EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

The annual meeting of the North Central Association will be held at the Hotel LaSalle, Chicago, during the week of March 15. Public meetings will be held on March 19 and 20. The meeting of the Commission on Accredited Schools and Colleges will be held on the 18th, and the deliberations of the Board of Inspectors will occur during the other days of the week.

NEW JOURNALS

A new journal entitled Educational Administration and Supervision appeared on January 1 under the editorship of Professors Coffman and Johnston, Commissioner Snedden, and Superintendent Van Sickle.

The first number of the new journal contains articles on the larger unit of school administration, on the character and functions of the school superintendent, on high-school matters, and on college matters relating to the supervision of students. Discussions and editorials extend the range of topics treated to include city charters for schools, the Harvard-Newton composition scale, vocational tendencies in education, school surveys and supervision, with comments on the relation between high schools and universities and the relation of the federal government to public education.

These titles make it evident that the new journal intends to deal with all sorts of administrative problems in the universities and intermediate schools down to the lowest grade of the elementary school. The influence of such a journal ought to be very wholesome in enlarging the scope of interest of superintendents and school administrators. Heretofore the problems of the high school and the college have commonly been in the hands of officers who have not concerned themselves very largely with the problems of elementary education. If all of these interests can be drawn together, many of the problems which arise because of the separation of the different units of the school system will tend to disappear.

One cannot welcome too heartily this new member of the fraternity of serious journals. At the same time the question arises, as it has often arisen before, whether it would not be better for all of the better journals to get together in some combination which would make it more easily
possible for school officers and students of education to get hold of periodical literature somewhat more readily. There is danger of dissipating interests in the competitions that arise between journals, especially when one faces the fact that in spite of the improvement in educational journalism there is still a very large body of periodical material which is of a low grade. The ordinary teacher is importuned to buy the local state journal and very frequently gets a narrow view of education because his reading is limited to one or two such journals. The serious journals are highly specialized and not united in promoting the general interests which each tries to serve in its special field. The result is that anyone who wants to get at the best current literature in education has to deal with a number of relatively inaccessible periodicals. The time will doubtless come in the not remote future when the type of combination which will make all of these journals accessible to the ordinary reader will in some fashion be worked out either through the publication of all of these journals by some great association or by a voluntary combination of the journals themselves.

C. H. J.

School and Society also made its first appearance in January. It is edited by Professor J. McKeen Cattell, of Columbia, editor of Science, the Popular Science Monthly, and the American Naturalist. A unique feature of School and Society is the fact that it is a weekly. Announcements indicate that it “will cover the whole field of education in relation to the problems of American democracy.” This wide scope gives promise of fulfilment in the January issue, which is fresh, vigorous, and comprehensive. In general appearance this periodical is far superior to any other educational journal. There is perhaps a suggestion of “the-world’s-greatest-newspaper” type of advertising in the statement “Aiming to become the professional journal for those engaged in the work of our lower and higher schools.”

Home Study

The School Review is fortunate in being able to promise its readers in the near future a complete report of an extended investigation of home study. Professor W. H. Heck, of the University of Virginia, is at present concluding the investigation. Up to this time he has examined eleven grammar schools (Grades V–VIII) and seven high schools. Of 1,785 grade pupils questioned 3 per cent study at home before going to school in the morning, 21 per cent in the afternoon of school days, and 73 per
cent in the evening of the entire week. Three per cent study on Sunday. Approximately the same percentages obtain for the 1,072 high-school pupils questioned. About half of the grade pupils study in a quiet room, as do 80 per cent of the high-school pupils. In answer to the question, Would you rather have your present school day longer with more time for study at school, or shorter with less time for study at school, or about the same as it is now? the vote is as follows:

Grade pupils: Longer, 156; Shorter, 518; Same, 1,064
High school: " 131; " 309; " 618

The most significant question is this: Can you prepare your lessons better at school or at home?

