

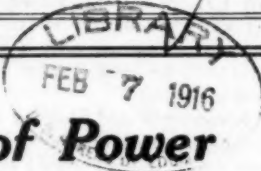
The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

Vol. V. No. 2

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY, 1916

50 Cents a Year



The Magic of Power

How soon shall we Learn to use the Marvelous
Power entrusted to us?

As Individuals we are Feeble, Aimless, Un-
related

As a Collectivity we can be Strong, Purposeful,
Effective

Always and Everywhere the Powerless are held
in Contempt

Always and Everywhere the Powerful are held
in Awe

Only those who fight for their rights as a Body
can ever hope to be Successful

The Mightiest Weapon in the Struggle for
Efficient Power is Organization

In Union there is Strength, because in Union
there is Collective Will

Are we Teachers to continue to ignore the
Greatest Lesson of History:

That Only Union Can Promote Human Wel-
fare.

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN AFFILIATION WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

HUGH FRAYNE

General Organizer, American Federation of Labor, New York

SHOULD the public school teachers organize and affiliate with the American Federation of Labor? Yes. There are many reasons why they should do so, but I shall attempt to enumerate only a few. I believe these will be sufficient to convince the most skeptical.

The same advantages and benefits that come to all other wage earners who have organized into trade unions would come to the school teachers if they were organized, affiliated and working along trade union lines. While it is true that teachers already have their associations, the results obtained cannot be as great and as beneficial to the interests of teachers generally as would be obtained if teachers joined in the regular labor movement, and depended upon trade union activities for the promotion of their interests rather than upon political preferment.

One of the best demonstrations of the benefits to teachers in being affiliated with the American Federation of Labor has been given by the success of the Teachers' Federation of Chicago. Through coöperation with the trade unions of that city the teachers have been able to have legislation enacted that protects them individually and collectively against any attempts of those who for political or other reasons would discriminate against them.

Contrary to a belief which is quite general among the school teachers of the country, their affiliation with the American Federation of Labor would not take from them any of the rights or privileges which they now enjoy in their Associations. Full and complete autonomy is granted by the American Federation of Labor to its affiliated organizations, the only requirement being that its traditional principles and ideals be strictly adhered to.

I am sure that the school teachers of

this country and all other fair minded persons who believe in justice and right can, without any fear of jeopardizing their best interests, subscribe to the following declarations which express certain of the principles that the American Federation of Labor stands for:

1. *The abolition of all forms of involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime.*
2. *Unrelenting protest against the issuance and abuse of the injunction process in labor disputes.*
3. *A work day of not more than eight hours in the twenty-four-hour day.*
4. *A strict recognition of the eight-hour day on all federal, state, or municipal work and a wage of not less than the prevailing per diem wage rate of the class of employment in the vicinity where the work is performed.*
5. *Release from employment one day in seven.*
6. *The abolition of the contract system on public works.*
7. *The abolition of the sweat-shop system.*
8. *Sanitary inspection of factory, workshop, mine, and home.*
9. *Liability of employers for loss of life or injury to body.*
10. *The passage of anti-child labor laws in states where they do not exist, and rigid defense of these laws where they have been enacted.*
11. *Free schools, free textbooks, and compulsory education.*
12. *Suitable and plentiful play grounds for children in all cities.*
13. *Continued agitation for the public bath system in all cities.*
14. *Qualifications in permits to build, of all cities and towns, that there shall be bathrooms and bathroom attachments in all houses or compartments used for habitation.*

15. *Woman suffrage coequal with man suffrage.*

15. *The Nationalization of Telegraph and Telephone.*

17. *The municipal ownership of other public utilities.*

18. *The initiative and referendum and the imperative mandate and right of recall.*

19. *A complete system of United States Government Postal Savings Banks.*

20. *A system of finance whereby money shall be issued exclusively by the Government, with such regulations and restriction as will prevent manipulation by the banking interests for their own private gain.*

These are some of the more important demands which organized labor, in the interest of the workers—aye, of all the people of our country—makes upon modern society. Higher wages, shorter work day, better labor conditions, better homes, better and safer workshops, factories, mills, and mines, in a word, a better, higher, and nobler life. Conscious of the justice, wisdom, and nobility of our cause, the American Federation of Labor appeals to all men and women of labor to join with us in the great movement for its achievement.

Aside from the great benefits that have been brought about by men and

women wage earners in the way of increased wages, the shorter work day, and improvements in the conditions under which work is done, there has been much helpful legislation of a permanent character that has been in the interest not only of the organized but in the interest of the unorganized wage earner as well. A great army of men and women workers, among whom may be included the school teachers who do not want to be classed as wage earners, also have been benefitted greatly thru this legislation.

The teachers by affiliating with the American Federation of Labor have everything to gain and nothing to lose. The influence and the prestige, as well as the confidence and respect that has been established by the American Federation of Labor thru its years of effort in bringing about better conditions of living, would be the most valuable asset that the public school teachers could possibly have. In return, all that would be expected from teachers thru their affiliation would be their moral support and co-operation in promoting the precepts and principles of organized labor. The final establishment of these principles would be of direct and individual benefit to teachers all the time, since the object of organized labor is to bring about better conditions for all.

