

"MUSIC AND ART"

Proposition That Congress Endow a National Institute.

ENOUGH GOOD SCHOOLS HERE

The Hard Headed Man of Affairs Would Wonder Why Their Professions Should be Subsidized in Preference to a Dozen Others.

BOSTON, Feb. 29.—Let us have a plain talk about the proposition to create an "Institute of Music and Art" at Washington by means of a governmental appropriation.

The incentive of competition with strong fellow students is just as likely to be present in an American city as abroad. Despite the situation of Boston in the extreme northeastern corner of the country, its leading music school, the oldest of its kind in the United States, the New England Conservatory of Music, draws more than almost any other institution for higher education in New England upon a national and international clientele.

Good technical preparation is about all that any music school can undertake. It has been asserted in connection with this campaign for a national institute of music and art at Washington that "in this country of ours many a genius is born and dies without ever being heard of, and all this because the atmosphere here is not conducive to the development of his talents."

The whole project for creating "America's Temple of Arts" at Washington seems to start on the false assumption that nothing is being done in this country for students of the musical and graphic arts; whereas, as every well informed person ought to know, a great deal has been done and is being done for them through private munificence and enterprise.

Take the example of musical instruction in Boston, which for many reasons has been the leading American center of musical education for many years past, or of art instruction in New York and Chicago, which have thus far supported the most important schools of drawing and painting in the Western Hemisphere.

Neither is it true, as the argument for a congressional appropriation has appeared to imply, that if Congress should tomorrow start up an institute of music and art, all the exile band of American students in Paris, Leipzig, Berlin and Milan would straightway quit the intolerable barracks in which they are housed, pawn the few remaining clothes in their gripsack and engage steerage passage to take advantage of the instruction offered for the first time by Uncle Sam.

In the city of Boston alone, to say nothing of opportunities offered in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati and other centres, are almost countless concrete reasons why such a national conservatory as has been proposed would be superfluous. It is hard to see what kind of advanced work could

be offered at Washington under governmental auspices which a thoroughly well equipped conservatory, endowed by individuals and conducted as a public trust, cannot undertake to do. The New England city offers to students who prefer to carry on their musical studies in an American community a musical atmosphere which is as real as that of any European capital. They are constantly assisted in appreciation of good music by the presence of a symphony orchestra, generally acknowledged to be the best in American and to have no superior in Europe. They have access to the performances of many other musical organizations giving concerts through the season. All the great foreign musicians sooner or later visit America, and Boston is always one of the first cities in their itinerary.

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tions and conditions, the real argument to make at this time in behalf of music and art is simply that they ought to continue to get their share from the individuals who generously endow classical colleges and technical schools. Very few people have any grudge against the muses. Musical education has not been without its friends in this country. More than a quarter of a century ago Reuben Springer of Cincinnati gave generously towards the establishment of a music school. In New York James Loeb has been munificent in the endowment of the musical arts. In Boston Eben D. Jordan and a number of other wealthy patrons of art and music have contributed to the resources of the Conservatory and enabled it to become an institution of national importance, with unquestionably the best equipped plant of any conservatory in the world.

The habit, in truth, of considering the needs of schools of music and art which are already partially endowed but whose usefulness can be increased by more funds, as by the creation of specific professorships, is one which will accomplish more for the cause of fine art in America than any plan of annual appropriations from Congress for the support of a school which would simply compete with good schools, already well established. It has been abundantly shown that private enterprise in this country, if properly appealed to, will assist artistic undertakings, and common-sense would dictate that Congress had best devote its funds to doing the useful things which individuals cannot or will not do.

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