

damage I have done to the boy's personality. The mauling, public as it was, could adversely affect his social attitudes. It could make him hate school forever. I tried to console myself, saying that it served him right for his arrogance. Anyhow, what has been done could not be undone.

I braced myself to face the music.

The day following, I found myself unable to keep my mind on the class activities. I expected the boy's parent to appear anytime. When the school janitor hurried inside to make me read a note, I thought at first that it was a call to the principal's office. But the school hours passed and ended uneventfully. When the class was finally dismissed, I breathed a sigh of relief. I was inclined to forget the incident, when a figure suddenly appeared at the doorway. My nerves jumped. I looked in the direction of the door and instantly recognized the visitor as Rudy's elder brother. His greeting was a little too cordial, I thought. I invited him in, trying to appear casual, in spite of myself.

"My father sent me," the visitor said, "on account of what happened, affecting Rudy."

Now this is it, I thought, preparing for the worst.

"We would like to apologize for Rudy's behavior," he added. "If he commits an offense again, please don't hesitate to 'discipline' him." There was sincerity in his voice.

This abrupt reversal of events was against my wildest expectations. I felt the tension that has gripped me since morning beginning to wear off. We

conversed cordially for a while. Finally he asked to leave.

"Please take my apologies, too, to your father," I called after him. "And tell Rudy to come to school tomorrow."

Rudy came the next day. He was obviously still under the effects of that unfortunate incident. He avoided my eyes, and was silent almost all the time. But the chip was off his shoulders.

I tackled the job of rehabilitating the boy. I owed it to myself, to the boy, and to the profession, to regain his confidence. I did not wish, however, to appear apologetic. I considered that unethical. I decided to approach the matter from another angle. I reorganized the groups and managed to have Rudy elected a group leader. In the ensuing days, we held brief sessions in the room to hear reports on absences, pupil behavior, and others. I granted the leaders the privilege of rating individual group members on the basis of their contribution to the group's work. The responsibility began to take effect on Rudy. Soon he was again talking to me. Slowly but surely, the wall of antagonism and insolence about him broke down, giving way to a new personality—that of an active, energetic leader, willing to assume responsibilities.

Nowadays, when I chance to think of that mauling incident, I cannot help wondering at the quirks that life allows to happen. Corporal punishment may be inadvisable, but it did not prove so in this particular case. It even, I might say, helped straighten out things. Yet I would not advise corporal punishment. Time may not be so benevolent as it was in that case.

# The Past Is Prologue<sup>1</sup>

By William G. Carr<sup>\*</sup>

**A**LL this week we have paid homage to the achievements of a hundred years. Now, in this closing session, let us turn our thoughts to the future. What is past is prologue.

To look back is relatively easy. There is safety in the visible record of history. But prophesy is risky. Indeed, the late Christopher Morley remarked that the prophets were twice stoned, — once in anger; then by means of handsome granite slabs in the graveyard.

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How far ahead shall we look tonight? A century? That is a good round figure. The only trouble is that after such an interval none of us will be on hand to offer or to endure reproach for the inaccuracies of our forecasts. Besides, in today's fast-changing world, to look ahead a hundred years is an exercise more of fancy than of reason. Let us then be content with a shorter view, — say twenty years. This is long enough to give us perspective and short enough to allow most of us (with good fortune) to be on hand for the check-up.

What kind of a world will the 120th annual Delegate Assembly of the NEA encounter? In 1857 the

trans-Atlantic Cable was being laid to link the two great land masses of the earth. It is a striking fact that in 1957, just a century later, man is preparing to link the earth with the other planets. Whether, in the next twenty years, the earth satellite will lead to interplanetary travel is doubtful; if it does, the credentials of delegates wearing space helmets will be very carefully examined.