TEACHERS' UNIONS AT WORK

FREDERICK MILLER

"WHAT THE REASONABLE teacher looks for is not self-government of an entirely autonomous profession, but the means of obtaining such a share in the control of the public service in which he is engaged as will maintain the dignity and influence of what ought to be regarded as a learned profession; safeguard the material interests of the teachers, and remedy or mitigate the defects of bureaucratic administration." Thus clearly and emphatically does Mrs Beatrice Webb state the aims of Teachers' Unions of England.

Is there a single item in this program that is not deserving of the whole-hearted support of every teacher in every school system, of every school official, of every member of the community anxious to have the children taught by competent, satisfied, manly or womanly teachers? To make this program living, strong, and effective, the past has shown that Teachers' Unions are necessary.

In England where unions first became a power a Teachers' Union is as much taken for granted as is the Transport Workers' Union. The National Union

of Teachers of England "is so strong in its activities and organization that it has sometimes been described as the strongest trade union of England. Miss Clara Grant, an elementary school principal of London, pointed out in the May number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* that the National Union has local branches all over the country, holding their own committee and general meetings, with frequent educational lectures, while a strong central body sits in London, to which delegates are sent. The union runs a weekly organ, *The Schoolmaster*, devoted to its own interests and recognized as the chief medium of expressing the voice of the teachers thruout England. It also maintains a representative in Parliament. As is so often the case in the poorly paid profession of teaching, the early struggles of the National Union of Teachers have centered around questions of salaries and professional status. The N. U. T. has frequently acted as a real tower of strength to individuals and groups, protecting them from injustice, tyrannical control of leisure or outside activities, sending representatives down to intervene between teachers and employers or even fellow-teachers, where necessary, and it has a strong "Legal Department" for cases taken to court where mediation has failed, or in cases of libel, assault, accident compensation cases, and so on. On the social side it offers large privileges to its members, i. e., a splendidly managed Provident Fund, providing for sickness, old age and life insurance, house-owning, etc., and it is now developing a Holiday Bureau.

The London Teachers Association, one of the branches of the National Union of Teachers, is a large and active organization of teachers in the London service numbering 20,000 members. The General Secretary in a letter to the Teachers League of New York City, describes its organization and purposes. All the members are full time, fully qualified teachers working in schools under the London Education Authority, and these members are drawn from every

type of school, elementary, secondary, technical, continuation, and university, and also from special schools and centres for the instruction of the defectives. They are governed by a Conference which meets twice a year, the members of the Conference being elected by the members of the Association working in the various cities and boroughs into which London is divided. The work of the Association is continuously administered by a General Committee consisting of about one hundred and thirty members also directly elected by the individual members of the Association in the various cities and boroughs.

The chief departments of the work are:

1. Professional, in the public sense of the word; that is, the consideration of all professional problems relating to the welfare of London teachers as employees of the London Education Authority.
2. Professional, in the personal sense of the word. Each year advice or assistance on personal and professional questions is given to over two thousand of the members, on an average.
3. The publication of *The London Teacher*, the official organ of the Association, which often contains the frankest criticism of the powers that be.
4. General educational work, the holding of meetings, publication in the official organ of the Association of educational memoranda, etc.
5. The promotion of holiday trips to all parts of the world.
6. A Trading Scheme, worked either by encouraging the members to buy goods from specially selected tradesmen who allow a special discount, or acting as agents or as middlemen to wholesale houses.
7. A fire insurance agency by which specially reduced terms can be obtained for the members.
8. Special day visits to places of educational interest.

The Association has always made it a part of its policy to have direct representation upon the education authority for London, and for many years now

the Secretary has continuously been a member of the London County Council, which is the Education Authority and the School Board for London. He seeks the suffrages of the electors in one of the London boroughs in the ordinary way as a member of a particular political party, but his official connection with the London Teachers Association is quite well known in the constituency and on the Council, where he devotes himself particularly to educational work. The General Secretary also has a seat on the educational committee, and watches with eagle eye the interest of its members. Personal deputations are frequently sent to the committee.

Compare this practise with the howl that was raised by the New York City officials when they saw a deputation of teachers at Albany opposing a bill that the officials were fathering. They vowed that teachers' trips to Albany to oppose their bills must cease—and they may, unless the teachers of New York learn from the example of their London fellow-workers that strength and respect come from organization. What would the Board of Education of New York, or the Mayor, think of the New York Teachers Union having a representative on the Board of Estimate's sub-committee on Education, in addition to a politician who happens to be Controller of the City. Even the teachers no doubt think this a rather wild idea—and yet in London it is the regular practise, and the schools are not in the throes of a revolution. Of course, the London methods would hardly do here. For example, take the following from the rules and regulations governing the London schools:

"The only uniformity of practise that the Board of Education desires to see is that each teacher shall think for himself, and work out for himself such methods of teaching as may employ his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and conditions of the school. Uniformity in detail of practise is not desirable even if it were attainable.

