

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF

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THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC PAPER IN WEBSTER COUNTY

You can get a very good idea of the personal habits and tastes of the occupants of property by the appearance of things about the premises. If the yard is full of rubbish, the bushes untrimmed, a dearth of flowers, and other evidences of carelessness, the chances are that the occupant is untidy and loose in habits. On the other hand, if everything is clean, neat and tidy, flowers blooming and a homelike air of contentment pervades the premises the chances are that the occupant is neat and progressive. Let all keep these hints in mind and clean up and beautify their property.

A KEY TO THE SITUATION

The most efficient, the most democratic public school system in this country is at Gary, Indiana.

For the first time in the history of education, scientific methods have been applied to education, scientific management to a school system, the educational capacity doubled and the cost of education cut in two, all at the same time.

It is only natural that a city built by engineers for an organization so largely involving engineering should partake of an engineering mind in its educational system.

The man who accomplished this educational wonder is William Wirt, formerly in charge of the public schools of Bluffton, Indiana, and he was found by the engineer who laid out the sewer system of Gary.

The writer spent a half day recently at Emerson School, the largest school building, or school plant as it is called, in Gary, and which is typical of the whole system.

The system differs from that ordinarily adapted by cities in the following major particulars:—

Emerson School has the size and appearance of the typical modern city high school, but kindergarten, primary grades, grammar grades and the high school courses are all taught under one roof.

Ordinarily the capacity of a building the size of Emerson School would only be about 1,040 pupils, but by rotating the classes and keeping one-half the pupils on the play grounds, in the manual training department, in the gymnasium, in the swimming pool, in drawing or music, the ordinary school room capacity is doubled to 2,080 pupils.

The school plant is in operation from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in evening, six days a week the year around, but a child does not stay in the strait-jacket of one desk all day, nor are they compelled to attend Saturdays or during the two months ordinarily allotted to vacation.

Very few textbooks are used. Every teacher is a specialist in one branch of education, and by the rotating system does not teach anything but their particular specialty.

Every child has a locker, but no regular desk.

The whole educational system can be summed up in three words:—
Learn by doing!

The idea of having so many grades or branches of education under one roof is for both efficiency in education and economy of operation.

In the first place it is based on the old country school experience, that the younger pupils learn from the older ones.
For instance, the chemical laboratory used by the advanced class in the high school course is right next to one of the primary grade rooms. There is a full length, clear glass panel in the door of this chemical laboratory so that the small pupils in passing can look in and see the operations of the older ones. The same idea is carried out relative to other departments and branches. There is clear, full length glass in every door and a higher class is usually located next to a primary grade one, and the same psychology is again applied by, say, the elementary

physics class using the same room as the advanced physics class.

An incentive is given the younger pupils,—they look forward to doing the work of the older ones.

Then, it has been found that the ordinary, distinctively high school building in a city soon resolves itself into a snob factory; that the parents who should and can ordinarily send their children to high school are restrained by reason of caste or social distinctions, that make an economic pressure under which the parents cannot stand,—they simply cannot afford to supply their children with clothing, class, and fraternity dues and other expenses that usually become a fixed standard, so their children are taken out of school.

Then there is the relative economy of school management by reason of the larger plant operation.

The system of rotating classes,—that is, sending them to different class room or different parts or departments of the building at the close of every study hour, creates an almost constant circulation of pupils through the building; it gives the children a chance to stretch and permits every class of small children to get a glimpse of what every older class is doing; it permits of a smaller number of teachers, better teachers at better salaries, and every teacher a specialist in each department of teaching; but the principal advantage is that it doubles what is normally the capacity of the ordinary school building and at the same time reduces the number of pupils of each room.—there are about 22 to 28 pupils under one teacher at one time under the Wirt system, while there are from 35 to 50 under the ordinary system in the average city.

This rotating system has still another advantage of being pliable enough to prevent any one child or group of children holding back their class; for if a child shows efficiency in grammar and deficiency in arithmetic he can naturally be given more hours in the deficient study.

Then the terms are divided up into three months periods, so that no pupil has to wait a whole year in order to be promoted or demoted as under the conventional plan. It is again efficient in the fact that if a child shows physical deficiencies he is given more hours on the play grounds and in physical culture, which department is also under a high grade specialist, and in this way no child stays out of school on account of ill health.

This old idea we have of holding schools from half past eight in the morning until three-thirty in the afternoon five days a week, with two or three months vacation in summer, is a rural precedent and has no place in cities. In the country children were needed at home from rising time till school time, after school time in the evening, and on Saturdays to help with house and barn chores, and in summer they were needed for three months during harvest time.

The country boy or girl derived an education benefit from his house and barn work because it taught definite tasks for definite purposes, it instilled a habit of application; it was manual training in other words.

In the city there are few if any house and barn chores, so this time of work on the farm now comprises the street and alley time of the city child, which is an evil influence.

Under the Wirt system a child does not go to school any more hours than under the conventional system, but the street and alley time is consumed in music, drawing, manual training or physical culture on a play ground or in a gymnasium under a competent physical instructor and play master, and in the swimming pool under a swimming teacher.

At Gary one-half of the children start in the morning with ninety minutes of school room study, which includes arithmetic, English, and history. This is followed by ninety minutes of music, drawing, manual training, physical instruction and play. The other half of the school attendance appear in reverse order,—that is, they first take music, drawing, manual training, and so on, followed by the regular school room studies.

In this way all parts of the school plant, including five acres of play ground, are in use all the time. For instance, instead of recess and play-time fifteen minutes in the forenoon and fifteen minutes in the afternoon, under the conventional plan, the play

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