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THE EFFECT OF MILITARY TRAINING ON EDUCATION.

BY DWIGHT F. DAVIS.*

It does not take a close analysis to determine that military training is having a potent influence on education in our country. The operation of our National Defense Act has brought this fact to the attention of our educators in a most forceful manner, and the War Department now finds itself unable to grant the requests from many colleges that desire Reserve Officers' Training Corps established at these civilian institutions.

The fear that military training would interfere with and distract the attention of the student from his regular course of study, as expressed by many educators a few years ago, is seldom, if ever, heard now. The operation of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps has convinced even the most skeptical that such fears were unfounded. Some of the former "doubting Thomases" are now the loudest in praise of the good effect which military training in our schools and colleges is having on education.

In considering briefly the R. O. T. C., it must be understood that apart from the basic object of giving military training to young men, the benefits otherwise obtained belong properly in three classes, physical, moral, and mental. Although these benefits are apparent throughout the entire course of the R. O. T. C. student, they follow in natural

*Specially written for the St. Louis Law Review. The Secretary of War is a graduate of our law school, Class of 1903. Attention is directed to a valuable article in the February, 1926, number of the "Washingtonian," entitled, "History of Military Training at Washington University," by R. S. Dodson, Major, C. A. C. (DOL), Professor of Military Science and Tactics, Washington University.
—Editors.

order and sequence. In the Junior R. O. T. C., which is conducted at our high schools, we find a program of physical development stressed. The student receives that exercise and body development which is necessary for success in life, at a time in his life when it is most needed. A sound body always makes for a sound mind, sound reasoning, sound views. The grave danger to a youth of high school age is faulty development, which might tend to disqualify him for life. A student who receives his physical training through the R. O. T. C. course need have no fear of such consequences, because it is established along lines that have been tested by the Regular Army for many years.

During the course he receives instruction in personal hygiene. There could be no more opportune time to impart this kind of instruction than during the high school years of a young man. At this age it is difficult to estimate the value of this element of training, but in connection with it, educators have been troubled in finding the proper method—the proper background, so to speak. This subject is so closely related to military training that it would be difficult to find better auspices under which it could so effectually be given.

A nation cannot exist long unless it has a high national spirit, which may be called patriotism. This patriotism comes from the knowledge and reverence of the country's institutions. It was a surprise to our people during the World War to learn how ignorant many of our young men were of our American Institutions and the obligation due the Government. After the War, the Army undertook to teach citizenship. A special course was arranged and instructors at all R. O. T. C. units and at the Citizens' Military Training Camps carried out faithfully the plans of the War Department.

Our most eminent educators have agreed that aside from the physical benefits, time devoted to military studies of the R. O. T. C. in our colleges is entitled to credit in a general scheme of mental culture. In subjecting themselves to discipline, which is essential to military teamwork, the students learn the real secret of civilization, which depends upon a combined action of human beings to a common end. In this connection my distinguished predecessor, Mr. Weeks, once pointedly remarked that "a million men unprepared to work together no more constitute an army than eleven men who kick a football constitute a football team." I am sure all thinking people agree that an earnest desire to act in harmony with the law is badly needed in our citizenship.

Many students find a real and practical application of higher

mathematics in the solution of military studies in the R. O. T. C. course, and numbers of students have found ancient and modern history most interesting in their research of military tactics.

Without a doubt, one of the greatest benefits of military training is found in the opportunity it gives to the young men to develop a gift of leadership and to acquire a sense of responsibility. It can be truthfully said that no man can prepare himself to serve his country in war without making himself more valuable in civil life.