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DISADVANTAGES OF TEACHING PROFESSION FORCE LOW STANDARD

The following article taken from "The Lincoln Public" gives the opinion of organized labor on the present conditions in the teaching ranks.

"Our schools are facing a crisis. Inadequate salaries and unjust treatment not only are forcing thousands of our best teachers out of the professions, but are largely preventing self-respecting young men and women of ability from preparing for teaching as the alarming decrease in normal school attendance shows. If American education is to meet the demands of the critical period we are entering, forward looking men and women within the teaching force and without, must not merely devote their best thought, but must coordinate their efforts. The American Federation of Teachers, through its affiliation with the American Federation of Labor with its membership of nearly four million, has the support of the most powerful and progressive democratic force in our national life, and the force most vitally and intelligently interested in public education.

"Organized labor is fundamentally interested in securing the best educational opportunities for the children of all the people. Some conflicting forces are fundamentally interested in keeping taxes down. Labor is determined to raise the efficiency of the schools to the highest level, and to make education mean what it should mean in a democracy. All aiming at that goal, and surely the teachers most of all, should welcome the effective support for progressive educational measures, the new possibilities for cooperation, which affiliation with us, and through us with the American Federation of Labor, would secure.

"We sometimes find the misapprehension that we are interested only in salaries. Improved economic conditions for teachers is a fundamental educational problem today, and we may make no apology for stressing it. Upward revision of salary schedules is indispensable to prevent an educational breakdown. Labor in both national and state conventions has gone on record for increased school revenues and adequate salaries.

We are now co-operating with the A. F. of L. and the N. E. A. in securing federal assistance. But we are just as keenly interested, and receive just as cordial support from organized labor, in securing the democratic voice of the active teachers in the conduct of our educational institutions, as opposed to autocratic domination extending downward from the upper reaches of the hierarchy. Only in that way can teaching become a genuine profession.

"One error which we must frequently clear up is the matter of the strike. The American Federation of Labor grants complete autonomy to the American Federation of Teachers. We, in common with many unions of public employees, do not use the weapon of the strike, but rely on other means, chiefly an educated and aroused public opinion, where our close connection with labor is particularly valuable.

"Although labor's support is a very real incentive, we affiliated primarily because we felt that the workers of the country, workers with both hand and brain, should stand shoulder to shoulder for the development of a richer common life and a more complete democracy. We endeavor to impress on teachers, both from their own standpoint and from that of their pupils, the handicap of their traditional aloofness from life, and the wisdom and duty of grasping the opportunity to connect themselves intimately and effectively with the civic, economic, and social life of the community.

"Our movement is growing rapidly. We have granted over one hundred charters to teachers' organizations in all sections of the country including New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Atlanta, New Orleans, Memphis, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Sacramento, San Francisco, Houston, Galveston, San Antonio, the Canal Zone. We recently entered the university and normal school fields, and now have five locals in each. Leading educators, among whom John Dewey is prominent, have endorsed the movement wholeheartedly. Space does not permit the detailed recital here of our substantial achievements, but with the assistance of organized labor in various sections of the country we have been able to secure material increases in teachers' salaries, important reforms in school administration, the election of progressive boards of education, and the enactment of such legislation as provisions for continuation schools, for free textbooks, for increases in school revenues and for

