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THE TEACHERS COLLEGE FACES THE FUTURE IN THE SELECTION OF TEACHERS

I AM writing these lines on a transcontinental train. I am a member of an interesting group—passengers from various parts of the country. Much can be learned in the observation car and the smoking compartments of Pullman cars.

Last night a half a dozen of us lingered long over the problems of today. We talked of unemployment, codes, old-age pensions, Upton Sinclair, President Roosevelt, and the international situation. I was much interested in one man. He was an engineer in charge of the maintenance of tracks and bridges on the railroad over which we were traveling. "My department employs about one-half of the men employed in 1929," he said. "In fact," he continued, "the whole system is operating with at least a thirty-per-cent reduction in personnel." "Is that a permanent reduction?" I asked. "Most of it is," he replied. "Then," I continued, "that means about 300,000 fewer men operating the railroads in America. What do you propose to do about them?" He had no answer, and could not see why the railroads should accept any responsibility. Shortly after this, we stopped at a division point. I wandered up ahead and watched the engineers change—one white-haired old man gave way to another equally as old—and we rolled on. The conductor came through the car to check up on tickets. The fringe of hair below his cap was white, and the stars and stripes on his sleeve showed that he had been many years in the service. By the ancient system of "bumping" on the

railroad, where a man of long service can take the job away from a younger man, the railroads have very few young men on duty.

One by one the other men in the group testified that their particular business was being run with fewer employees. I went to my berth wondering about the 300,000 railroad employees who would never be recalled to their old jobs, and the millions of employees in other lines of work who were facing an uncertain future. My pencil seemed to make figures that told me that somewhere between five and twelve million men once gainfully employed would never return to their old jobs. Business efficiency and machines have replaced them. What of their future? Some think that a new industry will absorb them and employment will pick up for a few years; however, the chances of this happening are very slim. The plain truth is that with our present machines in operation we cannot employ all who are looking for employment. In the future even fewer men will be employed making, transporting, and distributing things.

A few days ago I listened to the dean of a medical school discuss the over-supply of doctors. He told us that five thousand new doctors began practice each year, and only thirty-five hundred retired or left the profession. This condition has produced too many doctors. He concluded that it was necessary to further restrict attendance at medical schools. This same dean said that there were two hundred thousand nurses in America, that a large number of them were unemployed, and that we needed fewer nurses, and fewer and better schools for nurses.

It appears that in all of the professions too many are prepared to render services. Of course this is true not only in the pro-

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fessions but in all occupations. We are told that we have too many farmers, too many shoemakers, too many textile workers, too many miners, too many ditchdiggers; in fact, it is difficult to find any occupation where there are not too many workers. If we are to be logical then and follow the advice of some of the leaders of our professional schools, we would cut down the number of men entering all professions and all occupations. In other words, we have too many people in America. In fact, this whole line of argument reduces itself to absurdity. If we were to cut down our population by five to twenty million, we would then need fewer doctors, nurses, teachers, artisans, factory workers, miners, and laborers. For this very obvious reason, I prefer to present the other side of the question. We do not have too many doctors in America. Large areas of our country are without adequate medical service. Thousands of our people needing medical attention are being denied it for economic reasons. We are told that America's bill for patent medicine in 1933 was \$360,000,000, and that another \$100,000,000 was spent for self-medication remedies. When so large a proportion of our citizens are finding it necessary to doctor themselves, and when so many areas are without medical attention, it is absurd to reason that there is a surplus of doctors. The two hundred thousand nurses in America provide one nurse for each unit of five hundred and eighty in our population. Certainly that is not too many nurses. We are told that there are a million hospital beds in America, and that during the last year over 200,000 of them were idle, and that this is conclusive proof that we have too many hospitals and too many hospital beds in America. I hold that this is not true, when there are thousands of suffering people in America deprived of the advantages of hospital care during illness.

We are told there are too many teachers

in America—that we must cut down the number. I cannot believe this, when hundreds of thousands of children have been without teachers this year; when the schools even in our better cities are herding children into rooms where forty or fifty are being taught by one teacher; when we have been unable to provide adequate staffs for a program of adult education; when young children are provided no educational opportunities. The end of child labor in America means many more children to educate. The extension of the period of compulsory education means more teachers.

We do not have too many teachers in America; we do not have enough. We do not have a sufficient number of teachers to staff the schools we have and the schools we should have. Furthermore, we do not have a sufficient number of teachers adequately educated and technically prepared for their jobs to staff even the schoolrooms we now have. If we are to achieve social objectives in our changing society, we must look forward to a time when we will have a great many more teachers that we now have. It seems idle to attempt a changed society, if we are to go on with an inadequate educational system. Let me add also that our surplus labor must be taken up with social services which can be rendered by teachers, musicians, actors, writers, play-ground experts, doctors, dentists, nurses, and others who do not produce material things. There is a limit to the number of shoes that can be worn or cars that can be driven. There is no limit to the social services that can be rendered in our changing society.

This should mean that teachers colleges in the future must educate many more teachers. This means that we will need more students in our teachers colleges. How are they to be selected? There are those who believe that they should be selected on a quota basis. How does this quota system work?

In New York State each teachers college is allowed a certain number of freshmen. This number is fixed on the basis of an estimate of the number of teachers that will be needed four years later. I cannot believe in the wisdom of such a system. Had we at our college selected freshmen on that basis in the fall of 1929, they would have graduated from the four-year course in June, 1933. If we had selected the correct number, about half of them would have been without positions when they graduated. Now if we had selected a fixed quota of freshmen in the fall of 1933, the chances are that there would be a great shortage of teachers in 1937. Our society is not static enough to select freshmen on a quota basis for a demand that will exist four years hence. I much prefer to make this selection on the quality basis. I do not say for my college that I want 500 freshmen in the fall of 1935; but I do say that I want those who have character, health, ability to do college work, and a desire to teach. This number may be less than 500 or it may be more, but I prefer to take those who meet the quality classification rather than a certain number to meet a fixed quota.

Furthermore, we must be much wiser that we are now before we can select intelligently for a quota. A common standard of selection that is used takes students from the upper twenty-five per cent according to academic marks. I think this is bad. It excludes from teaching a large, competent, socially-minded group that probably would make better teachers than the academic-minded, upper twenty-five per cent.

No quotas for me. We need many more teachers, and I am much in favor of the middle fifty per cent as compared with either extreme.

GEORGE WILLARD FRASIER

The best school of discipline in home-family life is God's own method of training the young; and homes are very much what women make them.—SAMUEL SMILES.

CO-ORDINATION IN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

*From the Point of View of the
Professional School*

JUDGED by the criterion of timeliness alone, the program committee of the Association of Virginia Colleges has chosen wisely in selecting for this conference the problem of coordination. Particularly is this so since the program covers the whole range from admission to college, through the problem of curriculum studies, to graduation.

Two questions naturally arise, the answers to which it is to be hoped will be found in the program as a whole: first, how the concept coordination is related to such other concepts as articulation, integration, unification, and standardization, and second, how coordination itself can actually be specifically furthered by the discussions of this gathering.

*Educational Evolution in Virginia Naturally
Leads to Isolation Rather Than
Coordination*

When Dewey wrote his little monograph, *School and Society*, in 1900, he took the position that "all waste is due to isolation." In his discussion he called attention to the application of the principle to aims in American education, to the curriculum which has in the main been made up of disintegrated subjects, and more particularly to various parts of the school system. It seems important to develop briefly at this point the historical background of our present Virginia situation with reference to the evolution of the various institutions that go to make up what may be called the Virginia school system.

Something over a hundred years ago the State university was first established, the capstone of the public school system. It was

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