Editorials

The Junior High School

The junior high school is one of the most important, if not the most important creation of modern education. It is a serious professional attempt to adapt American education to the youths of this day.

Traditional and conventional American education adapted children and youths to traditional education. The junior high school seeks to modernize the spirit of American education in this regard.

More than a third of a century ago a few city superintendents more or less independently, if not accidentally, attempted to create a distinction under the designation “Intermediate” between elementary school pupils and high school students.

There were vigorous professional protests from both the elementary and the high school principals and teachers, and the success of the experiment was impractical until the public could see that there is a scientific as well as professional demand for so radical a change.

Today there is a general acceptance of the fact that seventh and eighth grade pupils are physically, mentally and socially radically distinct from fifth and sixth grade pupils, and equally apart from tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students.

This distinction was so clear and so great that fully one-third of those who were promoted to the high school to satisfy the reputation of the elementary school principal were uncomfortable and dropped out of the high school early.

When the public began to realize that seventh and eighth grade pupils are as different from tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade pupils, physically, mentally, and socially, as green fruit is from ripe fruit, there was a general demand for an opportunity for this group of pupils to ripen before their abilities were harvested for the market of life in the senior high school and college.

Green fruit has neither juice nor flavor, while ripened fruit has a personality flavor which reveals the inherited variety as distinct from all other varieties. This is what the junior high
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School develops in boys and girls. It prepares seventh, eighth, and ninth grade pupil-students to discover themselves, and enables teachers, principals and parents to know whether they are academic and professional minded or industrially or commercially minded.

For a time there was an heroic attempt to make teachers and pupil-students use traditional elementary or high school textbooks, but the success of the junior high school makes it indispensable that textbooks be created to meet the need for "Guideposts for Junior High School Years."

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John J. Tigert's Activities

The achievements of the University of Florida are amazing, considering the state of the country and of Florida's fruit misfortune, but to those who have kept in touch with the activities of the president of the University of Florida it is in no sense surprising. His secretary, who has kept tab on Dr. Tigert's activities, reports that in the year between September 1, 1929, and September 1, 1930, President Tigert traveled more than 20,000 miles, mostly in the state, addressed audiences totaling more than 35,000 persons in the fifty-one addresses that he made.

State Insurance Policy

Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase, who has recently gone from the presidency of the State University of North Carolina to the presidency of the State University of Illinois, says: "A state university is the greatest insurance policy any state can take out on the careers of its successive younger generations."

This is a notable and noble utterance for a man who goes from a great achievement in one of the most remarkable southern states to leadership in education of one of the most important states in the country.

Normal University, Illinois

The gathering of fifteen hundred alumni and citizens of Normal, Bloomington, and other Illinoisians at the reception to President and Mrs. Henry A. Brown of Normal University was an occasion to magnify the large number of eminent educators now alive who have been on the faculty of that institution. We can think of no other state teacher-training college that has had as many men and women now active in professional education who have been as vital a factor in the creation of the college as has the Normal University of Illinois.

Re-election of Blair

The re-election of Dr. Francis G. Blair as state superintendent of Illinois, after twenty-five years of service, has high significance, because Illinois had less respect for the tradition of his party this year than any other state in the Union. Dr. Blair has weathered several threatening cyclones in a quarter of a century, sometimes by silence and sometimes by derided denunciation of political chicanery.

To win this year in Illinois by a majority of 82,000 votes is probably the most distinct political-professional triumph on record.

Student Environment

President Cloyd Heck Marvin, George Washington University, in an address to the alumni recently, said: "The creation of an environment in which young men and women may develop themselves to the fullest of their intellectual and spiritual capacity is the purpose of a university."

This is saying for a university what is being said by city and county superintendents of all education. One county superintendent has won national fame by requiring every child to do as much for the community as the school does for the child.

The superintendent of one of the largest cities of the country insists that the community must do for the schools everything needed to make the schools represent the best of the community. He has organized a city environment in which each of seventeen organizations—civic, social and religious, industrial, commercial and professional—shall express itself officially on every important issue in education, so that the city environment of the schools shall be in sympathy with the school boys, girls, and youths.

President Marvin carries this idea up to young manhood and womanhood while they are preparing to be the environment of the university in the immediate future.

This has a national and international significance in Washington which it can have nowhere else, for the Washington environment is related to this country and to other countries in every civic, social and personal relation.