

A Proposed College of Social Research

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By J. W. MACMILLAN.

Herbert Croly, chief editor of the New Republic, writes in a recent issue of that live and purposeful paper of a design which is likely to be carried into effect in New York in the founding of a school for social research. Such a school would be unlike anything in existence in America. Indeed, the only college which the world has produced up to the present time on similar lines is the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques of Paris. And the New York school aims at wider objects than that of Paris.

It was after the smashing defeat and humiliation of France in 1870 that a group of Frenchmen, convinced that one cause of the surprising collapse of their country's powers lay in its neglect of organized education, founded a school to train students for public administration and to apply scientific methods to the problems of politics. This new school, privately founded, supported and controlled, has vindicated itself. It has undoubtedly helped to raise the standards of public administration in France, and to vitalize the legal and political thinking of the state. Some part of the difference in the spirit and efficiency of France in 1914 from France in 1870, when a second time she met the shock of the German legions, is to be credited to the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques.

The proposed school in New York is to be, like that of Paris, free of state control. As everybody knows, the whole tendency in recent education has been to place the control in the hands of the state. This has been forced by the inefficiency of the private foundation, for the most part. Too poor to purchase the necessary equipment, it has either loafed on its job, or begged the patronage of wealth. The best of the voluntary schools, which were those supported by the churches, and generally free from the taint of being gain-seeking enterprises, tended to conservatism, resisted the spirit of free inquiry, and were poor enough to boot. Thus it was natural, in days when the advance of science made laboratories necessary parts of colleges, for that laboratories are costly things, to turn the whole business of erecting, maintaining and directing colleges over to the governments. And so no organ of criticism of governments was encouraged and the health of the political life suffered for lack of medical skill in diagnosing and prescribing for political ills. It is clear that any school which aims to make scientific inquiry into political conditions, and to disseminate curative political ideas, must be lifted above state management.

The proposed new school of social research then is to be endowed and turned over to its faculty for control. The founders would efface themselves with the gifts which created the school. They would place it in the hands of a body of teachers chosen from among the leading specialists in anthropology, psychology, history, jurisprudence, economics, sociology, finance, and kindred subjects, selected from among those in whose ability and integrity the public have confidence. It would not require to be a very expensive school, for its laboratories would not require to be built of brick and stone and equipped with instruments and machines. It would pursue its researches in city streets, and country fields, in factories and parliament halls. Its raw material would consist of human beings, and its museum would be the records of history.

This is a curious revival of the purpose which gave the name "humanities" to the revival of classical learnings three hundred years ago. It is a commonplace in the career of the human race that "a conservative is the worshipper of a dead radical." Erasmus was almost driven from Oxford by the resentment of the scholastics against the new-fangled teaching of Greek. It will be, and it already is, the classical enthusiasts who will deride such a school as is now proposed. The patient study of human society, in the hope that some of its distresses may be allayed, seems to the devotees of the current curricula an unworthy task for the human intellect. Nevertheless, we may venture to believe that the same incorrigible desire of mankind to master its destiny, which won the triumph of the humanities over the scholastic learning, will in turn substitute a scheme of study which is practical and serviceable for one which is of little use.

Mr. Croly presents the following indictment of

social conditions in the progressive parts of the world:

"Under the traditional legal and economic system the surplus values created by technical investigation and industrial expansion, which were in part the gift of science and should have added much to the heritage of society as a whole, have been used chiefly to satisfy the special and frequently the exclusive needs of comparatively few people. The result has been a forced growth of moral and social particularism. Those who reaped the benefits of technical progress were reluctant to consider its fruits as anything but their own property. Those who believed themselves dispossessed could see no way of socializing the surplus save by anti-social agitation and even violence. . . . The integrity of human nature itself is threatened by the elaborate and unruly machinery which science has enabled enterprising men to create for the realization of particular and headstrong ambitions."

More and more, and especially as the war has advanced, open-minded men, in every class of society, are feeling that such indictments are true and must be faced. The problem of production has been solved. There is enough and to spare for all. We live in the era of surpluses, not of deficits, as our fathers did, not so many centuries ago. We must now face the problem of distribution. No child should be cheated of its inheritance as a member of a race which has won the offensive against nature. The average man feels this keenly, and he is responsive to the notion that there is a reasonable way out. Science has given us the increase of goods, can she not give us as well some decently fair way of dividing them? This proposed school is to be founded in the faith that the social order can be rationalized. It believes in human nature, and judges that the prevailing social failure is due not so much to lack of human goodwill as to ignorance of a social technique by which it may accomplish its just and generous purposes.

It is suggested that one of the chief subjects of research undertaken by the proposed college will be

OTTAWA GIVES DRAFT FIGURES.

