The Editors Say:

Comes from the press another Journal, its contents gathered from many different sources for your enjoyment, stimulation, encouragement and—oh, a lot of things.

This March number brings you an exposure by Louis Foley of rhetorical shamming: a summing up of teachers' testimony in the case of Worried Adults vs. the Exhibitors of Quiz Kids—with a plea for increased consideration of intellectually gifted children; a defense of State Universities against the charge that they are Godless; a seasoned teacher's outburst of what he would like to say to that new teacher, just out of pedagogy and now rigidly clutching the handle bars of his first job; an indictment of the so-called "passing mark"; and a familiar scene in a principal's office as Johnnie's mother comes to champion his right to pass. These and many other messages on many different phases of that challenging problem known as education await you in the pages that follow.

We like to think of this Journal as something that helps each reader to gain perspective on his own part in education—to see the whole task as an immense and many-sided one at which many men and women besides himself are toiling with energy, intelligence and endless faith.

Our subscription department asks us to thank all those subscribers who responded so promptly to the renewal notices recently sent out and to express the hope that any subscribers whose renewals are now due—or possibly overdue—will mail their remittances as soon as possible.

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THESE WAR-TIME CHORES

They keep us busy after hours. But they are richly rewarding to ourselves and our schools in many ways.

While it is true that much time is being consumed by the public school teachers in rating employees for great industrial and defense plants, in rationing sugar and gasoline and in registering civilian defense workers and draftees and performing many other services in the collection of waste materials; nevertheless all of these things are affording to the schools an opportunity to contact the public, which contact has been greatly needed and in many cases really earnestly desired.

The public schools of the nation have been too much the question; too much isolated from the work of the world. In many communities a whole generation has passed before a man who graduated from one of the elementary or high schools ever returns for any purpose to a school building, unless to participate in some public function or to cast his ballot. In the war effort, the school has become the center of activity, and being this center it has given the opportunity for every citizen in a community to meet the teachers in his particular school, to know their personalities, to appreciate their efforts and to understand what they mean to the community, the state and the nation.

The war has given opportunity for evaluating what we have attempted to do through the public schools in health and the bettering of physical condition of our people. It has given us the privilege of understanding our failures as well as of exalting our successes. The very fact that the rules and regulations for the selection of the draftees were more strenuous as far as physical conditions were concerned at the opening of the effort than they were in the period of 1917, 1918 and 1919, gave us a standard by which we might gauge the efficiency of our health system. It taught us above everything else the need of cooperating with the home, in producing healthier, stronger, better men and women. It has intensified our efforts to improve the diets of our children, not only in the schools but in the homes. It has strengthened our determination to have physical examinations; to put more emphasis upon oral hygiene. When we learned with amazement that a very large percentage of those who were rejected were refused purely and simply on account of dental caries, then the nation commenced to realize what some of us have known for years, that good teeth and the care of the mouth is one of the greatest means of promoting health.

We have conducted a program for better oral hygiene in the Atlanta schools for twenty years, and we were happy to see the results in the examination of our boys for the service. While throughout the nation a very large percentage of the people were turned down on account of poor teeth, the percentage among those who went out from the Atlanta schools was relatively small.

The great war effort has given us an opportunity to check the waste that was about to sap the very life of our nation. We were wasting our physical and mental energies; we were absolutely recreant to all ideas of thrift with reference to saving of paper, rubber, iron, steel, tin and a hundred essential materials. It brought to mind that these things were not only worth saving but that in learning to conserve natural resources on the farm and about the home and to save waste materials we were impressing upon ourselves a most important lesson of saving and conserving our own energies and our own souls.

Rationing at first seemed a very unpleasant thing, but it has called attention to the fact that we have been wasteful in the use of this great natural resource known as gasoline. It has made us feel that we must share the good things of life—sugar for example—not only with people of our own army, but peoples of the world. It has tended to cut down our selfishness, to make us think of others, to plan for our nation, and to exalt in ourselves the element of sacrifice. Surely these have been marvelous advantages for the schools and the children to realize in the development of character.

But above all, the school is becoming the center of activity, the place for accumulating waste material, the place where people have to register, the center where civilian defense classes are taught, and where people gather to study First Aid or nutrition, where nursing has become the chief study for the women of the community. The very fact that hundreds of people without children must go to the school house in order to get their ration of sugar, and hundreds of men who send their children to private schools, and never understand what the public school system means, must visit the nearest public school in order to be
THE DENVER CONVENTION

Eightieth N.E.A. gathering considers the effects of the war upon education

BELMONT FARLEY

HE 7500 teachers who attended the 80th annual convention of the NEA at Denver, June 28-July 2, found their way to the meeting in the face of many handicaps imposed by wartime restrictions on travel, by additional burdens incident to the national program of defense, and by the reduction of local teacher staffs due to increasing calls from the munitions industries.

The convention itself strongly reflected the impact of the world war on education in the United States and abroad. One of the most alarming effects of the war discussed was the rapidly growing seriousness of the teacher shortage. It is estimated that school will begin in September with nearly 100,000 teachers absent from their classrooms—a figure representing ten percent of the teachers in the whole nation, mounting to almost twenty-five percent in some of the states where the disparity between income from teaching and income from war work is greatest. The lack of teachers is most pronounced in those fields from which come the greatest demand for trained present and future military personnel—mathematics, chemistry, physics, industrial arts, and vocational shop work of all kinds. Many of the men who teach these courses have been called upon to enlist their skills either in the war factories or in the armed forces.

