

The American Teacher

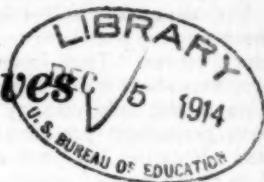
Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

VOL. III No. 10

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1914

50 CENTS A YEAR

Among Ourselves



Let us be frank with ourselves:

We have not the regard of our fellow citizens that we ought to have

We do not contribute to the solution of public problems in proportion to our ability and training

We have not the influence in the community that we ought to have.

Let us search our own hearts:

We have not the courage to face our own problems—
—we shift responsibility to principals and superintendents

We do not dictate the conditions of our own work—
—we compromise with politicians and contractors and convenience

We do not speak our own minds—we echo the words of authority.

Let us arise and greet the New Year.

LIBERTY IN TEACHING*

THOMAS M. BALLIET

Dean, School of Pedagogy, New York University

THE SYSTEM of education from the primary school thru the university is not so democratic as it should be—not so democratic as in Germany. I know too little of local conditions to trust myself to go into details.

Presidents of universities have too much power; boards of trustees have too much power. They have to deal with problems about which they know nothing. This is the only country in which we have permanent presidents of universities. Faculties have not enough power. Superintendents of schools have, in many cities, more power than they ought to have. I have been one myself and therefore know. Principals of schools exercise more power than they ought.

I do not think classroom teachers are competent to deal with all problems. Teachers, as a class, do not study general policies. There are only certain features on which their judgment is valuable.

When visiting schools in Europe, principally in Germany, I was struck with the fact that when introduced to teachers in a school, the principal would never refer to them as *my* teachers, or to the school as *my* Gymnasium or *my* Realschule. In America, it is a very common thing to hear a principal say, when looking for a new teacher, "My teacher of physics has left," as tho he owned the teacher personally. This does not make for respect on the part of the teachers for the principal. In Germany, teachers of the grades are considered *colleagues* of the principal, and principals in America ought to recognize this relationship.

Democracy in the schools is of three classes:

First, the children. Children have perhaps, more self-confidence than they should have.

Second, the people. The people who pay the bills should have control of the schools. The people have the right, thru the Board, to say what type of schools should be established. They may not exercise that right wisely, but that is a question of working up public sentiment. The people have the right to say what should be taught in the schools, as Spanish, French, German, chemistry, etc. The final decision must, of course, rest with the Board of Education. The making of a program does not belong to the Board of Education. The Board in New York assumes too much power. Those men and women on the Board whom I should have picked out as knowing most about the matter are the ones who acknowledge they don't know how to do it.

Third, the teachers. Power and influence should be extended to the teachers. It is their right to have a voice in the management of the schools. The selection of text-books is best left to the teachers who are to use them. When I was Superintendent, I had the power to select books, but always took those preferred by the teachers using them. Book agents should be kept away from the schools.

When it comes to the administrative side, that must be left to the Board and to the supervising body.

There are a good many questions on which the advice of teachers is valuable, tho not binding.

The question of discipline should be decided by the teacher. The question of corporal punishment should be decided by those who have to keep order. The right policy is to permit the rod and then discourage it. Compel principals to report the number of cases of punishment in annual reports. It is a bad thing for one class of boys to know that the principal dare not touch them. I would allow the rod to be used under restric-

* Address before Teachers' League of New York City, Oct 23, 1914.

tions. The birth rate is too low to supply the schools with teachers who can do without the use of the rod for some boys. The only alternative is the readiness to take children out of school, and put them in disciplinary schools.

Courses of study should be made by the supervising board and the teachers. The people are not competent to make courses of study. The teachers' views should not be merely advisory, but should have authoritative weight. The Board of Education should approve courses of study, but should not attempt to make them.

In regard to Teachers' Councils, I have no experience. It seems to me that when we organize a Teachers' Council, we ought to begin by making it merely advisory, and see how it works. Then, if it works well, give it more power. It is a mistake to be eager for power. Let us work for influence at first. Let us work for opportunity to express our views in a way that may have effect, but let us not ask that the people to whom we express them should be bound by them.

There is danger that the people who can engineer things do not know so much about them as others. What we want at first is to get an opportunity; not merely to be called upon by the supervisors when they want us, but to have legal standing so that certain questions shall be submitted to us—that their discussion shall be in the presence of those advised. It is helpful to all concerned to hear both sides of things.

Another common danger that we meet in the city is the distribution of opinions and recommendations in such a way that we cannot place the responsibility.

Therefore, I would make the Council advisory and hold the superintendents responsible, but the advice should always be put on record. Advice should either be accepted or the official should give reasons why he does not accept it.

There is also danger of too much democracy in the schools. When I was visiting Boston when Superintendent Seaver was in charge of the schools

there, he smiled and said, "If I could keep my principals within sight of the Course of Study, I should be happy." Where there were strong principals, the schools were good; where the principals were not strong, the schools were poor. Uniformity pulls up the poor, but hampers the efficient. Regents' examinations pull up the poor schools, but when you impose them upon the city schools they do more harm than good. Such means of pulling up the poor schools should be limited to the poorer schools in the rural districts, and let the city schools alone.