No teacher can teach successfully on principles in which he does not believe."

The official attitude of the London Teachers' Association towards regular Labor Unions is one of detachment, altho, of course, many individual teachers are in active sympathy with the Labor Movement, and in close association with it. There is a tendency, however, as the result of the retrenchments consequent upon the War for teachers' organizations to coöperate with the labor organizations and unions because the latter can be relied upon to resist unflinchingly retrenchments in educational expenditure.

A comparison between the London teachers and the New York City teachers all along the line is of itself sufficient to convince both the teachers and the public of the necessity of a teachers' union here.

Our readers are familiar perhaps with the work of the Chicago Teachers' Federation—the strongest teachers' union in the United States, and so it will be necessary merely to recall a few of the facts concerning their history and accomplishments. The object of the Federation as stated in its Constitution is as follows:

To raise the standard of the teaching profession by securing for teachers conditions essential to the best professional service, and to this end to obtain for them tenure of office, equal suffrage and all the rights and benefits to which they are entitled; the consideration and the study of such subjects as the Federation may deem necessary, and the consideration of the pension law.

Since the organization of the Chicago Teachers' Federation seventeen years ago, its history has been one of constant struggle. It has fought its own battles and has given aid to the Chicago Federation of Labor with which it is affiliated. During their struggles the teachers learned as Mr J L Engdahl expressed it in *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* of October, that self-interest for the teachers included the whole school system; that it in-

cluded the welfare of all workers; that it can be promoted only by those forces which tend to promote the general betterment of social conditions. "There is no cringing or cowardice among the Chicago school teachers," he says. "Deserted by old party politicians and reform organizations, the teachers found their place and their support in the labor movement."

As a result of the successful fight to force the delinquent corporations to pay a just share of the taxes, the teachers have been able to raise their maximum salaries of \$825 a year (schedule of 1898) to \$1500 (schedule of 1915). They have also placed the Teachers' Pension Fund on a sound basis. New York teachers please take note. The Federation, realizing the identity of its interests with that of all labor, actively but voluntarily supported the strike of the pressmen and the newsboys in 1912, in addition to aiding the garment workers and coal miners. It has also:

Affiliated with the State Federation of Women's Clubs and helped in the fight for equal suffrage;

Persistently fought the School Book Trust and supported Ella Flagg Young in her fight to free the public schools from politicians and text-book companies;

Fought the scheme of Big Business, thru the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and ex-Superintendent Cooley, to institute a dual system of education, which would put the children of the workers in one class and the children of the rich in another;

Fought to have the use of the public school building given to the people for social centers;

Fought against dark rooms and basement rooms and for better health and educational conditions for children;

Supported a move for lunches for school children and conducted a campaign for the protection of children against preventable contagious diseases;

Actively supported every move for public ownership of all public utilities.

The Federation, as we know, has been

attacked by the Chicago School Board. The affiliations of the School Board members were described in the November number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*. The Federation succeeded in securing a temporary injunction restraining the Board from enforcing the Loeb rule which aimed at the abolition of the Federation. The Board in attempting to have the temporary injunction dissolved, made the following statement among others; "These defendants (the Board of Education) admit that the teachers in the public schools of Chicago are, as a whole, as competent and well qualified as any body of teachers in the United States. . . . It is the well considered and deliberate judgment of the Board of Education that prohibition against memberships in or affiliations with labor unions or federations thereof by teachers is not only a just and reasonable, but also a necessary disciplinary rule and regulation, to insure the maintenance of an efficient system of free schools in said city." No facts are submitted by the Board to prove its contention, the facts being that free schools owe their existence to the strenuous efforts of Labor. The courts, strange to relate, have refused to dissolve the temporary injunction secured by the teachers.

In addition to Chicago, the following cities have Teachers' Unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor: Oklahoma City, Okla; Butte and Missoula, Mont; San Antonio, Texas; Scranton, Pa.

The American Association of University Professors—the Professors' Union—formed last year no doubt as a result of the many assaults of College Boards of Trustees on professors who dared teach what they regarded as the truth, but what the Vested Interests regarded as heresy. The professors realized that unorganized they were weak and helpless, unable to protect themselves against unwarranted and highhanded interference, not only with their teaching, but also with their very livelihood.

Professor Chas. H Judd, Director of

the School of Education, University of Chicago, gave the following as his reasons for the formation of professional organizations:

I advocate professional organization because I see unworthy, selfish agencies rendering ineffective the work of earnest school officers who labor against conservatism and political influence and personal prejudice.

Let us realize that if we do not organize more compactly for professional ends we shall never gain the advantages which come from united action. If we act as individuals, we are like the single fagots of the fable, easily broken by the naked hand. If we will bind ourselves together we shall be strong. It is an impeachment

of American educators that they have not perfected the strongest professional organization in the world.... How long will it be before we realize that a profession must be self made, and that the making of a profession means organized effort, and that organized effort is needed every day for the protection of great professional interests.