Here on earth, at any rate, there will be a vast increase in the amount and speed of travel. The achievements of science in these and other areas will continue to increase in geometric ratio. Automation and other new technics in agriculture and industry will immensely increase both productivity and leisure. Some experts predict that national income will double in less than twenty years. In medicine we shall see new remedies, or at least improved preventives, for such diseases as cancer and arthritis. Just as dietary discoveries have fortified our bones, nutritional research may in the future find how to accelerate mental activity, or to remove the grosser forms of mental retardation, and thus make learning more rapid and agreeable. Although medical practice will not become so expert as to prolong human life indefinitely, perhaps we shall achieve enough wisdom to see that this would be undesirable as well as impossible.

What about the social and political arrangements of 1977? They will certainly be different in many ways but I do not think they will change as dramatically as the physical environment. A craving for freedom and personal dignity seems to be a permanent trait of human nature. Many tyrants in the past have tried by terror and propaganda to extinguish that spark. History is a record of their failures. So I believe the current despotisms, great and small, will not endure forever although new tyrannies, perhaps in areas least expected, may be attempted.

All such forecasts nowadays must make two assumptions — first no major war and second no substantial danger in the by-products of nuclear energy. If the few who expect an inter-continental war are right, or if the larger number who affirm a real danger from atomic fall-out are right, then all bets are off. In any case, we can expect a wearing and wearying tension to continue with respect to both these dangers.

Now let us consider American education in these coming twenty years. Let us begin at the beginning. Children will still be born illiterate and self-centered. They may in the years ahead learn more and faster, but each new generation will constitute in effect a fresh invasion of barbarians. Their parents will still regard them with a mixture of pride, awe, and amazement. Their teachers will still greet them with a wary and affectionate skepticism. Youth will still

be lovable and perplexing, demanding, inspiring and aggravating. They will still be all of America, — all of its undeveloped resources, all of its hopes for the future. Their names will be Smith and Jones, McGregor and Wong, O'Collins and Gonzalez, Dombrowski and Polyzoides. Their daily lessons will give proof of budding genius, of stalwart mediocrity, of limited horizons. They will come to school smelling like fresh-cut grass, dried angleworms, peanut butter sandwiches, strong soap, the absence of strong soap, bubble gum, sneakers, honeysuckle, onions, and (at more advanced ages) of mother's Chanel, dad's shaving cream, the occasional surreptitious cigarette, and the all-obliterating clove. They will be shy or boisterous and sometimes both at once. They will come from homes torn by dissension, racked by disease, stained by crime, as well as from homes of harmony, health, and civic virtue. They will adore their teachers and be angry with them, scoff at them and secretly imitate them.

No, the children will not change, but in the next twenty years there will be in American education one many-sided change. Its outstanding characteristic may be summarized in one word: Quality, —as a subtle but very important new emphasis on **quality**.

To be sure the next twenty years will also witness great increases in the **quantity** of education provided. The children are already in the elementary school in unprecedented numbers. The current birth rate proves that many more are coming. We should be grateful to the fathers and mothers of America without whose continued cooperation the teaching profession would no longer be needed. The rising tide in the secondary schools will be augmented by general prosperity. High school graduation will soon be an almost universal requirement for employment. In the colleges, the same two forces, —increasing population and increasing prosperity, —will certainly send enrollments upward. One recent estimate puts twelve million people in college by 1977.

But, even granting the problems which mounting enrollments present, I still say that our frontier for the next twenty years is quality. Basically, in our first century, the battle of quantity has been won. There are many skirmishes and rear-guard actions still to come, but the principle of extensive and universal education is firmly established.

As quantity was the primary goal for the first century, so will quality be our chief aim for the second. We have been concerned that every child get into school. Now we must ask how much each child gets out of school. Nearly all now are in school, —not in schools with small classes, full-day sessions, modern equipment, and a well-prepared career teacher, —but still in school. While we continue to defend that achievement, we shall also accept and demonstrate

an intensified concern for the excellence of the instruction provided.

To achieve excellence, many change in organization, curriculum, and methods will occur. Let me name a few of them.

