EDUCATION

CHARLES H. JUDD
University of Chicago

ABSTRACT

Schools and colleges are seriously affected by the depression. A number of types of federal relief have been provided which have to some extent improved the situation. In certain communities constructive measures have been adopted to advise and instruct unemployed adults. The proposal is made that secondary and higher education be largely or wholly supported by tuitions. Schools have a marked increase in attendance as a result of the operation of the industrial codes. The increase may be made permanent through an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The regional standardizing associations are preparing to adopt new kinds of standards. The Federal Board for Vocational Education is absorbed into the United States Office of Education.

During the year 1933 the schools and colleges of the United States felt the full impact of the depression. Expenditures for education had been somewhat reduced in earlier years, but, in general, the financial stringency was slow in affecting schools because appropriations for education had been more or less stabilized and were not withdrawn in any large measure during the years immediately following the collapse. If federal relief funds had not been made available for the support of various kinds of educational activity during 1933, the situation would have been far more serious than it was.

The deepening crisis in education.—The United States Office of Education, to which the state superintendents of public instruction reported the conditions in the various states, published in the late autumn a leaflet entitled The Deepening Crisis in Education. Among the significant statements in this leaflet are the following.

Here are some casualties of the crisis in education:

One hundred thousand more children are this year denied all educational opportunities because of closing schools.

Shortened school terms will put at least a million other children on learning rations close to the level of mental starvation.

One of every two cities has been compelled to drop some important school service.

One of every three teachers must work this year for less than the "blanket code" minimum for unskilled labor.

Twenty-five thousand teachers have been dropped, while a million more pupils have come into the schools.

Two hundred thousand certificated teachers are unemployed.
Two hundred and fifty-nine school districts in twenty-nine states have been compelled to default on bonds.

The number of pupils per teacher is being increased—in five states there are on the average more than forty pupils per teacher.¹

Federal relief measures.—During the month of August, 1933, a number of college presidents assembled in Washington and prepared a proposal patterned somewhat after the plan adopted by the federal administration for the relief of unemployed young men through the Civilian Conservation Corps. The proposal was that qualified young people who desire to attend college but are financially unable to do so be allowed a stipend equal to that paid to men in the conservation camps. The proposal was presented to the President. The administration responded favorably to this proposal and other proposals relating to education which were urged on its attention. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration made appropriations from time to time for the following purposes: (1) Employment of unemployed teachers to keep open rural schools which would otherwise be closed for lack of funds. (2) Employment of unemployed teachers to conduct classes in cities for persons who are illiterate. (3) Maintenance of nursery schools. (4) Instruction of unemployed adults in vocational courses, instruction of adults requiring rehabilitation training, and instruction of unemployed adults in such general subjects as economics, history, and science. The purpose of general instruction is to maintain and improve morale among the unemployed. (5) Partial support in college of 100,000 young people who for financial reasons would otherwise be unable to attend. (6) Instruction by trained teachers of the men in conservation camps.

To this list of direct relief contributions to education may be added the fact that funds were made available under the Civil Works Administration for the employment of many persons who were unemployed but competent to do clerical work or work requiring training of a superior grade. Many university centers have been able under these grants of relief aid to give employment to persons who have higher degrees but were without positions.

The New York City adjustment service.—Local relief agencies have

¹ The Deepening Crisis in Education (United States Office of Education, Leaflet No. 44, 1933), p. 3.
in some cases contributed to educational projects. One example which is worthy of special mention is a project in New York City in which the Carnegie Corporation is co-operating with the city relief commission.

The history of this enterprise is as follows: The branch of the Y.M.C.A. located in the neighborhood of Wall Street became aware early in the depression of the fact that none of the ordinary forms of public relief reach the clerical and professional workers who are out of employment. While the directors of this branch of the Y.M.C.A. knew that they were not able to find employment for men, they felt sure that sympathetic counseling would help in the formulation of plans for personal adjustment. The Y.M.C.A. established a division which undertook to direct unemployed clerks, architects, civil engineers, and other trained men to opportunities for study which might in time lead to new occupations. It prepared and made available lists of places of wholesome recreation where men could spend their time in ways which would help them to escape the kind of despondency that comes from having an oversupply of enforced leisure.