When the teachers of the city cast about for a solution of the problems confronting them, they would do well to study the methods adopted by the Chicago Teachers' Federation and the National Union of Teachers of England; for the problems are usually identical and the solution lies in one direction—namely, in the direction of a Teachers' Union.

UNIONIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

CHARLES ZUEBLIN

EVERY CRAFT is to be self-governing if we are to have a democracy. Teachers must be organized into a union independent of their employers—the public. They should be affiliated, in my opinion, with all the other organizations of public employees. The teachers in Chicago were forced into affiliation with the American Federation of Labor because they were denied the salaries due them, for which they themselves had secured the money by legislation increasing the available taxes.

The only virtue in having the teachers affiliated with organizations of private labor is that they thus ally themselves with the masses. But there will be increasing public employment, and we ought to distinguish between those that serve the public directly and those that

serve them indirectly under capitalism. Therefore, it is undesirable for the teachers to affiliate with trade unions, but imperative that they should join with policemen, firemen, and civil servants generally, whether of community, state or nation. They will thus be associated with the average parents of average children at the same time that they do not ally themselves against the public with those who are organized to deal with private employers.

For the proper training of the coming citizen of the democracy the teacher must be a participant in a self-governing institution. The teachers' union ought, therefore, to be encouraged by the boards of education and educational executives. But if these have not the vision, the teachers must organize anyhow.

**"The American Teacher" is the tireless exponent of Socialization.
Join us.**

AN APPEAL FOR A TEACHERS' UNION

TEACHERS with few exceptions are not organized. Teachers with few exceptions are regarded as being nerveless and without backbone. Their pay is miserable. Their hours are seemingly short, but their work is exhausting. In spite of all this teachers have failed to learn the lesson learned by labor everywhere—namely the necessity of Organization. Teachers have refused to recognize that they are workers—highly skilled workers it is true—but workers nevertheless. They have failed to see the identity of their interests with the interests of all labor; and so the idea of union has been repugnant to them.

No group of workers, no matter who they are, can resist exploitation if they are unorganized. No group of workers can retain its manliness—its independence—if they are unorganized. No group of workers can retain the self-respect of the community if they are unorganized.

The teachers' plain duty therefore to the community, to the children, is to organize into one great Teachers' Federation or Union.

A democratic community has no use for teachers afraid of their shadows, afraid of their Principals, of their Superintendents, of Boards of Education; afraid to criticise the existing order, afraid to suggest reforms.

The children have no use for frightened, overworked, spineless, spiritless teachers. They need self-respecting men and women, so that they may develop into self-respecting boys and girls.

And finally you owe it to yourselves, Fellow Teachers, to assert your manhood and womanhood, to Organize for your protection, to be able to "fight with dignity and force" for proper conditions, for proper salaries, for a share in the control of the schools, for a voice in the formulation of school courses of study.

Or would you rather, hat in hand, wait in some politician's ante-room preparatory to licking his boots, and there beseech him to help you.

Which method do you prefer, Fellow Teacher? It is for you to choose! Now is the time! Let not ignorance and prejudice blind you! But consider the successful experience of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, the London Teachers' Association, and the National Teachers' Union of England.

UNION OR ISOLATION

IN AN EMERGENCY, human beings behave altruistically. They have to, under stress of social ostracism. Many teachers are now convinced that the Age of Isolation is wasting away and is being replaced by the Age of Socialization.

Union or Isolation: which shall it be? Will all those teachers interested in organizing a Union kindly write us? If the returns are impressive, we shall undertake a few experiments in Team Work. Write to us.

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No. 2

This paper is striving to do its part
in the creation of a real profession of
teaching, the members of which shall
be self-respecting and respected, thru
stimulating clear thinking on the work
and the social position of teachers, and
thru intelligent criticism of systems of
educational administration. No greater
service than this could be rendered to
the children of the state.

INTIMATIONS OF FREEDOM

THE AVERAGE teacher is a born timid.
He assumes without question, he accepts
without challenge. The exception illu-
minates the rule.

We take pleasure in calling attention
to the spiritual awakening of our Illinois

comrades-in-pedagogy. They are agi-
tating for a state-wide emancipation of
schoolmen and schoolwomen from the
cramping circumscriptions of yesterday.
They aver that "most of the provisions
about school law were enacted fifty
years ago, when *social, economic, and
industrial conditions* differed widely
from those of the present; and the gen-
eral problem of the present time is to
make such revisions, amendments, and
additions to the school law *as will fit the
school system to the new conditions.*"

WHAT ARE the larger duties of super-
intendents? How can superintendents
achieve a much-needed leadership in *cul-
tural* activities?

What do you mean by the "freedom"
of the teacher?

These pointed queries are as relevant
in New York City as in Chicago or in
any other haunted locality.

One thing is certain: the teacher-in-
ordinary will never know the vast im-
plications of Power or the promising re-
wards of Achievement until he (or she)
has elaborated a creative code of social
duties for himself and for her "Superi-
ors."

How many teachers are alive to their
social responsibilities?

