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The Teacher and Industry

Outline for Colorado

Is this subject far afield?

What Concerns the Teacher:

His business to give facility in using the tools which men have devised for daily intercourse. He gives this through the systematized knowledge of life as it has been worked out. After tools, he deals with principles.

More and more the teacher sees the wisdom of using the exhibits of cotemporary life in his teaching. The teacher in the country draws his illustrations and principles from the processes of Nature as they go the round.

It is the invasion of industry into daily life, the way it intrudes into all our thinking, affects the conditions of life, colors conversation, that makes it material for the teacher who considers the exhibits of life as part of his material.

This being so, what must be the attitude of the mind of the teacher? What is his opportunity?

Attitude of Mind:

Tempted to draw it from public attitude toward industrial problems. Generally speaking, that is an alarmist attitude, the result of seeing only the evils.

Every family its own physician (See Notes)

Almost as dangerous as absorption with evils is temptation

to prescribe remedies. Beware of talking before your pupils with industrial panaceas. Great opportunity, not in teaching schemes for improvement but in getting down to the principles which should be always to the front in considering industrial exhibits.

Three or four main lines run through the industrial discussion.

1) Distribution of Wealth.

Struggle over proper distribution of the fruits of industry. No denying their inequalities. Results of a study of income taxes as reported by the U. S. Government. Exhibits of wealth and their contribution to unrest. Unwise to call attention to inequalities without effort to teach the elements which go into the making of wealth, and their relation. In present day industrial discussion there is a constant claim that the laborer--meaning the manual laborer as a rule--is the chief, if not the only producer of wealth that should be recognized. This is the basis of such schemes of reconstruction as we find in what is known as the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the proletariat are the only ones that do anything, then they are the only ones, according to the law of justice, that should have any claim on industry. The attempt in Russia to work out this scheme has demonstrated that if you produce you must have capital, and that capital is not money. It is the accumulation of the past, thatis, the land redeemed from the wilderness; the transportation systems opened through centuries of labor; it is the city; it is all the accumulation of technical knowledge; it is

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trained brains and skilled fingers, the esult of generations of effort--all of this goes under the head of capital. That is, the accumulation of the efforts of the past of all classes of people.

Into the problem of production, beside this thing which we call capital, there goes more. There goes the extraordinary quality which sees what can be done, the thing we call vision, talent. There goes the ability to seize this idea and realize it in plans, put it into inventions,--both of these among the rare and certainly the most precious achievements of man.

And all of these are preliminary and essential before the man who labors with his hands has anything to do. This is not saying that this man might not be trained, might not have it in him to do all that has been done before, but the fact that he is a laborer proves that whether the capacity is inherent or not, it has not been developed. After he, working according to direction on an undertaking, has finished his task, there comes in another long process, the distribution.

All of these inter-related parts in the problem of production must be put into the heads of the pupils if we are to have any sound consideration of industry.

Illustrations on every hand. What better one than that in dealing with the land. It is one with which every body is familiar.

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Given a clear view of the inter-relations of the factors, their relative value must be insisted on. It is a law of the universe, it should be pointed out, that return follows the effort or service given. An insignificant effort merits and receives an insignificant return. The ethics of the matter must not be forgotten as they are too often today. The insistence is on what you get, and very little on what you give. Not only natural law but ethical or moral requires that this be turned about, that the people be made to see and feel not only that you must give if you are to get, but that you must put what you give before what you get. If we are to bring into the activities of the working life of the world any spiritual quality we must get away from the present materialistic interpretations.

Many of the systems that now have great hold on youthful thinking particularly merely are concerned with the material side of life. Communism is a system without a single spiritual impulse. It recognizes only the economic basis of life.

Participation in Management:

Turmoil in industrial life is caused almost as much today by the demand for larger participation on the part of the worker as it is for a fairer share of the fruits of labor.

In this country there is a serious contradiction between

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the principles of popular education and practice in industry itself. Every teacher considers it is his business to exploit democracy, the system under which we are supposed to live. It is a system, you teach, that gives a chance, and you impress, too, that it is a system which puts upon you an obligation in return for the chance, a duty to take a part in whatever concerns you. A pupil brought up on this doctrine goes into industrial life, and finds himself, as a rule, a part of a purely autocratic organization, without opportunity for free expression, without sufficient tribunal for grievances, or to correct wrongs in the modern system, for hundreds of thousands of workers, no chance to understand the meaning of the thing he does.

(Examples. Consult Miss Schwarz)

No demonstration that project in which he is taking part, is service. Essential for happy industrial life that dignity of undertaking, relation to the development and happiness of world be realized.

This anomoly, that is, the young person educated to democratic notions finding himself caught without power of free action or expression, in an organization however effective as a wealth producer naturally produces unrest, strain, revolt,-- disobeys a fundamental law of the human being that the instinct aroused must have an opportunity for gratification.

Attempts to guard democratic tendency in industry--

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first, through coöperation with unions; secondly, through shop organization. Necessity of stressing that all these undertakings depend upon honesty of purpose on both sides, loyalty to engagements, patience, soundness of leadership on both sides.

Countering Military Organizing tendencies of Industry:

The strike and lock-out methods of settling differences. Figures for 1919. (See Labor Bulletin)

Difficulties in handling a labor dispute. First, appeal to prejudice and not to fact. (Rattlesnake story)

The difficulty of getting facts in a mining dispute.

Claims on face preposterous. Fundamental difficulty, bad management. Settlement through strike not necessarily just. Need of courts of arbitration.

The way to peace in industry.

Obstinacy on one side
Surprise on the other.

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