Grade pupils: School, 555; Home, 1,176
High school: " 250; " 760

Allowing for the large percentage of expected error in questionnaires, especially when they are addressed to children, one finds that the generalizations based on this and similar data have an important bearing, both for the advocates of a longer school day, and for the advocates of home study.

EIGHT BILLS BEFORE CONGRESS

Of the eight bills concerning education now before Congress, the following are of most importance:

The Smith-Hughes bill proposes to appropriate $3,000,000 a year to promote industrial education. A federal board, with the Commissioner of Education as executive officer, is to co-operate with similar state boards, for paying the salaries of teachers of trade and industrial subjects; also for preparing teachers and supervisors of these subjects. To receive any appropriation a state or local community must contribute one dollar for every dollar received from the federal funds. The state or local community must also provide plant and equipment.

The Lewis bill proposes to create a national university at Washington and to appropriate $500,000 for the first year.

The French bill proposes to subsidize the training of forestry students in collegiate institutions of states in which there are federal forest reserves.

The Abercrombie bill provides $15,000 the first year and $22,800 each succeeding year until 1920, and $17,500 yearly thereafter until 1925, for investigation of plans to eliminate adult illiteracy in the United States.
The Hughes bill proposes to create a federal motion-picture commission as a division of the Bureau of Education, this body to license films used in interstate commerce and to withdraw licenses for cause.

Three bills of lesser importance are (1) to print at cost elementary textbooks for the states through the national public printer; (2) to establish a board of university regents for the District of Columbia; (3) and to create in the Department of Labor a bureau for the deaf and dumb.

The Harvard-Newton Bulletins

The first two bulletins of the "Harvard-Newton Series" have just been issued by the press of Harvard University. In this series will be published the results of experiments and investigations carried on in the Department of Educational Research of the Newton schools; in these the Newton school system under Dr. Spaulding and the Harvard department of education under Professor Hanus co-operate. Bulletin I sets forth the plan and outlines the program of work. The following topics are to be studied:

1. Differentiation in the treatment of pupils on the basis of the capacity they show for independent work. History; geography; arithmetic.
2. The most advantageous disposition of a study period. (Sub-periods at intervals, especially with intervening night, v. unbroken periods.)
3. The most advantageous disposition of review in a given material.
4. Comparative tests of various methods for speed in teaching special topics; e.g., long division; English grammar in high school.
5. How can a school assist in encouraging and refining the avocations of its pupils?
6. The development of a typical, uniform character-analysis based on the relations incident to school life. Hence, also the analysis of all phases of school life with a view to the opportunities they may afford for the display of definite characteristics in the pupil.
7. The development of a method for the scientific study of individual problem-cases, whether of instructional, disciplinary, or other nature.
8. The closer articulation of high school and grammar school: (a) in general organization; (b) in English; (c) in science; (d) in history.
9. The analysis into fundamental abilities of aggregates now usually rated as units; e.g., English, mathematics, etc.; also the invention of
tests and scales for the objective measurement of these abilities: Hillegas scale; eighth-grade scale.

10. The division of labor in teaching: the organization of class work to permit the larger use of conspicuous abilities in the teacher.

11. Effect of regulation of periods on quantity and quality of work.


Bulletin II is entitled "Scales for the Measurement of English Compositions"; it is by Frank Washington Ballou, Ph.D. It forms by far the most efficient study of this important subject ever made.

This series promises to be of very great value for every principal, superintendent, and all other students of the science of education.

ECONOMY OF TIME

President Lowell's annual report gives vigorous expression to the chief argument for economy of time in education. Already the experiment of lopping off the eighth grade, an experiment now two years old in the University of Chicago High School, is amply justifying itself. The pupils present a somewhat startling appearance when they enter the high school, they seem so young. Nevertheless they do not lag behind their classmates, who have spent on the average one whole year more in the endless repetition of the grades.

