

Schools Said Returning To Business of Education After Period of Floundering

Putting Backbone Back In the Schools

Our schools are getting better. After some pretty serious floundering they are getting back into the education business. It is not just Sputniks and Luniks which have awakened them; it is a growing awareness that youngsters must be properly prepared for life. In addition to the obvious emphasis on science, there is equally important new emphasis on:

- Hard work. School must be a place for learning, not just a "happy place."
- Accomplishment. In place of the old philosophy of social promotion ("promote 'em whether they learn or not") students are now being required to make the grade for their own good.
- Recognition. Honors for scholarship are returning to the scene.
- Progress in some schools is faster than others, and some need a great deal more push. But at least they're on the move. Typical of the trend is Clinton Junior High in Columbus, Ohio.

Giddy Courses Dropped

Here is a school which three years ago offered a course in cooking for boys. The course has been dropped, as schools in scores of cities have been dropping soft, giddy and time-wasting courses such as "social skills," "tap dancing," and "dating behavior."

Clinton now starts its outstanding eighth graders on algebra and a foreign language (formerly this came in ninth grade) and it encourages youngsters to plan ahead for four straight years of foreign language and four years of math, through calculus. In the standard Iowa tests in grammar Clinton's eighth graders have moved from 4 of a grade above average in 1957 to 7 above in 1958 and 9 above in 1959. In spelling their proficiency rating has doubled in the last three years.

"I called all my ninth graders together for a little talk," Principal Leslie Evans reported. "I told them not to expect good grades for nothing. Teachers aren't giving grades away. A good grade means that's precisely what you've earned. I told them. And in this school you're going to have to make the grade to pass."

The old social promotion—pushing youngsters along from grade to grade regardless of accomplishment—has

New Frontiers In Living

by Howard Whitman

gone down the drain. Last year 21 out of Clinton's ninth grade class of 166 did not graduate. They had to take make-up courses and earn their diplomas.

Scholarship Encouraged

But getting tough isn't the basic idea. Encouraging scholarship is. Two years ago Clinton started a wing of the National Honor Society for eighth graders (this usually doesn't start until high school) and this year four other junior highs in Columbus followed suit.

There's also a Court of Honor for good students. Seventh graders who get all A's and B's in their majors become Pages. Eighth graders who get at least one A and the rest B's become Esquires. Ninth graders who get at least two A's and the rest B's become Knights. A boy or girl who makes it all three years becomes a Knight Chancellor and is presented with a sterling silver pin. Each pin costs the school \$2.50 (an athletic letter costs \$1).

"And believe me, that's \$2.50 we're glad to spend!" beams Principal Evans.

Elementary schools in Columbus, like those in scores of cities, went for the "OSU" report card during education's great era of flaccidity. Ordinary grading was put aside as "too competitive" or "discouraging to children" and home to parents went bland missives stating merely "Outstanding," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory," usually plus a swarm of comments about junior's personality.

Some communities like Anne Arundel county, Maryland, simply went for the "SN" report card—S for satisfactory progress, N for "Needs improvement." Some parents referred to S and N as the "Something for Nothing System."

Back to Old System

Last September Columbus abandoned the "OSU" report card (as dozens of communities have been abandoning it in the past two years) and returned to a standard ABCDEF grading system. (Anne Arundel county has similarly junked "SN"). It, too, has returned to a standard marking system based on achievement.)

Canada, which followed U.S. education down the soft and soggy path (at a discreet distance), is likewise returning to the solid ground of good teaching.

George L. Roberts, former president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, reports, "There is a reaction across Canada from coast to coast against soft education. Many of the extreme swings of past years have been reversed."

Calgary, Alberta, set the new pace with a "no loafing doctrine" which has been emulated across the country. Calgary simply announced that high school was for youngsters who wanted to learn, and those above school-leaving age who proposed to goof their way through would be suspended or expelled "for lack of achievement."

Three Royal Commissions have been investigating education in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba during the past year. Each has found evidence of a "re-emphasis on the tool subjects"—the fundamental Three R's.

'Honor Tabs' for Sweaters

The O'Neill Collegiate and Vocational Institute, a high school in Oshawa, Ontario, pointed up the new emphasis on scholarship instead of fun and frolic in 1958 by handing out "Honor Tabs" to be sewn on sweaters to its first class honor students. Four years of first honors bring a school letter. Other high schools are following O'Neill's lead.

The era of spineless education made a shambles of many a classroom. Youngsters had to "express themselves" at all costs; they could do no wrong. Many teachers were frankly afraid to discipline troublemakers. The teacher—not the rowdy—might end up with a reprimand, dismissal, or even a lawsuit.

Judge John P. Griffith turned this tide of anarchy in 1957 with what, for modern education, may become an historic decision. In a Mount Vernon, N.Y., courtroom he upheld the right of a teacher who had used physical means to deter a student who was defiantly disrupting a class.

The teacher was charged with assault.

"I searched my mind and

heart as well as the law to come to a decision," Judge Griffith told me.

He found the teacher not guilty.

"The teacher stands in the same category as a parent," he wrote in his decision. "There is no question that if a parent were to punish a child for an infraction of the household rules and regulations, that parent would not be guilty of an assault. The teacher stands in loco parentis (in place of the parent)..."

Made Them Unhappy

"It is the thought of the Court that the teacher must be supreme in the classroom... Instruction can only be properly and successfully given by one who has authority over his pupils and who has their respect. The teacher is vested with the right to give orders and as a concomitant



'K' IN PARIS—Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, left, is greeted by French President Charles de Gaulle, right, on his arrival in Paris for an 11-day official visit to France. The man in the center is believed to be an interpreter. The Russian leader's visit will provide the last personal contact between Eastern and Western heads of state before the summit meeting May 16.

of the same he should have place" it made it quite unhappy instead. Unruly children, any sound psychologist will attest, are not happy children. To make the school "a happy As School Superintendents.

MEDFORD, OREGON, THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1960

John Bjorge, of Tomah, Wis., commented when he forbade students to come to school with beatnik and "bird's nest" haircuts in 1958. "The youngsters just wanted somebody to tell them what to do."

Today's schools are charting a more reliable road to happiness. They are beginning to teach children that ease and delight are not to be had in school or in life on the give-away plan; yet there is great and immeasurable happiness to be derived from using one's talents and facilities in worthwhile endeavor.

Do you want to be happy, Junior? Then accomplish something! It'll give you a real glow!

TOMORROW - THE FUTURE OF SEX.
(Distributed by The Register and Tribune Syndicate)

Memoria Rites For Crash Victims

Tell City, Ind. (UPI)—Four caskets were lowered into a hilltop cemetery grave today in a symbolic burial witnessed by mourners for 63 persons killed in an Indiana plane crash six days ago.

More than 100 kinfolk and friends of the victims of a Northwest Airlines turbo-prop that plunged into a farm field last Thursday night, watched bareheaded as the empty coffins were buried.

The ceremony concluded a half-hour four-faith memorial service held in Greenwood Cemetery about 11 miles from a crater where the fuselage of the big airliner buried itself deep into the muddy earth.

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