There is a tendency for the State Board to control the whole system. Autocracy, centralization of power, is not a good thing for the schools. In France and Germany there is a great deal of centralization. The Gymnasium, or classical high school of Germany, made but little progress until the Emperor stirred up these schools. The great progress that Germany has made is in the Real-schule, or trade school. These technical high schools are not under central authority. There is a saying in Germany that there will no longer be great Directors—who are, for the most part, really great men. The German Gymnasium of to-day does not produce those great men.

The State authorities in New York prescribe much more than they should. They should leave a good deal of freedom, especially to the city schools.

Teachers should have a large voice in the internal organization and management of the schools. Principals and teachers should have the power to adapt the Course of Study to their schools, especially where the children are so different. It is impossible for one Course of Study to fit all schools. Teachers and principals should have the right to give more English where the children need it, more hand work where they need that, etc. No central authority can do this.

The most undemocratic part of the New York school system is the control of the finances by the Board of Estimate. That, I think, is the worst thing so far as the lack of freedom is concerned. I

have the highest regard for men on that Board, but it would be impossible for any power short of Omniscience to deal with all the problems assigned to them. The result is that they delegate power to subordinates whose names never appear in public, and whom one would not make superintendents of schools. One of these clerks has boasted that he had more to do with determining how much money the Board of Education should have than Dr. Maxwell has. I do not question the judgment of any member of the Board of Estimate, but the judgment of one whom, if the public should know, they would condemn. When things go wrong because there is not money enough to do what is right, the Board of Education gets blamed, and the Board of Estimate gets praised for economy. The person who controls the purse strings is the one who controls the schools.

What we need in New York is a provision of the Charter that will provide

for the automatic appropriation for schools out of the general tax levy. A certain fixed amount which by experience has been found ample—I think three mills. Until the Board of Education is made financially independent of the Board of Estimate, it is impossible to do things that are needed in the schools. The Board of Estimate does not give the money to open trade schools because they have not decided what sort of trade schools is best! If the Board of Estimate is going to decide this for us, what are the Board of Education and the teachers for?

Many business men in New York think it is a very good thing for the Board of Estimate to have their hands on the purse strings so that the Board of Education can not spend the money. Some men lament the condition. Here you have a problem that ought to be agitated. Until we get that condition changed we cannot do all that we ought to do.

TEACHERS' PAY—A HISTORICAL VIEW

DAVID H HOLMES

Eastern District High School, Brooklyn

I MAKE NO pretense of presenting here a scientific treatise on the history of the development of teachers' pay; but it is a matter of easy knowledge that in the early history of education in this country, in Massachusetts, the teacher was hired by the school committeemen, who were themselves elected by the townspeople in their annual town meetings.

Incidentally, let us note in passing, that the New England town meeting is the best example of pure democracy we have ever had.

Sometimes it was decided in these town meetings that the town could afford to pay for keeping a school for the period of three or four months during the winter; and accordingly the school committeemen would be instructed to hire a teacher for this period at so much a month. Other and larger towns often

felt that they could afford to pay for the keeping of a school for five months.

As time went on and the value of education was better appreciated or as the communities became more prosperous, the smaller towns began to feel that they could increase the school time to four or five months, and the larger and more prosperous towns felt that they could support a school for six or seven months. But in any event, the teacher was always paid by the month, and whenever an additional month's work was added to his time, an additional month's salary was added to his pay.

So, while there are still school communities in the country which do not provide for more than six months' schooling in any year, the more prosperous communities, and especially the cities, are providing for from eight to ten

months' consecutive school sessions with the corresponding eight to ten months' pay.

As this school-period has now grown to within two months of a full year, a few cities, notably New York, have changed from their plan of paying for the ten months' work of teachers in ten payments or tenths, to the plan of paying for this work in twelve payments or twelfths, in order to bring the financial system of the Department of Education into conformity with the other departments of the city government, or for the sake of uniformity.

It is still within the memory of Brooklyn teachers when they were paid in tenths. The change from tenths to twelfths in Brooklyn was made shortly after the consolidation of the two cities, and was for the purpose of establishing uniformity in all the boros.

But the city authorities have never assumed that they were paying for more than ten months' work, even when the change was made from tenths to twelfths. If there is any technical interpretation of the language of the law, or by-law, or other regulation, in accordance with which teachers are paid in twelve payments, which may be construed as meaning that teachers are being paid for twelve months' work, such technicality was either unconsciously incorporated in such regulation by those in power or was carefully concealed from the teachers.

On the contrary, there are many instances in which the city has distinctly recognized that it was giving pay for only ten months' work while at the same time dividing this pay into twelve parts.

In my own experience there is an instance in point. In February, 1900, when the Eastern District High School was organized in Brooklyn, I was transferred to this school from the Mixed High School (now the Morris) in Bronx. I had received for my five months' work in Bronx, from September, 1899, to January, 1900, five payments, or five-twelfths of my ten months' pay. On June 30, 1900, I had received

five payments or five-twelfths of my ten months' pay for the five months, February to June, 1900. A claim for the omitted one-twelfth was afterwards allowed.