One whole year of life saved! Multiply it by the millions of lives affected, and the total becomes enormous. But the mere economy of time is relatively unimportant, compared with the economy of learning power for those children destined for college and graduate work. For general education President Lowell believes that "maturity may easily become over-ripe"; that the college student should enter at seventeen and begin his professional studies at twenty-one. "All this because it is during these early years that intellectual growth is most rapid" and "youths make the greatest profit by their books." According to Mr. Lowell, the average age (eighteen and one-half) of Harvard Freshmen represents at least a year of educational waste.

Critics of the proposed changes fear that educational advantages may be lessened for the multitudes. To this fear the reply is that the multitudes drop out before the eighth year of the elementary school; that in larger school systems eight years of proper work retained for those who do not mean to enter the high school put a premium of pride upon omitting the eighth grade, and may result in less mortality at the completion of elementary work. Finally, the eighth year, if it is largely
waste, ought, under any logic, to be omitted. To maintain educational plants merely to keep children in school is a shameful error—unless the school time be profitable.

ARTICULATING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, AND COLLEGE

Educational leaders of a decade ago saw the general outlines, the need of a closer association among elementary school, secondary school, and college. For the following selections from the Proceedings of the North Central Association of 1896 in proof of this point we are indebted to Professor G. N. Carman, of Lewis Institute. He submits them as bearing upon the problems of the “junior high school” and the “junior college,” prominent today in the deliberations of the Association:

1896—PRESIDENT ANGELL

We must even look below the high schools, and keep ever in mind the essential unity of educational work. Under our forms of organization we have cut the process of education too much into disconnected sections, and placed high barriers of formal and formidable examinations between them. The pupil, instead of seeing an inviting path, clear and open before him, leading from the primary school to the university, has had his vision bounded by obstacles, towering higher and higher as he advanced.

1896—PRESIDENT JESSE

The first two years in college are really secondary in character. I always think of the high school and academy as covering the lower secondary period and the Freshman and Sophomore years at college as covering the upper secondary period. Until so much at least of academic training has been received, higher education, in my opinion, does not really begin.

In the secondary period, and in at least the Freshman and Sophomore years of the college, not only are the studies almost identical, but the character of the teaching is the same. The chief function of the instructor is to teach well what has been discovered and arranged, and thereby to form mind and character.

1896—PRESIDENT DRAPER

We cannot tell just where the high-school course is to end and the college course commence. We all believe that they are continuous and ought to be uninterrupted, but the differing circumstances of different communities will have much to do with fixing the point where the high-school course shall stop and the college course begin. That point will be advanced higher and still higher as communities grow in size and increase in knowledge, in culture, in means, and in all of the instrumentalities for educational development and progress. A high school in the city of Chicago, with several hundred pupils
and twenty or thirty teachers, must necessarily be a very different institution from a high school in the southern part of the state of Illinois, with fifty or seventy-five pupils and three or four teachers. It is not for us to commend unduly the one or do anything that will discourage the other. Perhaps both may be equally deserving of commendation. It is for this Association to do what it can to assist both.

No one is responsible for this condition of things. It is the inevitable result of natural conditions; and the college which meets the work of the more lowly high school, and does what it can to stimulate and encourage that institution, is none the less a college than the one whose fetish is advanced entrance requirements, but which commonly has a door somewhere through which anyone can get into some department of the institution.

1896—PROFESSOR HINSDALE

The first practical suggestion of this character found in the University documents is contained in the report of Acting-President Frieze for the year 1869-70. Dr. Frieze argued that if a genuine university was ever to be built in Ann Arbor, or elsewhere in America, it must be founded on a much higher scholarship in the preparatory schools; that these schools must be made real gymnasia, doing a large part of the work then done by colleges, before a university could be possible; and that until this was done, thus setting the higher institutions free for higher work, the best talent of the country seeking the best education would be compelled to find it in a foreign land. Dr. Frieze saw the gymnasia of the future in the high schools of the state.

