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MONOGRAPHS ON EDUCATION
IN THE
UNITED STATES

EDITED BY
NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER
President of Columbia University in the City of New York

1
EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION
AND
ADMINISTRATION

BY
ANDREW SLOAN DRAPER
President of the University of Illinois

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Chief of Department
HOWARD J. ROGERS, Albany, N. Y.

MONOGRAPHS

ON

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

President of Columbia University in the City of New York

- 1 EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION—ANDREW SLOAN DRAPER, *President of the University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois*
- 2 KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION—SUSAN E. BLOW, *Cazenovia, New York*
- 3 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION—WILLIAM T. HARRIS, *United States Commissioner of Education, Washington, D. C.*
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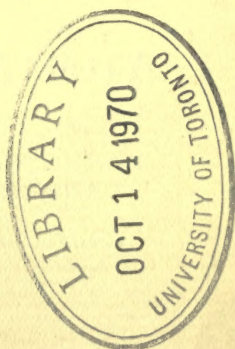
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EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTORY

Any treatment of the legal organization and the authoritative methods of administration by which the great public educational system of the United States is carried on must almost necessarily be opened by a statement of the salient points in the evolution of that system, for the form of organization and the laws governing the operations of the schools have not preceded, but followed and been determined by the educational movements of the people and the necessities of the case.

The first white settlers who came to America in the early part of the seventeenth century were from the European peoples, who were more advanced in civilization than any others in the world. Each of the nations first represented had already made some progress in the direction of popular education. Such educational ideals as these different peoples possessed had resulted from historic causes, and were very unlike. The influences more potent than any others in determining the character of American civic institutions were English and Dutch. The English government was a constitutional monarchy, but still a monarchy, and the constitutional limitations were neither so many nor so strong as later popular revolutions have made them. English thought accepted class distinctions among the people. The advantages of education were for the favored class, the nobility. The common people expected little. Colleges and fitting schools were maintained for the training of young men of noble birth for places under the government and in the government church, but there were no common schools for all. The nobility were opposed to general education lest

the masses would come to recognize God-given rights and demand them, and the masses were yet too illiterate to understand and enforce the inalienable rights of human nature. The Dutch had gone farther than the English; they had just waged a long and dreadful and successful war for liberty, and with all its horrors war has uniformly sharpened the intelligence of a people. This war for civil and religious liberty had enlarged their freedom and quickened their activities; they had become the greatest sailors and the foremost manufacturers in the world; and they had established the government policy of maintaining not only colleges, but common schools for all.

The first permanent white settlers in the United States were English and Dutch. In the beginning they had no thought of ceasing to be Englishmen and loyal subjects of the English monarchy, or Dutchmen with permanent fellowship in the Dutch Republic. They each brought their national educational ideas with them. Each people was strongly influenced by religious feelings, and life in a new land intensified those feelings. The English in Massachusetts were at the beginning very like the English in England. The larger and wealthier and more truly English colony recognized class distinctions and followed the English educational policy. They first set up a college to train their aristocracy for places in the state and the church, and for a considerable time their ministers, either at the church or in the homes, taught the children enough to read the Bible and acquire the catechism. The Dutch, more democratic, with smaller numbers and less means, and more dependent upon their government over the sea, at once set up elementary schools at public cost and common to all. In a few years the English overthrew the little Dutch government and almost obliterated the elementary schools. For a century the English royal governors and the Dutch colonial legislatures struggled over the matter of common schools. The government was too strong for the humble people; little educational progress was made. Near the close of that century the government

established King's college to educate sons of noble birth and prevent the spread of republican ideas. The Revolution of 1776 changed all. In fighting together for national independence the different peoples assimilated and became Americans in the new sense. They not only combined their forces in war, but in peace they combined the enlarged intelligence which the war had brought to them. They realized that education in all its phases and grades must be encouraged, and, so far as practicable, made universal under a democracy in which the rights of opportunity were to be equal.

But while they began to be interested in education it was because they saw that schools would help the individual and so promote virtue and extend religion. It did not occur to them at the first that the safety of the new form of government was associated with the diffusion of learning among all the people. This is not strange, for the suffrage was not universal at the beginning of independent government in America. Therefore, while the desirability of education was recognized, it was understood to be the function of parents to provide it for their children, or of guardians and masters to extend it to their wards and apprentices. When schools were first established they were partnership affairs between people who had children in their care, and for their convenience. They apportioned the expense among themselves; such as had no children were without much concern about the matter.

It was soon seen that many who had children to educate would neglect them in order to avoid the expense of contributing to the support of the school. Aside from this the schools were very indifferent affairs. If they were to be of any account they must have recognition and encouragement from government. It was easily conceived to be a function of government to *encourage* schools. Encouragement was given by official and legislative declarations in their behalf and then by authorizing townships to use funds derived from excise fees and other sources for the benefit of the schools when not otherwise needed. It was a greater step to attempt

to say that townships should require people, who had children to educate, to maintain schools, and a still greater one to adopt the principle that every child was entitled to at least an elementary education as of right, that this was as much for the safety of the state as for the good of the child, that therefore the state was bound to see that schools were provided for all, and that all the property of all the people should contribute alike to their support. Perhaps it was even a greater step to provide secondary and collegiate, and in many cases professional and technical, training at the public cost. But these great positions were in time firmly taken.

