

Is Education for Industrial Workers a War Work?

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This question may be considered with two classes in mind, Actual Workers and Prospective Workers. The treatment of the first must partake of the nature of emergency, that of the second is, to some extent, provided for in larger cities such as Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, but not to any appreciable extent in the smaller mill towns and villages.

The present war has brought into strong light several weak points in our social system one of these, due to the fact that Canada is just over the pioneer state, is that we have not realized the need for intensive application of science to industry. Had we endeavored to do so we would have found it necessary in addition to engaging engineers, chemists and other trained men, that we raise the educational status of the men who have to carry out their instructions.

The question of raising the horizon of the average worker and rendering him more useful in industry has one great difficulty: he has to earn his living at the same time. The school must be brought to him. Sometimes he would find it difficult to undertake even correspondence school work. He doesn't want or need much in the way of apparatus. The smallest communities have schools. There is no reason, apart from lack of incentive and initiative, why any school, anywhere, should not be contributing more directly to the special community needs. Workmen know how to carry out the operations upon which they are engaged and also in most cases have some knowledge born of experience as to numerous and ingenious ways of getting over the difficulties exigent to their work. The great need is that these men become interested in the elementary, basic principals behind it, and impressed that they are to be considered as contributing to the community welfare. Several factors must be brought into action.

The worker must be led to feel that it is to his own personal interest to attain more knowledge.

The teachers in small towns and villages must take an interest in local affairs and develop a deeper sense of personal responsibility.

The social life of the community must be more closely related to the school house.

Very often the chemical, civil or electrical engineer is the only trained technical man in a small community. He will often be in a position permitting him to take the initiative and will soon find that he can get the co-operation of the school teachers and local doctor in addition to his manager and superintendent. The mill element should be active in support of such movements, but it is always better that the community and not the mill should be the power. If there is a local newspaper, its editor can, and will generally, give great help.

In a community having, say, one industry and about five hundred population, there would be a fair public school with perhaps three teachers. The subjects which might be taken up here for night classes could be: English, Arithmetic, Mensuration, Mechanical Drawing, Sewing, Household Science. There should always be some work for women. This keeps all the community interested and increases the likelihood of the women taking up the other subjects. The local dressmaker or milliner could be interested and would find that the work would help rather than hinder her own business. Whenever, at all possible, all instructors should be paid. Volunteer work is good, but it is to be avoided as a general rule. The work will grow if the workers are really interested and can be made to see the national need. Provision must be made to carry interest over into at least a two year course.

Coming to a wider field, one of our leading industries is arranging for a three months intensive course at a central technical school wherein the student would work full time as in the mill, and would concentrate on four or five special subjects such as Mensuration, Mechanical Drawing, Arithmetic, Chemistry and Physics. This would be a very useful course for a young man or woman who has had only a common school education, and would carry him or her in these subjects up to about the end of the second year's work in a university.

The subject is capable of far wider treatment than this article can indicate, but the above points are necessary to show in a very rough way what may be done.

Now as to the matter in the light of the war. It is increasingly apparent that peace when it comes is to be a

democratic peace. The present condition of Russia illustrates an extreme in the way of democracy. Bolshevism is getting into Austria and to some extent Germany. We are inclined to welcome the idea of a crumbling from the inside by these forces in enemy countries, but do we want a Bolshevik peace? If this movement permeates the German people, who, and not their aristocracy, will be at the conference table, we must realize that there will have to be some consideration given to the stabilizing of affairs in all allied nations to balance the Bolshevik, Sinn Fein, and I. W. W. demands. Better mutual understanding between the employer and employed is one of the first essentials.

Mr. C. V. Corless in a series of very able papers read at the annual meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute, 1917 and 1918, discusses very thoroughly the need that exists for reform in our educational system from the roots up, rather than from the branches down. No real progress can be made to bring about a generally recognized sense of national stewardship by both capital and labor until there is brought about a radical change in our present autocratic and unnatural school system.

Repression must give way to expression.

The individuality of the child must be developed.

The practice of placing the earliest teaching in the hands of the lowest paid and least experienced teacher must be abolished. For this work teachers of wide experience, knowledge and vision, and enough of them, would justify a large expenditure of public funds.

We cannot expect to attain these ends with the existing more or less fossilized school boards, or while the vocation of teaching is rewarded, or fails to be rewarded, as it is at present. Teaching school is too often thought of as something to do until a better job shows up or until the teacher gets married.

Until teaching is regarded in its true light as one of the most important vocations, if not the greatest, in our civil life and until the teacher sees in each pupil the man or woman to be, to do, to suffer, or succeed, we cannot expect much improvement in the relation of capital and labor, or other divided interests that should be mutually helpful.

This war will have to be won for democracy. It may take some time yet. Something can be done with the present equipment and system even in the next six months in rural schools. When the war is won, it must stay won and one of the greatest insurances of democracy for the future is that education shall be democratic not autocratic.

A MUNICIPAL WAR CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK.

A Joint War Conference of the Association of State Leagues of Municipalities, National Municipal League, New York Bureau of Municipal Research and Governmental Research Conference, will take place on June 5 in New York. The two principal topics to be discussed will be "War Economy in Financing Local Governments," and "New Duties of City and State Governments in War Times." Other subjects will be "A War Service Program for Cities"; "The Government as an Employer"; "The Work of Municipal Leagues in War Times," etc.

We understand that representatives from Canadian Municipalities will be welcomed at this important conference which covers matters that the municipal councils of this country have already had much experience in: an experience that would be useful at the round table conferences that will take place after each address.

GARBAGE BY-PRODUCTS.

New York city's plant on Staten Island for the reclamation of garbage produces the necessary fat for ten million cakes of soap yearly, and also the nitrogen and glycerin for the manufacture of seven hundred thousand pounds of high explosive. In addition to this, much phosphoric acid and potash are reclaimed and sold for fertilizers. This is effected by the so-called Cobwell process.—Popular Science Monthly.

MILLIONS STARVING ALREADY.

Deaths from starvation in Europe are estimated by the United States Food Administration at 4,750,000 since the war began as compared to 4,250,000 killed by fighting.