Measures advocated to meet the situation included lifting the ban on married women teachers, increasing teachers’ salaries to a point where they are consistent with the rapidly rising living costs, the introduction in teacher training institutions of “refresher” courses for ex-teachers who are returning to the classroom, the acceleration of teacher preparation in normal schools and colleges, and the establishment of teacher placement as a feature of the federal employment services.

A two-day post-convention conference of secretaries of state education associations, state directors of the NEA and other officials of state and national associations called by NEA President Myrtle Hooper Dahl and Executive Secretary Willard E. Givens appointed a committee to give special consideration to the problem of teacher shortage. The committee, headed by H. V. Holloway, director from Delaware, called for immediate steps to curb a “critical and irreplaceable” loss in teaching staffs. Among the steps suggested was that teachers “deferred by selective service boards so that they may continue to teach should be given insignia and written certificates indicating that they have been assigned to teaching duties by the Federal authorities so that no stigma may be attached to their deferment.”

“We believe,” said the committee, “that those teachers who are so deferred and assigned to teaching duties because they are working in fields basic to military and war production efficiency would be making their greatest contribution to the war effort.” The committee urged that the NEA and various state associations join in a petition to Chairman Paul V. McNutt of the War Manpower Commission and General Lewis B. Hershey, National Director of the Selective Service System to take such steps as will bring about the
deferment of teachers in essential fields.

Frequent recognition was given at the convention to the accounting to which the war is submitting the teachers, the school systems, and the program of education in the United States. The teachers were lauded from many quarters for their effective participation in wartime activities, including aid to the sugar and gas rationing, to the selective service system, to the war stamp and bond campaign, to the salvage drives, to the Red Cross, and to the Civilian Defense program. High praise came from President Roosevelt in the following statement:

Now that the school year is drawing to a close, I want to express to the school officials and teachers of the United States . . . the appreciation of their government for the many special services rendered in the war effort. They have helped to bolster morale on the home front, have worked overtime in helping to register citizens for the Selective Service, as well as for sugar and gas rationing, and in many other ways they have assisted in civilian defense activities. I know that their cheerful and efficient service in these matters in addition to their main work in the schools and colleges, their uncomplaining overtime in the cause of freedom and democracy, have served to confirm the faith of the American people in the schools as a major bulwark of the nation.

Among the failures of American Education emphasized by the war is the wide extent of illiteracy among men of military age. United States Commissioner of Education, John W. Studebaker, discussed the recent announcement made from the White House that fully fifteen divisions of the potential soldiers in the Selective Service System had been turned down because of practical illiteracy. The Commissioner expressed his hope that a way might be found to prepare these men for some kind of service to country, and his confidence that teachers are ready to make a substantial contribution to the elimination of this inadequacy as soon as the needed federal legislation makes their contribution possible on a nation-wide scale.

While a bill now before Congress may result in temporary alleviation of this serious lack of preparation for immediate service, the view was expressed by many speakers that the permanent eradication of functional illiteracy in the United States awaits upon the establishment of universal educational opportunity through federal participation in school support. The legislative Commission of the NEA reported progress on the passage of S. 1313, which would enable all American children in whatever state they may reside, regardless of race, or of economic status, to have the rudiments of an education. The bill, recommended by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor for adoption by the Senate is now before that body for its consideration.

Up-to-date appraisal of world affairs, with emphasis upon the political and military activities of Europe, the United States and the Far East, was made for the teachers by Mrs. Vera Michele Dean, of the Foreign Policy Association; Walter H. Judd, physician, former superintendent of hospitals in China; Lynn U. Stambaugh, National Commander of the American Legion, and Col. M. Thomas Tchou, former secretary to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

In many of the half-a-hundred general and sectional meetings of the convention concern was expressed for safeguarding children against the ravages of war upon mind and body. Special attention was devoted to physical education, to the teaching of nutrition, to protection against air attacks, and to the maintenance of morale in the face of mounting casualty lists and the increasing hardships which war brings to the civilian population. Films from the War Department, Treasury Department, Federal Security Agency and U. S. Office of Education portrayed dramatically the nation at war and the contributions of the military forces and the civilian population to victory.

A general session of the convention was dedicated to planning for peace, in which world citizenship was a prominent topic. The fact that the thirty million children in the schools must maintain that peace, as well as pay the fabulous cost of its achievement, places a vital responsibility upon the schools. Carrying that responsibility effectively is a charge upon teachers which was urged by many speakers.

High point in the entertainment features of the Convention was a patriotic pageant in the Amphitheatre of the Red Rocks, outdoor coliseum of the Rocky Mountain foothills. The drama was produced under the auspices of the Denver schools. A colorful ceremony of the Convention was the burning of the final mortgage on the NEA headquarters building in Washington, at the fourteenth annual Life Members' Friendship Dinner, first banquet meeting of the convention.

A. C. Flora, superintendent of schools, Columbia, South Carolina, was elected president of the NEA for the year 1942-43 Mrs. Myrtle Hooper Dahl automatically becomes junior past president. Harold H. Blanchard, South Bend, Indiana, was elected president of the Department of Classroom Teachers. The Board of Directors of the NEA expressed preference for Indianapolis as the meeting place of the 81st annual convention in June, 1943. Plans were announced by the Educational Policies Commission for a series of national teachers' meetings by radio, the first of which will be broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company Monday, September 28, 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time.