First, the most urgent change for the immediate future is more time for teachers to help individual children. Quality in education requires above all else smaller classes and more classrooms. Crowded schools and half-day sessions today increase the nervous tensions of teachers and students, aggravate discipline problems; lower the standard of achievement, limit the adaptation of instruction to individual differences, and, to complete the vicious circle, hamper the recruitment of needed additional teachers. These conditions must and will be remedied in the next twenty years, not that teachers may lead an easy life, but rather that teachers may devote their energies more fully to their most essential tasks.

Perhaps it might help if we placed on all our school buildings signs reading like this:

"Jones Junior High School, constructed in 1935 to house 1400 students; current enrollment 2102."

Perhaps we should put on each classroom door a sign that would say:

"Grade III; teacher in charge —Mrs. Mary Doe; national standard of maximum class size —30; current enrollment —46; welcome, —enter edgewise."

I do not believe the general public has any adequate notion of the working conditions faced daily by millions of teachers and students, or of the way in which these conditions limit or deny the achievement of high quality education. Improvement of quality in this respect will be one of the major educational changes over the next twenty years.

Second, our search for quality in education must face the current proposals for adjusting salaries in accordance with some estimate of the quality of service rendered by each teacher. The advocates of merit rating have a plausible case. It should be evaluated by the profession with great wisdom and complete candor.

What shall we say to those who want so-called merit schedules? I think we should say something like this:

We teachers, too, want excellence and we want to reward excellence. We want an excellent teacher for every child, — not for just a few children. We think the way to achieve that is to begin with excellence in preparation and selection of all teachers. But we can't begin at the beginning until the salaries offered will attract and hold excellence. When we get salaries that will recruit the best available people, then and only then will it make sense to seek ways to give

further recognition for superior performance. Meanwhile, we shall keep an open mind regarding the discovery of practical methods to identify superior service. But we cannot compromise our goal of much higher standards for all children in favor of slightly higher standards for a few.

Third, the schools will in many ways modify what they teach and how they teach it. Some of these improvements will occur through wider application of effective methods already available and of sound knowledge already established. We shall continue to achieve greater skill, for example, in teaching the fundamentals and in preparing for useful employment. I can not predict that American education will "return to the fundamentals" for, of course, it has never left them. We can, however, say that in this important area, the steady progress of recent years will be maintained and, wherever possible, accelerated. Here, although the gains in quality in any single year, may be relatively small, over a period of twenty years they will be substantial.

A fourth aspect of quality in education during the next twenty years will be a great enrichment in all the arts, in music, in literature, in those occupations of mankind which we broadly call cultural. Since 1900 the average life span has increased by twenty years while the average work week has decreased by twenty hours. These trends will continue. Abundant leisure and a long life are no longer the lot of a fortunate few. They will be commonplace. Will these added years, these new hours of freedom from toil be spent to any real advantage? Will they be used to refine life or to cheapen it? In the coming years the schools will respond to these questions by a new emphasis on the pursuit of happiness. And by happiness, I do not mean merely the alternation of benumbed idleness with sensory excitements. I mean that self-realization which come from a purposeful and abundant life. To this end, the schools will give new attention to the stimulation of curiosity. They will never be finishing schools; they will always be beginning schools; their chief aim will not be to complete an education but to commence one, to launch young people upon a career of life-long learning. Constructive recreation and adult education will flourish. We shall think and speak less of the business of living and more of the art of living. Young children first come to schools, as a rule, eagerly responsive to beauty in color, form, design, rhythm, and harmony. In the next twenty years the schools will see that this responsiveness is nurtured, heightened, and refined.