There was nothing like an educational system in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time there were four or five colleges, here and there a private academy or fitting school, and elementary schools of indifferent character in the cities and the thinly settled towns. In the course of the century a great system of schools has come to cover the land. It is free and flexible, adaptable to local conditions, and yet it possesses most of the elements of a complete and symmetrical system. The parts or grades of this system may perhaps be designated as follows :

- a) Free public elementary schools in reach of every home in the land.
- b) Free public high schools, or secondary schools, in every considerable town.
- c) Free land grant colleges, with special reference to the agricultural and mechanical arts, in all the states.
- d) Free state universities in practically all of the southern states and all the states west of Pennsylvania.
- e) Free normal schools, or training schools for teachers, in practically every state.
- f) Free schools for defectives, in substantially all of the states.
- g) National academies for training officers for the army and navy.

h) A vast number of private kindergartens, music and art schools, commercial schools, industrial schools, professional schools, denominational colleges, with a half dozen leading and privately endowed universities.

This mighty educational system has developed with the growth of towns and cities and states. It has been shaped by the advancing sagacity of the people. Above all other of American civic institutions, it has been the one most expressive of the popular will and the common purposes. Everywhere it is held in the control of the people, and so far as practicable in the control of local assemblages. While the tendencies of later years have, from necessities, been towards centralization of management, the conspicuous characteristic of the systems has always been the extent to which the elementary and secondary schools are controlled and directed by each community. The inherent and universal disposition in this direction has favored general school laws and yielded to centralized administration only so far as has come to be necessary to life, efficiency and growth. But circumstances have made this necessary to a very considerable extent.

Bearing in mind the historic facts touching the development of the school system, we may proceed to consider the legal organization and authoritative scheme of administration which have arisen therefrom. We will begin with the most elementary and decentralized form of organization and proceed to the more general and concentrated ones, following the steps which have marked the growth of the system in a general way, but with no thought of tracing the particular lines of educational advancement in the several states.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The "school district" is the oldest and the most primary form of school organization. Indeed, it is the smallest civil division of our political system. It resulted from the natural disposition of neighboring families to associate together for the maintenance of a school. Later it was recognized by

law and given some legal functions and responsibilities. Its territorial extent is no larger than will permit of all the children attending a single school, although it sometimes happens that in sparsely settled country the children have to go several miles to school. It ordinarily accommodates but a few families: districts have had legal existence with but one family in each: many with not more than a half dozen families. It is better adapted to the circumstances of the country than to those of the town or city. A different form has been provided for the considerable towns, and still another for the cities as they have developed. The "district system" is in operation in most of the states, and in such the number of districts extends into the thousands. In New York, for example, there are over eleven thousand and in Illinois over twelve thousand school districts.

The government of the school district is the most simple and democratic that can be imagined. It is controlled by school meetings composed of the resident legal voters. In many of the states women have been constituted legal voters at school meetings. These meetings are held at least annually and as much oftener as may be desired. They may vote needed repairs to the primitive schoolhouse and desirable appliances for the school. They may decide to erect a new schoolhouse. They may elect officers, one or more, commonly called trustees or directors, who must carry out their directions and who are required by law to employ the teacher and have general oversight of the school. Although the law ordinarily gives the trustees free discretion in the appointment of teachers, provided only that a person duly certificated must be appointed, yet it not infrequently happens that the district controls the selection of the teacher through the election of trustees with known preferences.

Much has been said against the district system, and doubtless much that has been said has been justified. At the same time it cannot be denied that the system has had much to commend it. It has suited the conditions of country life:

it has resulted in schools adapted to the thought and wants of farming people: it has done something to educate the people themselves, parents as well as children, in civic spirit and patriotism: and it has afforded a meeting place for the people within comfortable reach of every home. The school has not always been the best, but it has been ordinarily as good as a free and primitive people would sustain or could profit by. It is true that the teachers have generally been young and inexperienced, but they have not yet been trained into mechanical automatons, and as a rule they have been the most promising young people in the world, the ones who, a few years later, have been the makers of opinion and the leaders of action upon a considerable field. Certainly the work has lacked system, continuity and progressiveness, the pupils have commenced at the same place in the book many times and never advanced a great distance, but, on the other hand, the children in the country schools have had the home training and the free, natural life which has developed strong qualities in character and individual initiative in large measure, and so have not suffered seriously, in comparison with the children living in the towns. The district system has sufficed well for them and it has otherwise been of much advantage to the people; and with all its shortcomings, or the abuses that are common where it prevails, they are hardly worse than are found under more pretentious systems. Surely the "American District School System" is to be spoken of with respect, for it has exerted a marked influence upon our citizenship, and has given strong and wholesome impulses in all the affairs of the nation.

