

is complete, and on the outcome it is hardly too much to say the destiny, perhaps the existence, of a great power depends.

FRANK H. SIMONDS.

Really Public Schools

CHARACTERISTIC of the "public sense" of the Gary schools is the class in history and geography, which I found at work getting an imaginative background of the larger social world. To the news-board in the hall they brought clippings that seemed important. The history room was smothered in maps and charts, most of them made by the children themselves. There was a great red Indiana ballot, a chart of the State Senate, a diagram of State administration, a table showing the evolution of American political parties, war-maps and pictures. The place was a workshop, with broad tables for map drawings, and a fine spread of magazines and papers. "Laboratory" work in history, tried so timorously in some of our most daring colleges, was in full swing in a Gary high school class.

When I visited the room the class was concerning itself with reports on "The city as a healthful place to live in," with special emphasis on parks, because the town had been waging its campaign for the new water-front park. Little outlines on Greek and Roman cities, mediaeval and modern cities, had been worked up in the school library—bountifully equipped as a branch of the city public library. I had walked into a true course on town-planning, at once the most fascinating and significant of current social interests and the study that packs into itself more historical, sociological and geographical stimulation than almost any I know. A class that had gone through those reports would have the materials for exactly the social background that our current imaginations need; and, moreover, all those materials would be firmly placed in the community setting.

There is a charming communal self-consciousness about Gary, and this sort of history is the thing that feeds it. One class had been working on a comparison of Athenian and Spartan education with Gary education. This struck me as peculiarly delightful. Such social introspection we rather badly lack in America, yet it is the only soil in which intellectual virtue can ever grow. The ancient history class has for its purpose: "to improve its members as American citizens by a study of the experiences of the ancient peoples." This class, after some classroom turbulence, formed a voluntary society which is duly opened and conducted

leisurely fashion outside. I know of no more admirable reason for historical study than this phrase, the natural expression of the Gary child who wrote the constitution for this class.

They do not seem to know whether they are studying "Civics" or not. They are too busy soaking in from real events a familiarity with history as it is lived and the community as it works. I throw in here an advertisement for the *Literary Digest* and the *Independent*, which the pupils regularly read. They study history backward, so that it explains what is happening to-day. They repeatedly dramatize remote times. They are talking of co-operating with the State historical pageant. It seemed to me that these children were actually learning their social world in the spontaneous, natural way that the intelligent child learns it from newspapers and books and from the slow, unconscious widening of horizon for which he must usually look quite outside the school.

If other community institutions have anything educational to offer outside the school, or if parents and children think they have, Mr. Wirt's school lets the children go to these out of their auditorium or play hour. The churches may have them for religious instruction—there is no Bible-reading or prayer in the Gary schools—and thus avoid the imagined necessity for a special kind of church day-school. Already a Polish parochial school in Gary has lost its reason for being and vanished. Y.M.C.A.'s, neighborhood houses, special music-teachers, etc., may also act as extensions of the school. It will be interesting to see how successfully some of these institutions which purport to form the child's morals and care for his soul's destiny prove their supplementary value, and how far they are not simply having joyfully extended to them a long rope by which they may hang themselves.

To Mr. Wirt the school is not more a community than the community is a school. He believes that parks and playgrounds should follow the schools, and in Gary he demands twenty acres for every school plant. He does not rely upon public playgrounds, to which, as experience shows, only a proportion of children can be enticed from the streets, but his playground is a part of the school on equal terms with the other activities. Otherwise these very expensive grounds which cities are providing are apt to be futile. Mr. Wirt's policy is to make it as easy as possible for the community to use the schools. He does not force people to the opportunities, but he puts them where people cannot easily evade them. He does not drive children to the public library, but he has a branch put in each school. The Gary schools are on

law—protector from tyranny—forbids more than ten months of school a year, but allows vacation schools. Sunday sees popular lectures. The Gary schools seem almost as public as the streets.

