**Editorials**

**The Writing Overhead**

Scarce a week passes without cutting the distances between places on this globe. Men in planes can already travel more than half as fast as the earth turns on its axis. It won't be long before an aviator can keep pace with the noonday sun.

Education has produced science. Science has produced the airplane, and certain objects that the airplane can tote about with it for destructive purposes. The next thing education has to do is to educate the peoples of the world on how to exist safely on the ground which the airplane overrides—and how to harness the airplane to work for mankind's benefit, not ruin.

Realization of these needs lately brought together a number of intellectual leaders representing fifty-seven different countries for a conference on air age education. Universities, governments and a miscellany of other organizations sent their delegates to New York City for this meeting. The effects of flight upon the entire human situation were studied and discussed. How shall children, how shall adults be taught to adjust themselves to the era of wings—wings which are not completely angelic, but must become so?

It is easier for education to start something than to overtake what it has started. In the case of airplanes, the catching up must be done quite rapidly, if at all. Air age education conferences can prove extremely useful. The more nations taking part in them, the better for our little planet.

**Good Will Planning**

...We may have peace by some other means, but educating the masses to want and demand peace will help.

That is why the World Conference of the Teaching Profession at Endicott, New York, in August, was important. While it brought together an educational group from fewer than half the nations, the affair was earnest and its plans in connection with the teaching of history and languages and the interchange of both instructors and students between countries should help us toward the goals which all persons of good will are seeking.

But let no one suppose there are no difficulties. Take the teaching of history. Who decides what shall go into a history book? Admitting that ours in America may be more truthful than those produced under governmental supervision in some other countries, all national histories make for nationalism and present a selection of facts or non-facts accordingly. There isn't any "World Court of History." Will Americans who study abroad learn there the truth about the lands they live in? Will they learn the real history of the United States from foreign texts? They will learn what other people think about us, mistakenly or correctly. But the net results for good feeling will depend more upon person-to-person acquaintance and friendship than upon study in the classroom. Thus, languages can contribute more than history to the breaking down of hate and fears. Yet many of our soldiers overseas disliked the British, whom they could understand at least partly, more than they hated other people whose speech was wholly alien.

We doubt if there is any direct road to international good will, or any that can be guaranteed to get us there. But all roads must be tried.

**Hands Across the Hudson**

All up and down and across the State of New York, academic gowns, caps and hoods have been coming out of closets and boxes in anticipation of a journey to Albany in company of their owners. For on October 17, amid all proper pomp and ceremony, the educational forces of the Empire State will inaugurate Dr. Francis Trow Spaulding as Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York—which is not a merely local institution but a combination of all the schools, colleges and universities of that sovereign commonwealth.

Dr. Spaulding follows only five predecessors—Andrew Draper, John H. Finlay, Frank Graves, Cole and Stoddard—since the commissionership commenced only in 1904, as an outgrowth of other official designations used in a domain where Regents have ruled over learning for 162 years.

If any one wonders why New York has reached over into Massachusetts to take its new commissioner from the deanship of the Harvard School of Education, let him recollect that Dr. Spaulding spent the years 1936 to 1938 studying the secondary schools of New York State, subsequently writing a noteworthy book, *High School and Life*, based on that study which was under Regents auspices. It was then and thus that New York educators came to know
Francis Trow Spaulding and he came to know many of the schools soon to become his particular charge.

A man of 49, educationally sound, administratively tested both as university dean and army colonel, should serve long and creditably the people of America's wealthiest, most inhabited state.

Massachusetts may perhaps be criticized not unjustly for letting a good man go with so little apparent effort to stop him at the border.

Teachers and the Strike

A strike of teachers at Norwalk, Connecticut, has drawn its share of headlines in a daily press that eagerly plays up the unusual.

But we wonder how long such strikes by members of the least strike-minded group in America will continue to be unusual.

In this connection, one should note that the American Federation of Teachers, an AFL affiliate which has always proclaimed its refusal to exercise the strike weapon, is starting to re-examine that policy.

Teacher groups will encounter more public disfavor than most other groups by resorting to the strike, if only because the public likes to think them different. And this, by the way, is the root of all the trouble. The public is accustomed to believe that teachers will stand almost anything because they love their work. The great majority of them do love their work. But they also like to eat. They like to be as well fed as janitors or firemen or other public servants who have not, in general, invested so many years in preparation.

Teachers ought to go slow on strikes, always seeking a better way if one can possibly be found. But in some instances and some places there may be no other way.

Professional Ambition

A frequently recurring problem in the life of every successful educator is that of when and whether to change his job. The novice starts at small pay, usually in some rural community or village. He remains a year or two, and then moves on—perhaps to his home town, perhaps not. More years elapse and he jumps again to a new location, where salaries are better and conditions more alluring. To reach the top, he must be on the active list of one or more placement agencies and be ready to pull up stakes whenever the right opportunity appears. The life histories of all high-ranking schoolmen read much alike. They have lived like nomads. Sooner or later they make friends and become a part of one community than they leave for another.

At what point ought one to stop this migratory business and settle down for good? No rule can be given. But as a man grows older, he presumably grows wiser and more cautious. He knows that big salaries and big cities often mean big headaches. Sometimes they mean big politics and big downfalls.

Somewhere along the zigzag pathway of his wanderings, he may have the good fortune to reach a spot where he fits so perfectly into the work and the general surroundings as to know it is the place for him. He may have a struggle between his ambitions to cut a great figure and to be most useful. All of us recall with gratitude some teacher who refused to sell his services at auction; some one who had said to himself, “This is my place.” Maybe it was an obscure corner of a high school or a freshwater college. He could have risen much higher. But no higher in our estimation than he did. He dwelt happily and in honor where he felt the work was more worth doing than any other in the world—for him. Our profession earns no greater praise than that it contains uncounted numbers of such men and such women.

Speaking of Vetoes . . .

Vetoes and the veto power have made many headlines of late. Public opinion in this country probably prefers the limited vetoes of a President to the absolute vetoes of a major member of United Nations.

While we are on the subject, why not ask ourselves, as teachers or administrators, whether we overdo this veto business within our own small realms?

A teacher can veto a pupil's mental curiosity or his attempt to think for himself.

A school administrator can veto the methods by which some teacher works most effectively. He can veto suggestions for the common good, made by his associates. He can veto cooperation, good community relationships, sound scholarship, high ideals, advancement of any sort.

Re-examine the vetoes issuing from your office desk or classroom. They may be blocking progress—and peace also.

Functional Illiteracy

No doubt the Carnegie Corporation is reasonably accurate in stating that ten million persons in the United States are “functionally illiterate,” with so little skill in reading and writing as to be seriously handicapped at work, at home and in civic understanding. Three million of these are Negroes. An important new effort has been launched to remedy this unfortunate situation, through application of teaching methods developed in the army and elsewhere. A Carnegie grant is behind the plan. The aim is excellent and the work needs doing. But we might stretch our definition of “functional illiteracy” still further. Somewhere we have heard that only two per cent of Americans read well enough to read books.