

# *The American* MERCURY

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## THE PEDAGOGUES AT ARMAGEDDON

BY H. E. BUCHHOLZ

**D**URING the past twelve months organized American education, trading under the name of the National Education Association, has made marked progress,—but characteristically, along very dubious paths.

In an earlier article, "The Pedagogues Leap To Save Us,"<sup>1</sup> I related the story of how a highly meritorious professional organization of teachers was debauched by the two small groups now in control of it. Founded in 1857, the association pursued a creditable course up to about the time of the World War. It was then that a clique of glory-seeking pedagogues, having conceived the idea of forcing on the country a Federal Department of Education, with a Cabinet job for one of their own number, got a death-grip on the organization. Concurrently, a pious Campbellite from Nebraska, James William Crabtree by name, was put in charge of the headquarters office as secretary, and permitted to surround himself with a staff composed of ardent Methodists and Baptists, all of the uplift school. This second camorra aspired to convert the profession into "a vast unordained ministry of religion who

will find their mission at the teacher's desk," and to that end it proceeded to round up recruits on a wholesale scale. In a relatively short while it had run the membership from the 7,000 representative educators who composed the NEA when Brother Crabtree came on the scene to more than 220,000 pedagogues of any and all sorts, a majority of them teachers who signed up on specific instructions from their superiors.

These two groups—the proponents of a Federal Department of Education and the theological crusaders—found it easily possible to work in harmony, for though they had the common aim of exploiting the public-school teachers *en masse* for their own purposes, those purposes were different and non-conflicting. The Cabinet-job boys reasoned that if the organization became sufficiently large to be a formidable political force they could easily scare Congress into acceptance of their demand for a Department with a portfolio attached, and the do-gooders reasoned that on the basis of the same substantial supporting army they would be able to set up a gigantic reform factory. Under this dual control the real purpose of the association was

<sup>1</sup> THE AMERICAN MERCURY, July, 1932.

gradually submerged, and the time soon came when the crusaders, who were always the noisier, could boast about national conventions at which professional matters were purposely avoided in order that a type of emotionalism could be let loose that suggested the red-hot atmosphere of an old-fashioned Negro camp-meeting.

Only a year back the consecrated Headquarters Staff appeared to be well on the way toward converting, not only all the pedagogues who had been herded into the NEA, but the whole body of American school children as well, into an uplift army that was to make Prohibition permanent, force tobacco advertising from both periodicals and radio programmes through boycott on the one hand and legislation against the other, and godfather a sister to the Mann Act prohibiting the transportation from one State to another of any book or picture that a pedagogical snooper might regard as improper.

In this heroic campaign the official *Journal of the National Education Association*, under the editorship of Brother Joy Elmer Morgan, a Nebraska Methodist, was the leader. Its pages fairly sizzled with inspired tirades—articles, posters, editorials, and quotations—against everything not approved by the Methodist bench of bishops. Typical of these pronunciamientos was the following from Balboa in the Canal Zone:

#### DRY LAW SETTLED

Speaking tonight from the pulpit of the Union Church here, Senator Smith W. Brookhart of Iowa said Prohibition is a settled question in the United States and most people are not even thinking about it any more. Criticizing newspapers which oppose the Prohibition laws, the Senator asserted: "They joined the agitation *because they would get advertising revenue from the booze business*. There was nothing

for them in Prohibition. Editorial opposition to the Eighteenth Amendment," he said, "is the widest system of falsehood and deception ever put out by any people in the world."

But that was before the Democratic and Republican National Conventions met in Chicago last June.

## II

Since then there has been a radical and highly significant change in the tune. In all the numbers of the *Journal* that have come out to the time I write there has been no editorial mention of Prohibition whatever, and even the formal resolutions of the association disclose a remarkable softening of heart toward booze. In 1930 and again in 1931 the spirit was:

The National Education Association *re-affirms its stand in favor of the Eighteenth Amendment* and of the laws enacted thereunder. It urges their vigorous and impartial enforcement and *pledges its support to an active educational campaign in the schools* in behalf of habits of living for which the Eighteenth Amendment stands.

But in the Summer of 1932 a hand-picked resolutions committee working harmoniously with both the portfolio-seekers and the moral camorra got no further than this:

The National Education Association commends the efforts to prevent crime, indorses *the impartial enforcement of all laws*, including the Eighteenth Amendment, and urges teachers in the present emergency to stress particularly *the obligation of good citizenship*.

