THE ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY

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PREFACE

THIS book was projected with the idea that the time is here for such a preliminary treatment, as an organic whole, of the field of educational administration. In seeking for a unifying principle the inevitable choice fell to our national ideals as expressed in democracy as we Americans have conceived it.

The aim has been to deal with principles, giving just enough space to history and description to furnish a suitable background and to account for sequences. In this way only did it seem possible to deal with the problems presented in such a constructively critical manner as the situation seemed to demand.

The book makes its appeal (1) to teachers and students of education, (2) to school boards and all school officials, and (3) to public men and legislators interested in a comprehensive survey of the problems of public education.

For materials the author has made free use of reports and bulletins of the United States Commissioner's office, of State departments of education, and of city boards and superintendents; of various studies by educational experts of colleges and universities and among school superintendents. Perhaps it is fair to say, however,

that the chief source has been from an experience of over thirty years in direct relationship with public schools and public education, and as a constant student of the problems thus presented.

Acknowledgment is due and gratefully expressed for the many courtesies of school officials in various cities visited or where application was made for published reports and other documents bearing upon the subjects passed in review. Especially is such acknowledgment due to Doctor L. D. Coffman, of the School of Education, and Dean Eugene Davenport, of the College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, for careful and sympathetic reading of the manuscript and for numerous and valuable suggestions and criticisms.

THE AUTHOR.

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PART ONE

FIELD AND SCOPE OF TREATMENT OUTLINED

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries have staged no more remarkable action in the world's drama than the evolution of public education. Sprung from the philosophical theories of Plato and Aristotle, this evolution did not reach concrete and tangible expression until the sixteenth century A. D. One of the earliest and most notable fruits of the Reformation during this century was the impetus given to the movement for popular education. In the same century the Dutch celebrated their victories over Spain, in their remarkable struggle for religious freedom, by establishing both common schools and universities. Simultaneously was laid, in Massachusetts, the foundation and early foreshadowing of our own system of common schools. As an essential part of the same general manifestation of this earlier growth came the schools established by the Dutch in New Amsterdam and the Quakers in Pennsylvania.

1. National Movements

Not, however, until the Revolutionary War had cemented the American colonies into a nation whose earlier declaration of independence became a reality with the war's close did the idea of free public education take form as a national policy. About the same time Prussia, awakened by the losses of the Napoleonic Wars, set resolutely about the task of establishing a system of universal education which later became the dominant system of the united German Empire and the greatest system of popular education in modern Europe.

In a similar way France was roused into action by the Franco-Prussian War and set seriously about the work of organizing the educational forces of the Republic into a state system of public education. Switzerland, Italy, and the Scandinavian states have emulated Prussia, with varying degrees of success, until all these countries are now in line as representing, with us, the democratic idea of education. Japan, in the Orient, stands forth as a remarkable example of the transfer of national methods in education. Here a people of different race ideals has succeeded in adapting much of the best in education that Western civilization has produced, thus giving that nation a most complete system of public schools under efficient organization. This Japan has done, too, apparently without sacrificing any essential features of her own national ideals.

2. Motives for Organized Systems of Education

The narrower and more selfish interests of individuals, clans, or families, or the more effective and general propagation of religious doctrines, were the earlier motives for organized effort in education. Of these two, relig-

ious interests came to dominate the schools on account of the effective organization of various churches and cults. The growth of cities in Europe, the revival and spread of commerce among the new modern nations, the reorganization of industries to suit the demands of this wider distribution of their products, and, above all, the spread of democratic ideals, all conspired to change the motive of education to these more secular interests and to transfer the administration of education from church to state.

3. Steps Leading to Secularization of Education

At first education was administered almost solely by the church. Thus it was that the masses came to look upon it as a secondary religious function of that body. Occasionally individual enterprises sprang up as commercial ventures; but the idea of a system of public education, administered by experts especially trained and equipped for such service, has developed slowly in most countries. Meantime the church, especially in its original types and where it was definitely established by the state, has contended strenuously for the retention of the educational function as its prerogative.

