SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOOL REPORTS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

THE schools must have leadership. By common consent the superintendent of schools is the official leader of the educational activities of the public-school system, and also the most influential factor in shaping public educational opinion. Every superintendent of schools accordingly must have a clearly defined educational policy and an administrative policy equally clear and defined. It goes without saying also that he must be able to justify both his educational doctrine and his administrative and supervisory policy. The present volume is intended, as far as it goes, to help the superintendent of schools, and other persons who are charged with the responsibility of providing good schools and school systems for the public, to formulate and justify their opinions and procedure. It is hoped, therefore, that the book will be of some use to principals and teachers as well as to superintendents, and also to members of boards of education and other school officials.

The several essays of which the book consists were written at different times and of course under different circumstances. Most of them have been published in educational periodicals and in other

journals. They are brought together here because taken together they have the general purpose expressed in the preceding paragraph. Readers who are sufficiently interested in the book to read it through will find some repetitions in it. These repetitions have been allowed to remain because they are found in different settings and hence deal with the subject under discussion from somewhat different points of view. Two or three of the essays can hardly be classified as material from the field of school administration. They are, however, included in the book because they have been frequently called for by correspondents, and because they seem to the writer to suggest studies which any superintendent or principal might well desire to promote.

In accordance with the general purpose of the book, the first essay deals with the "Meaning of Education." This essay endeavors to outline specifically, though in general terms, the necessary educational doctrine of a superintendent of public schools in a democratic society like ours, and it suggests also in outline the different kinds of schools which the conception of education defined in the essay requires for its embodiment in practice. In other words, the first essay attempts to outline briefly educational opportunity in relation to contemporary educational needs.

The nature of the second essay is defined in its title, "Some Principles of School Administration." This essay was originally read at the meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association in 1913. It attempts to set forth in a brief, but it is hoped in a definite, way certain fundamental principles which every superintendent who seeks to define his administrative policy needs to assimilate.

The third essay deals with "Town and City School Reports, More Particularly Superintendents' Reports," and aims to achieve two distinct but related purposes; first, to show the unsatisfactory character of most school reports as they are; and second, to suggest definite ways of improving them. Much uncertainty undoubtedly exists in the minds of superintendents concerning the aims, scope, and method of the reports which they are required to submit from time to time for the information of the school board, the teaching staff, and the public. This essay seeks to define these important elements of school reports, and the writer hopes that it will be found of service in the field which it covers. It was read at the meeting of Section L, A.A.A.S. in December, 1915 (Chairman's address), and was printed in *School and Society* for January 29 and February 16, 1916.

These three essays specifically embody the pur-

pose of the entire book, and the reader will have no difficulty in recognizing that they are directly concerned with the problem which the superintendent or principal must deal with in his endeavor to attain the resources and the leadership which is demanded of him as an educational organizer, director, and supervisor. The remaining essays of the book deal with particular aspects of the educational field which the superintendent must traverse.

The next essay, "Testing the Efficiency of the Public Schools," is an attempt to formulate for the superintendent certain questions which must be satisfactorily answered in any endeavor to determine whether the school system under his direction is reasonably efficient. This essay was read at a conference of mayors and other officials of New York State who were interested in educational administration as well as other phases of municipal affairs, and printed in the proceedings of that conference in 1912. The essay makes no pretense of completeness; that is, it does not, of course, seek to formulate all the questions which must be answered when the superintendent seeks to ascertain to what extent his school system is accomplishing the purposes for which it exists. The questions selected are, however, fundamental. They offer the superintendent an opportunity to proceed with a survey of his school system that ought to yield information

essential to one who is earnestly seeking to discover what he is doing, how it is done, and the results achieved. In short, most of the questions in this essay must be asked perennially by the superintendent who is not satisfied merely with general knowledge about the work under his direction, but seeks specific information on fundamental aspects of it, who desires himself to face the situation as it really is, to lead his staff to complete realization of that situation, and to work with them for the improvement of it. Most of the questions naturally cover a number of topics. The eight questions themselves, therefore, if written out in full would be expanded into many times eight. Some of the questions carry their own meaning without further discussion. Several of them, however, because of their contemporary significance, are discussed somewhat fully.

