. Routine statistics from the school systems of the various states are examples of such information. Furthermore, special nation-wide inquiries with regard to particular kinds of educational activities should be made from time to time by the federal government. Examples of such special inquiries which have been made by the United States Office of Education or are now in progress are the survey of the land-grant colleges, the report of which was published in December, 1930, the national survey of secondary schools, which was begun in 1929, and the national survey of teacher-training, which was begun in 1930 and is operating under an appropriation of $200,000 made by Congress.

The National Advisory Committee on Education has adopted by an overwhelming majority the principle that the federal government should not require that state funds match federal subsidies or that federal subsidies be used for designated purposes. Both requirements tend to distort the plans of state school systems and thus introduce a form of undesirable federal control.
The principle which underlies the policy described in the preceding paragraph is that the federal government should not exercise any control whatsoever over education in the states.

With regard to federal subsidies for education, the National Advisory Committee on Education is by no means certain. The concentration of national wealth in a few urban centers is complicating the problem of securing through local taxes the funds necessary for the conduct of schools outside the urban areas. It seems likely, unless the taxing systems of the states and of the nation can be radically changed, that the federal treasury will have to be called on to contribute more largely than at present to the support of schools.

There are other problems on which the National Advisory Committee on Education has not reached any decision. Chief among these is the problem of determining the type of federal agency which should be set up to bring together as far as possible the scattered educational activities of federal departments.

DEVISING NEW STANDARDS FOR COLLEGES

The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which is the pioneer regional association in devising and enforcing standards for colleges, has reached the point where it recognizes the necessity of adopting an entirely new type of standard. The standards on which this and other associations have been operating are of a somewhat formal type, emphasizing endowment, student registration, number of professorial members of the faculty, and material equipment. These standards have been shown to be inadequate because they do not take into account many progressive forms of operation, such as personnel programs, which are more effective in the training of students than are accumulations of material equipment.

A committee of the North Central Association has been making an exploratory study of the possibility of devising a new type of standard. This committee has visited a number of colleges which are recognized as eminently successful and has made an effort to discover the characteristics of these institutions which account for their success.
POLITICAL DISMISSALS IN MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTIONS

The academic world was shocked to learn of the wholesale dismissal of presidents and members of the faculties of the state institutions of higher education in Mississippi. The governor of the state had an ancient grudge against the institutions of learning. During an earlier administration he had shown himself so unworthy of public confidence that the academic group had opposed his re-election. After a period of retirement, he was again elected to the governorship. He immediately began to fill the board in control of the state institutions with his henchmen. As soon as a safe majority was established, the decapitation of the governor's opponents began, and the vacancies thus created were filled by inexperienced and incompetent people, who were political or personal friends of the governor.

The Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States, after examining the evidence regarding the dismissals, voted by an overwhelming majority to drop the four state institutions from the approved list of the Association. This action was followed promptly by similar action on the part of a number of national standardizing associations.

The Mississippi Education Association, made up of the teachers of the state, appointed a committee which has drafted a plan designed to make it impossible for any future governor to repeat the performance. The committee recommends a board of trustees for state institutions consisting of eleven members (with one additional member for the University of Mississippi), one of the eleven to be the state superintendent of education and the remaining ten to be appointed for overlapping terms of ten years.

State universities have suffered from time to time from political upheavals not unlike that which has taken place in Mississippi. Apparently, it is necessary for states to have direct experience of the evil effects of such happenings in order to arouse public opinion to a full appreciation of the disadvantages of political interference.

ATHLETICS AND FACULTY CONTROL

The year 1930 has been a year of serious trial of colleges and universities with respect to their athletic relations. The report on athletics of the Carnegie Foundation aroused much discussion. This re-
port revealed some of the facts but by no means all of them. It is very generally recognized that coaches of athletic teams know of irregularities in opposing teams but are unwilling to protest players because they are themselves guilty of similar breaches of the rules.

The struggle of vested interests to avoid faculty control of athletics grows more intense rather than less so. The effort on the part of the administration of the State University of Iowa to regain faculty control of athletics has led to a roundabout attack on the president. The University of Kansas was dropped from the “Big Six” but was reinstated before the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools could review the situation. The University of Minnesota has received a report from an outside committee of three, which was organized by the president of the university, and it seems for the moment that the administration is in control.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has been making an intensive study of athletics in several states and has found conditions which call for serious consideration at the annual meeting. Apparently, there is very little hope of securing clean athletics without the intervention of the standardizing associations.