Against this attitude of the religious orders two forces have operated powerfully and are still operative. In the first place, the Reformation resulted in splitting organized Christianity into numerous sects and denominations, thus distributing both the authority and the responsibility of education among a large number of bodies. One very important and direct result of this change was to leave a large body of people who were unattached to any Christian sect without means of education in a form acceptable to them.

In the second place, the growth of the idea of democ-

racy has put a peculiar stress upon the need of universal education. The development of modern science and its application to the industries has further accentuated the necessity of finding some scheme which will insure such universal educational facilities.

Out of the reaction of these contending forces has come the present situation with regard to the organization and administration of education. As we may readily see, the situation varies greatly in the different countries above referred to. The more directly these have come up out of traditional ecclesiastical control, the more difficult has it been to break away from this and to make education a secular function of the State. In this respect Japan represents the extreme of release from traditional complications. The British colonial governments of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are further illustrations of a weakened influence of tradition as compared with the mother country.

In the United States, while we are still left with a dominant secular control, yet the peculiar nature of our institutions, together with the vastness of the immigration to our shores, has not left us free from some serious complications in this respect. There can be no ground for doubt, however, as to the outcome. If we are to maintain the free institutions for which our fathers contended we must maintain a complete and universal system of free public education. Church schools and schools under private control may still be maintained, and for an indefinite time to come. They need not be interfered with so long as they are able to show results in education that are a reasonably satisfactory equivalent of the secular schools of the State. Such a continuance of these schools, however, can never relieve the State of its obligation to support, at public expense,

such a system of education as shall fully meet the requirements for maintaining those conditions of intelligence, skill, and morality among the people necessary to the perpetuation of our democratic institutions.

The inadequacy of a system of schools administered solely by the church stands out more clearly with each advanced step in the evolution of democratic societies with their ever-increasing demands for technical education.

4. Causes of Slow Development of Popular Education

The retardation which the tradition of religious control of education has caused in the development of an efficiently administered educational scheme of universal character has been much greater than at first appears. In the first place it has made it more difficult for the people at large to grasp the significance of education as a public measure and financed from the common treasury. So deeply did the popular mind become habituated to the performance, by the church, of the educational function that many even yet fail to appreciate the need and the economic importance, for instance, of the supervisory function as exercised by the State or district in the management of schools. The same state of mind has been a chief cause for a similar lethargy in regard to the professional training of those who are to teach and supervise these schools. Nevertheless, our schools may now be said to be completely secularized. To quote from a recent study of this subject:[1] "To-day we find in every State a system of public education in which civic and industrial aims are dominant, in which religious instruction is either entirely eliminated or else

[1] Samuel W. Brown, "The Secularization of American Education," contributions to Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912.

reduced to the barest and most formal elements, and the control of which is vested well-nigh exclusively in the State or some subdivision thereof. Two factors have been dominant in bringing about this transformation. The first of these is the conviction that a republic can securely rest only on an educated citizenship; the second is a sacred regard by the State for the religious opinion of the individual citizen."

Another cause of this retardation is seen in the difficulty with which the full significance of democracy in education is grasped by the popular mind. Even yet there are many who think of schools chiefly as a means of advantage to the individual or his family. From the point of view of the childless taxpayer this takes form in a protest at having to help educate his neighbor's children. The man who patronizes only private schools, for which he pays directly, or the man who, for conscience' sake, helps pay for a school as a religious propaganda, often calls the additional tax for the support of public schools unjust. These momentarily forget their share of interest in that part of the body politic which can neither afford the luxury of exclusiveness which the private school offers nor accept the doctrines which the church would inculcate.

Even if it were possible for all to accept some of the many forms of religious faith as a basis for education, such a scheme could not begin to compete with the State in the efficiency of the schools organized. Many of the different religious denominations are small and therefore financially weak. They could never hope to keep pace with the stronger organizations in the support of adequate school facilities.

Along with other things, the ability to understand the greatly increased cost of education has developed tar-