If the school is to be not only a community embryonic of current society but also a school-community of itself, it must have some forum or theatre where everything that is peculiarly interesting in any part of the school may be brought dramatically to the attention of the rest of the school. This Mr. Wirt provides in the auditorium hour, so drearily used in the ordinary school for religious exercises, "speaking pieces," and moral homilies. In Gary every child goes to "auditorium" for an hour each day, but he listens there to talks by the special teachers about their work, lantern-lectures and dramatic dialogues written by the children themselves from their history or literature work. There may be moving-pictures, instrumental music, gymnastic exhibitions. The initiative and responsibility are left to the teachers. There seems to be no limit to the interest and the possibility of what may go on in this free little secular theater except what the imagination of teachers and children can suggest. There is always singing, and of a most excellent tone. "Auditorium" is one of Mr. Wirt's novel ideas. It seems to make unreal the old categories of "entertainment" and "edification," just as the rest of the school seems to damage the conceptions of "work" and "play." There was a pleasant informality about things, with the girls sewing at the back of the theatre, and the young audience breaking into whistling as they marched out to the music of the piano. "Auditorium" ought to be quite as important as Mr. Wirt thinks it is. What school-work might become, lived always in the possible light of its intelligent presentation to the school audience in dramatic form, we do not know, because educators have never been dramatists. The Gary schools have special teachers for expression, but the American spirit is in many ways so inexpressive that the idea can thus far be only a frank and delightful experiment.

I liked particularly in the "auditoriums" I visited the intermingling of children of all ages. This is one of the many ways by which the Gary school breaks down the snobbery of age which causes so much unhappiness in childhood, and fixes the adult mind with so many delusions. I came across a significant editorial in the Emerson School paper which showed me how useful this intermingling was in smashing caste lines that were already forming. The editor acknowledged that the expected objectionableness of the "youngsters" to

sophisticating minds of high-school children.

I mention this because it is typical of Mr. Wirt's genius to obliterate artificial lines and avoid mechanical groupings. His ideal school is one like the Emerson in Gary, a complete school, from kindergarten to college, in the same building, with all the varied facilities used by all classes. The grading is of the utmost flexibility. The traditional twelve grades are followed, but classes work in "rapid," "average," or "slow" groups, according as the various children give promise of completing the State-prescribed curriculum in ten, twelve or fourteen years. The child may pass from group to group or from grade to grade at any time on the examination of the supervisor of instruction. The child himself has no sense of being "graded" or even "marked." Report-cards are rather a concession to parents' weaknesses. If the child needs additional help, there is the parallel school, so that he may have a double lesson the same day. And the Saturday school offers another opportunity.

All studying is supposed to be done in school hours. The fearful bogey of "home-work" is laid. In this free interchange of groups the child acquires a sense of individuality. Each has practically an individual schedule of work, for the organization of which the executive principal, who devotes all his time to such matters, is responsible. Except in the youngest classes, the children seem to move about individually to their different rooms and shops. By this drastic carrying down of college methods through the grades Mr. Wirt has exploded another hoary superstition that great masses of children in city schools can only be handled by uniform and machine methods, in a lump. Froebel School in Gary has twenty-five hundred children, most of them very small alien immigrants. Yet the same flexible and free methods are used there, apparently with success. These children, because of the immensely varied equipment, and the possibility of small classes in the shops, are getting something resembling individual instruction. I picked up at random the card of an older girl at Emerson. It read: "Printing, History, Gymnasium, French, Music, Botany, Auditorium, English." The very shock of that bold "Printing" gives you a realization of the modern school you are in. And this is a girl besides.

Now a program like this, and all this free election and flexibility, would seem wilful and anarchical were it not for the fact that in the Gary school these schedules are the result of a natural and very careful process of selection, made by the child. What the child shall study, outside of the

a beautiful building with laboratories and studios, gymnasia and shops, and put your child into its kindergarten or first grade. He runs about the halls. The shops and studios and laboratories are not segregated, but distributed over the building so as to convey the impression that they are equally significant, and to give every child an opportunity of becoming familiar with them. All the rooms have big glass doors or windows. The child's own unaided curiosity makes him look in and wonder about what the older children are doing there. One could see children of all ages peering into the foundry or machine-shop or printery.