This sudden retirement of the association and its *Journal* from the Methodist communion was apparently due to a clash between the interests of the proponents of

a Federal Department of Education and those of Brother Crabtree's celestial choir. The farmer, seeing both great parties go wet, began to be uneasy, and when, in November, the wringing wet Mr. Roosevelt beat the half wet Mr. Hoover, there was a quick run for cover. So Brother Crabtree and company had to give up their plan to convert all the schoolma'ms of the country into Carry Nations. A hint of what thus went on under the cover is to be found in an article, "President Roosevelt and Education," which Frank P. Graves, New York State Commissioner of Education, contributed to the *Journal* for last March. I quote:

While President-elect Roosevelt has not spoken directly on education as a national problem, as a disciple of Jeffersonian democracy he ardently believes in the principle of "home rule" and of "State sovereignty" in most matters. His position on such questions is distinctly stated in a radio broadcast during *Collier's* hour on March 3, 1930:

"Wisely or unwisely, people know that under the Eighteenth Amendment, Congress has been given the right to legislate on this particular subject, [the Prohibition issue] *but this is not the case in the matter of a great number of other vital problems of government*, such as the conduct of public utilities, of banks, of insurance, of business, of agriculture, *of education*, of social welfare, and of a dozen other important features. In these, *Washington must not be encouraged to interfere. . . .* The preservation of this 'home rule' by the States is not a cry of jealous Commonwealths seeking their own aggrandizement at the expense of their sister States. *It is a fundamental necessity if we are to remain a truly united country.*"

Mr. Roosevelt has, however, repeatedly shown his faith in the expert and in organized research, and he may possibly be persuaded that educational investigation and dissemination are of sufficient importance to entitle them to a Cabinet position of their own.

In other words, let us be careful. The new President's leaning toward Jeffersonianism is disquieting, but if he is not alarmed otherwise, it may still be possible for the association, packed as it is with "experts" and saturated with "organized research," to win his support for the pedagogical portfolio. So the faithful quickly discarded, at least temporarily, their crêpe-draped toppers of Volsteadism, and now the fight for a Department may proceed merrily, if needs be even to the tune of a bacchanal.

This retreat left the uplifters hanging in the air. Having abandoned the war upon John Barleycorn, they had to find some other imaginary dragon that could be delineated as threatening the life and happiness of the American people, including especially the public-school teachers. The result is that now all the moral spit-blowers are being trained on the poor bankers. In this substitution there is evidence of shrewd political acumen, for the bankers are very unpopular, at the White House and elsewhere, and it is as safe and about as courageous to attack them as it would be for a hero outside prison walls to hurl abuse at a life-timer.

The following excerpts from the *Journal* are typical of the arguments now being employed to persuade the public that the mess in which the American educational system finds itself can be traced to the doors of designing Money Interests that are bent upon the ultimate destruction of the public schools:

Greedy bankers, manufacturers, and politicians try to save themselves, forgetting that in a time like this, he who would save his life must lose it in the common good. (*January, 1933.*)

It appears that *the New York bankers*, operating through the banks in the smaller cities and towns, *are attempting to force unnecessary reduction of school budgets.*

Local school leaders may wish to caution their banking friends about this matter, and to remind them that these are the same New York bankers who forced them to buy worthless foreign bonds. (*February, 1933.*)

Powerful forces that are fighting the schools are operating on a nation-wide basis. . . . The *New York* bankers, *who are trying to force down school expenditures*, represent the same group that sold the people of the nation five billion dollars' worth of real estate mortgage bonds which are now in default. (*March, 1933.*)

There are today nation-wide, highly organized, well-financed attacks on the schools *by greedy interests*. . . . Americans today are studying politics and economics as they did in the days of the Boston Tea Party. They are getting ready to throw off a new kind of tyranny—*that of the Wall Street Power Trust oligarchy*. (*March, 1933.*)

A WORD OF CAUTION—Let no teacher underestimate the magnitude of the attack on the schools. It is very powerful. It is highly financed by *greedy interests* who wish to escape taxes *or to keep the people in ignorance*. It is in the hand of forces who understand the importance of organization more clearly than teachers yet do. Their agents reach into every community. They deny the right of representatives of the people acting as members of boards of education to run the schools *in the interests of the people*. In the end the people will have to decide between the rights of their children and the selfish interests which would cripple the schools; between the *New York banker-power trust forces* and their own boards of education. (*April, 1933.*)