THE TOWNSHIP SYSTEM

While in the first half of the century the general educational purpose seems to have been to make the district system more perfect, the tendency in the latter half has unmistakably been to merge it into a more pretentious organization, covering a larger area, and capable of larger undertakings. The cause of this has been the desire for larger schools,

taught by teachers better prepared, and capable of broader and better work, as well as the purpose to distribute educational advantages more evenly to all the people. Accordingly, in most of the states there has been a serious discussion of the relative advantages of the township as against the district system, and in quite a number of the states the former has already supplanted the latter.

The township system makes the township the unit of school government. It is administered by officers chosen at annual town meetings, or sometimes by central boards, the members of which are chosen by the electors of different sub-districts. In any event, the board has charge of all the elementary schools of the township, and if there is one, as is frequently the case, of the township high school. The board, following the different statutes governing them and the authorized directions of the township school electors, provides the buildings and cares for them, supplies the needed furnishings and appliances, employs the teachers, and regulates the general operations of the school.

It is at once seen that the township system is much less formally democratic and much more centralized than the district system. It has doubtless produced better schools and schools of more uniform excellence. One of its most beneficent influences has been the multiplication of township high schools, in which all the children of the township have had equality of rights. These high schools have given an uplifting stimulus to all the elementary schools of the township, and have led all the children to see that the work of the local school is not all there is of education, and given many of them ambitions to master the course of the secondary school.

Very much has been said upon the subject, but it is not necessary to go into it at length here. The township system has many advantages over the district system for a people who are ready for it. It is adapted to the development and to the administration of a higher grade of schools and very likely to better schools of all grades. It is a step, and an

important step, towards that general centralization in management and greater uniformity of improved methods of supervision and instruction now so manifest throughout the school system of the United States.

THE COUNTY SYSTEM

The southern states, most if not all of them, have a county system of school administration. This has not resulted from the development of the school system, but from the general system of county rather than township government prevalent in all the affairs of the southern states from the beginning, and easily traceable to historic causes. The county is the unit of school government in the southern states, because it has been the unit of all government.

The county system is not constituted identically in all of the southern states of the union. In Georgia, for example, the grand jury of each county selects from the freeholders five persons to comprise the county board of education; in North Carolina the justices of the peace and county commissioners of each county appoint such a county board of education, while in Florida such a board is elected by the people biennially, and in some states a county commissioner or superintendent of schools is the responsible authority for managing the schools of the county. In Georgia "each county shall constitute one school district," but in several of the states the county board or superintendent divides the territory into sub-districts and appoints trustees or directors in each. In the latter case the local trustees seem to be ministerial officers carrying out the policy of the county board. In any case the unit of territory for the administration of the schools is the county, and county officials locate sites, provide buildings, select text-books, prescribe the course of work, examine and appoint teachers, and do all the things which are within the functions of district or township trustees or city boards of education in the northern states.

THE CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

As communities have increased in population they have outgrown any primary or elementary system of organization for school purposes. Laws of general application or common usage in a county sparsely settled would not suffice for a city of many thousands of people. In such cities the people could not meet to fix the policies and manage the business of the schools: they could not meet even to choose officers to manage the schools. So the state legislatures have made special laws to meet the circumstances of the larger places. In some states these laws are uniform for all cities of a certain class, that is, cities having populations of about the same number, but more often each city has gone to the legislature and procured the enactment of such statutes as seemed suited to the immediate circumstances.

Because of this there is no uniform or general system of public school administration in the American cities. Of course there are some points of similarity. In nearly every case there is a board of education charged with the management of the schools, but these boards are constituted in almost as many different ways as there are different cities, and their legal functions are as diverse as there is diversity in cities. In the city of Buffalo, New York state, the school affairs are managed by a committee appointed by the city council, but happily this case stands by itself, and the evil consequences possible under such a scheme have been much ameliorated in this particular case for the last half dozen years by a most excellent superintendent of schools, elected by the people of that city.

In the greater number of cities the boards of education are elected by the people, in some cases on a general city ticket, and again by wards or sub-districts; in some places at a general or municipal election, and in others at elections held for the particular purpose. But in many cities, and particularly the larger ones, the boards are appointed by the mayor alone, or by the mayor and city council acting

jointly. In the city of Philadelphia the board is appointed by the city judges, in Pittsburgh by local directors, and in New Orleans by the state board of education. In a few instances the board is appointed by the city councils.

In the city of Cleveland, Ohio, the board of education consists of two branches: a school director elected by the people for the term of two years, and a school council of seven members, likewise elected by the people in three groups with terms of three years each. This scheme was devised in 1892 by prominent business men of the city, and, having been enacted by the legislature, has been in very satisfactory operation since.

It must be said that there has been much dissatisfaction with the way school affairs have been managed in the larger cities. In the smaller places, even in cities of a hundred thousand or more inhabitants, matters have gone well enough as a general rule, but in the greater cities there have been many and serious complaints of the misuse of funds, of neglect of property, of the appointment of unfit teachers, and of general incapacity, or worse, on the part of the boards. Of course it is notorious that the public business of American cities has very commonly been badly managed. It would not be true to say that the business of the schools has suffered as seriously as municipal business, but it certainly has been managed badly enough.