Fifth, we shall see in the next twenty years a great improvement in the use of modern teaching materials. Books, pictures, exhibits, models, recordings, motion pictures, radio, and television, as well as other tools and devices now undiscovered or undeveloped, will be

considered just as necessary items of classroom equipment as pencil and paper, chalk and blackboard are today. Before that happens, however, we shall rid ourselves completely of the idea that the newer aids to teaching and learning will somehow solve the basic problems of education. By 1977 we shall understand that the new tools have little value except as they are wisely used by skilled teachers. It is safe to predict also that in such important and difficult fields science, mathematics and foreign languages the new tools will be found especially helpful. Having effectively disposed of the beguiling fallacy that some gadget can put high-quality education on a cheap and painless mass production basis, good teachers will be able to use the new tools with greater effectiveness.

Sixth, our schools will turn with renewed diligence and skill to the task of preparing for citizenship in the world of today and tomorrow. We shall realize, as the next few years pass, that it is not sufficient to take all the tricks in the diplomatic card game, or to win the race for inter-continental missiles, or to train more engineers than Russia if, in so doing, we fail to teach by precept and example the skills and duties of responsible citizenship. The security of our country involves much more than defending a piece of valuable real estate, complete with buildings and servants. We are engaged in the perpetual struggle for those commanding ideals that are at once more enduring and more delicate than any material things. In the next twenty years, the front line of that struggle will run through every classroom in America.

This emphasis on citizenship will be enhanced not only by the long sought requirements of the American ideal but also by the nature of the crisis in human affairs. One shrinks a little from uttering the word "crisis." I know that every generation has believed that it lives in such an age. But this time, surely, it is desperately true. Today for the first time there exists a force that can in a few hours destroy all the accumulated wealth in homes, factories and markets, all the delights of music and the arts, perhaps all of human life on this planet. Everything we cherish is subject to annihilation beyond repair, beyond replacement, even beyond remembrance. To deal with this ultimate dilemma, we need to learn and to teach a new breadth of vision, an ability to listen with humility and to speak with courage, a freedom from prejudice in all its ugly manifestations. For such purposes a minimum education simply will not do. Only the best possible education can confront the dangers and merit the opportunities of the future.

What is needed to make these and other imperative improvements in the quality of education? Better buildings and equipment? Such capital investments require money. Plenty of modern teaching ma-

terials? They do not cost very much money, but they cost more than most schools can spend right now. Answers to problems in school organization and instruction? We can get answers through educational research. And that costs money. Competent, experienced, well-prepared teachers and school administrators? Their services cost money on a scale that can compete for talent with other occupations. Smaller classes, more individual guidance, and more special classes to meet unusual needs? These require, as I have said, more teachers and more money.

The high quality education that Americans need and will get in the next twenty years can not be bought in the bargain basement.

Money is not the only necessity for better quality in education, but it is the first necessity. We could make rapid and substantial improvements in the quality of our schools right now if we had the financial resources to do as well as we already know how to do.

The Committee of the White House Conference on Education, early in 1956, said that expenditures for education should be doubled. As a practical matter, can the local tax rate upon homes, factories, and farms be doubled? Can all state income taxes and all state sales taxes be doubled?

Let us recall this much of our history: We began in this country with schools supported by local taxation. In the past half-century these local revenues have been augmented by state taxes which reach sources of wealth and income that are denied, for all practical purposes, to the localities. Substantial state support for education was not easily won. In many ways minority views of today about federal support for education parallel the fanatical addresses of yesterday, holding that the republic would rock on its foundations if the states should share in this so-called local responsibility. Now that policy has been thrust aside. It was thrust aside by the organized leadership of school people and of farsighted citizens. It was thrust aside by the requirements of the democratic ideal. It was thrust aside by the changing economic circumstances which made it necessary to broaden the area over which taxes were collected. The same trends today are operating upon a national stage.

National participation in meeting the cost of public education is as inevitable as the succession of the seasons. As the past fifty years have seen nearly all of the states accept a substantial measure of responsibility for financing education, so the next twenty years will surely extend that principle, not only within each of the forty-eight states but also to the entire nation collectively.