Apparently even the venerable John Dewey, of late sporting the pasteboard crown of "honorary life president" of the NEA, has caught the spirit of the boss pedagogues who thus feel it more politic to engage in pantomime battle with imaginary enemies of the tax-supported schools than to defend their own performances in the field of education. At the meeting

of the Department of Superintendence in Minneapolis in the latter part of February some of the innovations of present-day pedagogy came up for critical discussion. According to a semi-official report:<sup>1</sup>

Although Professor Dewey was himself at the convention, he left the defense of the innovations that have sprung from or have been assisted by his theories largely in the hands of lieutenants, followers and colleagues. Professor Dewey was more immediately concerned with defending the schools against their outside enemies, *chief of which, in his opinion, is the United States Chamber of Commerce.*

### III

If the NEA can make the schoolma'ms of the country believe that the future of the public schools is threatened by some such wicked octopus as Wall Street or the United States Chamber of Commerce, and that the association stands ready to fight for the pedagogues' lives, jobs, and *salaries*, the Headquarters Staff should be able to do a landoffice business in memberships at \$2 each a year. To that end the uplifters are belaboring the ma'ms with demands that they come in at once. For example:

Local, State, and national associations of teachers are rendering valiant service in this time of distress, *but they need the support of every teacher*—not just a loyal few. This year of all years every one in the profession should join *all three organizations*, thus giving stability and strength to the programmes of Service which these associations sponsor. *Let's hang to the rigging!* (*November, 1932.*)

No superintendent of schools, no principal, no board of education, can save the teaching profession during the next ten crucial years. It will require the devoted loyalty and more intelligent action of *the great body of teachers themselves*, working

<sup>1</sup> Boutwell, William Dow: "The Minneapolis Meeting," *School and Society*, March 18, 1933.

in the closest understanding and coöperation with *the parents of the children whom they serve.* (January, 1933.)

There is every indication that the schools are now facing a period of hard years which in many cases may involve their very existence. The time to emphasize *the work of interpretation* is now. (February, 1933.)

The *Journal*, of course, is ready to help in this "work of interpretation." It sells little leaflets for enclosure with report cards, and also has "the inexpensive Dollar Packet for Educational Interpretation, which is made up to meet the needs of each school ordering it."

These leaflets are designed to go to the homes each month. . . . Send in your order promptly. . . . If the schools in your community are threatened, do not sit idly by while the service to the children is cut off. . . . Even though the schools in your community or your State may not now be threatened, *do not neglect to keep close to the homes.* (March, 1933.)

The schools are now threatened so seriously that unless every teacher assumes his share of the responsibility for interpreting school service *to parents, citizens, and taxpayers*, the children are certain to suffer. Three effective ways of interpreting schools are: First, to visit the homes of pupils, to inquire about their needs, to express interest in their progress and the formation of their character; second, to send regularly to parents along with report cards *simple messages giving information and inspiration*; third, to take active part in parent-teacher meetings which are a most important phase of adult education. (February, 1933.)

The important point is to have a few pivotal facts and to emphasize and re-emphasize these facts until they are *well established in the thinking of all the people.* (Crabtree's Annual Report.)

There is constant drumming on the idea that one of the jobs of the public-school teacher is to go from door to door as a canvasser selling the schools to parents:

Nothing could do more to *humanize* the schools and *to tie them to the hearts of parents* than for every teacher to visit every home represented in his class in this friendly, understanding way. . . . If the teacher is too busy to perform this essential educational service, either there is bad planning or *the teaching load is too heavy.* (November, 1932.)

Let every teacher visit the home of every child represented in his classes. Let him express to the parents *his deep interest in the child's welfare.* . . . Let him find things in the child's development to praise. Let him lead both parents and child to think of the school as a place of happiness, opportunity, hard work, and wholesome play. (Crabtree's Annual Report.)

This missionary work, it appears, will not only save the schools from Wall Street, but also end the Depression and cure all the other sorrows of the age:

Visiting teachers and other social workers, who go directly into the homes, *can point the way from poverty, disease, ignorance and economic instability.* (April, 1933.)

