

Teachers of Tomorrow

ARNOLD E. JOYAL

PROFESSIONALLY ALERT educators are giving careful thought to post-war, teacher-education problems. They are asking such practical questions as these: "What is going to happen to the hordes of emergency teachers who are employed in our schools today when the war is over? How about the marginal teachers who, in normal times, would receive scant consideration from employing authorities? Now that they have rendered us a service, what is our obligation to them?"

Similarly, educators are asking the questions: "What is our obligation to men and women who joined the armed services and left the classrooms to fight for their country? Should they be automatically re-employed? And, what about the thousands of teachers who left the classrooms, lured to government positions, to defense plants, and to busi-

ness and industry by higher wages and more attractive positions? What, if anything, does public education owe them?" These, and similar questions, must be answered. They are important questions with far-reaching implications. They merit our careful study.

Although it is not possible to categorize all of the many types of actual and prospective teachers involved, the following general classification is presented and certain subdivisions within the groups are noted.

I. Teachers Who Left the Profession During the War

A. Teachers who joined the armed forces or some war group like the merchant marine or Red Cross.

B. Teachers who withdrew from the profession to marry or to be with their families because of war conditions, women whose families moved to defense areas and who then kept house or reared children, wives who followed their husbands around the country but were not gainfully employed themselves.

C. Teachers who were attracted by better pay to other positions and who were gainfully employed in government, business, or industry.

II. Teachers Who Entered the Pro-

The present turnover in the teaching profession seems destined to go into reverse at the end of the war. Persons who rushed out of teaching to take jobs in other fields may be rushing back just as hastily when peacetime employment conditions again prevail. Many "duration" teachers will leave our number. And into the ranks will come youths who have roamed the earth and flown the skies just at the time when, normally, they would have been winding up professional training or beginning their careers. Arnold E. Joyal, Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Maryland, presents here a realistic discussion of the teachers of tomorrow and how we may best help them to fit into the profession.

profession After the War Started

- A. Teachers who came in as "pinch hitters," patriotic former teachers who were willing to help in an emergency and who may or may not withdraw when the emergency is over.
 - B. Professionally unqualified teachers who were employed as an emergency measure because of the shortage of qualified personnel.
 1. Persons who have demonstrated reasonable competence.
 2. Incompetent and unsatisfactory teachers.
- III. Persons Who May Seek to Enter the Profession After the War
- A. Surplus personnel, perhaps engineers, for example, who may find their professional ranks crowded and may look to teaching as an outlet for their training.
 - B. Students whose plans and preparation to enter the profession of teaching were interrupted by the call to war service and who desire to take up where they left off. This group includes the thousands who went directly from graduation into the war services and industries.

Group I: Returning Teachers

With respect to teachers who served with the armed forces, there is unquestionably a professional and moral obligation to return them to their positions as soon as possible after they are released from the service. For some teachers in some areas this obligation

is backed by law. To be sure, such teachers should recognize an obligation on their part to rehabilitate themselves academically and professionally. Most of them will be only too glad to cooperate. Probably the government will encourage and even subsidize their rehabilitation. This relatively small group of teachers, however, will probably not constitute a great problem.

Teachers who withdrew from the profession to be with their families because of war conditions pose a different and more difficult problem. For example, there is the young teacher who married her soldier lover and followed him from one camp to another, eventually to bear a child. A great many young women have done that during the war period. Some of them may wish to return to teaching when the war is over and when a more normal home life can be restored. Then there are other young women who have moved with their families to defense centers, perhaps to maintain homes for fathers or brothers or other relatives. Other women were forced to give up teaching to stay at home and care for their own children, domestic help being totally unavailable or economically impossible. Still other women left teaching merely because their husbands were financially better able to support them under wartime boom conditions than under normal circumstances. Some of them will wish to return to the classroom when economic conditions change. Just what is the obligation of the schools to such groups of people?

Obviously there can be no general answer. These people have no such claim on a position as do the persons who served with the armed forces. On

the other hand, many of them had socially justifiable reasons for leaving the profession. Many of them did not benefit materially from the circumstances which forced them out of teaching. Many of these people are fine teachers and should be given careful consideration as schools return to normalcy. And of course there will be some extreme and unusual cases. Inevitably some of the young wives who withdrew from the profession will become widows. Such women, especially if they have children, will present a strong appeal before school boards. One point, though, would seem tenable. Such persons should return under current certifying standards, and school boards should be cautious in making selections from this category.

Teachers who left the profession to enter other fields of employment, principally because of the attraction of higher wages, deserve still less consideration than either of the above mentioned types. While it would be short-sighted to say that they are entitled to no consideration at all, it would seem to be perfectly reasonable to suggest that they should be employed only as they may be needed and under such certifying and salary conditions as may currently exist.