STANDARD TESTS

Much interest has been exhibited in recent years in the development of standard tests by means of which colleges and schools may compare their achievements. The Carnegie Foundation sponsored an elaborate series of investigations in the colleges and high schools of Pennsylvania. The American Council on Education has for some years past supplied a large number of colleges with standard tests for use in rating entering students. These and other movements for the development of adequate tests have been united, and the Committee on Personnel of the American Council on Education, under the chairmanship of Dean Herbert E. Hawkes of Columbia College, is now equipped to undertake an extensive experiment in the refinement of tests. The General Education Board has supplied this committee with a fund of $500,000 for its work. This fund is to be used during a period of ten years for developing and standardizing tests and for investigating the virtues and defects of various types of tests.
STUDIES OF THE CURRICULUM

A number of school systems in the United States have been engaged in recent years in revisions of their curriculums. It has become evident that co-operation on a national scale is the only efficient method of bringing about desirable reforms in the content and methods of teaching. Specialists in various fields have organized national committees and have produced studies which are of great importance for the future organization of teaching. The results of one study, namely, that of the modern languages, which was begun some years ago, have been appearing in a series of volumes. These volumes have aroused much discussion during the past year because there is lack of agreement with regard to the emphasis which should be placed on rapid, extensive reading—a type of exercise favored by the committee in charge of the Modern Foreign Language Study.

A second curriculum investigation which is being sponsored by a national association is the investigation of the social studies. The American Historical Association is sponsoring a commission which is made up of representatives from the fields of economics, sociology, political science, and education as well as from the field of history. This commission is in its third year. It has prepared a statement of the objectives of the social studies, has studied the problems which arise when the social studies are introduced into the curriculum, has organized tests of the knowledge which pupils have regarding social relations, and has begun the experimental preparation of materials to be used in schools.

PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL SUPERVISION

The Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association devoted its 1930 yearbook to the problems of supervision. The centralization of control in city school systems has given rise to perplexing problems. Is the special art supervisor in authority over the teachers in a given school building with respect to the instruction in art, or is the building principal in authority, with the art supervisor merely acting as an adviser? Is the teacher authorized to experiment with methods of teaching, or must the teacher wait for permission from superior officers in the system? Uncertainty on such problems has led to antagonisms within school systems. The
development of supervision has been so rapid in recent years that
general agreement has not been reached with regard to the best pro-
cedures to be adopted. It is important, therefore, that the whole
problem of supervision be made the subject of serious consideration
by school officers.

EDUCATION BY RADIO

Education by radio has received much attention during the year.
A conference of experts from the United States, Canada, England,
Ireland, and Mexico was held in June, 1930, at Columbus, Ohio,
under the joint auspices of the Payne Fund, the State Department
of Education of Ohio, and the Ohio State University, for the purpose
of discussing the problems of education by radio.

William J. Cooper, United States commissioner of education, held
a conference on October 13, 1930, of representatives of university
broadcasting stations and others to discuss the problems which con-
front stations which include educational broadcasts in their pro-
grams. Small educational stations are being crowded out by com-
mercial stations. The conference formulated a demand that Con-
gress "enact legislation which will permanently and exclusively as-
sign to educational institutions and government educational agencies
a minimum of 15 per cent of all radio-broadcasting channels which
are or may become available to the United States."

The school system of Cleveland, Ohio, is trying the experiment of
conducting classes in arithmetic by radio. Lessons are broadcast
from a central station by a selected teacher of superior ability. As
a basis for the lessons, the pupils are supplied with sheets on which
examples have been printed. The room teachers supervise the les-
sions while they are in progress and continue the instruction during
intervals between the broadcasts.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION BY AIRPLANE

New York University has an airplane in which extension lecturers
are transported to and from the centers where they conduct courses.
By this method of transportation the range or regular extension work
is greatly increased, a center as far from the university as Jame-
town, New York, being included.
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

An outstanding conference of the year which included interests other than education but promises to be influential in increasing the attention given by schools to the health and general welfare of children was the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. In opening this Conference Secretary Wilbur said in part:

The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection is to make a survey of our children, to study the forces influencing them, and to try to chart the wisest courses possible in our future management of youth. There is a duty that maturity owes to youth which can be carried out only by the fullest use of existing knowledge.

We have been fortunate in getting together this group of splendid, trained workers, and through their united efforts we anticipate that we shall be able to bring the great American public to a full appreciation of the responsibilities we owe to our children.

The White House Conference must not only gather information but develop methods for communicating it to those in every part of our country so that an interested and informed citizenship will unite in the solutions of the many problems of childhood.

The Conference, which was held on November 19–22, is to be followed by state conferences which will put into execution the plans formulated at the central meeting.

ADULT EDUCATION

Interest in adult education has increased greatly during the year. Adult-education councils have been organized in a number of centers. The University of the State of New York devoted its annual convocation in October to a discussion of adult education. One of the major problems in this field is that of bringing under supervision private schools for adults so as to prevent unqualified teachers or fraudulent institutions from imposing on the public. It has been suggested in many of the discussions that ultimately the public-school systems of the country will have to extend their efforts, which now cover many forms of adult education, so as to include all phases of this branch of education. Strong arguments can be advanced for public support of all kinds of classes for adults. Chief among these is the argument that adults need continually to readjust their habits of thought and action in order to keep abreast of the changes which are taking place in a rapidly evolving machine civilization.