The work of the Y.M.C.A. was so successful in helping unemployed men trained for technical services that it seemed desirable to expand the range of its application. A vacant floor in the building of the National City Bank at Madison Avenue and Forty-second Street was furnished by the bank at a nominal rental; office equipment was provided by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company; and the "Adjustment Service" was organized to carry on a program of individual counseling with regard to vocations, education, and recreation. The Adjustment Service is a counseling agency, not an employment bureau. It has a library in which information is available on all kinds of opportunities for education and recreation. It has a staff specially trained in personnel work. It has a psychiatric division which is competent to make examinations and give help to anyone who is in need of its services.

This counseling agency is working in close co-operation with the State Department of Education and with the other agencies which are conducting adult education in New York City.

_The Des Moines forums._—An experiment in adult education undertaken with a view both to allaying the restlessness which has been
caused by the depression and to preparing people for intelligent participation in public affairs has been inaugurated by the school system of Des Moines, Iowa. With the aid of a grant made by the Carnegie Corporation, public forums are conducted in school buildings. Trained lecturers present discussions of social, political, or economic topics, and members of the audiences ask questions after the lectures. The forums have proved to be successful in drawing large audiences and in creating enthusiasm for study of problems of social life.

_Tuitions proposed for secondary and higher education._—An attack on popular education was launched by that well-known advocate of educational retrenchment, Henry S. Pritchett, sometime president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In the annual report of the Foundation, Mr. Pritchett advocated the following changes in American education.

It is not to be expected that all the state governments or all the educational experts will agree upon the reforms to be effected. But there ought to be a fair agreement as to the direction this adjustment of tax-supported education to the intellectual needs and the financial resources of the states ought to take. Some of the signposts that mark this course would seem to be the following:

1. The courses of study should be fewer and simpler, and should look toward the training of the habits of the mind rather than the furnishing of information. In other words character and the ability to think are the real aims of the elementary school. It should be a free school, but the purchase of books by the state should cease. The American people are being made soft by this sort of coddling.

2. The secondary school should carry a tuition fee as it does in Europe, and the standard of admission should be such as to exclude the manifestly unfit. How large a part of the expense of the secondary school should fall on the state is a matter for state decision.

In the secondary schools, as in the grade schools, the need for a simpler curriculum is pressing. Today the secondary schools will be found to offer, in one state or another, the most amazing mass of studies, literary, scientific, and vocational. Everything from philosophy to journalism can be studied, in name at least, in the secondary schools in our country. A more simple, sincere, and consequently a less expensive régime, supported partly by the state and partly by tuition, should take the place of that which now obtains.

3. University education as provided out of the public funds of the various states has already begun to throw an increasing amount of the expense upon those receiving instruction. The proportion of this cost, to be borne by public funds, will vary. Arizona, for example, cannot afford to support at public expense such an elaborate institution of higher education as Ohio or Illinois. In
proportion to its resources it supports today an extraordinary institution of learning. In the main it must be recognized in the future that tuitions in a tax-supported university must carry the greater part, if not the whole cost of professional education. There was a day when the state might have been justified in training teachers, lawyers, physicians, and engineers at public cost. That day has gone by.²

Increases in school enrolments.—The retrenchments which were made in educational budgets during the year 1933 came at a time when the demands on schools were greatly increased. A part of this increase resulted from the fact that many high-school graduates who could not secure employment returned to the schools from which they had been graduated and asked for the opportunity to continue their studies. A part of the increase resulted from the operation of the new industrial codes, which very generally exclude from employment young people under sixteen years of age. The following summary of the provisions of the codes with respect to the employment of children is quoted from the editorial pages of the Elementary School Journal.