The twelve-payment plan has now been in uniform operation in the Greater New York City schools for a dozen years or more, during which time the resultant notion has taken hold of the community at large that the teachers are receiving twelve months' pay for ten months' work.

School executive officers have even been known to take advantage of this impression, so falsely and yet so generally held by the public, to make a grandstand play with the City Fathers for economy, by advancing the claim that since teachers were being paid twelve months' pay for ten months' work, they could be required to work the full twelve months without additional pay.

Teachers themselves have fallen into the error of speaking of "our vacation having been given to us for purposes of recuperation and self-improvement," etc., when the facts are simply these: that teachers have never been given their so-called vacations. These so-called vacations are nothing more nor less than periods of unemployment, during which they must support themselves without pay until the time arrives again for which the city can afford to pay them for their services.

Many teachers, I take it, would prefer a full year's job at a full year's pay; some teachers would, doubtlessly, prefer the ten months' work for the ten months' pay; all teachers came into the system on the implied contract that the working period was limited to ten months; and no teacher will willingly work twelve months for ten months' pay, even tho the ten months' pay be divided into twelve payments.

The endurance of the child has no doubt had its influence, together with financial inability on the one hand, and inadequate appreciation of educational opportunities on the other, in restricting the length of the school year, as well as of the school day, except, perhaps, in

quarters where the school is regarded as an asylum for children who are not wanted at home, rather than as an educational institution.

But in this connection it may be noted that the endurance of the teacher has never played any part in the length of the school year or of the school day. This point has in my judgment been over-

worked, and, by pressing it too strongly, teachers run the risk of entangling themselves in hopeless contradictions and inconsistencies.

Let us stick to our plain professional rights as they rest on precedent, firmly established by the historical aspects of the case.

TEACHERS IN COUNCIL

B B GREENBERG

P S 165, Brooklyn

THE REVIEW of the work of the Teachers' Council of P S 165, Brooklyn, organized a year ago, proves the effectiveness of the experiment in developing in the school a spirit of coöperation among supervisors, teachers and children. Ever since the organization of the Council it has been intensively brot home that education must be a great coöperative undertaking which makes provision for initiative, independence and creative activity of every individual charged with responsibility.

Indeed, to those who looked at the suggestions and regulations of the Teachers' Council of 165 with a philosophical turn of mind, the work of that body during the year of its existence has seemed to expand the individuality of every teacher in the building—those who have taken no part in the doings of the Council, the newly appointed Training School graduate, the pupil teachers, as well as those who seized the valuable opportunities of sharing in the deliberations and studies of the Council. What impressed the newcomers to the school, however, is the fact that the spirit of democracy which prevails in the school is a concomitant of the Teachers' Council, and thus they conclude that the training of children in the direction of their education is dependent ultimately upon freedom, not repression, upon the existence of such an atmosphere that one's individual-

ity may be developed, and may serve to influence and to be influenced.

The narration of the early history of the Teachers' Council of 165 would simply repeat the experiences of other new institutions. It was a period when the eleven representatives of the school with their coöperating committees from the teaching body simply had to "feel" their way. The greater part of the time was devoted to matters of immediate necessity and of routine suggested by the teachers.

The period of infancy was, however, soon passed and then the Teachers' Council of the school began a period of existence that was marked by a program of constructive activity. It was then that the Council members with their committees discussed and decided upon measures that gradually developed in the school the spirit of democracy and coöperation.

The suggestions and regulations were such as came under the following: a subdivision and gradation of the penmanship work thruout the school; the gathering, selecting and distribution for drill of common errors of speech of the school and of the environment; the selection, readjustment and distribution of text-books as well as supplementary material. In matters of methods of teaching, the Council worked upon the principle that the general method of teaching in the school should be such as utilizes the teachers' and the children's

initiative and coöperation. As a result of the recommendations from the Council, great impetus was given to the gathering of illustrative material and the starting of a school museum.

Matters of school administration and management received the greatest attention from the 165 Teachers' Council. The teachers thru committees took full charge of the care of the halls, the basements and the surroundings of the school. It made provision for the care and cleanliness of the building. It arranged for all the after-school activities—securing directors of these activities, drawing up the schedule for rooms and time, deciding rules of eligibility and membership, and determining upon methods of rewards and of exhibition of the work. In addition it had such committees as considered grievances of teachers; studied needs for social service in the vicinity of the school and the advisability of teaching in the open air. Other committees arranged for lectures by the teachers of the school, to be delivered after school sessions, and for the holding of parents' days.

The Council departmental system committee succeeded in convincing the principal of the school, much against his will, that such a system in the upper grades would be advantageous and as a result was given the power to arrange for all the details of the system—the subject assignments, the schedule, etc.

