

# THE HOOD RIVER NEWS

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## SCHOOL TOPICS

Edited by E. E. COAD

### Student Failures—Who Is Responsible?

Forty-six of the one hundred thirty-seven students in the high school received posting slips on Monday, the 16th day of October. Fifty-six of the total number are boys, and twenty-nine of them were posted; that is, they failed to do the minimum of work required of them in one or more subjects.

"Too many," I hear you say. Yes, it is too many. But who is to be blamed? Suppose we look at the question fairly. Failures occur in every day life. We have national failures, business failures, professional failures, social failures, and I am inclined to think that every school with a standard worth while will have occasional failures. The school would not be true to life if it were not so. But the proportion of failures above stated is out of all proportion to actual life conditions. An honest failure is quite different from some of the voluntary bankruptcy proceedings that we read about and sometimes know something of. And I take it that many of these school failures are merely the result of a failure on the part of the students to appreciate the value of honest and conscientious labor. A failure may be necessary to stir some fellow up to a realization of what life is after all. Some of the greatest successes are built upon the smoldering ruins of a failure. Many a person has found himself as a result of his failure. Failure is as much a test of human worth as success, but it is not the failure that counts; it is what you get out of the experience. But there is no excuse for the student who is not doing his best and failing complacently every week, as some of the students are doing. There is something wrong with public opinion that does not shame the individual into a different attitude of mind toward his work.

A great deal depends upon the point of view of the individual. The most dismal failure to one person may be a distinct success to another. Just as a high school boy told me the other day: "I come to school to have a good time. My folks never say anything about my school work. I come and go as I please. I work and I play as I please." Now a grade of 20 in English or 15 in Algebra did not figure failure to him. Instead it meant 80 or 85 per cent of fun for him—just what he was coming to school for.

Now I do not hold the teacher, myself included, entirely blameless for some of the failures. We are just ordinary human beings. We are trying to help boys and girls "find themselves." Many parents will tell you that they cannot understand their own children. Is it any wonder, then, that the teacher who is studying children from half a hundred homes, or more, fails to get results occasionally? We do not measure children with the same yard stick. We merely ask that the pupil do his or her best possible school work while in school; that school work be placed first in both plan and thought. Is that asking too much?

Not long ago someone asked me: "What is the matter with your high school teachers? Can't they teach those boys and girls so they won't fail?" Simple solution, isn't it! Why not have lawyers who can save all their

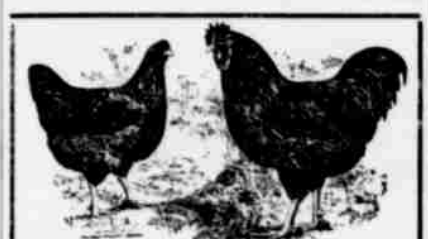
clients, doctors who can save all their patients, and preachers who can save us all from perdition? Is the fact that they fail at times the fault of their instructors? As a simple matter of fact you can have teachers who would say that a pupil failed, no matter what his scholarship was, no matter how little effort was put forth. It may not be entirely ethical to say it, but it is true nevertheless. Just fill the positions with spineless pedagogues, who have not the moral courage to face the certain thoughtless criticism that results when a teacher registers his or her honest opinion that a student has failed to do his work acceptably, and I suppose everything would be all right. No failures then! Is that what the people of Hood River want? Suppose you tell us what you think about it?

**FOOTBALL VS. WORK**  
We have tried to meet a very persistent demand that no student be allowed to participate in athletic sports if his work was not done to the satisfaction of his teacher. So far this year, among the boys who have the written permission of their parents to play football, not enough have kept from being posted to form a practice squad. So the boys play football anyway. Since they play as the Junior Booster Club and do not use the name of the high school in any way we have absolutely no control over the question. It is up to the parents. If they are sincere in demanding that their boys do efficient school work to take part in any sport, they will have to enforce the matter themselves since the teachers have no authority in the matter as I view it. Yet Friday afternoon we had several requests from parents asking that we excuse students on account of the football game which the students say does not concern the high school in the least. And I have no apology to offer for refusing the requests. If the parents want their boys to do school work when they send them to Hood River high school they send them to the right place. But if they want them to play football instead, we want it understood that we do not have football in the school curriculum. And we do not have it in the play curriculum for the fellow who will not buckle down and do his regular work.

If Hood River is to have schools of which she can be justly proud it means work for pupils, work for teachers and work for parents. Parents and teachers working together for a high ideal can realize it. But we certainly are lined up toward opposite goals if the people by their attitude toward student failures say that fun, frivolity and football are to take precedence over studies. In a talk to the students of the University of Oregon President Foster of Reed College said the other day, "I came here to tell you to study and work hard, and I know what I am talking about. Where are the 'good fellows' of yesterday—those who believed in having a good time and considered it smart to avoid scholarship? I tell you that the person who fiddles his hours away at college and later entirely throws off his habits of idleness to enter upon a great career—that person is a myth. The right man will enter college with a fixed and steady purpose to succeed and will do everything that is given him to do in the very best and fullest way that he can do it." And it seems to me that this applies to high school students just as forcibly as it does to college students.

Don't understand that I have an austere attitude toward youth. I believe in wholesome play and fun, in physical exercise and sports. I have some old fashioned ideas which I think should prevail, that is all. I think that boys and girls of adolescent age should not be allowed to carry

on a full-fledged courtship. I believe in regular hours of rest for boys and girls. I think the home and the school should enforce rigid discipline for the sake of the child. I think that play should come as a relaxation from work well done. I have a habit of plain speaking and have tried to say what I think, not to stir up criticism, but to set you to thinking. I don't ask you to think as I do. But I do ask you to consider this failure problem candidly and seriously and that you cooperate with the school for the best interests of the boys and girls. We must have your support if we are to do our best for your boy or girl.



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## FOOTBALL SEASON OPENED SATURDAY

The football game Friday between The Dalles high school students and the students of Hood River high school again resulted in neither side scoring. The struggle was a hard one, witnessed by a fairly good attendance, and took place on the flat below the railroad track which is this year being used for a gridiron. Unable to play under the name of the high school on account of failing to comply with the recent ruling that they must maintain an average of 80 per cent in their studies the local youngsters changed the name of the aggregation to that of The Boosters.

Hood River's first big football game of the year took place Sunday when the local pigskin chasers met a good Portland team and played a 6 to 0 contest, the score going to the visitors. The Portland team scored a touchdown in the first part of the game, but after that were unable to do anything but hold the home team down to a goose egg. The game was witnessed by a good attendance and the local heroes of the gridiron made a first rate showing for the first game. Their antagonists were a husky lot and also knew the game. With a little more team play and experience in regular games the Hood River aggregation should be able to put up a stiff game with any of the teams in their class.

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