We have a very good case for properly financing high-quality education. That case rests, first, on

high ideals, —the stubborn conviction that every human being should have a fair chance through a high quality of education to develop to the full whatever capacities he may possess.

Our case rests also on economic realities. A few years ago, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce eloquently demonstrated that what a nation spends for its schools is truly an investment in people. Today, that great organization has apparently forgotten that truth and, in the midst of unparalleled prosperity, is leading a dogged and desperate campaign to persuade both political parties to break the platform pledges, to repudiate the President, and to deny less than half of one percent out of a \$70 billion national budget to help build some badly needed schools.

Education is still an investment in people. I doubt very much whether American businessmen really believe that better schools can be or should be financed entirely by higher state and local taxes. I feel sure, however, that we do face some short-run trouble from the current indiscriminate campaign against public expenditure of any and every kind. I am equally sure that we can and will meet this propaganda successfully. We have no one on our side except the majority of the American people. They will not long be hoodwinked by the preposterous notion that the proper financing of education would shatter the American economy.

In addition to the appeals of ethics and economics, the total case for better education has a third component. Since our government relies on popular opinion, popular opinion must be enlightened and not merely by a literacy which permits superficial acquaintance with the headlines of each passing day. Enlightenment includes habits of systematic thought, backgrounds of geography, of history, of science, of art, of arithmetic, of reading which give depth and significance to the decisions that every voter makes as he uses or neglects his franchise. Our system of government can operate properly only with universal and excellent educational opportunity. To deny that is deeply subversive of the American form of government.

Of course, hardly anyone ever comes out openly and explicitly against adequate expenditures on education. It is always a case of let's think about it longer, or why is there so much waste in education, or why don't the schools teach something other than what they are teaching, or is the discipline too difficult or too easy, or are we sure we really need to make this expenditure, or can we get by one more year, or let's do it next year or the year after, or let someone else do it, or is something else more urgent at the moment?

Such are the diversions we shall encounter as we move in the next twenty years to secure quality and equality in educational opportunity.

But the American people have been through all this before. They have always ultimately seen through whatever razzle-dazzle of opposition was thrown in the way of improving the schools which the public owns and our profession serves. They will do it again.

To enlist and inform such public support is, in my judgment, a duty of the organized profession which is second only to the duty of providing instruction. In the next twenty years, our local, state, and national organizations will be working very hard on that job. We can show the public that new levels and new solutions for the financing of better schools are imperatively demanded by new conditions and readily permitted by new levels of national productivity. Only a massive effort to advance the level of school support in the states, in the localities and in the nation can possibly meet the accumulated educational shortages from the past and put education of high excellence within the reach of every young American today.

Time is one seamless fabric. The pattern woven by the loom of history, if pattern there be, is so vast and complicated that we can never be sure whether it is repeating itself or beginning some unforeseen variation. Minutes and years and centuries are merely convenient human inventions. The clock ticks and the leaves of the calendar flutter aside, but they do not cut the pattern, —they can not halt the loom. The shape of things to come is determined not only by the past but also by every action or failure to act in the present.

The title of these remarks, as you all know, is taken from a line in *The Tempest*. The full text of Shakespeare's passage goes like this:

“What's past is prologue;

What's to come, is your and my discharge.”

The future I have tried to forecast is not inevitable. It is only possible. What happens in the next twenty years will depend on what each of us does to discharge his responsibilities in the next twenty days and twenty months. If the National Education Association of the United States remains strong and united we can provide that improved quality of education which the people of our country and of the world need, for freedom, for prosperity, for happiness, —yes, even for survival.

When this convention ends in a few minutes, it will not merely put a period at the end of a long and thrilling paragraph. It will also put a big capital letter at the beginning of the next chapter. This end-of-a-century moment is a “breather,” a chance to get our second wind, as a climber part way up the mountain glances back for a moment over the paths below, and then turns with courage and joy to assail to peaks still unconquered.