1897—PRINCIPAL FRENCH

The growing carelessness with which the larger colleges are coming to regard their lower classes would be a great calamity were it not possible to regard it as the precursor of a revolution which will simplify our present complicated system and crystallize it into new and permanent forms. It is unquestionably true that the universities are more and more concentrating their energies in their postgraduate and professional schools, and are coming to regard their undergraduate work as academic or preparatory. It is to be hoped that this is but the beginning of a process by which they will abandon undergraduate work entirely and devote themselves exclusively to the field which is properly theirs. Their undergraduate work must then be shortened and turned over to the preparatory schools. If this is to be the outcome, we may deplore the present evil results of the adoption of such a policy, but the final product must be hailed with rejoicing.

THE WISCONSIN LAW FOR PRACTICE TEACHING

The Wisconsin legislature of 1913 passed a law providing that after July 1, 1915, no person who shall not have taught in a public school
for at least one year will be granted a county teachers' certificate unless
in addition to passing an examination such person shall have completed
the course of study provided for the common schools of Wisconsin or
one equivalent thereto, or the course of study provided for a graded
system of at least eight grades, or one equivalent thereto, and who
shall not have had at least two additional years of instruction in training,
one of which shall have been devoted to professional studies prepara-
tory to the work of teaching; provided that graduates of four-year
high schools not maintaining a training course for teachers need take
only one year of additional work.

Other features of the law include the experiment of establishing in
one or more high schools located in the same county, with the approval
of the state superintendent, courses for the training of teachers. The
law further states that such training departments may be established
only in those high schools where the faculty numbers at least four,
exclusive of the person taking charge of the work in the training depart-
ment. The course in the training of teachers must be maintained for
nine months, and the salary of the teacher in charge is to be paid by the
state.

When it is remembered that Wisconsin already has eight normal
schools, with one more being built, candid judgment must admit that
there seems to be little need for any such provision as this. Although
the law provides that only experienced teachers are to be placed in charge
of the training courses, the difficulty of finding expert instructors for the
normal schools is already great enough. Exactly where the experienced
teachers who are to conduct these courses will be found is an open
question. The normal schools might fairly interpret this provision as
indicating either a lack of confidence in their ability to train teachers,
or an equal lack of ability to attract to the normal schools a sufficient
number of students to officer the public schools.

SUPERVISED OBSERVATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Another experiment in practice teaching combined with critical ob-
servation of classroom situations has been undertaken by the depart-
ment of education of the University of Wisconsin in connection with
the University High School. The idea behind this high school is to avoid
as much as possible any interference with the work of the high-school
classes upon which the cadet teachers practice, and yet give the appren-
tice teacher a chance to show his skill. The method of accomplishing
these much-to-be-desired results may be illustrated as follows: Students in the university who desire to teach mathematics, let us say, become regular members of the high-school class in algebra. They sit with the high-school pupils, are held rigidly responsible for the subject-matter of the course, are called upon by the class instructor to recite and to participate fully in all the activities of the class.

In addition, these students are frequently asked by the instructor to assume the rôle of teachers—it may be to demonstrate a problem, to correct errors in blackboard work, or to conduct a class discussion. Moreover, these apprentice teachers are required to keep a record of the concrete classroom situations as they arise. Upon these situations, as solved or unsolved by the instructor in charge, they make critical comments as to what ought to have been done or ought not to have been done to meet the situations. These records are carefully examined by the principal of the high school and by the instructor in mathematics, and are used as the basis of the frequent and regular personal consultations by these officers with the apprentice teachers. The records are filed in the principal's office, where they may be examined by superintendents who come to the university in search of promising teachers.

The feature which is especially commendable in this plan is the excellent basis for critical observation. A visit for one day, a visit for a number of days, for that matter, does not give even the trained observer sufficient data upon which to judge the merit of either class or instructor; but several months of daily observation, backed by participation in the activities of the class, plus incidental work as a teacher, give even the most inexperienced college student a real opportunity for securing a practical working knowledge of how to solve teaching problems.