The essay, "Courtis Arithmetic Tests applied to Employees in Business Houses," is the report of a study made jointly by the writer and Mr. Harry D. Gaylord, Secretary of the New England Society of Mathematics Teachers, and printed in *Educational Administration and Supervision* in November, 1917. The study was undertaken to discover by actual measurements whether the results achieved in the fundamental operations in arithmetic in the public schools were commensurate with the demands of

business houses. During the past ten years we have devoted a good deal of attention to measuring the achievements in arithmetic of public-school pupils, but as far as I know no studies were made prior to this one to ascertain whether the achievements of the schools actually met the needs of business. Of course, no finality can be claimed for the results presented in the study, but they are suggestive because they cover about two hundred and fifty employees in one of the largest Boston banks and about the same number of employees in one of the largest of Boston's department stores. If any one is encouraged to carry such a study further, the writer suggests that he consider not only the achievements in arithmetic of eighth-grade pupils, but that he measure the achievements of pupils in commercial courses in the high schools and in schools of commerce, and compare the achievements of such high-school pupils with the scores made by employees in business. The reason for this suggestion is implied in the study itself.

The next essay, "Measuring Results in Learning Latin," is a first attempt in an important field of high-school work. The study was made by graduate students in education working in the writer's Seminary in School Administration. The measurement of educational results is now a commonplace of school supervision, but we have as yet few or no

reliable methods of measuring results achieved by high-school pupils. This study was one of the first, if not the first, attempt at measurement in the field of foreign language study. It is confessedly a first attempt, but judging by the interest which the study has evoked (the article has been called for by correspondents at least once a week since it was published in the *School Review* in 1916), it is included here for whatever value it may have. As already stated, it is confessedly a preliminary study in the field which it covers, but the writer has reason to believe that it has stimulated many similar studies throughout the country.

The essay, "How Far Shall the State Go," was written for the *Michigan Alumnus* at a time when the question whether Michigan University should establish a graduate school was under consideration. The essay is an argument for such a school, and endeavors to point out that the State possessing a State university cannot afford to dispense with the highest educational opportunity which the State can provide, namely, a graduate school of arts and sciences as an integral part of the university. Though not directly concerned with the superintendent's problems, it is included in this volume because of its bearing on a democratic conception of public education, a conception which is certainly of interest to every superintendent.

The next three essays deal with education and educational administration in Germany. The three papers taken together are intended to show to American readers how the German conception of the State influenced educational theory and procedure, and to contrast that theory and procedure with American education. The writer hopes that the readers of these papers will see how impossible the German conception of the State is for the American, and consequently, how impossible the German conception of education is in a democratic society, and also, by certain concrete examples, to what lengths German officialdom has gone in educational practice. These papers were written during the war. The first of them, entitled "The German Example," was printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* in October, 1915, in response to a letter from the editor of the *Advertiser* who asked for certain comments on an editorial in his paper printed several days prior to the date given above. The next essay, "German Schools and American Education," was printed, but not under this title, in the *Milwaukee Journal* in August, 1917. The editor had asked for this paper because he wished to print something which would set forth how the German school system is opposed to American ideals and hence unfitted for the United States. The paper entitled "Germany's Kultur" is the revised steno-

graphic report of an address delivered at the Harvard Summer School in the summer of 1918 and printed in the *Boston Herald* of October 13 in that year. It points out why the German people submitted "so abjectly and so patiently to the iron rule of their military caste." This address is intended to show the possibilities of public education in shaping the convictions and the enthusiasms of an entire nation; to show how this was done by Germany; and incidentally to teach the lesson of what could be done by a public-school system equally efficient but based on sound moral principles — such a school system as we endeavor by all the means within our power to develop in the United States.

The final essay, namely, the one on the "Graduate School of Education of Harvard University," describes a new development in the training of leaders in the field of school administration and was printed in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* in December, 1919.

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I

THE MEANING OF EDUCATION

THE problems of education are problems of social progress on the one hand and of individual development on the other. The problems of social progress which teachers have to solve are, how to conserve, how to improve, and how best to transmit to the oncoming generation the developed resources of society; and the problem of individual development is, how to deal with the individual so that his life may be as full, as rich, and as satisfactory as possible, and at the same time enable and stimulate him to render to society the utmost service of which he is capable.

