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THE FIGHT FOR THE BUREAU OF EDUCATION.

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The answer of Congress to the requests of the united educational interests of the United States, that an additional \$75,000 be given to enlarge and increase the efficiency of the Bureau of Education, was an appropriation of \$7,600. The steps preceding this singular action are both interesting and important. The Congressional Record for January 7 and 16 of this year contains full reports of the debates in the House of Representatives on the proposition to employ a force of field specialists in the Bureau of Education.

Early in 1910 a plan was formulated along lines projected by the Commissioner of Education whereby his office was to be strengthened and enlarged, the only purpose being to provide equipment and means with which to meet constantly increasing demands and opportunities for service. The plan was brought to the attention of a majority of the 500,000 school teachers through the medium of educational papers and of national and state educational organizations. It was submitted directly for consideration, suggestion and approval to 20,000 schoolmen and others interested in public and private instruction. Both methods were adopted to ascertain the consensus of opinion of those most directly interested. Among this army of over half a million one group condemned it on the ground that it was clearly an effort to weaken state control in educational matters. Another group opposed it because it did not go far enough. These insisted upon a Department of Education equal in rank and power with that of Agriculture. In one lot of 3,000 replies examined there were found four of the first group and seven of the second. Besides these there were about one hundred letters which, while they commended the plan, offered rather sarcastic suggestions as to the best means of persuading Congress to appropriate the necessary funds. Some of the writers evidently spoke out of a large experience. Excepting these different groups the educational organizations, national and state, the schoolmen and friends of education generally were enthusiastic in their endorsement and encouragement. They seemed to feel that here at last was a scheme which promised a Federal agency adequate to meet a need in education without at the same time exercising any control whatever over local authority. On this basis they repeatedly urged their Representatives, Senators and the Secretary of the Interior to grant the money needed.

Meanwhile, Dr. Elmer E. Brown included in his estimates items aggregating \$75,000 for the salaries, clerical aid, and traveling expenses of

ten field specialists. He proposed to employ them in the following fields of school work:

The construction of school buildings.

School administration.

Accounting and statistics.

Industrial education (evening, trade and continuation schools.)

Education for housekeeping.

School hygiene.

Rural schools.

Agricultural and mechanical colleges.

Commercial education.

The wider uses of the school plant.

These were approved by the Secretary of the Interior, by the Cabinet and by the Secretary of the Treasury, and were transmitted by him without change to the sub-committee of the house in charge of the legislative, administrative and judicial expenses. After a careful hearing, the committee decided to report favorably on the whole budget; but the chairman of the house committee on appropriations decided otherwise and instructed the sub-committee to report in favor of only two of the specialists; one in school hygiene and one in rural education.

In this modified form the estimates were reported in the house which was in committee of the whole house on the state of the union. The clerk read:

Bureau of Education: Commissioner of Education, \$5,000; chief clerk, \$2,000; specialist in higher education, specialist in school hygiene, specialist in rural education, at \$3,000 each; etc., etc., in all, \$72,800.

The Honorable Herbert Parsons of New York, the Honorable Albert Douglas of Ohio, the Honorable Charles Randolph Thomas of North Carolina, the Honorable George William Norris of Nebraska and the Honorable William A. Cullop of Indiana were most actively in favor of granting the amounts as they appeared in the original form. Mr. Parsons' speech, especially, gives an able and detailed exposition of the pressing need of a stronger office of education.

On the other hand the Honorable James R. Mann reserved the point of order on the whole paragraph, while the Honorable Robert Bruce Macon, who was inclined to be more lenient, reserved the point of order only on the two additional specialists. In the following extracts appear what seem to be the main arguments of those opposed:

1. It is an attempt to violate the rights of the states.

2. The Organic Act limits the functions of the bureau to the collection and diffusion of statistics.

3. The National Education Association was created by the Congress. The association promised not to involve the government in any expense. It now wishes to foist its duties on the government. Certain professors also are anxious to sell their work to the government.