Brother Crabtree is apparently convinced, in fact, that all that is necessary to bring in a new Golden Age is to set all of the schoolma'ms to pulling door-bells and hawking the Enlightenment. He says:

The National Education Association was born amid stress, fear, and uncertainty. When it was organized in 1857 there hung over the nation's life the dark cloud of slavery and the dread spectre of civil war and disunion. . . . While the new organization began its work *too late to prevent the Civil War*, it has been a leading factor in reuniting the North and the South in heart as well as in form.

Brother Crabtree here hit upon a novel and thrilling selling point, and the *Journal* has not been slow to follow the trail. Since he wrote, Brother Morgan, the editor, has been recalling proudly the wonderful ac-

accomplishments of the association in surmounting great national difficulties, especially panics, and whooping up the talent of the inspired pedagogues, male and female, for solving every imaginable public problem. For example:

1857 was a year of terrible panic. . . . Hardship was everywhere, and yet looking back to 1857 from this distance we can see that *it was a time of seed sowing*. The *Atlantic Monthly*, established in that year, began setting new literary standards for the nation. *The National Education Association was organized*. The foundations were laid at that time for preserving the Union. (*December, 1932.*)

It is the high privilege of the teachers of America to turn the minds of the people away from violence, whether the revolutionary ideas originate among the greedy who talk about the failure of democratic government, which they have always sought to weaken and undermine, or whether these ideas are born of injustice, want, and despair among the poor. *The teacher is the savior of the people. . . .* He is the employé and the servant of the entire people, in a position to *insist that on the part of both rich and poor there shall be justice and understanding*. (*March, 1933.*)

Unfortunately, the part that the pedagogues had in bringing about the present Depression is too obvious to require more than brief consideration. Certainly it received a substantial impetus when the tax-ridden American people began to realize that their cities were going bankrupt, and that the enormous cost of the public schools was largely to blame. The question is not whether or not other departments of the government besides that of public education helped to cause these bankruptcies. The schools, here under scrutiny, cannot refute the charge that the pace they set for money-spending was one that could not be maintained except in boom times, and that when boom times ended the

pedagogues were encouraged by those who dictate the NEA's politics to insist that there be no retrenchment in the matter of public education, but that, instead, a period of Depression represented the ideal time for expanding its scope and cost:

Out of these dire difficulties we may gain a new and wider recognition of the importance of education to the economic and social welfare of our nation; *an extension of the period of regular schooling to eighteen years*; a multiplication of the opportunity for adult education. (*Crabtree's Report.*)

And as late as February of this year, when unemployment seemed to have the country in a death grip, Ellwood P. Cubberly of Stanford University, addressing the Department of Superintendence of the NEA, blandly proposed that machines be used to replace more employed men so that more money would be available for the public schools, with the added hint that we have so many people in America that if some adults are killed by automobile accidents—or possibly starvation—it will not matter greatly to those who put the Child First:

The actual waste of money on our highways today in the employment of men to do by hand labor what could be done far better and far cheaper by machinery, is enormous. The proposals for grade-separation improvements, too, to prevent some careless or fate-tempting driver who scorns to "stop, look and listen" from killing himself, are tremendously expensive and could easily be postponed. One could maintain a good-size city school system for a year on what one important grade-separation project would cost. *With the present general surplus of population*, there is little need today for curtailing the education of thousands of school children that some careless or drunken driver should be prevented from killing himself by trying to dispute the right of way with a locomotive. (*School and Society, March 4, 1933.*)



## IV

So far, so good. But a review of all that the pedagogical statesmen are now saying and advocating shows that there is still a considerable confusion among them. All the old reliable spellbinders have mounted the rostrum at the same time, and some of them are shouting words that are meaningless to others and maybe even to themselves. For example, at the meeting at which Joseph Rosier was elected president of the NEA, the organization passed a resolution condemning *particularly* reducing the salaries of teachers:

Either direct cuts or the substitution of cheap teachers for those who are competent, experienced, and reasonably paid is a blow to school morale and child welfare.

And yet Brother Rosier, in his first encyclical, a few weeks later, said:

The teachers of our country *do not rely upon materialistic conceptions of value* in their struggle for educational and professional advancement. They have learned to appreciate and understand the supreme intellectual and spiritual values.