How many of our superintendents are
leaders in education?

How many of us inspire the children,
or, in fact, one another?

How then, can we increase our social
efficiency?

ON BEING CHEAP

WHOEVER HAS devoted years of thought
and effort to the mastery of any subject,
or to the acquisition of high skill in any
craft, is likely to have some respect for
the value of his own service, for his
own performance, quite apart from any
cash return his work may bring. Such

a person is likely also to have some respect for the expert service of other trained men and women, to have some appreciation of the specialists, quite distinct from the regard for the "earnings" of the specialists. On the other hand, the child of fortune, the gambler, the untrained and inexpert, the grafter have this in common: that they have no realization of what it means to be an expert and therefore no appreciation of the service of the expert. Or they suspect the genuineness of the expert, as being in the nature of a secret or a trick.

When we leave the administration of important public works in the hands of speculators, adventurers, manipulators and "politicians" we should not be astonished on finding them incapable of appreciating the value of expert services. They will perhaps be content to pay high fees for lawyers, who have, in a way, the trick of showing people how to evade the letter of the laws, or how to use it for advancing their own purposes. They will perhaps be content to pay high fees for engineers and expert managers and financiers, who have, in a way, the trick of showing people how to economize. But they will not pay suitable wages for carpenters and mechanics, if they can help it, for these are only "handy men" and to the inexpert one handy man is about as good as another—and some of them are much cheaper than others. They will not pay suitable wages to teachers, for almost anyone can keep a class, and some class-tenders are much cheaper than others.

If our craft is to have any standing in the community, if it is to command the respect and the remuneration commensurate with the value of its social service, we must develop our own standards of work and we must insist upon our work being up to standard. We must resist every attempt on the part of cheap managers to replace teachers with cheap "handy men" and we must join with other classes of workers in advancing the principle that expert work should be done by experts and be paid for with an adequate wage.

Whether teachers in public schools join forces for their economic advancement with other public servants, or with organized workers in other crafts, they will gain little until they themselves insist upon suitable standards of workmanship for all who seek admission to this branch of service. We shall continue to be cheap, and to lend ourselves to the politicians seeking to make records of "economy," so long as we ignore this question of qualification and selection.

A CORRECTION

IN THE ARTICLE entitled "Teachers on Boards of Education" by Benjamin Morrison, in our last number, appeared the statement that one of the high school principals in New York City had implied some resentment at being required to introduce the coöperative part-time system of vocational instruction without having been consulted as to its practicability or wisdom. We are authoritatively informed that this plan was introduced only in those high schools that had accepted it thru the consent of the principals to coöperate in the experiment. The principals of all the high schools were given an opportunity to designate "coördinators" for this work; but none was required to do so thru any official order.

At the same time, it is obvious that any coöperative plan in education logically implies coöperation all along the line. If the elements of the plan were so new, special, or technical in nature as to make it impracticable for high school principals to assist in the formulation of the plan, that of course would be reason enough for delaying the invitation to coöperate until the plan had been made ready. But the acceptance by principals of the offer of the coöperative plan seems to us to carry with it a mutual obligation on the part of both formulators and principals to determine the proper administration of the plan by as frequent conferences as might seem necessary to both.

It is very probable that the burden of general business on the calendar of the

Board of Superintendents has had a great deal to do in the past with preventing the working out of many plans for cooperation. In fact, everyone interested in Educational Administration in New York City knows that the Board of Superintendents, as well as the Board of Education itself, are heavily overladen with sheer grinding labor. Aside from the endeavor of each board at times to cover the field of the other in addition to its proper one, only the Board of Education has taken steps looking toward relief. And only that board has favored tentatively the measure which both will be forced to adopt ultimately and completely.

The measure which the long-continued strain of overwork by administrators will force is the same measure which enlightened social vision perceives is necessary. Not only is it easier to share work and responsibility with twenty thousand than it is to accomplish the same work with a few score, but administration itself is accomplished with even less waste of motion when the "bossed" share in the democratic management of an essentially democratic institution. Overwork for administrative boards and overwork for teachers are alike unnecessary. Let us cooperate and eliminate the wastefulness of it all. It may be that when we cooperate in counsel as Mr Morrison has suggested in his article, we shall come to the conclusion that after all it is not overwork that makes us cry out, but rather that it is the strain incident to the barbarous abnormality in our administrative relations.

OUR UNION, U S A

RECOGNIZING THE STRENGTH that lies in a union of forces, the representatives of the straggling colonies along the Atlantic side of the American continent some years ago formed a political alliance. It was the apparent purpose of this alliance to promote what we might today consider purely spiritual aims, altho the material foundations of life were not entirely ignored. We read, for example, that "life, liberty and the pur-

suit of happiness" are the major objects of this union. While no one, so far as we know, claims that the union has been successful to the extent of one hundred per cent efficiency, there is great divergence of opinion as to whether and how far—short of perfection—the union has succeeded, up to the present. Indeed, there are many who even challenge the wisdom of the aims, and while in favor of retaining the union, these would gradually divert it from its original purpose and substitute therefor other objects of union endeavor. Thus, for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," they would substitute "Security of Property and the Pursuit of Profit" as the objects of the union's solicitude.

