

NORMAL QUESTION DISCUSSED

Weston, Or., May 19. — (To the Editor of the Leader.)—Our friend, the Oregonian, is exceedingly troubled because the people of Oregon are going to have an opportunity to decide upon a question of vital significance to them—the "normal question."

If the people are possessed of intelligence sufficient to warrant them being granted the ballot, then let them use it in deciding this question. Evidently the Oregonian fears that the people may not coincide with its opinion in the matter.

The normal school, as even the Oregonian will admit, is the most efficient means of educating our public schools. It has been suggested that departments of "Education" or courses in "Pedagogy" be grafted upon the high school, college and university, and that these are sufficient. One central institution, let us say, in Portland is also advocated.

The university in its present state cannot keep its proper balance between the amount of attention given to the practice work on the one hand, and the academic work on the other. The Education Report of the Commissioner of Education (1909) gives the conclusions reached after thorough investigation of the English colleges and universities. The board of Education has this to say:

"The board is greatly concerned by the increasing difficulty of securing for students who take university courses adequate instruction and training for the main business of their profession. The pressure of their academic work is so heavy that such students are often excused at present from courses in physical exercises and manual training; their training in the art of teaching itself and other professional subjects is often lamentably inadequate, and it is impossible at present to impose upon them the instruction in hygiene which should form an essential part to the equipment of a teacher, and more especially for service in a public elementary school."

The tendency in universities is to encourage prospective teachers to take the ordinary academic work of the other students and to get their profession in lectures. One of the two things will happen in such case; the student preparing to teach must neglect his professional training or endanger his physical well-being by over work. The right attitude toward professional training is not cultivated. The subject is emphasized, not the activity of the individual human mind. It is evident to any intelligent student that the regular academic subjects are considered by college authorities as vastly more important than any strictly pedagogical subjects. Even in the pedagogical subjects the method is the lecture presentation, the instructor doing the thinking, the students imbibing facts that might be required in an examination. The student is constantly drinking in a pedagogy the opposite of that which is being presented in the lectures. Our universities have become strong-holds for book denomination, lecture, authority of dogma, and system. University graduates are in danger of making a fetish of such instruction.

The large centralized normal school or college must necessarily adopt similar methods of instructing large classes. The greater work of the normal school is diametrically opposed to

Monmouth Public School Monthly Report.

District Number 13, Month ending June 10, 1910. Made out by

A. L. CLARK, Teacher.

		BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS
1. No. pupils remaining last month		87	70	107
Increase	(a) No. pupils registered new, marked "R"	0	0	0
	(b) " " pupils registered secondary, marked "R"	0	1	1
Decrease	(c) " " pupils re-admitted, marked "R"	6	7	13
2. Total (sum of items 1 and 2)		81	78	121
3. No. pupils dropped, marked "d"		7	12	19
4. No. pupils remaining at date (difference between items 3 and 4)		74	66	102
5. No. pupils on Register since beginning of year marked "R"		76	97	173
6. No. pupils on Register since beginning of year marked "E"		2	6	8
No. pupils on Register	a Over 4 and under 6	1	4	5
	b Over 6 and under 9	13	17	30
	c Over 9 and under 12	15	19	34
	d Over 12 and under 14	15	17	32
	e Over 14 and under 20	31	40	71
7. Total (sum of items a b c d and e)		75	97	172
8. No. days taught during month	14	15. Average number pupils belonging	101.2	
9. Whole number days attendance	1374.5	16. Average daily attendance	98.2	
10. Whole number days absence	41.5	17. Per cent of attendance	97.1	
11. Whole number times late	1	18. No. visits by parents	5	
12. No. pupils neither absent nor late	72	19. No. visits by members school board	0	



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such institution, and is a recreation against it. Under the leadership of our educational reformers, all is subordinated and is primarily directed to the understanding, the development of the individual, through the study of his "self-activity and self-realization." This means an inductive method in initiating the child into each and every subject, the question and answer method.

No one will argue that much improvement cannot and will not be made in our training schools, especially academic lines, but in accordance with pedagogical principles.

Doctor Von Wehner, minister of public instruction in Bavaria, recently replied to parliamentary inquiries concerning the establishment of separated chairs of pedagogy in Bavarian universities, as follows:

"The reports of three universities (Munich, Wurtzburg and Erlangen) were received in due time by the government. The introduction of practice school, into the universities was rejected by all three senates."

Among the various arguments against pedagogical professorships were these:

"The practical preparation of future secondary teachers properly belong to the pedagogical seminaries; that of teachers of elementary schools to model classes in normal schools. The university, as such has other objects in view; it has to promote the professional and purely human preparation of students. Connecting model or practical schools with the universities would raise objections concerning the principles upon which university education rests; it

would also create great administrative difficulties relating to the teachers of such schools, their pupils and local school conditions."

In the leading German universities as Berlin, Leipzig, Marburg and Jena, pedagogy is represented by a number of chairs of philosophy, but a model school for experimental teaching is found only at Jena. Thus we sense the model school, the indispensable adjunct of the normal school, impracticable in a system of pedagogical training "stuck upon" the university.

The consensus of opinion of educators is that the small normal school is the most efficient. Most of our states in the ratio of nearly six to one maintain more than one normal school, supported by the state. Seven only are getting along with one, and these are but seven out of forty-six. Twelve states have two normal schools, four states have three, and the rest have more than three. Oregon has the unique distinction of maintaining none, a source of pride indeed. Argentina with a population of about five million maintains 35 normal schools.

What is the matter with the geographical position of the three schools at Monmouth, Ashland, and Weston? Where would the Oregonian have them placed? Each of these schools is in a position comparatively easy of access to the students of the various parts of the state.

The efficiency of the schools is a matter that the board of regents is responsible for, and it is easily obtainable by effective supervision. As to our friends, the politicians, who charge now that the schools are "geographical misfits," they and not the school are "geographical misfits."—J. E. KEEFE, JR. in W. L.

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