4. These people wish to "sneak in" or "slip in" an office in the United States government.

5. This is an "entering wedge" that will drain the treasury of millions.

6. The commissioner of education is trying to create public sentiment in favor of his office.

7. The commissioner, since it was proved that he was not trying to do this, evidently is not in favor of the plan.

8. The Bureau of Education, having nothing to do, started raising reindeer in Alaska.

These statements were made by representatives who hold pre-eminent positions among a large body of distinguished men. They are reputed to be fully informed in a wide range of subjects. Obviously, however, they are not alive to the needs and conditions of public instruction. They do not understand, and therefore are out of sympathy with, the aims and purposes of schoolmen. They do not have the faintest comprehension of the character of the education work which must be done by the nation if it is to be done at all. Otherwise, they certainly would not have stultified themselves before 500,000 teachers by such obviously stupid assertions, nor would they have belittled themselves in the eyes of educators by resorting to the abuse of a wise parliamentary check against unwarranted expenditure of public money. The following paragraphs give the facts with regard to the bureau and show ultimately the means adopted for defeating its most recent plans.

First, the alleged danger of federal control as related to states rights.

When the measure for the creation of an independent bureau of education was before the House in 1867, General James A. Garfield, then a representative from Ohio, said: "The genius of our government does not allow us to establish a compulsory system of education as is done in some of the countries of Europe. Whether it has the right of compulsory control or not, we propose none in this bill." The law of 1868 still further provided against "control" by reducing the office to a subordinate position in the Department of the Interior. It was in full accord with the spirit and letter of this law which does not authorize the bureau to exercise any control whatsoever and does not even enable it to compel the giving of statistical information, that the present plan was formulated and proposed.

Second, the fact that there is no adequate work for the bureau.

In 1867 there were available at Washington fairly complete statistics of education work in seventeen states. Nothing was known of the other nineteen. The national government had given 53,000,000 acres of the public domain to fourteen states for school purposes, and nothing was known of the use which had been made of this vast territory,—an empire larger than two

such states as Ohio. The first duties imposed upon the new office were to determine the condition and progress of education throughout the country and to present to Congress at the end of a year a statement "of the several grants of land made by Congress to promote education and the manner in which these several trusts have been managed, the amounts of funds arising therefrom and the annual proceeds of the same, as far as the same can be determined." This was the tale of bricks expected of an organization without authority to demand data and consisting of the commissioner of education and three clerks quartered in three small rooms and supplied with \$12,000 for salaries and expenses for two years. At the end of the first year the Congress dropped the chief clerk, provided for only clerks of the lowest grade, reduced the salary of the commissioner from \$4,000 to \$3,000 and quartered the office in two dingy rooms of a rented building.

In a letter written to Dr. Harris in 1901, General John Eaton speaks at length of the difficulties which Dr. Barnard, the first commissioner, encountered in securing quarters for his office and funds with which to print reports. Of his own experiences for sixteen years as commissioner, General Eaton had the following to say before the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association at its meeting in 1889 in Washington:—

"And let me say here that all this work is embarrassed not merely for lack of money to publish but to pay services. Why should these men sacrifice their time and endeavor for our benefit and that of the country while there is so much money for everything else? When I first went into that office we had two rooms and then we were driven out of that building into another and another and back to where the office is at present and then not allowed all of that small building. Go there to-day and see how the museum is crowded out of place, the books of the library have to be put in rooms where work is going on all the time. It has been said that there is not interest enough in education in the United States to furnish that office a proper home, a proper working place and proper means."

In his recommendations for the fiscal year, 1910, Dr. Brown says:—

"Exclusive of provision for the education of the natives of Alaska, the appropriations for the Bureau of Education are less in amount than they were in 1881 and 1882. Aside from the Alaska school service the net increase in the staff of the office, counting employees of every grade within the past ten years, has been two copyists at a salary of \$900 each per year. In the meantime the reasonable demands on the bureau, within the scope of its statutory functions, have increased with the great expansion of educational activities in all of our states and territories."

So much for the assertion that the bureau never had anything to do. The matter of fact is that a penny-wise Congress has made it impossible for the office to do more than a fraction of

the work on hand at any time during the fifty years since its establishment.

