SENATE BILL CREATING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On October 10 Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia introduced into the Senate of the United States a bill creating a Department of Education in the federal government. This bill also appropriated money to be used in developing education throughout the states. The amount of the appropriation is $100,000,000.

The bill is too long to be quoted in full. The following extracts will give the main items which appear on the eighteen pages of the bill:

To create a Department of Education, to appropriate money for the conduct of said department, to appropriate money for Federal co-operation

The Elementary School Journal is published monthly from September to June by the University of Chicago. It is edited and managed by the Department of Education as one of a series of educational publications. The series including also The School Review and the Supplementary Educational Monographs is under a joint editorial committee and covers the whole field of educational interests.

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with the States in the encouragement and support of education, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that there is hereby created an executive department in the Government, to be called the Department of Education, with a Secretary of Education, who is to be the head thereof.

Sec. 2. That there shall be in said department at least three Assistant Secretaries of Education, to be appointed by the President.

Sec. 3. That there be transferred to the Department of Education the Bureau of Education and such educational war-emergency commissions or boards or educational activities already established by Act of Congress as in the judgment of the President should be transferred to the Department of Education.

Sec. 9. That it shall be the specific duty of the Department of Education to co-operate with the States in the development of public educational facilities, including public-health education, within the respective States.

In order that the co-operation with the States in the promotion of education may be carried out for the best interests of education and public health in the respective States, the Secretary of Education, subject to the approval of the President, is authorized to reorganize such bureaus, offices, boards, divisions, or branches of public service as are transferred to the Department of Education. In this reorganization he shall consider—

1. The encouragement of the study and investigation of problems relating to the educational purposes set forth in this Act and to such other educational problems as may, in the judgment of the Secretary of Education, require attention and study. Research shall be undertaken directly by the Department of Education in the fields of (a) illiteracy; (b) immigrant education; (c) public-school education, and especially rural education; (d) public-health education and recreation; (e) the preparation and supply of competent teachers for the public schools; and (f) such other fields as come within the provisions of this Act or as may come within the provisions of other Acts of Congress relating to the Department of Education.

2. The encouragement of higher and professional education and the encouragement of learned societies, including the appointment of such commissions as the Secretary of Education may deem necessary.

3. The encouragement of physical and health education and recreation, these terms to be inclusive of all public-health questions relating to school children and to adults, and of social and recreational problems which relate
not only to the native-born but also and especially to the foreign-born population.

In order to carry out the provisions of this section the Secretary of Education is authorized to make such appointments or recommendations of appointments, in the same manner as provided for appointments in other departments, of such educational attachés to foreign embassies, and such investigators and representatives as may be needed, subject, however, to the appropriations that have been made or may be made to any bureau, office, board, division, or branch of public service which is transferred by this Act or may be transferred; and where appropriations have not been made, the appropriation provided for in section ten of this Act shall be available. All provisions of Congress for co-operating with the States in the promotion of education, unless otherwise provided by law, shall be supervised through and by this department.

Sec. 10. That there is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education the sum of $500,000 annually, to be available from and after the passage of this Act, for the purpose of paying salaries and conducting investigations and of paying all incidental expenses, including traveling expenses, and rent where necessary, and for the purpose of allowing the Department of Education to inaugurate a system of attachés to American embassies abroad to deal with educational matters. But this section is not to be construed as in any way interfering with any appropriation which has hitherto been made and which may hereafter be made to any bureau, office, division, board, or branch of public service, which is by this Act transferred to and made a part of the Department of Education, or which may hereunder be transferred by the President; and said appropriations are hereby continued in full force, to be administered by the Secretary of Education in such manner as is prescribed by law.

Sec. 11. That in order to co-operate with the States in the promotion of education, as hereinafter specified, there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the following sums: For the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty, and annually thereafter, $100,000,000.

Sec. 12. That in order to co-operate with the States in the abolition of illiteracy, three-fortieths of the sum annually appropriated by section eleven of this Act shall be used for the instruction of illiterates ten years of age and over. Such instruction shall deal with the common-school branches and the duties of citizenship, and when necessary shall prepare for some definite occupation. Said sum shall be apportioned to the States
in the proportion which their respective illiterate populations of ten years of age and over (not including foreign-born illiterates) bear to such total illiterate population of the United States, not including outlying possessions, according to the last preceding census of the United States.