All this has come from the amounts of money that are involved and the number of appointments that are constantly to be made. More than a hundred millions of dollars are paid annually for teachers' wages alone in the United States. People who are needy have sought positions as teachers without much reference to preparation, and the kindly disposed have aided them without any apparent appreciation of the injury they were doing to the highest interests of their neighbors. Men engaged in managing the organizations of the different political parties have undertaken to control appointments in the interests of their party machines. And the downright scoundrels have infested the school organization in some places for the sake of plunder.

As cities have grown in size and multiplied in numbers, the more scandal there has been. And American cities have grown marvelously. In 1790 there was but one having between eight and twelve thousand inhabitants: in 1890 there were one hundred and forty-seven such. By the census of the latter year there were fourteen cities having between seventy-five thousand and one hundred and twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Now there are certainly a dozen with more than a half million of people each. The aggregate population of a dozen cities exceeds the aggregate population of twenty states. But if the troubles have multiplied and intensified as the cities have grown, so has the determination of the people strengthened to remedy the difficulties.

There has been no more decided and no more healthy educational movement in the United States in recent years, and none with greater or more strongly entrenched obstacles in its way, than that for better school organization and administration in the larger cities. Its particular features or objective points are pointed out by the committee of fifteen of the National educational association in the following declarations :

“ In concluding this portion of the report, the committee indicates briefly the principles which must necessarily be observed in framing a plan of organization and government in a large city school system.

First. The affairs of the school should not be mixed up with partisan contests or municipal business.

Second. There should be a sharp distinction between legislative functions and executive duties.

Third. Legislative functions should be clearly fixed by statute and be exercised by a comparatively small board, each member of which is representative of the whole city. This board, within statutory limitations, should determine the policy of the system, levy taxes, and control the expenditures. It should make no appointments. Every act should be by a recorded resolution. It seems preferable that this board be created by appointment rather than election, and

that it be constituted of two branches acting against each other.

Fourth. Administration should be separated into two great independent departments, one of which manages the business interests and the other of which supervises the instruction. Each of these should be wholly directed by a single official who is vested with ample authority and charged with full responsibility for sound administration.

Fifth. The chief executive officer on the business side should be charged with the care of all property and with the duty of keeping it in suitable condition: he should provide all necessary furnishings and appliances: he should make all agreements and see that they are properly performed: he should appoint all assistants, janitors, and workmen. In a word, he should do all that the law contemplates and all that the board authorizes, concerning the business affairs of the school system, and when anything goes wrong he should answer for it. He may be appointed by the board, but we think it preferable that he be chosen in the same way the members of the board are chosen, and be given a veto upon the acts of the board.

Sixth. The chief executive officer of the department of instruction should be given a long term and may be appointed by the board. If the board is constituted of two branches, he should be nominated by the business executive and confirmed by the legislative branch. Once appointed he should be independent. He should appoint all authorized assistants and teachers from an eligible list to be constituted as provided by law. He should assign to duties and discontinue services for cause, at his discretion. He should determine all matters relating to instruction. He should be charged with the responsibility of developing a professional and enthusiastic teaching force, and of making all the teaching scientific and forceful. He must perfect the organization of his department and make and carry out plans to accomplish this. If he cannot do this in a reasonable time he should be superseded by one who can."

It ought to be said before passing from this phase of the subject that these principles have made much headway, and that the promise is excellent. There is not a city of any importance in the country in which they are not under discussion, and there are few in which some of them have not been adopted and put in operation.

The powers of the city boards of education are very broad, almost without limits as to the management of the schools. They commonly do everything but decide the amount of money which shall be raised for the schools, and in some cases even that high prerogative is left to them. They purchase new sites, determine the plans and erect new buildings, provide for maintenance, appoint officers and teachers, fix salaries, make promotions, and, acting within very few and slight constitutional or statutory limitations, enact all of the regulations for the control of the vast system.

The high powers, cheerfully given by the people to school boards, have arisen from the earnest desire that the schools shall be independent and the teaching of the best. Of course these independent and large prerogatives are exceedingly advantageous to educational progress when exercised by good men: when they fall into the hands of weak or bad men they are equally capable of being put to the worst uses. And it is not to be disguised that in some of the foremost cities they have fallen into some hands which are corrupt, but more often into the hands of men of excellent personal character, but who do not see the importance of applying pedagogical principles to instruction, and who are, in one way or another, used by designing persons for partizan, selfish or corrupt purposes. Of course it is not to be implied that there are not to be found in every school board men or women with clear heads and stout hearts who understand the essential principles of sound school administration and are courageously contending for them. Nor must the serious difficulty of holding together pupils from such widely different homes in common schools be lost sight of. And again, the obstacles in the way of choosing and training a teaching

force of thousands of persons, and of continually energizing the entire body with new pedagogical life, must be remembered. And yet again, the dangers of corruption where millions of dollars are being annually disbursed by boards which are practically independent, are apparent. But, notwithstanding all of the hindrances, the issue is being joined and the battle will be fought out to a successful result. There can be but one outcome. The forces of decency and progress always prevail in the end.