Of the first fifty-eight industrial codes to be approved, all but three prohibit the employment of children under sixteen years of age under any circumstances. The code governing the bituminous coal-mining industry prohibits the employment of minors under seventeen years of age either underground or in hazardous occupations aboveground but omits the clause prohibiting the employment of persons under sixteen under any circumstances. The code relating to theaters permits the use of child actors for special parts. The retail-trades code is the only one yet approved which permits part-time work of children between fourteen and sixteen years of age. Under the terms of this code children between fourteen and sixteen may be employed either three hours a day for six days a week or eight hours a day for one day a week. In either case the hours of employment must be between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. and must be such as not to interfere with the child’s opportunity to attend the regular day school. The builders’ code prescribes eighteen as the minimum age of all employment, and a number of codes carry an eighteen-year age minimum for hazardous operations.³

The proposed child-labor amendment to the Constitution.—The increased school attendance resulting from the provisions in the industrial codes relating to the employment of children promises to be

³ “Child Labor under the Recovery Program,” Elementary School Journal, XXXIV (December, 1933), 251.
made permanent by the adoption of a child-labor amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In 1924 Congress passed a resolution submitting such an amendment to the states. The Supreme Court had decided that without such an amendment Congress cannot pass legislation limiting child labor. The amendment has not up to this time been accepted by a sufficient number of states to make it a part of the Constitution. During the past months a vigorous campaign has been carried on by the National Child Labor Committee and other friends of the proposed amendment to secure reconsideration of the amendment in the states which originally acted adversely.

The January issue of the American Child, the official organ of the National Child Labor Committee, contains the following paragraphs.

Five states—Iowa, West Virginia, Minnesota, Maine, and Pennsylvania were added during December to the honor roll of states which have ratified the Federal Child Labor Amendment. Ratification has now passed the half-way mark, twenty states in all having taken favorable action. . . .

In all of these five states, ratification was given at special sessions of the legislatures, and in all except Maine, ratification had been considered at regular sessions in the spring, but had not received favorable action.

This renewal of interest in the Federal Child Labor Amendment is largely attributable to the child-labor achievements of the NRA. Through the industrial codes, child labor has been prohibited in the major industries and the states are anxious to insure the permanency of these standards on a national uniform basis. Individual states, although heartily favoring a sixteen-year age minimum, are unwilling to enact such standards into law as long as other states with which their industries must compete maintain low standards. Last winter bills to raise the minimum age for employment to sixteen years were introduced in eleven states but were passed in only two. Nevertheless when a few months later sixteen years became the age for employment under the NRA codes, which applied equally to all parts of the country, this standard was acclaimed universally even in those states which had defeated state legislation on the subject.+

In the February issue of the American Child, in answer to the objections made by President Nicholas Murray Butler to the efforts to revive and adopt the proposed child-labor amendment, the following argument is presented.

The Child Labor Amendment was drafted and adopted by Congress as a direct result of the two decisions of the United States Supreme Court declaring

the first and second child-labor laws unconstitutional. *(Hammer vs. Dagenhart, 247 U.S. 351; Bailey vs. Drexel Furniture Co., 259 U.S. 20.)*

It is important to note that four out of nine justices of the Court, in passing on the first law, held that Congress already possessed the power to control child labor through its authority over interstate commerce and one, in his opinion on the second law, held that Congress possessed this power through its taxing authority. The first Federal Child Labor Act was actually in force nine months before it was declared unconstitutional by a bare majority of one in the Supreme Court and there was almost universal testimony to its salutary effect. The second was enforced for three years and its results also were widely acclaimed.

The reasons for the adoption of these Federal Child Labor Acts were twofold. They are the same reasons which now underlie the movement to secure the adoption of the amendment. First, there is the desire to prevent the exploitation of children in industry and second, the desire to protect those states wishing to guard against the evils of child labor from unfair trade competition of the manufacturers and other employers of labor in one or more states where the child-labor laws are lax.

