

MEN ENGAGED IN PUBLIC SCHOOL WORK INSIST THAT NON-ESSENTIALS ARE TAUGHT

The last session of the Oregon Legislature by resolution called on the State Board of Education to reduce the course of study in the common schools and make it more practical. Views of prominent educators in state colleges and in the public schools were solicited by The Oregonian and these are presented herewith. Very few of those interviewed agree with the Legislature.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, THE PRESIDENT OF THE OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, THE DEAN OF WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY AND STATE SUPERINTENDENT ACKERMAN

IN reviewing the course of study for public schools as laid down in the state manual issued by the State Department of Public Instruction, I fall to find any required work omitted. The standard subjects, reading, language, arithmetic, geography, spelling, writing, physiology and hygiene, history, civi government, and nature study which comprise the required subjects, certainly have a justification in the course of study of the public school. The optional subjects are music and drawing. I doubt whether many public schools of the state attempt to give these systematically. The amount of work suggested by the manual in each of the required subjects has been reduced to an extremely conservative limit. In grammar, for example, only two books of the three-book course adopted are required. In geography, it is allowable to use one book of the two-book course. The statement is specifically made that pupils shall be held responsible only for the statements found in the course print in the geographies, which constitute, perhaps, not more than a half of the text in any one of the geographies. In arithmetic, the suggestion is made that the written and mental arithmetic be taught as one class, the two texts being used practically on alternate days. In algebra, the discount, exchange, circulating decimals, annual interest, etc., are cut out of the requirements. In reading, perhaps some are frightened by the list of supplementary books given in the manual, but a careful reading of the note at the head of the list would at once reveal the fact that these books are not to be purchased by the pupil or used as text books. It is the work of the Board of Education that, if it pleases, require some small number of these books for supplemental work, but the boards are as a rule extremely conservative in this matter. In nature study, the Board has wisely made no such requirement at all. The few that are read are usually a text and recreation to the pupil rather than a burden. In nature study, the Board has wisely made no such requirement at all. The few that are read are usually a text and recreation to the pupil rather than a burden.

TEACHERS ARE OVERWORKED

SALEM, March 19.—Dean W. C. Hawley, of Willamette University, who has been a lifelong resident of Oregon, and who has been for many years an instructor of university students who have been graduated from Oregon public schools, was asked today for his opinion of the proposal to reduce the course of study in the common schools. Being too ill to write, he said: "Since the Legislature adopted the resolution advising that the course of study be shortened, I have examined the requirements of the common school system very carefully. I am of the opinion that in a properly equipped school, where the teacher has no more than a reasonable number of pupils and grades, the present course of study is a good one. I think the difficulty arises in the smaller schools where one teacher has charge of a large number of children and must teach all the branches from the A, B, C class to the eighth grade. I know teachers who have such schools, and they bear as many as thirty recitations a day. Under such circumstances the teacher can give no individual instruction upon particular points that are troublesome to one pupil or another.

"I believe that the teachers are good teachers, and that the standard of qualifications in this state will compare favorably with those in other states, but that the course might be improved slightly, and that the number of schools are crowded with work. I believe that under the new consolidation law, rural districts will be unified so that although one teacher may have as many as a number of schools as now, yet they will be classified so that each instructor will have only two or three grades to teach.

DEPENDS UPON THE COURSE

ackerman, the State Superintendent of Schools, is an educator of experience and ability, a man who I believe has given great thought to this subject. The adoption of the best course of study, and I am inclined to believe that he has been successful in his efforts, and that the course as now used is quite well adapted to the needs of the schools throughout the state.

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"There is one other study which I regard as essential, that is history. Through this study the child is enabled to discover the meaning of the word civilization, and to become better acquainted with his own instincts and individuality.

WELL-KNOWN PORTLAND TEACHERS

While the resolution does not apply directly to the public schools of Portland, the theory sought to be established by the resolution is of vital interest here. Most prominent in public school work expressed these views:

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LEGISLATIVE REQUEST THAT THE STUDIES BE CUT DOWN IS DISCUSSED BY EDUCATORS

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VOICES FROM ALL PARTS OF THE STATE

COUNTY Superintendents and the principals of public schools at various county seats and other cities in Oregon expressed themselves as follows on the resolution:

Do Not Eliminate

SALEM, March 19.—The course of study for the public schools of Oregon cannot be improved by eliminating any of the studies now in the course. There are nine subjects in the course and very little work in nature study. The average boy or girl can easily complete the course in from seven to ten years. Some systematic study of literature should be added to the course. Many boys and girls fail to do good work in our schools on account of one or more of the following causes: 1. Reading of trashy literature. 2. Irregular attendance at school. 3. Lack of sympathy and co-operation between teacher and parents. 4. Bad associates. 5. Unskilled teaching. 6. Short terms of school. 7. Lacking of the cigarette boys. 8. Employ the best teachers, pay wages that will induce such teachers to remain in one school for a term of years, provide a school building as neat and comfortable as the average home, maintain a nine months' term each year, place a good library in the school, visit the school and get acquainted with the teacher, do not be afraid to permit the boys and girls to do a little hard study and all the difficulties with the course of study will vanish.

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