One of the indications of the tendency toward a more "practical"—and doubtlessly more "profitable"—view of the meaning of Our Union is furnished by the recent formation of the "National Americanization Committee." This Committee, which has managed to obtain for use on its letter-head the names of many men and women for whom we have sincere regard, as well as the names of many others, announces its purpose to be the furtherance of methods for the Americanization of Immigrants—a most laudable purpose, and one which will have in the future, as it has had in the past, the hearty support of THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

* * * *

The Americanization of Immigrants! The inculcation of those humanitarian ideals that have given Our Union a distinct place in the history of Civilization! The assimilation of the disinherited into the larger life of our Democracy! The training of the suppressed for the enjoyment and the exercise of Freedom! The liberation of the victims of bigotry and parochialism to the generosity and catholicism of our broad Fraternalism! The elevation of the bowed and humbled to the dignity and self-respect of human Equality!

Could any program be more inspiring? Could any plan more certainly call forth the best of our idealism and devotion?

What better indication could one wish of America's spiritual leadership? To this noble set of purposes we may expect every American Teacher to lend unqualified approval; and so far as margin of time and material resource permit, active support. We bespeak for the National Americanization Committee the earnest consideration of our readers.

There must be some mistake.

We have before us a printed reference to the plans of a certain National Americanization Committee. Among other items we note plans for various "campaigns" to be conducted in the near future. There is the "Efficiency First" campaign, which will attempt to find out "the causes of strikes among foreign born workmen." The implications of this announcement are ambiguous. We are to understand either that the true-blue Americans never strike, or that causes of strikes are fundamentally different between the two groups of workers. Again, the committee seeks to accomplish something "by translating American industrial standards to the foreign-born lest the strike agitator get there first." It is very broadly hinted here that the strike agitator is equally anxious to translate American industrial standards to the foreign-born, but the Committee would like very much to "beat him to it," as some of our American-born say. Now the thing that is not quite clear is this: Are the Committee and the Agitator bent upon enlightening the foreign-born upon the conditions revealed by the National Industrial Relations Commission with a view to fore-arming the f-b by forewarning him? Or do they wish to impress him with the American ideals of Submission, Obedience, Humility, Reverence-for-God's-Industrial-Representatives, Gratitude-for-Job, Vote-for-Your-Friends, and similar spiritual instruments for the enslavement of peoples?

What are the American Standards? Are they the conditions of life and labor for which we are to strive by virtue of our spiritual inheritance from the revolutionists of the eighteenth century, or

are they the conditions that prevail in Colorado mine fields, in Michigan, in West Virginia, in New Jersey strike zones, in Massachusetts or Chicago strike zones?

Mr Frank P. Walsh, the Chairman of the Industrial Relations Commissions is convinced that the very first essential for the protection of the American standards from further degradation was the formation of strong unions of all workers—including public school teachers. Mr Walsh was invited to cooperate with the National Americanization Committee, but he declined to do so on the ground that the task of the Committee appeared to be directed toward the thwarting of the workers' efforts to better their condition thru the medium of the trade unions. In a letter to the Committee Mr Walsh said that better standards of living and of citizenship among immigrant workers can be brought about only thru the betterment of wages and working conditions, and that the trade unions are the agency to do that work.

Several weeks before the Committee met on January 19-20, 1916, the Chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission wrote urging upon the Americanization Committee the endorsement of trade and labor unions as Americanization agencies, but the proposal was never considered.

Therefore, all in favor of the well-known American Ideals and Standards will have to join together, lest certain other agitators get there first.

The Federation of Teachers' Associations of New York City is attempting to raise a fund of thousands of dollars among the teachers "to educate the general public as to the true interests of our schools." The Federation calls attention to the fact that "The Association of Mayors of the State of New York has been formed. The chief object of the mayors' association is to secure control of the number, salary, and tenure of office of teachers." And the Federation proposes to fight the union of mayors by collecting money to print matter to educate the public. Nonsense! The mayors are not afraid of paltry thousands in money, nor of education. But they are afraid of votes. Meet 'em with another union, and a stronger one.

SIDETALKS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS

X

SUBMISSION OR SALTPETER—WHICH?

J S

A NEW ENGLAND teacher of chemistry recently wrote down his reaction formulae toward life. A textbook publishing firm printed them on a six by eight Christmas card, illustrating the season, but not the formulae, with a modern home scene of a mother reading to her three children by daylight, while thru the craftsman window appear the three wise men and the "herdsmen" regarding the Star of Bethlehem. The formulae are given the title "The Teacher's Vow." You may have seen the card.