It is seen, therefore, that the aim of the Teachers' Council of 165 to participate in the administration of the school and to decide what ought to be done for the children, for the parents of the children and for the teachers themselves has been accomplished. In the greater number of cases the interests of the children and the environment of the school were the guiding motive and not the teachers' interests, per se. In the last analysis the teachers' freedom and sharing in the administrative functions of the school were merely the means of securing the coöperation that spelled success to the work.

The reasoning of the teacher of the

school has been something like this: We are to develop in the children of our school, and thus indirectly in the parents, the ability to use rationally their own wills. To do that we ourselves must be able to do likewise—that is, we must use our initiative and not merely act as automaton, merely following rules handed down from "above"; we, too, must coöperate, do things for the school. We, too, must show that we have a duty to perform in our classrooms and out of them, and that our responsibility is to be shouldered not because the principal forces us, but because it is necessary for the school.

But the Teachers' Council of 165 has found a few difficulties, unsolved questions that have given the teachers food for thought. We have found some among us who do not want their rights—who are content with being dictated to, at times entirely unnecessarily, provided all responsibility is taken from them. To my mind this state of affairs is perfectly natural. But in becoming American citizens, and in becoming teachers in these schools of America, the land of democracy, we have not ceased to be human beings. How shall we approach this type of teacher?

The problem of all problems, however, is who shall enforce the regulations of the Teachers' Council. It has been our conviction that there is no consistency in having the principal enforce these regulations. We have accordingly started to have the chairmen of the committees consider all cases of neglect on the part of teachers. Following the failure of these heads of the committees to have the indifferent teacher see the "light," the Council itself will take action such as will bring public opinion of the school to bear on such indifferent or inefficient teachers. How this will work, we are watching very carefully. In any case, the enforcing of the regulations of the Teachers' Council will require a good deal of experimenting. Might it not help in solving this problem, if the Teachers' Council were given a legal status?

PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

IN MAY of the present year, a notable series of meetings was held in New York City under the auspices of The Committee on Practical Training for Public Service, of The American Political Science Association. The report of this conference has just been issued from the office of the Committee, at Madison, Wisconsin, under the title of "The College and the City."

The articles in this report, as well as the idea upon which the work of the Committee is based, are of great civic interest and value. A review of the report, however, will be of less service to teachers than a few statements concerning the awakening which the articles portray.

For many years the colleges have prepared students for life by teaching them, after the fashion of the historian, the subject matter of politics and government. The teaching has always been done honestly, perhaps, and the theories scientifically expounded by the professors, and learned by the students through numerous "quizzes" and "crams." But the professors had never seen a budget committee in action, nor a dock department granting favors to privileged business men. And the students seldom if ever tried to put the theories they had learned to practise, because the stuff had only been Government I, or Politics XVI, to them, and they were going into law or finance anyway.

But within the past dozen years the cities have grown tired of Tammany Hall and its kindred gangs. Reformers stirred the people to a keen sense of the civic wrongs that were being committed in their midst. Good men were elected to office in many cities, and the era of the "goo-goos" began. This era has now past, and the good men are all dead, be-

cause they did not know how to do their jobs skillfully.

Occasional reversions of power to Tammany Hall and other colleges of graft kept the intelligence of the cities awake to the need of men who *knew how*. City clubs and bureaus of municipal research have furnished the point of view, and also the elements of training for the best of our present-day city officers. But these are not primarily schools. The stimulus for the organization of the teaching and the practical training of future public servants did not come from the colleges, for they were not the ones that felt the need. The men whose experience showed their lack conceived the idea of appealing to the colleges to introduce with their courses on the theory of politics and government some actual practise in laboratory work.

The plan proposed by the Committee, and now approved and in operation in some colleges, notably in the University of Wisconsin, is that every candidate for the highest degree in the graduate schools shall before receiving his degree spend a year of practise in a city department, actually taking part in its operations.

Considerable enthusiasm was manifested in the meetings in New York last May. Well established officials from large educational foundations and young men of fire and enthusiasm worked together on the big problem of getting the work of the public done honestly and efficiently.

Teachers of elementary and high schools had little interest in the proceedings apparently. They have not yet begun to think of teaching itself as a form of public service.

Copies of the Report of the Committee may be obtained for twenty-five cents, by addressing a letter to Edward A. Fitzpatrick, Sec'y, Box 380, Madison, Wisconsin.

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This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

TO OUR STOCKHOLDERS

A stated meeting of the American Teacher Company, Inc. will be held on Saturday afternoon, December 12, 1914, at 4 P M, in the rooms of the City College Club, 302 Madison Avenue, New York. All stockholders are urged to be present.

THE END OF VOLUME THREE

ONCE MORE we are happy to remind our readers that it is possible to carry on the publication of an independent periodical in a special field of thot. THE AMERICAN TEACHER is just finishing its third year.

An examination of the files brings to light the fact that the paper has raised many issues in educational policy, and that some are in a fair way to be settled right, thru the agency of the growing enlightenment of thinking teachers and other kinds of citizens. There are six of these issues that stand out conspicuously. They are: (1) The desirability of teachers' sharing in the administration of the schools, (2) The elimination of politics from education, (3) The improvement of standards for the selection of the higher positions in the teaching service, (4) The rating of teachers, (5) Vocational education, and (6) The mother-teacher question.

