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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

A Central Vocational School. During the Conference of Vocational Education held in Ottawa the last week in October, resolutions were passed affirming the need of a central school for the training of teachers of Vocational subjects to be employed throughout the Dominion. It was resolved that the accommodation and equipment of such school be provided by the Federal Government; while the maintenance be divided equally between the Federal and Provincial Governments, the proportional share of each Province being determined by the total population living in urban communities of 3,000 or over.

The training of teachers to carry on the work of Vocational Education is a vital need upon which the success of the movement rests. The teacher in such a school needs not only to be expert in his practical work but he must be able to impart his skill to others. There is need of theoretical, as well as, practical training in a Vocational School and the teacher must be able to associate the two in such a way as to supplement the one by the other. The Vocational teacher needs certain social qualifications which will fit him to understand his pupils and their problems, and lead them to appreciate the value of the essentials of a good general education as well as the economic value of skilled proficiency. The demands are so varied that it is difficult to find the needed qualifications in one person; since the average teacher has only the theoretical training while the skilled workman lacks the ability to impart his knowledge to others.

What is Vocational Education? There seems to be considerable confusion as to the meaning of Vocational Education, some persons using the term to include manual training and domestic science. A class of graduates in Harvard University which has been studying Vocational Education for some time formulated the following definition.*

"Vocational education is preparation for work in industry, commerce, agriculture, the professions, or home making. 'Manual Training' is not vocational education but is rather a phase of general experience useful for discovery or cultural purposes. 'Pre-vocational' work likewise is for discovery and try-out purposes rather than for actual vocational preparation; the continuation school for children 14 to 18 is at first for guidance and choice, and later for vocational education because the entering pupils have not yet seriously chosen a vocation nor found themselves in a satisfactory job. Vocational education is

not in opposition to general education and should fortify and supplement preparation for civic, moral, family and recreational activities."

To this may well be added their summary of the general characteristics of effective Vocational Education which "should contribute to the ability to become efficient in economic life, so that all may have an opportunity while in school to prepare for occupations which are productive. Vocational Guidance and Industrial Training should tend to produce a more widespread participation and responsibility in economic life bringing about greater personal efficiency and happiness. This may be accomplished by constant application and changes in the Vocational Educational program to fit the economic and sociological needs of the present and immediate future. The means to this end are investigation and surveys, which can be accomplished through the co-operation of employers and workers, including their respective organizations, with the educational administrations. Vocational Education should be broad, relating and applying actual studies to the situation which will be met in life. Trade skill should not be over-emphasized and should be taught in proportion to the related and basic studies. Plans should provide for the schools to co-operate with employers, workers, and their organizations."

The Need for Vocational Training. Throughout Canada and the United States there is an appalling loss of pupils during the last two years of the Elementary School and the High School.

The Canadian Conference passed the following resolution regarding a means of lessening this national wastage of talent:

"Resolved that junior industrial courses should be established for the children who have completed Grade VI., such courses to extend over the period of three years and to have a decided bias toward one or other of the main divisions of industrial activity, viz., commerce, manufacture, trades, agriculture, household."

This need is voiced also by this group of Harvard students:

"We are a nation of sixth-grade graduates with a formalized school program which does not attract the attendance of the masses of our population above the compulsory school age. Therefore Vocational Education can be used on a part-time or full-time basis to hold these children under school influence a little longer."

This resolution of introducing industrially inclined courses after Grade VI. is a timely and interesting suggestion. In certain parts of the United States the so-called Six-Six plan of school organization is being incorporated. The Elementary course, which we are all

* Brewer, J. M., Summary of Conclusions in Vocational Education, Education September, 1920. pp. 52-57.