The demands of the intelligent and sincere friends of popular education in our great cities are for a more scientific plan of organization which shall separate legislative and executive functions, which shall put the interests of teachers upon the merit basis and leave them free to apply pedagogical principles to the instruction, which shall give authority to do what is needed and protect officers and teachers, while it locates responsibility and provides the way for ousting the incompetent or the corrupt. The trouble has been that the boards were independent and the machine so ponderous and the prerogatives and responsibilities of officials so confused that people who were aggrieved could not get a hearing or could not secure redress, perhaps for the reason that no one official had the power to afford redress. What is demanded and what is apparently coming is a more perfect system, which will give one credit for good work in the schools and enable a parent to point his finger at and procure the dismissal of one who inflicts upon his child a school room which is not wholesome and healthful, or a teacher who is physically, pedagogically or morally unfit to train his child.

THE STATES AND THE SCHOOLS

Since the American school system has come to be supported wholly by taxation, it has come to depend upon the exercise of a sovereign power. In the United States the sovereign powers are not all lodged in one place. Such as have not been ceded to the general government are retained by the states. The provision and supervision of schools is

one of these. Hence the school system, while marked by many characteristics which are common throughout the country, has a legal organization peculiar to each state.

The dependence upon state authority which has thus arisen has gone farther than anything else towards the development of a *system* and towards the equalization of school privileges to the people of the same state. Naturally indisposed to relinquish the management of their own school affairs in their own way, they have been obliged to bow to the authority of their states, in so far as the state saw fit to assert its authority, because they could not act without it, as counties, cities, townships and districts have no power whatever to levy taxes for school purposes except as authorized by the state. They have become reconciled to the intervention of state authority, moreover, as they have seen that such authority improved the schools.

Of such improvement by such intervention there can be no doubt. In many cases state school funds have been created, or large sums are raised by general levy each year, which are distributed so as to give the most aid to the sections which are poorest and most need it. In the state of New York, for example, the cities pay more than half a million of dollars every year to the support of the schools in the country districts. In practically all of the states excellent normal schools are maintained to prepare teachers for the elementary and secondary schools. In all of the southern and western states great state universities are sustained as parts of the state school systems. In ten universities of the North-Central division of states there are twenty thousand students in college and professional courses, and the work is of as high grade and of as broad range as in the oldest universities of the country. These things are exerting strong influences upon the sentiment of the people of the different states and increasing their respect for the authority of their states over their schools.

And the application of state authority to all of the schools supported by public moneys of course makes them more

alike and better. The whims of local settlements disappear. The schoolhouses are better. More is done for the preparation of teachers, and more uniform exactions are put upon candidates for the teaching service. The courses of study are more quickly and symmetrically improved. There is criticism and stimulus from a common center for all of the educational work of the state.

The different states have gone to very different lengths in exercising their authority. The length to which each has gone has depended upon the necessity of state intervention by the exercise of the taxing power, or of delegating that power to subdivisions of the territory, and upon the sentiment of the people. In most cases it has been determined by the location of the point of equipoise between necessity and free consent. The state government has, of course, not been disposed to go farther than the people were willing, for all government is by the people. The thought of the people in the different states has been somewhat influenced by considerations which arise out of their early history, but doubtless in most cases it is predicated upon their later experiences.

All of the state constitutions now contain provisions relating to popular education. This was not true of the original constitutions of all of the older states, for when they were adopted the maintenance of schools was looked upon as a personal or local rather than a state concern. But later amendments have since introduced such provisions into all of the older state constitutions. And all of the newer ones have contained strong and elaborate sections, making it a fundamental duty of the government they established to encourage education and provide schools for all.

Of course, all of the states have legislated much in reference to the schools, and there is scarcely a session of one of the state legislatures in which they do not receive considerable attention. In all of the states there is some sort of a state school organization established by law. In practically all there is an officer known as the state superintendent of

public instruction, or the state school commissioner. In some there is a state board of education. In New York there is a state board of regents in charge of the private academies, in some measure of the public secondary schools, and of all of the higher institutions; and also a state superintendent of public instruction, with very high authority over the elementary schools and in a large measure over the public high schools.

The officer last referred to doubtless is vested with larger authority than any other one educational official in the country. He apportions the state schools funds; he determines the conditions of admission, the courses of work and the employment of teachers, and audits all the accounts of the twelve normal schools of the state; he has unlimited authority over the examination and certification of teachers; he regulates the official action of the school commissioners in all of the assembly districts of the state; he appoints the teachers' institutes, arranges the work, names the instructors, and pays the bills. He determines the boundaries of school districts. He provides schools for the defective classes and for the seven Indian reservations yet remaining in the state. He may condemn schoolhouses and require new ones to be built. He may direct new furnishings to be provided. He is a member of the state board of regents and of the board of trustees of Cornell university. He may entertain appeals by any person conceiving himself aggrieved from any order or proceeding of local school officials, determine the practice therein, and make final disposition of the matter in dispute, and his decision cannot be "called in question in any court or in any other place."