The New York educational system has an officially recognized Teachers' Council. This body is now beginning the second year of its existence. It is distinctly a means by which the opinions of teachers may reach the supervising staff and the Board of Education. With increasing intelligence on the part of the members, and upon the adoption of a more democratic means of selection of members, the usefulness and power of the Council will be very great.

School councils for the individual schools have begun to exist in several New York City schools. These have made such headway as to be approved by the President of the Board of Education.

The campaign that THE AMERICAN TEACHER has made against politics in education has not been primarily a personal one, but politics is carried on by persons. Whenever an individual engaged in education joins hands with political marauders, for no matter how worthy an idea, public-spirited organs and city officials serve a righteous cause when they help to prevent the promotion, or

other form of approval, of the public offender.

The movement for improving the standards for the selection of educational officials is still undeveloped. The ideas for these standards are yet uncrystallized, but the desire on the part of the appointing powers for better administrators seems to be real and sincere. But the habit whereby friends of the appointors are selected, instead of friends of the public welfare, is strong and hard to break. The public itself may have to do the breaking.

The most daring of all the movements represented in these columns is a movement for the elimination of the entire system of rating teachers. The contention is that after the qualifications for entrance to the profession are met by teachers, there is no more reason why teachers should pass frequent inspections than there is that lawyers or physicians should do the same thing. With inspections abolished, all of the irritation incident thereto would vanish, and the members of the teaching professions would begin to hold up their heads.

Vocational education within the short space of three years has gone the whole gamut of popular consideration from impatience and contempt to unanimous and official approval. City officers have given their valuable time holding public meetings and traveling over the middle West, in search of practical suggestions for the development of this valuable system of ideas for fitting the lives of young people for efficient living. When compliments are passed out to those who have contributed to the path-breaking thinking so necessary to every great social era, *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* will shyly present its claim for a ribbon.

The pain of the mother-teacher is the birth-throe of a great social idea—the possibility of the full human development of human beings who teach the children. The existence of the *neuter* as an official requirement in education is nothing less than a social and eugenic crime. The day of some crimes is passing rapidly.

LESE MAJESTE!

WHEN ONE is greatly annoyed there is great danger of his losing his head—figuratively speaking. Judging from the newspaper accounts (since we have no inside information) we are inclined to suspect that this kind of a decapitation occurred at the educational headquarters of the City of New York in the month of November.

It seems that one of the women teachers had written a letter to the editor of one of the newspapers, inviting him in a rather jocular vein to come with her to the meeting of the Board of Education to witness a game of "mother-baiting." As the Board consists of perfectly gentlemanly and ladylike gentlemen and ladies the implication that they could do anything so cruel and undignified as to bait mothers was certainly unfair, especially *before* the fact. The reaction of the Board to this letter, which was published in the newspaper, is extremely interesting; and suggests that at least some of the members were greatly annoyed. For the lady who wrote the letter was suspended from her school on "charges of insubordination."

Wherein the insubordination consisted has not been made public. But if teachers are to be suspended or baited for saying things that are personally offensive to the members of the Board of Education, then there can be no liberty of teaching. In effect this means that a certain servant of the city, placed in a position of authority or power, may use his position to embarrass a fellow servant in retaliation for a personal annoyance,—may embarrass this other to the extent of depriving him of his position even. For the Board of Education consists of a number of persons engaged in public service—for which they receive no remuneration; and the teachers are another body of persons engaged in public service—for which they get the money on which they live. The Board of Education is in a certain position of authority and may—within certain limits provided

by law—direct the doings of the teachers and, under certain circumstances, dismiss them from the service.

To make of an offensive letter to the newspapers—which was at worst simply in bad taste—an occasion for bringing "charges of insubordination" and for holding hearings and trials is perhaps a "natural" way of reacting to the annoyance; but it is one hardly calculated to augment the respect of the public—or of the teaching body—for the "superiors." It is in any case a most unwarranted infringement upon the right of every American citizen to voice his views on matters of public concern, and a most high-handed misuse of authority.

The educational authorities may well contend that it is not conducive to the welfare of the children to have teachers speak contemptuously of the Board of Education; and they would be well within their rights—not to say duties—to reprimand a teacher for a public exhibition of bad taste. But to maintain that even a public insult to the Board or to any of its various *members or fellow workers* is an occasion for the severe discipline in this case initiated is to raise the suspicion that we have become Russianized even before the Cossacks reach Berlin.

We might go on to call attention to the fact that many a teacher has written to the newspapers matters that went far beyond ridiculing the Board of Education. There have been direct and indirect charges of dishonesty and incompetence and of confusion of motives. But so far as we have been able to learn these offensive teachers have not been "disciplined." But we refrain, for the comparison leaves too much to the imagination.