Ottawa.—The following statement was issued by the Department of Militia and Defence:

"In connection with the recent published returns, covering the operations of the Military Service Act, it is evident, from some of the comment in the press, that the form in which the statement was made out has led to misunderstanding as to the total number of men obtained in relation to the 100,000 reinforcements authorized by the statute.

"The total number of men obtained by the machinery of the Military Service Act up to June 19 was 57,295, to which may be added for the purpose of determining the number of men available 16,807, who have reported voluntarily. The statement in detail to June 19 follows:

"Number of reporting as ordered, 48,575. Number reporting late or apprehended as defaulters, 12,537. Defaulters (non-registrants) apprehended, 7,350. Total 68,462.

"Deduct number discharged, or on leave without expense to public, 11,167. Balance, 57,295.

"Add number voluntarily reporting, 16,807. Total, 74,102.

"It should also be borne in mind that the total on any given day is subject to substantial deductions owing to the considerable number of men who, shortly after reporting, are placed in lower category and returned to civil life."

WILL HIGHER FREIGHT DECREASE TONNAGE?

There is no surer way of decreasing the freight offered for transport on American railroads than to increase the freight rate, for there is always a quantity of low grade freight which will move at a rate but which will not move at a higher rate. To increase the rate of this class of freight 25 per cent

the perplexities of labor adjustment. The existing methods of deciding the differences which constantly arise, or rather never subside between capital and labor, are either through collective bargaining or legislative control. Neither of these, nor the combination of them, has yet displayed any capacity for bringing these differences to an end. There remains the need of developing some means of co-operation between the managers of industry and the rank and file of the laborers. What this means maybe is not yet known. It can only be discovered by men of high character, wide knowledge, and sound judgment going into the manufacturing plants and studying them at first hand. No such class goes there now. The proposed school would send them.

Another important subject of research would be public administration and social management. It is in this field that the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques has done its work. This is a field presenting peculiar difficulties. The men in charge of state affairs, in many cases, want inquiry into what sort of people they are and after what fashion they are governing, while, on the other hand, the people are extremely shy of experts. Any demagogue could rouse an audience of average citizens to scorn and contempt of the student in politics. The difficulty is so sharp as to show how great is the need of introducing the rational element into political life. The size of the problem is the best reason why it should be undertaken. As Mr. Croly says, "the creative power of ideas is no less implicit in the American than in the French national tradition." Perhaps such a faith is stronger in republics than in monarchies, but we may dare to hope that the political descendants of Burke and Pitt are not utterly and invincibly hardened against thought being applied to the state.

Such a school would be essentially scientific in its nature. Much of the similar teaching and investigation which is now carried on is motivated by philanthropy. Probably the schools of philanthropy of the larger cities of the United States are the nearest existing approximations to what is intended. And they are doing wonderful work, as is shown by the readiness with which their graduates are taken up by the civil service or absorbed into industry. Yet, in true college work, the motive of generosity must come second to the desire for truth. It is the truth which sets men free. It is the alliance between the intelligence and the will which is supremely needed. After that, with the equipment thus provided, may come the social evangelist.

means to permanently kill the moving of from 20 to 25 per cent of this class of freight. As to the other grades of freight, the result is to decrease the quantity moved by limiting the market.

Most people imagine that an increase of a freight rate by one-fourth would only cut down the market for that class of goods a corresponding amount, but they are wrong, for the fact in freight transportation is that with a given freight rate any class of freight will be transported a certain distance in every direction from the central point in spite of or in the face of competition. Now the increase of the freight rate by 25 per cent means a cutting down of the radius of distribution one-fifth and as a consequence the market for the product from that central point of production decreases in proportion to the square of the radius. In other words, if at the present freight rates, the radius of a market is 100 miles, a 25 per cent increase in rate will cut down the radius of the market to 80 miles and the total loss of market as a result of the 25 per cent rate increase is as the difference between the square of ten and the square of eight. In other words, a 25 per cent increase in a freight rate means a loss of 36 per cent of the market, and a corresponding decrease in shipping.—Guy M. Walker, in The Magazine of Wall Street.

LIFE INSURANCE FACTS.

Since organization American life companies have paid \$4,000,000,000 in death claims. This would give 608,000 widows and orphans three meals a day for twenty years. It would provide 800,000 homes at \$5,000 each. In addition to this, about \$4,000,000,000 have been paid to policyholders in dividends, endowments, for surrendered policies, etc. The assets now on hand amount to \$5,140,000,000 chiefly in reserves. They exceed the total savings bank deposits of the country and would pay the national debt almost five times over.—Public Savings Ladder.