All this, with the splendid organization of the state board of regents, unquestionably provides New York with a more complete and elaborate educational organization than any other American state.

There are some who think that it is more elaborate and authoritative than necessary; that it unduly overrides local freedom and discourages individual initiative. One who has

been a part of that system, and who has also been associated with educational work where there is but very slight state supervision, will hardly be disposed to think so. But it is certainly exceptional among the states. Most of them undertake to regulate school affairs but very little. In the larger number of cases the state board of education only controls the purely state educational institutions, and the principal functions of the leading educational official of the state are to inspire action through his addresses and gather statistics and disseminate information deducible therefrom.

However, there can be no doubt about the general tendency being strongly towards greater centralization. Not only are its advantages quite apparent, but the overwhelming current of legislation and of the decisions of the courts is making it imperative. These are practically in accord, and are to the effect that in each state the school system is not local, but general; not individual schools controlled by separate communities, but a closely related system of schools which has become a state system and is entirely under state authority. Local school officials are now uniformly held to be agents of the state for the administration of a state system of education.

The granting of aid by the state, the necessity of the exercise of powers without which the schools cannot live, and which powers reside exclusively in the state, implies the right of the state to name the conditions upon which the aid shall be received, and the duty to see that the exercise of such powers shall result in equal advantages to all.

Widely dissimilar conditions lead different states to a greater or lesser appreciation of their educational responsibilities and make them more or less able or disposed to exercise their legal functions to the full measure of their good. Yet all are appreciating the fact that a constitutional, self-governing state exists for the moral and intellectual advantage of every citizen and for the common progress of the whole mass. All are moving as best they are able, and according to the light they have, in fulfillment of wise public

policy and constitutional obligation. They have employed and will continue to employ different methods. Some will act directly through state officials: some will delegate a large measure of authority to local boards and officials so long as it seems well: but all have the highest authority, the supreme responsibility in the matter, and under the influence of the later knowledge will undo whatever may be necessary, and take whatever new steps may be necessary, to carry the best educational opportunities to every child.

And it is the purpose of the people and the law of most of the states that such educational opportunities shall not only be provided for every American child, but that every one shall be required to take advantage of them. Compulsory attendance laws have been enacted in most of the states. These are not as carefully framed as a good knowledge of educational administration might very easily lead them to be, and they are not as completely enforced as the true interests of many unfortunate children require, yet it may be said safely that the right and the duty of the state to educate them is recognized, and that the tendency towards greater thoroughness in the way of making education universal as a safeguard to our free citizenship is general.

It was not so in the beginning, but American public schools are rapidly coming to be related together in a system of schools, that system a state system, and at once the most flexible and adaptable to our manner of living, our social ideals and our national ambitions.

THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION

As already pointed out, the authoritative management of the schools has never been conferred upon the general government, but is reserved to and exercised by the several states. What might have been done at the time of the framing of the federal constitution, if it had been supposed that in a few years the support and management of schools would develop into a government function, can only be speculated upon. It is well known that the members of the

first constitutional convention were not indifferent to education. But their view of the subject was the view of all men of their time, *i. e.*, that it was highly desirable that all social organizations should encourage, perhaps even by that time that it was proper for government to see that schools were maintained, but that the real responsibility, and of course the expense, should fall upon people legally chargeable with the custody of children. The functions of government touching education were not then under consideration at all, and when they forced themselves upon public attention the towns, and, when the exercise of the power of taxation became imperative, the states assumed them as they were bound to do.

Accordingly, the federal government has never exercised any control over the public educational work of the country. But it may be said with emphasis that that government has never been indifferent thereto. It has shown its interest at different times by generous gifts to education, and by the organization of a bureau of education for the purpose of gathering the fullest information from all of the states, and from foreign nations as well, and for disseminating the same to all who would be interested therein.

The gifts of the United States to the several states to encourage schools have been in the form of land rights from the public domain. In the sale of public lands the practice of reserving one lot in every township "for the maintenance of public schools within the township" has uniformly been followed. In 1786 officers of the revolutionary army petitioned congress for the right to settle territory north and west of the Ohio river. A committee reported a bill in favor of granting the request, which provided that one section in each township should be reserved for common schools, one section for the support of religion, and four townships for the support of a university. This was modified so as to give one section for the support of religion, one for common schools, and two townships for the support of a "literary institution to be applied to the intended object by the leg-

islature of the state." This provision, coupled with the splendid declaration that "religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged," foreshadowed the general disposition and policy of the central government and made the "Ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest territory" famous. The precedent here established became national policy, and after the year 1800 each state admitted to the Union, with the exception of Maine, Texas and West Virginia, received two or more townships of land for the founding of a university. In 1836 congress passed an act distributing to the several states the surplus funds in the treasury. In all \$28,101,645 was so distributed, and in a number of the states this was devoted to educational uses.

But the most noble, timely, and carefully guarded gift of the federal government was embodied in the land grant act of 1862 for colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts. This act gave to each state thirty thousand acres of land for each senator and representative in congress to which the state was entitled under the census of 1860, for the purpose of founding "at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the states shall respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." This act has been added to by other congressional enactments and the proceeds of the sales of lands have been generously supplemented by the state legislatures until great peoples' colleges and universities have arisen in all of the States.