MOTHER-TEACHERS AGAIN

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION of New York City is apparently emerging from a nightmare in which mother-teachers occupied a prominent position. The matter is now in the hands of a special committee, while an appeal is at the same time pending before the State Commissioner

of Education. In the latest case—that of Mrs Lora M Wagner—the request for leave of absence for the purpose of child-bearing had been refused, as on former occasions, and the teacher remained at her work. She left school as usual on Friday afternoon; before the following Monday morning the child was born, and of course the mother was then physically unable to report for duty. "To be consistent," the Board voted to instruct the district superintendent to bring charges of "neglect of duty" against Mrs Wagner. To understand wherein this consistency lay, we must recall that over a year ago, after disposing of the case of Mrs Peixotto, a motion was presented to direct the City Superintendent to prefer charges of neglect of duty against all teachers whose cases were "similar to that of Mrs Peixotto." The argument that followed and our own reflections thereon were recorded in THE AMERICAN TEACHER for November, 1913, as follows:

Another Commissioner that this motion superfluous, since under the by-laws it is the duty of the Superintendent to prefer charges against all teachers who are suspected of "neglect of duty." A third Commissioner was in sympathy with the purpose of the motion, but feared that the wording was not sufficiently definite, since each case might have distinctive features, and there might not be another one *exactly* similar to that just disposed of. Then Commissioner Wile arose and said, "All right then, let us be honest about it. I offer as a substitute or as an amendment, that 'the Superintendent be directed to prefer charges of neglect of duty against all teachers who have absented themselves for the purpose of child-bearing.'"

Did the Board accept Dr Wile's invitation to be honest? It did not. It rejected his amendment and voted the original motion. No doubt they were sincere in doing so; but some things are hard to understand.

If this magazine interests you, get another subscriber.

ON THE RIGHTS OF TEACHERS TO DEMAND THEIR RIGHTS

IN DECIDING that Cleveland's school superintendent was guilty of contempt of court, Judge William B. Neff made a spirited defense of labor's right to organize and a remarkable arraignment of Cleveland's school system.

The case grew out of Superintendent Frederick's discharge of six school teachers because they had joined a union (see *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, September number, p. 98). Failing to obey the court's order to reinstate the teachers, Superintendent Frederick was found guilty of contempt of court.

The judge said:

Mr Frederick, the overwhelming weight of the evidence establishes that you are guilty of contempt. You can still do some semblance of justice to these teachers. Un-speak your bitter word of banishment!

Why blight the lives of these teachers, destroy their usefulness, and break their hearts? I would reinstate them myself if I had power under the law to do so. You owe their reinstatement to the public, whose servant you are.

You are out of harmony with the public, your real employer. You are not employed by the Board of Education, but by the public. In your loyal service to your nominal masters, the board, you have drifted away from your real master, the public.

Concerning the school board anti-union rule, which he enjoined, Judge Neff said:

The board had no right to pass the rule. It was an act of folly, and its principle was vicious, un-American, unpatriotic and unjust. If the courts are so palsied, so powerless, so decrepit as not to interfere, then judges ought to be brought to the courthouse in wheelchairs and fed with spoons.

In taking up the right of labor to organize, he said:

Labor unions are lawful organizations. It is grossly unjust to legislate in any way against those who toil. Labor is the only property the workingman brings to market, and it is all he has to sell.

Referring to the superintendent's de-

mand for "harmony," the judge said:

The system is sick, very sick. Two things only will cure it: Light and air, agitation and ventilation. "Pull down the blinds! Turn out the lights!" says Mr Frederick. "Then we shall have harmony in the schools!"

Well, to be in harmony with such a system is to be out of harmony with everything else that is good and commendable.

Following is Neff's decision, in part:

The anti-union resolution of the board was vicious in its principle as well as subversive of constitutional liberty. If the board can validly discriminate against labor unions, then it may discriminate because of race, or color, or nationality, or creed, or for any other arbitrary reason.

There is no necessary conflict between affiliation with the American Federation of Labor and the vocation of a teacher. The testimony submitted in the case shows that all the alarm of strikes and boycotts that seems to have disturbed the board is utterly unfounded, for the reason that strikes among public employes are not tolerated by the federation.

It is un-American and grossly unjust to legislate in any way against those who toil.

The greatest good to the greatest number can be achieved only by the rule of the common people.

From all this it results that the board's anti-union resolution is void. The board had no right to pass it.

And yet no sooner was this resolution passed than the superintendent and his assistants made haste to enforce it to the letter; but the injunction in the original case was granted, and that prevented the slaughter of the innocents that was planned—the dismissal of the hundreds of teachers who voted for the union.

It is contended there is no precedent for the issuance of this injunction, and that, therefore, it ought not to have been granted.

While I would not undervalue precedent, neither would I approve a slavish adherence to mere precedent. Either the courts must from time to time make new precedents, and thus keep up with progress, or else refuse to make new precedents to conform to new

conditions, and thus become stumbling blocks in the way of progress.