Sec. 13. That in order to co-operate with the States in the Americanization of immigrants, three-fortieths of the sum annually appropriated by section eleven of this Act shall be used to teach immigrants ten years of age and over to speak and read the English language and the duties of citizenship, and to develop among them an appreciation of and respect for the civic and social institutions of the United States. The said sum shall be apportioned to the States in the proportions which their respective foreign-born populations bear to the total foreign-born population of the United States, not including outlying possessions, according to the last preceding census of the United States.

Sec. 14. That in order to co-operate with the States in the efforts to equalize educational opportunities, five-tenths of the sum annually appropriated by section eleven of this Act shall be used for the improvement of public schools of less than college grade, with the definite aim of extending school terms and of stimulating State and local interest in improving, through better instruction and gradation and through consolidation and supervision, the rural schools and schools in sparsely settled localities. The said sum shall be apportioned to the States in the proportions which the numbers of teachers in the public schools of the respective States bear to the total number of public-school teachers in the United States, not including outlying possessions, said apportionment to be based upon figures collected by the Department of Education: Provided, however, That no State shall share in the apportionment provided by this section of this Act unless such State shall require every public-school district to maintain a legal school for at least twenty-four weeks in each year, and unless such State shall have enacted and enforced an adequate compulsory school-attendance law, and unless such State shall have enacted and enforced laws requiring that the basic language of instruction in the common-school branches in all schools, public and private, shall be the English language only.

Sec. 15. That in order to co-operate with the States in the promotion of physical and health education and recreation two-tenths of the sum annually appropriated by section eleven of this Act shall be used for physical education and recreation, the medical and dental examination of children of school age, the determination of mental and physical defects in such children, the employment of school nurses, the establishment and main-
tenance of school dental clinics, and the instruction of the people in the principles of health and sanitation. The said sum shall be apportioned to the States in the proportions which their respective entire populations bear to the total population of the United States, not including outlying possessions, according to the last preceding census of the United States.

Sec. 16. That in order to co-operate with the States in preparing teachers for the schools, particularly rural schools, three-twentieths of the sum annually appropriated to the States by section eleven of this Act shall be used to prepare teachers, to encourage a more nearly universal preparation of prospective teachers, to extend the facilities for the improvement of teachers already in service, to encourage through the establishment of scholarships and otherwise a greater number of talented young people to make adequate preparation for public-school service, and otherwise to provide an increased number of trained and competent teachers. The said sum shall be apportioned to the States in the proportion which the numbers of teachers in the public schools of the respective States bear to the total number of public-school teachers in the United States, not including outlying possessions, said apportionment to be based on figures collected by the Department of Education.

This bill is the one which was prepared by the Emergency Commission of the National Education Association. It has been endorsed by a number of universities and will be presented for consideration at the state associations which meet from this date on. Copies of the bill can be secured from the secretary of the National Education Association in Washington on application.

The bill ought to be discussed not only by teachers but also by laymen because the success of the measure will depend very largely upon the conviction of citizens that a federal department will improve the school work in all sections of the country.

JUNIOR RED CROSS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The American Red Cross organized some time ago a junior division. To this Junior Red Cross has been intrusted all of the work which children in public schools have been
asked to undertake in making garments for the soldiers and collecting funds for the relief work of the association. The Junior Red Cross has also been called on to make garments for the refugees in France.

As soon as the work of this division of the Red Cross began to be organized, it became evident that the problem here was different from the problem of the parent organization. The Red Cross makes its appeal for support to individuals or it asks that organizations be set up in different communities to carry on work which is the special function of this Red Cross organization.

The Junior Red Cross, on the other hand, makes its appeal through an institution which is already organized and which has important work to carry on quite apart from the activities of the Red Cross. If the Junior Red Cross is to be effective, it must go into the schools with a program that fits the program of the schools themselves. The program is very largely one of adapting the needs of the Red Cross to the needs of children who are securing their education.

Having discovered that the problem was one of adjustment, the Red Cross has recently inaugurated, especially in the Central Division, a policy of distributing outlines for general types of study which can be carried on through the whole year. There is, for example, an outline of a course of study in health. This outline begins by calling attention to the needs of the classroom in which the children are assembled; how to keep a room clean and well ventilated, how to keep it at a proper temperature, how to keep it properly lighted, etc., are problems which can be taken up in a school program and at the same time can be used in training children to be more conscious of the needs of the community and of the importance of suitable physical conditions for all classes of workers.

This first outline of health conditions will be followed by a series of lessons to be continued throughout the year. Sample
programs will be supplied for the constructive work to be undertaken in the schools for the health work and for the study of American institutions.

In short, the Junior Red Cross of the Central Division is undertaking a program which will enlarge the work of the schools yet not in any way interrupt the legitimate enterprises which go to make up the ordinary school program.