It is essential that educators constantly remind themselves that the welfare of children is the principal criterion to be observed in selecting teachers. While it is true that many teachers "deserted the classroom" to better themselves during the war, it is equally true that many of them are alert, aggressive people, precisely the kind of teachers who will do outstanding work in any situation. To the extent

that this is true, school boards should employ these people. After all, schools should seek the best people available. It should be made clear, however, that they will be expected to qualify under the standards operative at the time of their postwar employment. They should not "have their cake and eat it, too."

Group II: Wartime "Pinch-bitters"

The "pinch-hitters," patriotic former teachers who stepped into the classroom to help out in an emergency, may or may not constitute a serious problem. Doubtless many of them will gladly return to home life or their former jobs. Such persons will have earned the deep gratitude of the American public. But it may prove to be true that when the war ends some of the women in this group—maybe more than we now believe—will have enjoyed the experience as a respite from housework and will have come to expect and depend on the added salary. Their children will be older and their families will have adjusted themselves to having the mother employed. Some of them may wish to remain in their positions. For these people there would seem to be only one answer. If they are qualified and are good teachers, they should be retained. Only one consideration should be borne in mind: if they are kept they should be truly the best available persons for the positions. To pursue any other policy would be an error.

Professionally unqualified teachers, employed merely as an emergency measure, again constitute a different problem. Thousands of these "marginal" teachers were given positions merely because they were the only people available. Certifying agencies had to

close their eyes to standards. In some extreme cases any "reasonable facsimile" of a teacher was employed and put into the classroom with the hope that she could at least maintain order. Undeniably, the schools have suffered greatly because of this regrettable circumstance. Unless educators are very careful and approach with skill the problem of clearing up this situation, generations of students are going to continue to suffer. The schools cannot tolerate a continuance of some of the teachers an hour longer than absolutely necessary.

Some of these marginal teachers have, of course, demonstrated a reasonable competence. By no means all of them should be ruthlessly eliminated. An honest effort should be made to appraise their abilities and contributions. Persons who are clearly inadequate and inferior should be eliminated. Borderline cases should be counseled and presented with an opportunity to qualify under the regular certification standards. Some of them can probably take over other work in the school but they should not remain in the classroom. The schools will do well to take a positive and conservative stand on this question. There is just one justifiable basis on which to employ teachers and that is to get the best available personnel in the light of the welfare of boys and girls.

Group III: Postwar Newcomers

After the war, there will probably be a surplus of trained personnel in several fields. Just what these fields will be cannot be predicted with certainty. One which is likely to show a surplus of personnel, however, would now appear to be engineering. During the war great emphasis has been placed on the train-

ing of prospective engineers because unusually large numbers have been necessary to operate a war economy. It is highly probable that for one reason or another some of them will decide that they would like to become "teachers" after the war. Other professional groups, such as psychologists, personnel workers, etc., may find themselves in the same situation.

What is the obligation of public education to such persons? It would seem reasonable to insist that persons from other professions should meet the same standards and have the same qualifications, including professional education, as any other candidate for a teaching position. Many a trained engineer may know his science and mathematics and yet not be qualified to present the subject adequately in the high school classroom. In other words, he may be long on subject matter but short on a sound philosophy of public education.

Teacher-education institutions and certifying agencies must take a positive stand on this matter and assure themselves of proper professional outlook on the part of such trainees before recommending them for certification or employment. The standard program of professional education courses should be required of all prospective teachers. Every effort should be exerted to make certain that persons seeking to enter education are doing so with a sincere desire to become teachers and not merely as a stop-gap or temporary expedient brought about by surplus of workers in their own professional field.

The prospective teacher who was diverted from college to war before he reached the classroom can return and continue his professional preparation.

Doubtless the government will be generous with such students and will make it possible for them to get a better education than might normally have been the case. Probably all of them, whether or not they had actually completed their professional training, will wish to become refreshed in their academic life. Probably many of them, their outlook broadened through experience and maturity, will more than ever recognize the need for a broader education.

The problem of dealing with the selection and placement of teachers after the war is going to be extremely difficult. It is much more complicated than most of us can now foresee. If history means anything, there will be a surplus of teachers. Schools will have the opportunity to re-convert to peace time conditions. We must be wise enough and bold enough to grasp that opportunity and to make it truly significant for public education.



You Have Elected . . .

Announcement of the names of the ten members elected to the Board of Directors of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development is made on the inside back cover of this issue of *Educational Leadership*. Officers of the Department are elected by the Board from its membership. Announcement of officers for 1944-45 will be made in next month's issue of *Educational Leadership*.

Ballots to all members of the Department for voting for members to the Board were mailed on December 6. It was felt that mailing on this date would allow ample time for ballots to reach all members before the rush of Christmas mail. Evidently this was true in most cases, for the number of returns was gratifying. However, as several members have indicated, some ballots were held up in the mails. Aware that there had been such delay in some cases, the Board of Tellers—Veryl Schult and James E. Mendenhall—postponed the date for counting votes. To members who received ballots late, our sincere apology.

Copyright © 1944 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.