

Equalizing Educational Opportunity

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One of the problems that education faces today is a disconnected school system. A fact which I read recently in "Education in a Democracy" astounded and startled me: The state of New York expended \$147 a pupil in average daily attendance while Arkansas spent only \$31 per pupil during the years of 1937 and 1938. The salaries of teachers range from \$500 a year in some states to \$2500 in other states. Interestingly enough, it has been found that states with the least per capita income frequently make the greatest effort to support the schools.

How much better equipped the child from the far-seeing state would be in comparison to the one who goes to an outmoded school taught by poorly paid teachers. Yet both children are American citizens, and, as such, should have an equal opportunity to develop their talents and abilities.

Yes, something certainly should be done to bring about a unification of the school system in this country. But then the question of centralization of control arises. Leaders warn us against a dictatorial government. Wise men mention that Germany has always maintained federal control of the schools and used this power to further the ends of the

state. It is pointed out that remote control of the state of Washington by the capital of our government would be neither effective nor desirable. Also it is understandable that a group of states all experimenting with different methods of teaching would progress more rapidly by comparing notes than the whole nation would by experimenting with one method at a time.

The Senate Committee on Education proposed a bill in 1941 to give states federal assistance to help them meet financial emergencies and to help reduce the inequality of the schools. Although there are many arguments in favor of the bill, I think it would receive considerable opposition at this time from people not in sympathy with the present administration.

Perhaps the same goal can be realized without federal aid if the states will make a more hearty attempt to overcome the discrepancies within themselves. The schools in rural districts are in sore need of having their standards raised to the level of the city schools. If equal opportunity were granted in all sections of each state, then we would be getting at the root of the problem, and the job of making opportunity uniform throughout the whole country would be greatly simplified.

Materialism and Idealism in Education

PATSY WALKER

Much has been said about the modern educational system. It has been praised for producing efficient workers and useful citizens. On the other hand, the modern

system has been criticized for producing students who have no depths of feeling, no initiative. Such students can accomplish only the work they have specialized