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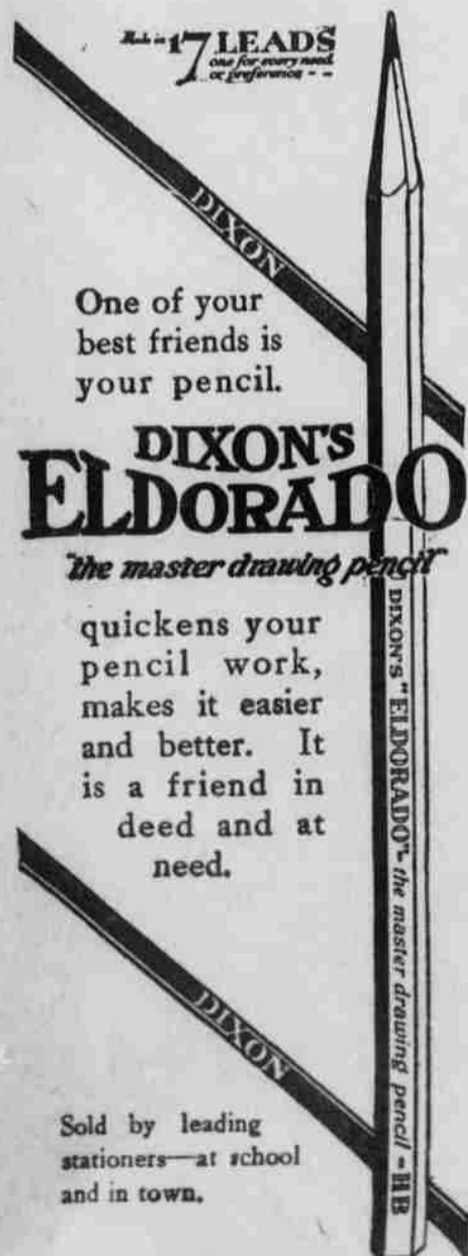
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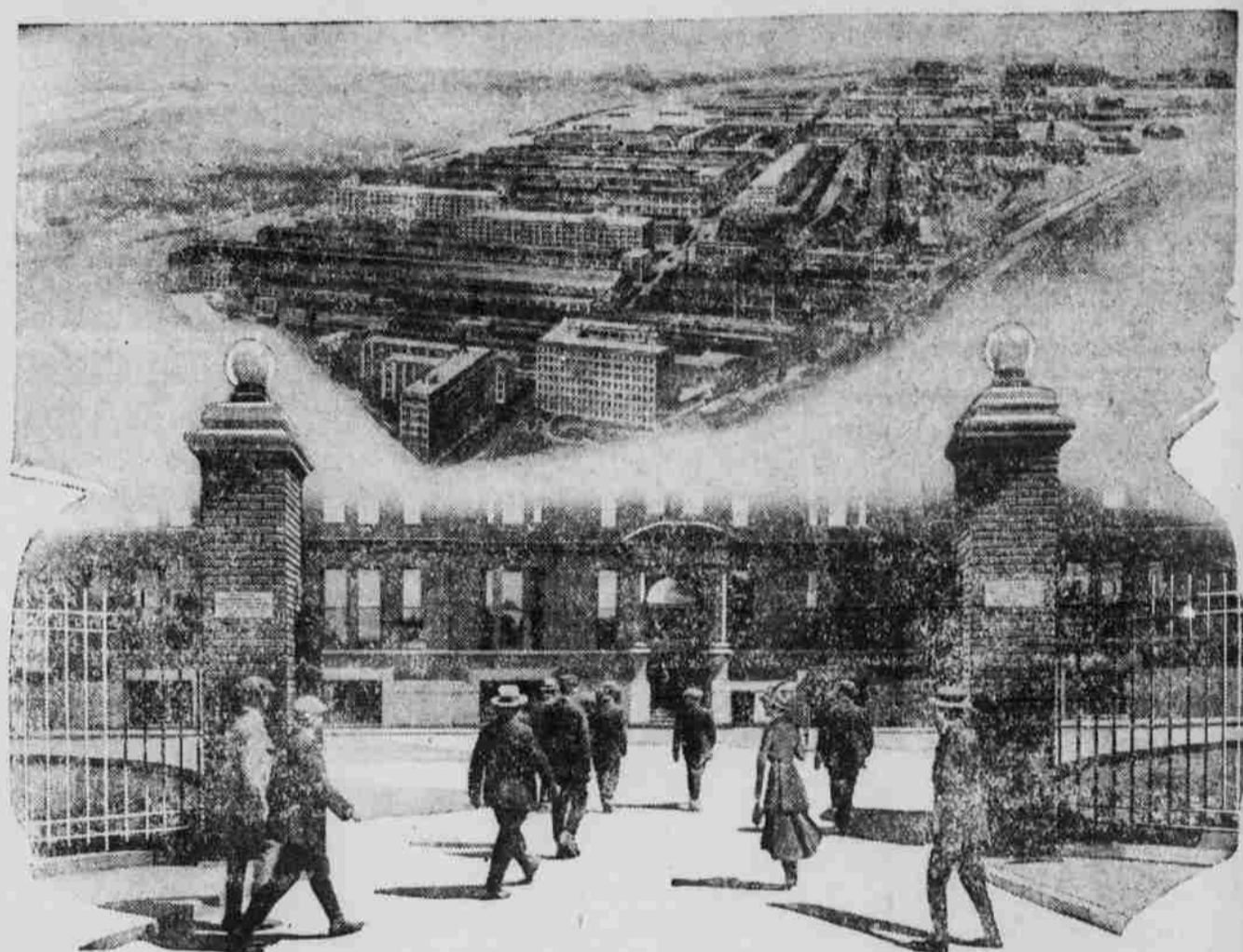


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tenure of position. In urging you to form a local we are confident that we can be of assistance to you and we know that you would bring a valuable contribution to our national organization. In our deliberations and our

actions it is important that we have representation of the points of view of all groups of teachers, and of all section of the country. "Democracy is an overworked word, but you will agree that it is under-

worked in practical application, and that the genuine democratization of education is the greatest service the teachers can contribute to our nation in this time of reconstruction."