This is a very much wiser course than the one which has been tried in many quarters during the past year. It has been the practice in some cases for the school to undertake a short drive for a special program. After this has been followed for a few weeks, it is abandoned for some new type of work. The year breaks up under such a program as this into a succession of distracting efforts which do not serve the purpose of the school because they are lacking in continuity and in productiveness for the intellectual life of the children.

The school will profit very much by a better organization of the Red Cross work itself in such a way as to furnish a model and example of the way in which all school work shall be organized.

**NATIONAL SCHOOL SERVICE**

The Committee on Public Information at Washington is publishing a periodical known as *National School Service*. The editorial announcement of this periodical states that it is intended primarily for classroom teachers in elementary and high schools. A supply sufficient to furnish every teacher with one copy will be sent to every school building in the United States. If for any reason a teacher fails to receive a copy, it is requested that notice be sent to the New York office of the Committee on Public Information.

The periodical has had a number of interesting articles which will be helpful to teachers in informing their pupils in regard to the war and in regard to the different activities
which are going on in the schools as a means of helping the
government during the war.

RURAL TEACHERS' READING CIRCLE

The Bureau of Education of the United States has for
some years been promoting a National Rural Teachers' Reading Circle. Anyone who knows the conditions of the
isolated one-room school in this country will understand
the necessity of providing adequate channels through which
reading-matter may go to the teacher in one of these schools
in order to keep that teacher in contact with the larger social
movements, most of which are centered in the cities of the
nation.

In a recent bulletin issued by the Bureau of Education
another important reason is pointed out for supplying reading-
matter to teachers in one-room schools. The American
farmer has come to be much more than in the past generation
a student of science. Through the Department of Agriculture
and through many other agencies the farmer has been supplied
with reading-matter, much of which bears directly on his
daily problems and some of which carries him beyond his own
work to a consideration of broad political and social matters.

The country teacher can maintain his or her position in a
community of farmers who read only when that teacher is in
contact with the material which will make him a competent
member of the intelligent community.

The following statement with regard to the cost and course
of study arranged in the National Rural Teachers' Reading
Circle is issued by the Bureau of Education.

Cost.—The Reading Circle for 1918–20, which is hereby announced,
will be without cost to the members except for the necessary books, which
may be procured from the publishers at regular retail rates, or through local
libraries, or in other ways. There is no restriction as to membership,
although it is highly desirable that applicants have a liberal acquaintance
with the best literary works, past and present.
Study course for the years 1918-20.—The books for this period reflect largely the conditions in education due to the unprecedented changes going on in the world today. They are classified under five heads, namely: Nonprofessional Books of Cultural Value, Educational Classics, General Principles and Methods of Education, Rural Education, and Rural Life Problems.

The work is intended as a two-year reading-course, although it may be completed by the industrious teacher in a shorter time. A National Rural Teachers' Reading Circle Certificate, signed by the United States Commissioner of Education, will be awarded to each teacher who gives satisfactory evidence of having read intelligently not less than five books from the general culture list and three books from each of the other four lists—seventeen books in all—within two years from the time of registering.

Correspondence.—Teachers interested in the 1918-20 Reading Circle work should write for circulars, registration blanks, etc., to the Rural School Division, Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

TEACHERS' SALARIES

It is not often that one of the literary journals interests itself in the finances of the public schools. Especially is it true that the ordinary reader is disposed to regard the efforts of teachers' associations to improve salaries as a purely selfish undertaking. It is significant that the New York Nation in a recent issue finds itself moved, first to point out a definite fact with regard to the New York public schools and the schools in neighboring states, and, secondly to call attention to the absolute necessity of a modification in the methods of dealing with teachers if their profession is to be maintained at a high level of efficiency. If laymen would devote themselves to a discussion of the economic side of the problem, teachers would be free to discuss educational standards. This would be a legitimate division of interests and would naturally follow from a serious consideration by the ordinary businessman of the situation described by the Nation. The editorial in full is as follows:

There are four hundred vacancies on the staff of the New York public schools, and, according to all reports, the schools in other parts of the country
are depleted proportionately—or worse. Never in Connecticut's history were the schools so poorly off for teachers, and the fall opening in Pennsylvania and New Jersey is very discouraging. The trouble, as we have pointed out before, is primarily with the shrinkage in the purchasing power of money, which always bears hardest with those of fixed income, and is felt first and most acutely by those whose fixed income is set at the margin of decent subsistence, like teachers and clergymen. It is impossible for teachers to face a continuance of costly living conditions at their present rate of pay; and how to better salaries and reconcile the taxpayers is the question that local boards find hard to solve. Meanwhile, many attractive and unusual opportunities have been opened in commerce and trade for precisely the type of person who has hitherto gravitated into teaching. Many male teachers have gone into the army, and others into various kinds of war work while large numbers of women have heeded the call from offices which promise them congenial employment the year round at double the teacher's weekly rate of wage, or better, and a vacation with pay. No one can complain of this tendency, for it seems really to be a matter of self-defense upon the part of the teachers. Yet, after the great struggle to raise the standards of school-teaching to even comparative excellence, it would seem impossible to let them decline. The taxpayer must be made to perceive the quality of the emergency.

SCHOOL ROUTINE

The Saturday Evening Post is probably one of the most widely circulated periodicals in the United States. In a recent number it made the following caustic criticism of the public schools of the United States:

One day in early September a little company of men met in an office. They were about to undertake one of the weightiest businesses that can devolve upon American men. One of them was the superintendent of education; the others were principals of the several public schools of the city. The school year was beginning. From that day on until June the minds of more than fifty thousand young Americans would be officially in the hands of the men in that room. Their discussion, in a general way, was as to how they should deal with those young minds.

The superintendent presented a very important idea—namely, that the children's compositions should be kept in portfolios, with the names and grades marked on the outside; also that a hundred per cent in spelling should
be required of graduates. Somebody earnestly urged that more attention should be paid to oral arithmetic. Nobody even hinted that the subject of a world-war might be mentioned during the year to those fifty thousand young Americans.

And that particular city is typical. Most of our public-school instruction in this year of 1918 is ordered like that—when reference to how high a pupil should stand in spelling and what attention should be given to oral arithmetic, but with no reference to anything that has happened since July, 1914.

Some millions of young Americans sit day after day within walls that hear no echoes from Metz and St. Quentin—whose echoes, in fact, take no cognizance that such a thing as a Western Front exists in the world. They are the only walls of that description in all America.

If you are of age, probably you do not realize that the fighting round Santiago, Cuba, is the latest American military exploit which is brought to the attention of the coming generation by those who are specially trained and paid to engage its attention.

It is an old and melancholy subject—this scholasticism of most of our public-school instruction, its obstinate detachment from life.

Some weeks ago we saw a big brown tent pitched a few rods off the main street of a village. The banner over the entrance said Chautauqua. The tent was packed and overflowing with an audience listening to a young man in khaki. Considered strictly as a literary performance, it was not a remarkable war lecture; but we saw dozens of children sitting breathless—there a boy with parted lips, his eyes rapt and shining; here a girl whose slim throat contracted with emotion.

That figure on the platform had been in it; his hands had touched the guns; his eyes had seen the trenches. He would be an awful blockhead who could not take that for a point of departure and get those children interested in American history. But next week those same children would sit half stupefied over a colorless account of the War of 1812.

They say it cannot be done; that the textbooks were all prepared long before the war; that education must begin with the old stuff. All the same, it will be done. It has got to be done.

Boring children and then complaining that they will not learn properly is not educating them. Public-school instruction must find its points of departure in the living, bustling world, to which pupils' interest naturally runs.
This editorial overlooks in a most unpardonable degree the large amount of faithful and efficient war work done in the school during the last two years. Children and teachers have joined eagerly and earnestly in every form of such work. In matters of regular instruction there is possibly some justification for some criticism. On the other hand, one can hardly refrain from defending the principals and superintendents who discuss some of the details of classroom organization. If the managers of a great department store came together to discuss the details of their business, they would hardly be criticized for giving some attention to a matter as trivial as the color of the string to be used in wrapping bundles. They certainly would have to discuss the distribution of the departments, some of which would have to go upstairs and others of which could occupy the space on the ground floor. These trivial matters of business detail cannot be disposed of without the knowledge of the managers of the business. It is doubtful whether the managers of the department store would engage in any large political discussion at the time of their meeting. The criticism made by the Post can be set aside, therefore, in so far as it enumerates petty details of administration to which school men must give attention.

The editorial, on the other hand, is right in pointing out that matters relating to community life and to instruction along these lines have in the past been too largely omitted from the course of study and from the consideration of school officials. There ought to be some knowledge on the part of children of the great movements in current history. There ought to be some knowledge of American institutions, and place should be found in the program of every school for the introduction of these matters. If necessary, some of the details of ordinary routine should be referred to teachers even at the risk of lack of uniformity throughout the school in the treatment of these details. The business of the school should
rightly include both the trivial details and the broader innovations which are needed to keep the organization abreast with the times. Neither of these should be omitted. The injustice of this editorial is that it does not truly represent the attitude of schools during the war; furthermore it attacks the careful school man for attending to details and makes that attack the basis for a recommendation with which all could agree without assenting at all to the statement that there is no reason for the careful consideration of the details.