When the child has reached the third or fourth grade he has a certain idea of what activity interests him, and he is allowed to go into shop or laboratory as observer or helper to the older child. He watches and asks questions, and the older boy learns by teaching him. If the child finds that the work does not actually interest him he still has the chance to change. When he takes up the work in the higher grades he has served his apprenticeship and is already familiar with the apparatus and

the technique. The teacher does not have to break in a new class each year. It is almost a self-perpetuating and self-instructing class. The child has been assimilated to the work as new members in any profession or trade in society are assimilated. When the child is exposed from his earliest years to the various vocational activities, is allowed to come into them just as his curiosity ripens, you have as perfect a "choice of a vocation" as could be imagined. Only this sort of opportunity can really be called "vocational training." The usual vocational school work takes the child too late, when his curiosity is likely to be dulled; it puts him into the work without any previous familiarity. It can scarcely be anything but drudgery. If "capacities are to be developed," Mr. Wirt's scheme gives the surest means of developing them. It solves the grave problems of "vocational" and "pre-vocational" training, which are so sorely vexing the professional educational world, a large part of whose business in life seems to be to create and have problems.

RANDOLPH S. BOURNE.

A COMMUNICATION

Understanding Foreign Relations

SIR: The "democratization of foreign policy" is a cry frequently heard to-day. We need not go into the vexed question of what precise kind of democratic control is desirable in international affairs. What is undoubted is the general feeling that foreign policy has not been an adequate expression of national consciousness, and the keen desire that in the future the conduct of foreign affairs shall bear the imprint of all that is best in each nation.

Whatever else is necessary for the accomplishment of this end, we are agreed that one thing is essential—namely, knowledge. If the national consciousness is to be expressed in foreign affairs, the nation must be conscious of foreign affairs. The masses must know the facts of international relations and must train themselves to appreciate the significance of those facts. Statesmen in the past have led their people in questions of foreign policy by the invention of vivid phrases, and the people worship those phrases to the third and fourth generation. Until phrase-worship has given place to knowledge, until statesmen can speak publicly in terms of fact without inflaming popular passions bred on half-knowledge and catchwords, all dreams of "democratic control" will be in vain. If democracy is to teach the chancelleries its ideals, it must first learn from them their patience and their knowledge.

Now, knowledge of international affairs is no closed book, locked away in the diplomatists' safe. Its essentials are fully at the disposal of the historian and the publicist. The education of a nation is a gigantic task, but it is the

locks of strong-boxes which are probably nearly empty. In this as in other things the words of a great American judge are true. "Education in the obvious is of more importance than investigation into the obscure."

It is here that the only real danger of friction between Great Britain and the United States lies. Knowledge of facts and the sobriety which knowledge brings are as much lacking and as much needed in England as in America, but let us confine ourselves for the moment to America. The NEW REPUBLIC has, ever since its original appearance, obviously stood for that reasoned and sober study of international affairs which, as we have already said, is the one essential to a sound foreign policy. But has even THE NEW REPUBLIC lived up to its task in discussing the recent relations between Great Britain and the United States? Let it be clearly understood that no Englishman wants more favorable or more sympathetic comment from the American press than it has given in the past; this article is in no sense an appeal for sympathy or for assistance. The question simply is, whether recent international questions have been discussed with knowledge or on the basis of unconscious and unverified assumptions.

The discussion has largely been conducted in terms of phrases, such as "neutrality" and "international law." Real facts and real ideals lie behind those phrases, but constant repetition tends to move the phrase further and further away from the reality. To take one instance. In all the discussions on the contraband question international law has been freely appealed to, but practically no mention has been made of it, and again and again arguments have