The work of the United States bureau of education is a most exact, stimulating and beneficent one. Without exercising any authority, it is untiring and scientific in gathering data, in the philosophic treatment of educational subjects,

and in furnishing the fullest information upon every conceivable phase of educational activity to whomsoever would accept it. Its operations have by no means been confined to the United States. It has become the great educational clearing house of the world. The commissioners who have been at the head of this bureau have been eminent men and great educational leaders. The present commissioner, Dr. William T. Harris, stands without a peer as the most philosophical thinker and the readiest writer upon educational subjects in the world. Under such fortunate direction the bureau of education has collected the facts and made most painstaking research into every movement in America and elsewhere which gave promise of advantage to the good cause of popular education.

So, while the government of the United States is not chargeable under the constitution with providing or supervising schools, and while it does not exercise authority in the matter, it will be quickly seen that it has been steadily and intelligently and generously true to the national instinct to advance morality and promote culture by its influence and its resources.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Up to this time we have been treating of the American public school system, using the term in its strictest sense. We have been referring to the schools supported by public moneys and supervised by public officers. Yet there is an infinite number of other schools which comprise an important part of the educational system of the country and are of course subject to its laws. Any statement concerning American school organization and administration, even of the most general character, would be incomplete which did not cover these, but obviously it is not desirable in this connection to do more than touch upon the relation in which they stand, by common usage and under the laws, to American education.

In the first half of the century just closing many private "academies" or "seminaries" sprang up in all directions

where the country had become at all settled. This was in response to a demand from people who began to reach out, but could not get what they wanted in the common schools. Any teacher with a little more than ordinary gifts could open one of these schools upon a little higher plane than usual and very soon have an abundance of pupils and a profitable income. Many of these institutions did most excellent work. Not a few of the leading citizens of the country owe their first inspiration and much help to them. The larger part of these schools served their purpose and finally gave way to new public high schools. Some yet remain and continue to meet the desires of well-to-do and select families who prefer their somewhat exclusive ways. A considerable number have been adopted by their states and developed into state normal schools, and not a few have by their own natural force grown into literary colleges.

The earlier American colleges were, in the beginning, in a large sense the children of the state. Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia were all chartered by and in some measure supported by their states at the start, and are yet subject to the law, though they have become independent of such support. A vast number of colleges has been established by the religious denominations for the training of their ministry, and, so far as possible, for giving all their youth a higher education while keeping them under their denominational influence.

In recent years innumerable schools have arisen out of private enterprise. Every conceivable interest has produced a school to promote its own ends and accordingly adjusted to its own thought. So professional, technical, industrial and commercial schools of every kind have sprung up on every hand.

All such schools operate by the tacit leave of the states in which they exist. The states are not disposed to interfere with them, as they ask no public support. Some of them hold charters granted by the legislature, and more secure recognized standing by organizing under general cor-

poration laws enacted to cover all such enterprises. In some cases the states distribute public moneys to some of these institutions by way of encouragement, and perhaps impose certain conditions upon which they shall be eligible to share in such distributions. But ordinarily a state does no more than protect its own good name against occasional impostors who wear the livery of heaven to serve the devil more effectually, and it is feared that some states have not yet come to do this as completely as they ought.

The tendency to regulate private schools by legislation, to the extent at least of seeing that they are not discreditable to the state, is unmistakable. New York, for example, has prohibited the use of the name "college" or "university" except when the requirements of the state board of regents are met. All of the reputable institutions,—and they constitute nearly the whole number,—desire reasonable supervision, for it certifies their respectability and constitutes them a part of the public educational system of the state.

EXPERT SUPERVISION

It has not been convenient in tracing the preceding pages to treat of an exceedingly important phase of the American school system which distinguishes that system from any other national system of education, and which has come to be well established in our laws; that is, supervision by professional experts, both generally and locally.

From the beginning the laws have provided methods for certificating persons deemed to be qualified to teach in the schools. This has ordinarily been among the functions of state, city, and county superintendents or commissioners. Sometimes boards of examiners have been created whose only duty should be to examine and certificate teachers. The functions of certificating and of employing teachers have, for obvious reasons, not commonly been lodged in the same officials. Superintendents began to be provided for by law in the early part of the century. The first state superin-

tendency was established by New York in 1812. Other states took similar action in the next thirty years. Town, city and county superintendencies came along rapidly, and by or soon after the middle of the century had been set in operation in most parts of the then settled country.

The main duty of these officials in the earlier days was to examine candidates for teaching, report statistics, and make addresses on educational occasions. In later years, however, they are held in considerable measure responsible for the quality of the teaching. In the country districts the superintendents hold institutes, visit the schools, commend and criticise the teaching, and exert every effort to promote the efficiency of the schools, until a discreet and active county superintendent comes to exert almost a controlling influence over the school affairs of his county.