In the *Journal* for March an article was published which certainly did not support Dr. Rosier's claim that pedagogues are not mercenary. It was entitled "Firm Stand Prevents Salary Cut," and it told how the municipal authorities of Newport, R. I., proposed a reduction in the salaries of all city employes, including firemen, policemen, and teachers. Charles Carroll of Providence, the NEA State director, raised the question whether the municipality had a right to reduce the salaries of the teachers, and the outcome was that the matter was submitted to the pedagogues themselves, with the suggestion that they take the proposed cut voluntarily. Despite their appreciation of "supreme intellectual and

spiritual values," they voted unanimously against any reduction. All of which prompted Mr. Carroll to observe:

It may open the eyes of some people to a wisdom in "schoolmasters and school-ma'ams" not usually possessed by politicians.

One group of the spellbinders for the public school racket is bent upon bluffing the tax-payer into believing that the system as it is now constituted is somehow sacred and beyond criticism: it aims to give the impression that only wicked politicians are for reducing its costs. At the same time another group of spellbinders, speaking for the same principle, but suspecting that if the present tax burden on real estate is increased property-owners may be thrown into bankruptcy, is flirting with the wicked politicians in the hope of getting permission to save the racket with Federal funds. From the 1932 NEA resolutions:

The Federal government, through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, should make available to the several States *sufficient funds to safeguard public education against retrenchment*. Congress should not overlook the fact that our public schools are self-liquidating enterprises, not in the sense that toll bridges are self-liquidating, *but in a sense more vital*. Particularly in the present crisis, retrenchment in education is dangerous, for education is the chief bulwark of the nation against the destructive forces of extreme radicalism.

Thus the pedagogues wander in Babeldom. At the same time that one group is engaged in denying that any extravagances have been introduced into the schools, another group is explaining that responsibility for the more costly innovations rests upon the shoulders of laymen. At a Conference on the Crisis in Education held in Washington last January, according to the *Journal*:

Dean Judd, speaking for the American Council, called the attention of the delegates to the fact that many school innovations have been brought about *by social pressure* and not by over-ambitious members of the educational profession. He was seconded in this viewpoint by President Rosier of the National Education Association and Editor Morgan of the *Journal*.

But even if the Judd charge were true it would not clear the pedagogue of the complaints laid against him. Rather it would indicate that he is even more inefficient than has been suspected, in that he permitted the judgment of laymen to be substituted for his own supposedly "expert" judgment. As a matter of fact, however, Dr. Judd's alleged "social pressure" has invariably been instigated by the pedagogues themselves, and it has served admirably as an excuse for them to do the reckless things they wished to do.

Editor Morgan, who seconded the Judd charge, is the same man who, only a short time before, was advocating in the *Journal* all sorts of costly and preposterous innovations. High-schools were to be converted into colleges; the educational system was to be carried down to the infant level; teachers' loads were to be reduced to as little as ten pupils, so as to eliminate unemployment, and a Federal university was to be started in Washington, at an annual maintenance cost of a trifling \$6,146,000, to train superintendents and supervisors despite the present surplus of them.

Again, in an article entitled "The Kindergarten and Nursery School," by Professor George D. Stoddard, of the University of Iowa, which appeared in December, 1922, *Journal*—a few weeks before the Washington "Emergency" Conference—one finds this:

"For younger children, nursery schools and kindergartens to supplement home care."

These eleven words quoted from the official recommendations of the White House Conference constitute one of the most revolutionary proposals in American education. Translated into actuality in terms of buildings, equipment, staff, and training facilities, it amounts to a proposal to spend at least *a half billion dollars per year on the education of more than five million children thus far completely out of contact with our educational programme.*

And this:

[Here] we have a supplementing of home care rather than a replacement of it. At the same time freeing the mother during a certain portion of the day permits her *to carry on work for pay and recreational or cultural activities.*

In other words, half a billion more dollars of the groaning taxpayers' money is to be spent annually to afford mothers who cannot employ nurse-maids an opportunity to enter the already overcrowded field of unskilled, part-time wage-earners or to join a few more bridge clubs!