Well, there are seven "Vows" in all, breathing submission or priggishness more or less offensively. One of the seven seems to me to have been inspired possibly by a principal who has forgotten his hard economic life as an underling, or possibly by a member of a board of education who favors economy thru the sharp practise of refusing appointments to substitute teachers or by cutting the wage of defenseless teachers-in-training. But it may have been inspired by a member of a board of city fathers who, like some members of boards of education, class teachers as "subordinates"—even as "paid subordinates," no matter how poorly paid. This vow, which I trust all superintendents will detest, reads,

I will accept my remuneration, however small, without envy, complaint, or discouragement, never forgetting that a teacher is a leader into the higher life, and not merely a wage earner.

Suppose we should try to put those words and all the abject submission they stand for into the mouths and minds of Pennsylvania coal miners, say in the town of Reading, paraphrasing the vow slightly to fit, and having it read,

I will accept whatever I find in my envelope, however little, without a kick, never forgetting that the mining of coal is a divine undertaking, which I infer from the word of George F Baer, and*

never forgetting that I am therefore not merely a digger of slate or a lighter of fuses.

Knowing the spirit of the miners as I do, I should not expect to try to make them listen to this vow, and then be able to take myself out of Reading alive. And yet, it is astonishing how sincerely the miners seem to respect teachers.

I have put this matter of submission before you, sirs, because I have reason to believe that, in spite of the fact that as officials you can make use of submissive teachers, as men and as representatives of society you can have no manner of use for them. The question that concerns me vitally now is, Are you prepared to throw off the cloak of officialdom, and with some of us get into this big job of putting spirit into the teaching profession? Because of your long experience and good understanding of educational conditions you could help a great deal. But before you try to help, suppose you try to understand those who are already on the job.

You will find that we are getting mighty tired of the ancient and respectable attitude of submission of teachers to any part of society that deigns to advise, patronize, use, or kick them. You will find that we are preparing to surprise the type of chemist aforesaid by *substituting saltpeter for submission* in the compound of the social relation of teachers to their bosses and exploiters. Whether any of your honorable body has studied chemistry or not, you will be able to realize the value of saltpeter as a stimulus to respect.

Interpreted in the language which the man in the street or the superintendent in the swivel chair will understand, we are now driving for the organization of a great union of teachers. It may be that our aim of supplying dynamic power for

* George F Baer, late President of the Pennsylvania & Reading Coal Company, once replied to a letter calling upon him for an explanation of his attitude toward striking miners, as follows: "I and other Christian gentlemen have been given control of the propertied interests of the country by Divine Providence."

the profession may be attained better by the formation of a nation-wide union of teachers alone, or it may be that affiliation with the American Federation of Labor will give us the strength and the spirit we crave. If you want to be told more of why we need a union, read almost any page of this number of THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

If you are interested, you can be of use in either one of two ways; by helping to make up the chemical and spiritual compound, or by sitting a little tighter on the lid.

PARENTS SEEK TO HELP TEACHERS

THE SCHOOL PATRON'S Section of the N E A is reported to have adopted an ambitious and worthy set of aims, at the Oakland meeting last summer. We are particularly impressed with some of them, as they indicate a fresh approach to our problems, an approach that is certainly not common among teachers themselves. Here for example, is item 7:

To give the teachers adequate pay and provide more school kitchens.

That appeals to us. The newspaper account from which we draw does not tell us whether the teachers are to have their meals prepared in these kitchens, but we understand that some such plan has been tried without serious consequences.

Here is item 12:

To establish more schools for delinquents and try to eliminate politics from all school management.

We believe in segregation, of delinquents as well as of politicians; but it is hardly fair, from our experience, to place them in the same class. We have known some very honest delinquents. There are other good features in this report.

EVERY fool believes what his teacher tells him, and calls his credulity science or morality as confidently as his father called his divine revelation.—G. B. S.

Communications

THE SCRANTON TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE FORMATION of the Scranton (Pa.) Teachers' Association was the result of a mass meeting of the grade teachers of the city, to protest against a written examination on McMurray's "How To Study." The examination was scheduled to be held by Superintendent of Schools, Samuel E. Weber, on the afternoon of May 21, 1915.

The protest meeting was held on the afternoon of April 23, at which time resolutions were adopted asking Dr Weber to reconsider his order and to make the examination optional, and not compulsory. A committee was also appointed to invite Superintendent Weber to address this meeting, with the hope that a compromise might be effected.

Dr. Weber accepted the invitation, but stood firm on his original order and refused to rescind the action of calling upon every grade teacher employed by the city to take the Written Lesson.

Upon the withdrawal of Superintendent Weber from the meeting the teachers decided to form a permanent organization for the purpose of promoting the social and mental efficiency of the teachers, and for the betterment of the welfare of the children.

Another meeting was held on April 30, and at this session the teachers accepted an invitation issued by President Steven J. McDonald of the Scranton Central Labor Union, to join the American Federation of Labor and its local adjunct, the Central Labor Union. The name, Scranton Teachers' Association, was adopted, and officers were elected.

This much accomplished, steps were taken immediately to devise ways and means for the protection of their rights as teachers granted them by their state diplomas.