This second reason needs a short explanation. Under the Constitution a state, while it can regulate its own child labor, cannot prevent the importation into and sale in the state of the product of child labor in other states, no matter how lax or non-existent the state child-labor law of the second state may be. Unless Congress has that power, we are in this country in an extraordinary and lamentable position. The people in each state and the nation are powerless to remedy a condition which places the people of all the states which desire to effectively restrict child labor from doing so except at the cost of submitting their manufacturers and other employers of labor to ruinous competition. The majority of the Supreme Court in declaring the Federal Child Labor Acts unconstitutional practically took the position that the nation and the states, short of the voluntary adoption by all the states of efficient child-labor laws, were powerless to effect a remedy for a condition threatening the future of the country. The continuance of this state of things was and is, we submit, unthinkable. It may be that the majority of the Court in the child-labor case were right as a matter of constitutional interpretation. In any event, their interpretation exposes a grave defect in our Constitution. This defect will be cured by the adoption of the proposed Child Labor Amendment.5

New standards for colleges and secondary schools.—Four years ago the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools inaugurated a study which had for its purpose a complete revision of the standards of the Association for approving institutions of higher education. The then accepted standards were found to be too me-

chanical, dealing chiefly with aspects of institutional administration which can readily be subjected to quantitative evaluation.

The study has progressed to the point where the committee in charge is prepared to recommend at the meeting of the Association in 1934 that the old standards be replaced by a plan of approval developed through an examination of some sixty institutions of known quality. The new plan proposes to chart the relative position of any institution under consideration in seventy-two percentile scales each of which records the range of variation in some particular of the institutions of higher education on the approved list of the Association. A profile will be prepared, and the balance or lack of balance shown by the profile as a whole will be the basis of approval or rejection.

The study made by the North Central Association of its standards for institutions of higher education has stimulated the secondary-school commissions of the regional associations to initiate a re-examination of the standards now in use in their field of operation. A committee known as the Committee for Co-operative Study of Secondary-School Standards and Accrediting Procedures has been created. The following paragraphs from a report prepared by a member of the staff of the United States Office of Education indicate the way in which this committee was organized.

The first effort in the direction of a co-operative study of standards was suggested by the National Association of Officers of Regional Associations at their fifth annual meeting in Washington, February, 1932. A resolution was adopted that each regional association appoint representatives to meet as a committee for the discussion of a study of secondary-school standards. Subsequently each association was approached by the officers of the National Association; all of them expressed definite interest and willingness to co-operate except the Western Association, from which no reply was received. It was thought wise, however, to delay the promotion of this project until the results of the National Survey of Secondary Education and the study of standards of institutions of higher education in the North Central Association were available.

By the spring of 1933 these two projects were well advanced, and the North Central Association at its session in April of that year authorized the chairman of the Commission on Secondary Schools to appoint the twenty state chairmen as a committee on the study of standards for accrediting secondary schools. From this general committee the chairman appointed a subcommittee of five to act as an executive committee and to be the representatives of the North Central Association to work in co-operation with other regional associations. A
small amount of money was appropriated by the North Central Association for use in getting the study started.

This committee of five and representatives of the Southern Association and the Middle States Association met in Chicago on July 3, 1933, at the time of the National Education Association meetings, to consider the possibility of working together. Dr. George F. Zook, now United States Commissioner of Education, met with this group. Before the day's discussion had closed, it was clear that everyone present felt the need for enlisting the interest and active support of all regional associations of colleges and secondary schools and possibly the help of other agencies. Definite need was felt for making the study on a nation-wide basis. As a next step Commissioner Zook, at the request of the group, agreed to call together at an early date in the Office of Education representatives of all the regional associations. The call was sent out, and the response received to the invitation was immediate and enthusiastic.

A change in federal relations to vocational education.—President Roosevelt, acting under the authority given him by Congress to reorganize the executive departments of the federal government, transferred the Federal Board for Vocational Education from the status of an independent board to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior. Secretary Ickes, in turn, assigned the functions of the Federal Board for Vocational Education to the United States Office of Education. These actions correct one of the most serious inco-ordinations which ever came into American education. In 1917 Congress passed a law which was undoubtedly intended by those who favored the law to divide the educational system of this country into two distinct branches, one concerned with academic education, the other with trade and commercial education. The operation of the law as interpreted by the Federal Board for Vocational Education created serious difficulties in many of the high schools of the United States because it was almost impossible to organize programs of instruction that achieved an effective combination of general education and specialized vocational education.

Fortunately, both the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Education are fully aware of the necessity of developing a rational program of training for industry and commerce. The director of vocational education under the old board has been made a deputy commissioner of education, and harmonious planning of a new program has been inaugurated.