The high-handed outrage which the Board of Education seemed determined to commit was so spectacular, so glaring, that it was high time that a precedent be made; so this court made one, and by so doing saved hundreds of teachers from losing their positions.

This may be the last important case which I shall ever decide; but if it is, I could not wish a finer valedictory.

ON PENSIONS

AN EFFORT by Michigan public school teachers to obtain a system of retirement pensions is noteworthy for two reasons: the movement was launched at a convention of 5,000, including many of the most eminent educators of the country, and a semi-political campaign is to be conducted, following this week's election of a Legislature. State Superintendent Keeler urges a reasonable plan, which follows in many respects the scheme suggested by the Carnegie Foundation in 1912. It provides for the voluntary retirement on a pension, after twenty-five years of teaching, or a voluntary retirement on a larger pension after thirty years of teaching, provided the applicant has served fifteen years, including the last five immediately before retirement, in Michigan; or retirement by the State after fifteen years if incapacitated and deserving. The retirement fund is to be created by monthly contributions from all school teachers, and by legislative appropriation. Twelve States now retire all public school teachers on pensions, and the larger cities in fourteen more do the same. As tending to increase the rewards of a profession notoriously ill-paid, and so to draw into it better workers, the movement deserves approval and support.—*New York Evening Post*.

TROUBLESOME AGITATORS

AG'I-TA'TOR, n (L) 1. One who agitates; one who stirs up or excites others;

as, political reformers and agitators. 2. (Eng. Hist.) One of a body of men appointed by the army, in Cromwell's time, to look after their interests. 3. An implement for shaking or mixing.—*Webster's International Dictionary*.

And yet, we hear persons using the word in anger, hurling it forth as if it were a curse. A close study of the dictionary definitions will demonstrate that in every relation an agitator is a benefactor. Nothing needs reforming more than politics (except possibly education). No person could be more useful than one who looks after the interests of the soldier for everyone else is sending him to death. And nothing could be more public spirited than an agitator who shakes and mixes mankind, and prevents it from becoming vile thru stagnation.

The secret of the general condemnation of agitators, and the fear that many have of being called one, lies perhaps in the agitation of the person or thing agitated. If you are a politician (or trying to be one), it gets on your nerves to have some person try to break up your business—for politics is a business, tho a poor one. Nobody is worried about it but you; it was the complacency of the other people that enabled you to get your business so well established. You raise a great howl about "troublesome" reformers, thereby exciting the people, besides blinding them, and becoming the only dangerous agitator in the field.

If you are an educator, or a boss in charge of educators, and want to keep the stratification of the Board of Education, superintendents, principals and teachers as it has always been, you are bound to get stirred up when a "troublesome" agitator appears upon the scene, endeavoring to break up your horizontal, superimposed alignment. You may even lose your head, while screaming.

A good lesson for "troublesome," meaning providential, agitators to learn is to be calm while shaking and mixing the stratified ranks in their profession, and not to grow hysterical when resistance is manifest.

THE TEACHER'S LIMITATIONS

IN THE MAY number of *The School Journal* Dr William E Chancellor calls attention to the frequent ill-health of school superintendents, and suggests some of the factors that contribute to this morbidity. One of the causes listed is the fact that superintendents are so frequently from other localities and must become acclimated, or go under in the process. Another cause is the long day of work. In addition to many hours in the office or in the schools, they generally have several evening meetings a week—of one kind or another. A third cause is the multiplicity of directions under which they must do their work with the many teachers, the parents of pupils, the board members, and other persons that have dealings with the schools. And with this goes the fact that superintendents rarely receive adequate clerical assistance. A fourth cause is found in the fact that superintendents rarely possess business training, and therefore carry on the business of their offices in a wasteful—that is, time and energy consuming—manner, that reacts upon their health.

The most suggestive item in Mr Chancellor's list is the last, which we give in his own words:

Another cause is subtle and obscure. The temperament and disposition that fit a man to be a competent and well-liked educator do not fit a man for executive efficiency. Such an educator has the defect of his best qualities that are patience and sympathy. By their nature, patience and sympathy take time. The tactful man is not characteristically forceful and quick. Of course, genius and high talent are not subject to ordinary rules; and occasionally a man is a good executive and also agreeable and tactful.

This is a matter of great practical importance from the point of view of democratic education. When we find men and women who have the tact and patience and sympathy to do effective work in the classroom, we should make it worth their while to devote themselves to

this work as a life career. By tempting the successful teacher to become a principal or superintendent, we are not only depriving the classroom of its due: we are imposing upon the schools a supervisor that is in very many cases efficient at the cost of his health. We must expect those who occupy the higher educational positions to have a sympathetic understanding of the problems of the class-room teacher; but the superintendent need not himself be an expert teacher. To the extent that he has the "temperament" of the teacher, he is likely to fail as an effective executive, just as the "practical" business man is bound to fail in the work of teaching.