## V

Let us now turn to another line of argument offered by the embattled pedagogues. Once more Professor Judd is the spokesman. His speech, "Education, the Nation's Safeguard," delivered in Washington in February, 1922, before the Department of Superintendence, so impressed the Headquarters Staff that it was published in the *Journal* and also issued as a pamphlet. I quote from it:

Formerly, industry protected many children and housed them in its factories. The protection which it gave was, to be sure, sometimes a fraud because it exploited children and profited by their cheap labor. As industrial processes became increasingly complicated, industry found it less and less profitable to keep the children in



factories. Of late years industry has not wanted children; it has shut its doors to them. Sometimes it has offered to the public the pretense that it is filled with the spirit of philanthropy. Many a law compelling children to attend school has been passed in the name of charity *when it was in fact a law excluding children from industry*. Go, if you will, today with the youth who has completed the curriculum of an elementary or secondary school, or, for that matter, of a college, and see him in the market place or at the door of the shop offering his services. See him ask for a place in the world of productive labor. You know how his application is received.

This may be supplemented with an excerpt from the Boutwell report on the Minneapolis meeting in February:

All that education asked was modest financial support and the useful employment of its pupil product. At Minneapolis organized education finally awakened to the fact that the only two demands it makes on American society are being rejected. Financial support is being withdrawn. *The only occupation open to its carefully prepared graduates is that of tramp.*

The so-called "modest financial support" calls for no comment; but the allegation that industry backed the school-attendance laws in order to get rid of applicants for work certainly deserve notice. Who but a pedagogue would believe this? Certainly it required no law to refuse employment to the young; moreover, if industry is really as crafty as Dr. Judd pictures it, it would not by statute lock the factory door to the employment of children lest the time come when it might wish to employ them again. Moreover, out of the Babel comes the *Journal*, taking the other side!

While millions of men are walking the streets of America jobless, hundreds of thousands of children *are being exploited in industry*. . . . There still remain unscrupulous employers and parents who are

willing to profit by the labor of children. . . . This type of child labor could and should be promptly and permanently eliminated *by properly enforced legislation.* (March, 1933.)

And at the same time Brother Crabtree, in his annual report, is proposing that the compulsory attendance age be raised to eighteen!

It was actually the pedagogues themselves, suffering from an itch to expand the school plant and its cost, who sold the public high-school to the country, just as they are now trying to sell it nursery schools. For years they filled the land with arguments that the earning capacity of any individual could be definitely increased, no matter what his native equipment, for every year that his schooling was prolonged. Schoolization, not education, was held forth as the vital thing. If the thought may arise that this was a humanistic move to force children from the streets into the schools, even if at public expense, the testimony of both Judd and Boutwell shows that the schools bungled the job they so recklessly undertook.

## VI

Unintentionally, doubtless, the schoolmen's own kingfish, Commissioner of Education William John Cooper, has punctured the bladders with which the pedagogues have been walloping business men for the mess into which education has fallen. Speaking before the Department of Superintendence in February he said:

It seems to me that in this crisis business leadership has failed us. Will society turn to education and say: "You tell us what to do"? When I find that more than three-fourths of the high-school work of 1,000 prospective teachers in twenty-four universities and colleges has been in the fields of English, foreign languages, mathe-

matics and history, and that approximately a third of their college work is in these fields rather remote from present-day problems, I wonder whether we shall prove also to be without the preparation for the leadership which the age demands.

That Commissioner Cooper should have these doubts about the ability of the pedagogues to train efficient leaders, after his long years of noting the type of individual that organized pedagogy selects for its own leaders, is not surprising. The present mess of public education, in truth, is directly traceable to the wretched quality of its leadership. It would be unfair to presume that in the whole field of education there are no men capable of courageous and efficient leadership, just as it would be unfair to conclude that under the froth and scum there is not much that is sound and meritorious in the public schools. But those who are capable of sensible and decent leadership are used very sparingly by organized education.

Occasionally I am condemned by schoolmen as a destructive critic. If I am it is because the matters I discuss, when truthfully revealed, are commonly self-condemnatory. I could name a group of educators that would be able to lead public education out of the wilderness and keep it from straying back for at least a generation. Naturally, considering my associations, such a list must needs include some of my friends, but to protect it from the charge of personal bias a like number of educators with whom I have only slight acquaintance has been added and also a like number whom I know only through their work. Here is the list:

*College presidents:* Nicholas Murray Butler, Lotus D. Coffman, Harry W. Chase.