In 1884 the Congress passed an act providing a civil government for Alaska. The secretary of the interior was instructed to make needful and proper provision for the education of the children of school age in the Territory of Alaska, and for this purpose the sum of \$25,000 was set aside. A year later the secretary instructed the commissioner of education to undertake the work. In 1905 the governor of the District of Alaska was made ex-officio superintendent of public instruction and was directed to make an annual report of the condition of the schools in his district to the secretary of the interior. Section seven of the same act provided further that the education of the Esquimaux and Indians should remain under the direction and control of the secretary of the interior. In 1907 Congress directed that the expenditure of money appropriated for school purposes in Alaska should be under the supervision and direction of the commissioner of education subject to the approval of the secretary of the department of the interior. This work then was not sought after by the Bureau of Education, but was imposed upon an over-worked force poorly furnished with the means and equipment needed for the work which it was already supposed to do under the terms of the organic act.

Third, this is work which should be done by the National Education Association.

The organization known as the National Education Association was "created" by school men themselves in 1857, was incorporated in the District of Columbia in 1886 and again in 1907 under its present charter and name. The object was to "advance the dignity, responsibility, and usefulness" of the teaching profession and to develop educational science by "distributing among all the accumulated experiences of all." It is manifestly absurd to suppose that an organization of this kind could undertake to cover the whole field of educational investigation and research. It is also just as absurd to accuse an association of this character of trying to foist upon the government even the least of its duties or of attempting to "sneak in" or "slip in" an office under the federal government. When a committee of its most prominent members presented a bill in the House through General Garfield for the creation of an independent office of education, they hoped thereby to magnify the vocation of teaching in the eyes of the people, and more important still, to set in motion the only adequate machinery "for distributing among all the accumulated experiences of all." State governments cannot do it without serious duplication of time, service, and expense. Private organizations cannot do it, nor ought they to be expected or permitted to do it, for they lack the necessary sanction of the people.

Fourth, the present bureau is accomplishing nothing real.

It is well known among school men to-day that things have been happening since Dr. Brown took charge of the bureau. The offices have been moved to more commodious quarters, the jumble of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and catalogs has been transformed into an orderly and accessible collection of important educational information; valuable bulletins have been and are being prepared and distributed; and the force itself has been brought into vital personal relations with educational leaders and measures. It was to be expected then that Dr. Brown would concur in a measure which agreed fully with his own plans for a larger and stronger and more useful bureau. This he did when he included in his estimates for 1912 the items enumerated above. To insinuate on the floor of the House that Dr. Brown had been carrying on a propaganda in the interests of his office, and that therefore his request for more funds should be refused, was bad enough; but to offer as an argument against the same thing, after the above insinuation had been refuted, that because he had not carried on such a propaganda, he therefore could not be very much in favor of his own estimates, was legislative acumen and fair dealing worthy of legendary Central American politicians. For doing as he did there were precedents enough both in his own office and in other departments of the government. Agriculture has grown from an office spending thousands to a great department spending millions in just that way. His action was not an attempt to over-ride the peculiar functions of the states in matters of education; nor was it an entering wedge for the spoliation of the national treasury. The wedge has been there since 1867, and for twenty-five years past has remained stationary.

Now, as to the present state of affairs. In no other department of national activity has advance been so slow and difficult as in that which is represented by the Bureau of Education. It first had to win the confidence and co-operation of school men. This it has done after no little misunderstanding and vexation. It has tried year after year for nearly fifty years to win the favor of an unsympathetic Congress. This it has failed absolutely to do.

In the present instance the bureau not only failed to gain anything, but actually lost through the action of Mr. Mann a part of that which it already had. When the office was moved to its present quarters in the old Post-Office building, the usual appropriation of \$4,000 for rent was no longer needed. It happened that Commissioner Brown had asked for substantial increases in his estimates for that year. Congress merely shifted the rent money, and so provided \$3,000 for the salary of a specialist in higher education and \$1,000 for an additional clerk without adding anything to the aggregate appropriations of the former fiscal year. Upon raising the point of order, Mr. Mann very carefully included the specialist in higher education with the rest, so that

Dr. Brown lost what little advantage he had gained the year before in saving a part of the rent money for constructive work.