As this editorial goes to press a new issue of the Post comes to hand containing an apology for the mistaken attitude assumed by the editor toward the war activities of the schools. He has heard from school people from Maine to California and has learned something he did not know. It is a great pity that it is not possible to spend the necessary postage and human energy to convince all offhand critics of the schools that they are in need of information. The editor of the Post probably would not write a caustic criticism of any other institution on the basis of information so meager as that exhibited in his first editorial. The schools are long suffering and must be patient while editors and others who discuss freely what the schools should do are gradually finding out that there are real virtues as well as defects in the American educational system.

**CHICAGO'S SCHOOL DIFFICULTIES**

The Chicago school system has passed rapidly through a series of experiences involving the Supreme Court of Illinois, the mayor, the City Council, two boards of education, a new superintendent, two business managers, and a variety of other officers and accessories. The Supreme Court decided that the board which had been in operation for sixteen months had no right to exercise authority over the schools. This board attempted to carry on the fight in the lower court, but was
defeated in this effort and summarily dismissed by the judge of that court. The mayor then attempted to secure the reappointment of the board that had been declared illegal. This he attempted to carry through by the cheapest sort of politics. He coupled with the renominations of the board the nomination of five labor men. He hoped with this bait to catch the City Council. He did not succeed. Since no new board has been legally appointed under the law which was adopted two years ago the old board automatically returned to power. The first meeting of this old board is described by the *Chicago Tribune* as follows:

Dignified parliamentary procedure yesterday replaced the small-sized riots that for more than a year constituted the meetings of the Chicago Board of Education.

The "old" trustees held the first session they have had in the board rooms in sixteen months. There were no uniformed policemen at the beck and call of the president. The gavel was used only to convene and adjourn the session. Gone was the quartet of lawyers which formerly surrounded the rostrum to steer the rulings of the chair.

As the reinstated president, Jacob M. Loeb, delivered a brief message deploring diplomatically many of the things that have happened to the school system recently, he explained that it would be wise "as well as charitable" to omit anything of a nature approaching specific condemnation or even criticism.

Then the sixteen trustees present proceeded to transact their business quietly and expeditiously. The new committees were appointed and approved, and to them was referred a regular grist of routine business. The decision of the Supreme Court and of Judge Scanlan against the "solid six" were put into the record along with Attorney Levy Mayer's opinion that all the eleven of the mayor's pending appointments are illegal.

Only once was there any discussion. That was when Lewis E. Larson, the reinstated secretary, read letters exchanged between Peter A. Mortenson, recently elected superintendent during the reign of the "solid six", and President Loeb. Mr. Mortenson's letter tendered his resignation on grounds that the Supreme Court rulings had indicated his election was invalid.

"I believe the board of education over which you preside" his letter says, "has in mind only the good of the school children and that you desire
to carry out a constructive educational program. The schools can progress only through the harmonious co-operation of all concerned, and I do not wish to add in any degree to existing complications."

Mr. Loeb replied by appointing Mr. Mortenson acting superintendent.

Mr. Loeb's "reinaugural" message included an urgent appeal for the restoration of the "penny lunch" and the resurrection of the system of school social centers, both of which were almost buried by the "solid six."

His remarks, in part, follow:

"More than sixteen months have elapsed since we last met here. In the interim much has been done to the school system, both here and elsewhere. Much has been left undone.

"We are facing problems more than ordinarily serious. We are faced by tasks more than ordinarily trying. Our duty is only to solve the problems and perform the tasks. To these this board will bring experience, sound judgment, serious thought, and energetic effort. There will be agreement stimulated by public, not personal, interest. There will be progress and accomplishment. There will be hope for the Chicago public schools."

To the finance committee Mr. Loeb said: "You have the grave problem of grappling with a growing deficit, now estimated at nearly $4,000,000. That you will solve the financial problems which confront the school system I have no doubt; yet I venture the opinion, and I believe that this opinion is shared by our entire board, that no injustice must be done to any employe in the nature of a reduction of compensation."

The board approved the discharging of John A. Cook and Morton L. Cressy, two "solid six" members of the law department, and the appointment in that department of George Steinbrecher as an assistant to Angus Roy Shannon.