In the cities, and particularly the larger ones, the problem is much more difficult. The teachers are much greater in number and the task of securing persons of uniform excellence is much enlarged. The schools are less homogeneous and instruction less easy. Frequently the superintendent cannot know the personal qualities of each teacher, or even visit all of the schools. Yet a system must be organized by which, through the aid of assistants, the superintendent's office will be advised fully of the work of every teacher in the system. And if the system is to have anything like uniform excellence, if the rights of children are to be met, and the instruction is to have life in it, all teachers must be upon the merit basis, the most deserving must be advanced in rank and pay as rapidly as practicable, and the weak must be helped and trained into efficiency or removed from their positions.

The laws are coming to recognize the responsibilities and difficulties of the superintendent's position, and are continually throwing about that officer additional safeguards and giving him larger powers and greater freedom of action. The great issue that is now on in American school affairs is

between education and politics. The school men are insisting upon absolute immunity from political influence in their work. It would doubtless seem strange to people of other nations not familiar with our political conditions, that such insistence may be necessary. Pure democracy has its troubles. The machinations of men who are seeking political influence constitute the most serious of them. However, the good cause of education against political manipulation is making substantial progress. The law books of all of the states show provisions recognizing the professional school superintendent: in many of the states they contain provisions directing and protecting his work: and in some of them they are beginning to confer upon him entire authority over the appointment, assignment and removal of teachers, while they impose upon him entire responsibility for the quality of the teaching.

It is this professional supervision, by states and counties as well as by towns and cities, taken up almost spontaneously at the beginning and early established and compensated by law, which has given the American schools their peculiar spirit. As intelligence has advanced and the people have come to know the worth of good teaching and have been unwilling that their children should be associated with teachers who have not the kindly spirit of a true teacher, or be kept marking time by incompetents, they have favored larger exactions and closer supervision over the teaching, to the end that it might be in accord with the best educational opinion. All this is yearly becoming more and more apparent in the laws, and it is advancing the great body of American teachers along philosophical lines more steadily and rapidly than any other great body of teachers in the world is advancing. American teachers have always had freedom. Now they are learning to exercise it, and they are being permitted to exercise it, in accord with educational principles.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion a few facts touching the great school system, the legal organization of which we have briefly tried to sketch, and which has produced that organization and in turn has in part been produced by it, will be of interest. The enrollment of pupils in the state common schools alone was, in 1895-6, 14,379,078. These schools were kept open an average of 140.5 days in the year. The number of teachers employed was 130,366 males and 269,959 females, a total of 400,325. The total value of the public school property was \$455,948,164, and the running expenses for the year were \$184,453,780. There was raised by taxation \$163,023,294. Of institutions above the grade of elementary schools there were 677 colleges and universities, with 97,134 collegiate students and 69,014 preparatory students. Some of these are too ambitious in calling themselves "colleges," it is true, yet all are doing work that counts, and educational nomenclature is straightening itself out slowly but steadily. There were 5,108 public high schools with 409,433 secondary pupils, and there were 2,100 private high schools and academies with 107,633 secondary pupils. There were 77 law schools with 10,449 students, 148 medical schools with 24,265 pupils, 157 theological schools with 8,173 students, and 362 normal schools with 67,380 students. In cities of over 8,000 inhabitants there were 601 schools with 3,590,875 pupils. In the whole country there were 7,184 public libraries with 34,596,258 volumes.

In the year 1896 there was paid for teachers' and superintendents' wages in the common schools \$116,377,778, or 63.1 per cent of the total expenditure for school purposes.

Laws making attendance at school compulsory have been enacted in 32 states and territories.

One of the most gratifying facts in connection with the educational work of the United States is the large increase in the number of graduate students in the colleges. The following table exhibits the number of resident graduate

students in universities and colleges of the United States for 25 years and down to as late a time as the figures are available :

1871-'72.....	198	1880-'81	460	1889-'90.....	1,717
1872-'73.....	219	1882-'83.....	522	1890-'91.....	2,131
1873-'74.....	283	1883-'84.....	778	1891-'92.....	2,499
1874-'75.....	369	1884-'85.....	869	1892-'93.....	2,851
1875-'76.....	399	1885-'86.....	935	1893-'94.....	3,493
1876-'77.....	389	1886-'87.....	1,237	1894-'95.....	3,999
1877-'78	414	1887-'88.....	1,290	1895-'96.....	4,363
1878-'79.....	465	1888-'89.....	1,343	1896-'97.....	4,919
1879-'80.....	411				

The United States bureau of education, to which I am indebted for the foregoing figures and much other information, is aided by a corps of 15,000 voluntary correspondents who furnish printed reports and catalogs and cheerfully answer the bureau's inquiries upon every phase of educational work.

It is of course difficult for one not familiar with American institutions and American ways to understand or appreciate the American school system. To him it seems anything but a *system*. It is a product of conditions in a new land, and it is adapted to those conditions. It is at once expressive of the American spirit and it is energizing, culturing and ennobling that spirit. It is settling down to an orderly and symmetrical institution, it is becoming scientific, and it is doing its work efficiently. It exerts a telling influence upon every person in the land, and is proving that it is supplying an education broad enough and of a kind to support free institutions.



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