

Educator Believes Americans Would Rebel At Longer School Year

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Mail Tribune
Washington Correspondent



Washington - Would the American people support the idea of operating the public school system through much of the summer - instead of allowing school buildings and teachers to be idle three months out of the year?

This question seems relevant in view of the Kennedy Administration's appeal for federal aid to education to improve the condition of education and reduce the shortage of classrooms and teachers.

One leading educator shakes his head. Dr. William G. Carr, executive secretary of the National Education Association, believes too many American families would rebel at the idea of the long summer school vacation being reduced from three months to one.

Dr. Carr doesn't look upon the traditional 9-month school year as an educational issue. It is more of a social or cultural issue. It is what families are used to. It makes planning a family vacation simpler.

No Strings Attached
The question came up during a radio broadcast in which Dr. Carr was interviewed by a panel of newspaper correspondents on the Voice of America's weekly program, Press Conference U.S.A., which is beamed throughout the world. There were no strings attached to the character of the questions the reporters could ask, and the program was not rehearsed. Dr. Carr once taught at Pacific University in Oregon. He is the operating director of the nation's largest teacher organization.

Teachers would be better off if they could work at their profession the year around, Dr. Carr believes, instead of having to take summer jobs to supplement their salary for

teaching nine months. But if the school year were lengthened, teachers would of course have to be paid higher salaries.

There is a teacher shortage basically because the salary incentive is insufficient, Dr. Carr believes. Money is only one of the incentives for teaching, he is quick to point out, but teachers are not unlike others in desiring a reasonably high standard of living commensurate with their educational training and value to society.

"If we could hold all of the persons who are prepared to teach, we would have no shortage," he stated.

Caused by Inducements
The difficulty is caused by inducements made by private business firms which offer more attractive situations, particularly in salaries, he explained.

One of the hopes of the NEA is that federal aid to education will result in teachers receiving higher salaries. Under the Administration's plan, the federal grants would go to the states without any strings on how it should or could be used, either for buildings, salaries or other administrative overhead expenses. If this creates a larger pool of revenue in each state for education, the idea is that a greater amount could be allocated for teachers' pay.

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Dr. Carr conceded that using school buildings more than nine months would help somewhat in overcoming the shortage of classrooms that exists in some areas of the country. But he shied away from advocating this as any cure.

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HOME IN STREET—Unable to pay his rent, R. C. Johnson, 41-year-old unemployed sandblaster, moved into the street in Nashville, Tenn., with all the family possessions. Here he and his son, Robert, 16, try to keep warm as they guard the furniture. Johnson, father of five, said he sent his wife and other children to a friend's house, "because it was too cold out here." "I tried to find you another place, but couldn't. I guess you might say I'm kinda up against it," he said. (UPI Telephoto)

Nursing Home Picture Grim

Washington—APD—The average nursing home is a grim place for old folks to spend the waning days of their lives.

So says the Senate Subcommittee on the Aging in an official report on a nationwide survey of nursing home conditions.

The report estimates that there are now about 37,000 nursing homes of all types in the United States. They can accommodate a total of about 650,000 patients. Only about one-fourth of them provide "skilled nursing" care — and

in many cases that is more nominal than real. The average age of the patients is 80. Charges for nursing home care vary widely, ranging from as little as \$2 a day to as much as \$13.85 a day.

The subcommittee found that a "small minority" of the best commercial nursing homes do provide "good nursing care, occupational and recreational therapy and medical service" and are "cheerful, clean and safe." But costs in such homes are "relatively high."

At the other extreme, and also in the minority, are the poorest nursing homes, which are "overcrowded, nauseating and unsafe" and which provide no medical or rehabilitation services.

The vast majority" of nursing homes, the subcommittee said, "fall in between these two categories."

"They are moderately safe, provide nursing care varying from indifference to warm sympathy, are generally clean and meet minimum standards of space, nutrition and fire protection."

But they provide "little recreational activity beyond a lone television set." Attendance by physicians is "rare" and little if anything is done to rehabilitate or restore the aged patients to self-sufficient activity, according to the report.

These average nursing homes, the subcommittee said, promote "passivity and immobility" in their patients. Deprived of the active rehabilitation program which could restore a large percentage of them to mobility and mental clarity, the patients soon lapse into a state of living death. Their minds and muscles atrophy from disuse, and they become permanent invalids, condemned to a bleak existence of staring at the ceiling or a television set until death at long last mercifully releases them, according to the report.

The subcommittee said the problem can't be solved merely by passing laws requiring nursing home operators to provide better services. Money is the rub — the average patient just can't afford to pay as much as it would cost to provide the kind of care he needs.

Do Best They Can
"Most nursing home operators do the best they can within the limits of their income," the subcommittee said. "It is inherently impossible for even the most altruistic nursing home proprietors to provide registered nursing service, routine medical care, rehabilitative and recreational activity, and still make even a small profit."

The subcommittee recommended that Congress step in with "major legislative steps" to improve nursing home care. Specifically, it said, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare should develop "minimum standards for patient care in nursing homes designed to restore and maintain the physical and mental independence for patients."

Then Congress should "consider adoption of a program of federal financial assistance" to nursing homes which upgrade their services to meet the minimum standards.

Consistent Duck
Memphis—APD—Eleven-year-old Don High has a duck named "Biddle" with a record of some kind. Don and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. High, says the mallard has laid 81 eggs in 81 days.

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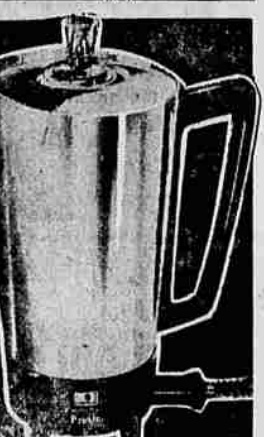
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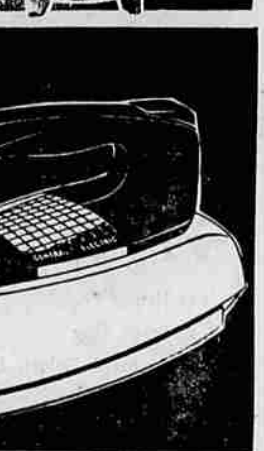


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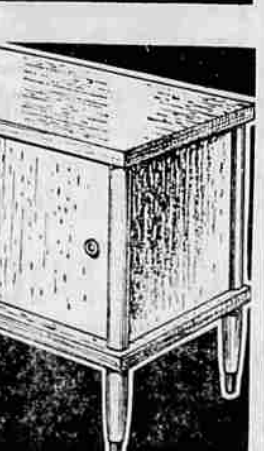


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