Of course there are exceptional people of such great versatility and adaptiveness that they can readily turn from work requiring quick practical decision to work requiring patience, or reflection, and do both kinds passing well; but they are exceptional people. Those who can do well one kind of work should have an opportunity to do that; and it should be no reflection upon them that they cannot do other kinds. In distributing workers thruout the educational systems it is particularly desirable that each be placed where he can do the most good, and to guard against making a man a superintendent on the strength of his record as a mathematician or as a follower of directions.

Moral education is too important to be delegated to any one study or one set of influences. It must permeate the whole; it must be omnipresent; it must dominate all phases of instruction and of school management.—Chas A McMurtry, in *Conflicting Principles in Teaching*.

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BOOK NOTES

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Most teachers are not interested in problems of administration—probably because they do not realize how closely their comfort and happiness are concerned with administration. Still fewer are the teachers who are interested in educational legislation. If one tenth of the teachers in the country could be induced to read Professor Cubberly's "State and County Educational Reorganization," which purports to present the "Revised Constitution and School Code of the State of Osceola," we might expect a tremendous stirring in their bosoms, with practical results out of proportions to the effort involved. This revised code of a hypothetical State covers every phase of the public school problem from the public's point of view, and points the way to many needed reforms which the administrators hesitate to introduce for purely technical reasons. The foot-notes explaining the reasons for changes in the code summarize the new philosophy of education in a concrete and practical way. The book represents what we may hope to see accomplished when scientific management attacks the school problem with a broader vision than has guided it in most of its attacks upon public problems. Of special interest to teachers are the suggestions for the training, certification, appointment, tenure, pensioning and grading of teachers. The provisional plan for the measure of merit of teachers, prepared by Prof Edward C Elliott of the University of Wisconsin, The most striking feature of this plan is suggested in one of the "General Propositions," and is worth citing in full:

As fundamental conditions for the cumulative improvement of teaching and for the greater effectiveness of school organization, should not teachers, (a) be encouraged and trained to determine their own professional worth in accordance with standards mutually agreed upon by

teachers and supervisors; (b) receive the benefits of direct, constructive criticism, and the stimulation of continuous, skillful, personal, **non-interfering** supervision; and (c) claim exemption from **snap** measurements of their merit based upon casual visitation and intermittent inspection, and from the unsupported, arbitrary judgments of superiors?

The differences between what obviously should be the minimum provision of the state for the effective and comfortable carrying out of its major purpose, and the equally obvious prevailing practice are well brot out in this book, and are well worth the serious consideration of all who have the public's interest at heart. (Macmillan, \$1.25.)

IN A SERIES of pamphlets prepared by Dr William Byron Forbush for the American Institute of Child Life, the teacher and parent will find a large amount of useful material gathered from many sources and arranged in topical form. Concrete "cases" are presented to illustrate general principles in the management and training of children. The titles of the pamphlets suggest the topics with which they deal: On Truth-telling and the Problem of Children's Lies; The Government of Young Children; The Government of Children Between Six and Twelve; The Dramatic Instinct in Children; Sex Discipline for Boys in the Home, and many others. Each pamphlet has a list of references, and a list of the subjects discussed in the monograph. The topical arrangement should make these studies great time savers for all who are concerned with the special problems that arise in the raising or teaching of children.

Dr Earl Barnes has prepared a syllabus of thirty lectures on "The Psychology of Childhood and Youth," which should be helpful to those who care to carry on their studies by themselves. The topics treated are such as heredity, physical development, sense development, how children think, imitation, habits and instincts, growth of personality, etc. Each outline is followed by a selected list of readings, and the pages are interleaved for notes and memoranda. (Huebsch, 50 cents.)

A PROPHECY

IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS of New York City there are about 18,000 women teachers. Of these about 1,300 are married. In recent years sixteen married teachers, fourteen in the elementary and two in the high schools, have either absented themselves or applied for leave of absence because they were soon to bear children. The Board of Education has refused to grant such applications. It has virtually said that New York cannot see its way to having any of its teaching done by mothers with babies. Mayor Mitchel has just taken the first step toward getting New York out of this unhappy position. He has put this question to the president of the Board of Education: "Would not a simple rule providing for leave of absence in this case for a suitable period put an end to all this discussion, and instead of working injury to the schools, be likely to do them a great deal of good?" In a remote future the mayor of some American city will probably put these questions to its board of education: "Have we not too many childless women teachers in our schools? At what age do pupils become too old to receive with profit most of their instruction from women without children?"—*The New Republic*, November 14, 1914.

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ONE CENT

The Expansion Policy propounded on our front page of the November issue pleased such a large number of readers, that we have been asked to reprint it on a card that you can hang up in your study or workshop—as a reminder. If you would care enough to see this reprinted in colors to pay ten cents for a copy, let us know on a postal card. If enough postals are received the printer will be told to go ahead. **THE AMERICAN TEACHER**, 129 Lafayette Street, New York.

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Those who are not growing.
Those who do not love children.
Those who are spiritually dead.
Those who are without enthusiasm.
Those who do little because paid little.
Those who are satisfied with just ordinary results.
Those who scorn knowledge.
Those who are teaching just to get a little money ahead.—*The Educator-Journal*, September, 1914.

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