

manager had his way, so the boy went to work running errands. The vocational expert consoled himself with the reflection that this preliminary work was at least an accelerated form of floor-walking. Finally, the probationary period was over and to the delight of the vocational expert, the young man was told that on a certain date he could begin to work as a full-fledged floor-

walker. But here the story ends abruptly. Going to work on the morning when his duties as floor-walker were to begin, he dodged an automobile and, in so doing, slipped and fell in front of a street car, which cut off both his feet. The accident was not fatal—except to his career as a floor-walker and to the hopes of the vocational expert.

## ONE CURE FOR NATIONAL WASTE

HELEN E. PURCELL

Institute for Public Service, New York, N.Y.

A boy who had finished the first year high school was asked to keep the accounts of a very simple household. He failed utterly. He could do the usual problems in arithmetic and had a smattering of algebra and geometry, but when he came face to face with the most simple and practical piece of mathematics he would ever have to deal with, he was absolutely at sea.

This boy had finished an elementary school course without having any instruction in simple bookkeeping forms or budget-making; also he had planned a high school course that would permit him to graduate without a knowledge of these fundamental business matters. This is an example of the lack of practicality often found in our schools and the sometimes wildness of the possibilities for elective work.

In the elementary schools every child should have training in the keeping and budgeting of accounts. No child should be considered fit to graduate who is not able to put into simple and correct form the practical things of everyday personal and community life.

His first lessons should teach him to budget his own resources. From this should develop an interest in civic finances and the ability to understand them and to put them into form. In the high school additional training in these problems should be given.

The writer believes thoroughly in the provision of elective courses and in early specializing. However, there are

some things that are fundamental; English is one of them, practical business methods should be another. A boy might very well graduate from high school without a knowledge of algebra and geometry if these subjects had no place in his future life work. He should not graduate from either elementary or high school unable to understand his own and the community's debits and credits. The first is the sort of ignorance that leads men to spend more than they earn, the second permits sharpers to get control of governmental problems.

This sort of work should make a conscious start not later than the fifth grade. In fact, from the very beginning the number work of the child should center around practical problems. A beginning should be made by requiring, each week, the organization in correct form of an actual spending account. A balance on the side of savings should be encouraged. This should lead to simple exercises in budget-making in relation to a spending account. As part of an introduction to work of this kind, one teacher for a month placed upon the board from day to day the expenditures of a real boy whom she knew and asked the class to be his bookkeeper. She called this boy John. John had an allowance of 25 cents per week. Each Monday the members of the class brought the accounts of this boy up to date and struck a balance, all in proper form.