*College deans:* George F. Arps, J. B. Edmonson, John W. Hall.

*College teachers:* William C. Bagley, Edgar W. Knight, Henry C. Morrison.

*State superintendents:* Ernest W. Butterfield, James M. McConnell, Albert S. Cook.

*City superintendents:* Frank W. Ballou, Zenos E. Scott, R. G. Jones.

Would organized education in America entrust its destiny to such a group? I doubt it for two reasons: first, the two cliques that now dominate the NEA would be left out, and, secondly, the pedagogues in general have grown so accustomed to having quacks imposed on them that they are no longer capable of exercising sound judgment in choosing leaders. Note what Mr. Boutwell says:

A scene in the Peacock Alley of the Curtis Hotel on Monday afternoon caught, in a sense, the point of view of the convention. Seated in one of those throne-room type of hotel lobby chairs was nonchalant Mr. Howard Scott, prophet of Technocracy. Around him, three deep, bent forward in rapt attention, were school administrators. They were shooting questions at him. He was expounding, with technological trimmings, a combination of Spengler's "Decline of the West" and More's "Utopia." His listeners were playing hookey from some very worthy educational meetings to look into a new world.

In other words, the pedagogues as a whole are so stupid that in a time of Depression, with the public schools under fire and confronted with terrific problems, they play hookey from professional meetings called to discuss those problems, and sit idiotically at the feet of a man whose attempts at serious discussion were so comical that he was thrown out of the first professional group with which he sought to ally himself. Discarded and derided in New York, he journeys to Minneapolis and becomes a prophet to the pedagogues!

# THE TRUTH BEHIND THE NEWS

BY MILDRED GILMAN

**T**HE tabloid has created for its public a great catalogue of tried and tested bromides. Every news story must fit into its proper niche, from which it emerges clothed in the proper adjectives. Dull characters are romanticized, sordid details are glamorized. A drab prostitute becomes a Midnight Moll or a Light O' Love, and any young girl or boy who packs a gun is a Thrill Bandit, a Two-Gun Sally, or a Three-Gun Bill. Mrs. Michael Slatz, who kills her husband because she is tired of seeing him come home to her without a job, is a Hate Killer. A tired old man, befuddled with dope, who murders his bigamous second wife and burns her body to hide the evidence is a Torch Fiend.

Who would read a line about Mrs. Slatz if the reporter wrote honestly that she was a pinched, homely woman of forty-five, shapeless from child-bearing, toothless, frantic with hunger, who finally, in a moment of desperate rage, shot Mr. Slatz as he lay sleeping beside her? The story wouldn't make more than a small box on page eight. But after the reporter has dressed Mrs. Slatz up a bit, made her more attractive, brought in a possible Other Woman, a Soul Mate for poor Mr. Slatz, then the story begins to have promise. Yet this same truth-loving public is always shouting for "what really happens", the actual "lowdown" on the news. Radio talks are based on this new craze, and there are dozens of "truth" magazines

on the market. (One of the most famous of these truth magazines, incidentally, makes all of its contributors sign an affidavit before selling a story, swearing that none of the characters or incidents is taken from real life.)

If the public *really* begins to want the truth beyond the news, the bare unadorned facts, then the reporters' task will be much simpler. For it is not always easy to make stories fit into their proper molds. There was recently, for instance, the case of an Italian gangster's widow. I had orders to fit her into the Faithful Wife mold. Something like this:

SLAIN SHEIK'S WIFE FAITHFUL  
AFTER BRIGHT LIGHTS SWEETIE  
DESERTS HIM.

BULLET RIDDLED BEER KING  
COMES HOME IN DEATH TO DE-  
SERTED WIFE'S HUMBLE TENE-  
MENT.

"I LOVE HIM EVEN THOUGH HE  
WRONGED ME FOR ANOTHER  
WOMAN AND LEFT ME TO STRUG-  
GLE FOR HIS KIDDIES, WHILE HE  
SPENT MONEY LIKE WATER."

FAITHFUL WIDOW FIGHTS FOR  
CHURCH BURIAL FOR SLAIN BEER  
BARON.

It seemed an easy story at first. There was the deserted wife, middle-aged, work-worn, weeping bitterly before the bier of her handsome husband. The tenement was humble and the Sheik's children looked thin and neglected. There was no