After the chair had sustained the point of order several attempts were made to save the day for the bureau. Mr. Parsons proposed in lieu of the original estimates to provide \$50,000 for the salaries of experts and for the investigation of educational problems. His speech in defence of this amendment ought to be read by every school man in the country. Mr. Mann once more made the point of order, and the chair sustained it. Mr. Norris of Nebraska then offered an amendment of appropriating \$9,000, which Mr. Douglas of Ohio amended to \$20,000, for investigation, but not for salaries. Mr. Mann again made the point of order. He based his action this time on the ground, first, that the phrase which appears in the organic act "to diffuse such information" refers specifically to "statistics and facts," and secondly, that school hygiene does not "refer to education at all," but only to "the management and construction of school buildings and the ventilation of school-rooms." Mr. Norris's amendment was finally passed, thirty-two voting for it and twenty-six against.

A few weeks ago one of the most stupendous engines of war ever built by civilized man slid over the ways and into the water at Norfolk, Va. She will carry in her main battery twelve twelve-inch guns, valued at \$720,000; or more than enough to pay the salaries of the entire force now employed in the Bureau of Education for twelve years. She will carry twenty-one five-inch guns valued at \$193,200; or more than enough to employ a force of ten field specialists in education for six years. She will cost the nation \$9,000,000 in repairs and maintenance in twenty years; or nearly three and one-half times as much as the bureau has cost the government under the terms of the organic act in more than

forty years. At the end of twenty years she will have depreciated in value 100 per cent., and will have cost the nation to build and support in time of peace not less than \$20,000,000; or nearly four and one-half times as much as the work of the bureau, including the Alaska service, has cost in more than four decades. Have we anything to show what this war vessel really means? In the filthy mud of a foreign port lies her prototype, a grisly, forsaken memorial to wicked sacrifices of human life, misuse of man's most heroic qualities; wounds, greed, starvation, disease, suffering, sorrow, grief, and the widows and the orphans of civilized nations. This is what it all means in the last analysis. As these facts drive their way to our hearts, is it a pleasant thing to learn that while the whole country is alive to the need of a fuller knowledge concerning facts of human life and happiness, there are men who refuse \$75,000 to the Bureau of Education, and permit themselves a few days later to grace, with pomp and ceremony, the launching of an \$11,000,000 battleship? It is the business of Education, as represented by her army of more than 500,000 servants, to set these things right. She should learn of Agriculture, of Commerce, and of Labor. Her three sisters know how to get the funds and the equipment to do their necessary and splendid work. They possess the wizardry that charms the self-styled watch dogs of the treasury, and the result shows in better farms, finer cattle, safer mines, better transportation, and a wealthier nation. Let Education then sit at their feet and learn that she will come to her own not merely because it is good or just or right, but only when and because she has acquired the power to compel.

The joint committee of the House and Senate which has under consideration the estimates for the Bureau of Education reinstated the salary of the specialist in higher education and added \$6,000 for salaries of specialists and expenses of investigations in rural schools, school hygiene and industrial education and \$1,600 for the salary of an additional clerk, a total increase of \$7,600 over last year's budget. This is eight and a half times larger in amount than the aggregate of the increases allowed in the former ten years.

A real democracy must see that the chance for an elementary education is open to every man and woman. This is the first essential. But it is also essential that there should be the amplest opportunity for every kind of higher education. The education of the mass, while the most important problem in democratic education, is in no way or shape by and of itself sufficient. Democracy comes short of what it should be just to the extent that it fails to provide for the exceptional individual the highest kind of exceptional training, for democracy as a permanent world force must mean not only the raising of the general level, but also the raising of the standards of excellence to which only exceptional individuals can attain. The tableland must be raised, but the high peaks must not be leveled down; on the contrary, they, too, must be raised. Highly important though it is that the masons and bricklayers should be excellent, it is, nevertheless, a grave mistake to suppose that any excellence in the bricklayers will enable us to dispense with architects.—Theodore Roosevelt, in *Outlook*.