

Equalizing Educational Opportunity

BETTY ANN EVARD

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

in; they have no thoughts of their own. Actually they are poor imitations of the professors who taught them.

There is an increasing number of schools which emphasize the classics. In these schools the students learn to interpret and appreciate the fine arts. From studying and analyzing the great masters of art, literature, and music, they acquire a profound philosophy of life. Since these students can find a reason and meaning for their daily lives, they can often find a satisfactory answer to the sometimes unanswerable question "why?"

In the business world such a knowledge of the arts is frowned upon. These students with the high ideals are frequently referred to as intellectual snobs. Some employers feel that the fact that one enjoys symphonies and art galleries gives no indication that one will succeed in a money-making process.

However, there are highly specialized schools. A student in one of these schools may become an expert in a given field. He may be able to obtain a position in his field and advance in it. Nevertheless, he will not enjoy life to

the fullest extent, nor will he appreciate the numerous advantages that life has to offer if one delves deep into the subject.

Offers of positions come readily to a student who has specialized. He will succeed until a problem arises which he must reason out for himself. The employer blames the failure on the individual when often it is the fault of his previous training. The materialistic system taught him to do the work of a particular field, but it neglected to teach him the principles of thinking and reasoning.

In my opinion the ideal system would be a skillful combination of materialism and idealism. I am interested in radio work. At one time I was advised to go to a strictly professional school; yet another time I was told that if I had a liberal background in the arts, I could succeed not only in the radio work but also in other fields. Today the problem of materialism and idealism in education confronts youth as well as educators. It seems, however, that the materialism of the modern business world is crowding out the idealism of the classics.

View From The Choir

BARBARA HARDING

Softly the organist begins the opening strains of the prelude and we, nun-like in our flowing black robes, tread with slow steps to our usual places in the choir. The members of the congregation sit below us whispering and, at times, talking noisily together, seemingly unaware that the services have started. The whispering ceases abruptly, however, when the

organist swings from the soft, slow strains of the prelude to the thundering tones of the *Doxology*.

A quick glance around the church during the opening prayer reveals that the congregation has avoided the front rows of seats as if they were infested with a rare communicable disease. The pews begin to be inhabited about midway