On May 21, the day set for the examination on "How To Study," an extra-

ordinary meeting was held in the Central High School Auditorium. An essay on "How To Study" was read, and a lecture was delivered by Dr L G Sweeney, of Scranton, on "Medicine, With Its Relation to Pedagogy."

Very few teachers took the commanded examination, but Dr Weber announced later that another would be conducted on June 18.

On the morning of June 18, Miss Anna J Cadden, on behalf of the Teachers' Association, went to court and asked for a preliminary injunction restraining Dr Weber from conducting the compulsory examination. The writ was made returnable June 25.

However, on June 21, the members of the School Board held a meeting, the chief item of business being the reappointment of all teachers who had submitted to Dr Weber's "Written Lesson." It was a master move on their part, for it rendered impossible, the granting of the injunction to restrain the examination.

Consequently, Judge Newcomb, on the day of the hearing advised the teachers, for the sake of harmony to submit to the test. He declared that they had the law with them but regretted that it was utterly impossible for him to give back their positions to them.

Acting on Judge Newcomb's advice the teachers agreed to take Dr Weber's "Written Lesson," and set the following morning, June 26, 1915, as the day.

Following the examination, came the announcement of new contracts which were to be signed and returned to the Secretary's Office by August 7. These contracts contained the following clause:

"It is Expressly Understood and Agreed, That the said teacher shall, during the term of this contract do such professional readings as the Board of School Directors and the District Superintendent shall direct or prescribe, and the said teacher further agrees to take such written or oral tests or examinations upon said prescribed reading as the Board of School Directors and the Dis-

trict Superintendent shall, from time to time, direct or prescribe."

Again the teachers submitted to the ruling of the Board and signed. Then it was decided by the members of the Association to take an active part in politics. This they did and in the November election succeeded in electing one member to the School Board.

From the very outset, public sentiment favored the teachers, and nearly every union in the city pledged them their moral and financial support.

Regular monthly meetings of the Association are now being held, and it is planned to conduct lecture courses bringing the leading scholars of the country to the city to lecture.

A SCRANTON TEACHER.

Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Inclosed please find check covering amount of two subscriptions for your fine paper.

Send one copy each month to the principal who objected to his teachers reading a Whiteman's publication. It may wake him up.

Continue to send mine. I have learned to think along broader lines—thanks to your doctrines.

WILLIAM NEIDLINGER,
Washington Irving High School,
New York.

Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Yest, I am still getting *and reading* THE AMERICAN TEACHER. It is full of live ideas energetically presented. I find it very stimulating.

ELIZABETH HODGSON.

Wichita, Kansas.

The fundamental principle of a teachers' organization must be the proper training and education of children and the present and future welfare and social efficiency of those children. But teachers must not be blamed or censured for using this same organization to promote their own welfare. As a general rule, what is good for the teachers is also good for the children.—*The Illinois Teacher.*

SWEET TREASONABLENESS

Privacy is the aboriginal sin against Social Progress.

Privacy is the refuge of the self-complacent.

Privacy is the circumvallation of the indifferent.

Privacy brands the individual, as Secession stigmatizes the State.

Where Privacy is, there Individualism and Discord and Competition and Suspicion rankly luxuriate.

Social Mindedness begins where Privacy—Snobbery—is checkmated.

All of which is preliminary to the startling truth that Teachers are the most private persons in the World.

They teach history from Books and boycott history from Life.

They teach Language but blindly ignore the pulsing social Aspirations bodied forth in Language.

They teach Freedom but thwart the audacious freedoms of Thought and of Speech.

They Espouse Indifferentism: they frustrate Progressivism.

And all because they are Private Persons torpidly unmindful of the Meaning of Citizenship in a Collectivity.

Teachers constitute that Great Anomaly: the Private Citizen.

Private citizenship (a contradiction in purposes) is about as fruitful for Progress as Celibate Parenthood.

All of which is preliminary to the more startling truth that Teachers are the most anti-Social persons in the World.

The teacher is not united to his fellow teacher. He prefers to mind "HIS OWN BUSINESS!"

The teacher is not united to his fellow workers. He prefers to work out HIS OWN "salvation"!

The teacher is not united to the Social whole. He prefers to keep HIS OWN cast-iron culture intact and pure!

The teacher is not united to the International Brotherhood of Toilers. He prefers to share the gains of Struggle. The Struggle itself is beneath his dignity.

All of which is preliminary to the most startling truth that Teachers are the moral parasites of Society, inflated, self-deluded Egotists.

MORAL—The road to progress is neither straight nor narrow: It is crooked and spacious.

We Teachers have been living in a Fool's Paradise where nothing is true but falsehood. Have we the intellectual courage to meet the treacherous facts of life halfway?

Willy-nilly, we shall have to sacrifice some of our precious paper idealisms. The first paper ideal to fling into the waste basket is entitled: **SELF-SUFFICIENCY.**

Isolation is an outworn fiction. Interdependence is the bond of socialization.

Let us inaugurate an Interdependence Day for Teachers.

"Sweet Treasonableness" is the living sign of our emancipation for Paper Idealism:

THE IDEALISM OF PRIVATEERS.