If that be a fair statement of the problems of education, let us next outline what our social resources are; for with them we must deal from the elementary school through the university, and in the vocational school as well; whether that vocational school be for the training of an artisan, a business executive, a farmer, a merchant, or a professional man.

First of all, society has accumulated spiritual resources, namely, its literature in the broadest sense; history; pure science; art; religion; and the ideals and character of its men and women. These are our ultimate resources; for out of them every other means of discipline and welfare may be developed. The bearing of literature, history, science, art, and religion on ideals and conduct is obvious. The manifold problems solved in the mastery of literature and language, science, history, art are the source of what we call general intelligence; and an appreciative understanding of literature, and of the conduct it portrays, is in itself inspiration and guidance toward worthy living, and promotes the dissemination of common interests and of good mutual understanding among men. It is therefore a perennial influence in the development of mind and character.

But we possess, also, political or institutional resources. We have a government by the people which, with all its faults, we are justified in believing is the nearest approximation to liberty under law yet achieved. It is the result of the efforts of generations of devoted, disinterested men, and of the conflict of selfish interests with disinterested public zeal. The record of both is written in history; and the result is embodied in our actual government. If literature is a record of the ideals of

the race, history endeavors to be a record of its actual experience. To pass in review with understanding and appreciation the successes and failures of races and nations of men, and particularly of our own race and nation, in working out its present worthiest political ideals, and to study its actual government, is to acquire insight into and interest in and respect — and some apprehension — for the development of our institutions; and this insight and interest and apprehension are indispensable to stable and progressive government, and particularly to a democratic government like ours, in city, state, and nation.

We have, moreover, scientific resources hitherto unequaled. If history is the study of our institutional resources — of the world of organized society — pure and applied science give insight into the material world. These sciences not only satisfy the intellectual hunger felt by all men in the presence of the mystery of matter, life, and force, but scientific intelligence furnishes society the indispensable means of providing satisfactorily for its physical existence and welfare.

We have also æsthetic resources — the art of today and of all time. The full significance of these resources we are coming to appreciate more and more every year. That civic beauty may be a source of civic pride, and so of civic welfare, we

know. That the charm of the plastic and pictorial arts may uplift and broaden the humblest as well as the most favored citizens our public museums of fine arts, our public concerts, our public recreation centers abundantly prove. Men must play as well as work; and if a part of their recreation can be the serious but exquisite pleasures the fine arts afford, not only individuals but whole communities will profit thereby.

The resources of our civilization are also economic. We have developed an extraordinary system of the production and transportation of the necessaries, comforts, and luxuries of life, and equally marvelous means of communication between men; we have in consequence the most complex industrial and social civilization. In order that each one may find his proper place in the world, and so ultimately play his part in it for the progressive welfare of society, in order that he may be an efficient thinker and worker in it, it is highly important that these economic resources be brought within the range of interest and apprehension of the children in our schools of every grade and kind, at every stage of the pupil's development, whether in the school, the college, or the vocational school.

Until recently our economic resources have received scant attention in education; even now they receive much less than they deserve. Industry,

agriculture, and commerce, including the means of transportation and communication, are essential to our contemporary material welfare. The processes, materials, and tools of industry and commerce must be studied to be understood; and this study, if satisfactory, includes not only the study of books, but also the laboratory experience which the workshop, the chamber of commerce, the wharf, the freight depot, the office, the farm or garden, and the store afford. And this, whether we regard education in industry, agriculture, or commerce as education for vocational purposes, or as part of education for life. Whatever one's future vocation may be, education for life certainly means, among other things, such an understanding of industrial, agricultural, and commercial activities, and such appreciation of the problems they present, and such power to deal with these problems, as will enable the pupil to do his share in conserving, improving, and transmitting these activities to the next generation, whether he is himself actively engaged in industry, agriculture, or commerce, or not.

Education for life attempts this, or should attempt it, throughout the pupil's entire school career, so far as his age and stage of development permit. Hence the industrial courses in the schools deserve the fullest encouragement. So do the agri-