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## ANNUAL CONVENTION OF DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS.

THE eleventh annual convention of the division superintendents of schools was opened in the auditorium of the Philippine Normal School, Manila, on the morning of January 27, 1913, and was in session each morning to February 1. These conventions have been a source of much inspiration each year. They have offered an excellent opportunity for the Directors and the General Office to get into closer touch with the problems of the field and to adopt such measures as may be of assistance to those who have these problems to meet. The annual convention is, as it were, a clearing house, to which every man comes with his story of work done, difficulties encountered, and lessons learned by association with parents and pupils; where every man has an opportunity to help or to be helped; where the spirit of coöperation which has been so characteristic of the work of the public schools of the Philippines finds its highest expression and its most striking manifestation. It is at the annual convention that the young superintendent has an opportunity to hear from those who have had long years of experience the manner in which problems, not unlike those with which he has been confronted, have been solved and the means whereby difficulties not unlike his have been surmounted or removed.

The annual convention is in a large measure an experience meeting, but it is more than this. It gives an opportunity for constructive criticism on policies that have been adopted or methods that have been in vogue. It gives an opportunity to the man, who is a leader, to offer his original suggestions and have them discussed in a friendly, helpful manner. Through the recommendations of its committees it brings all of the best of such suggestions together in terse form to be adopted or rejected. Probably no other single feature of educational work has done more to bring about and maintain harmony of purpose and method, or to elevate to a uniformly high standard in every line, the achievements of the Bureau of Education, than has the annual convention of division superintendents.

Prior to the adoption of the custom of conducting an annual sales exhibit at Manila, some of these conventions were held at Baguio in connection with the Teachers' Vacation Assembly. During the last three years the conventions have been held at

Manila and have assembled either just before or during the yearly industrial exhibition of the Bureau of Education. This has given superintendents a favorable occasion for a study of the work of their schools in comparison with that of every other school division, and has made possible the discussion of industrial plans and methods and policies in a manner more practical than could have been possible otherwise. Due to this fact in large measure and to the emphasis which has recently been placed upon industrial instruction in the public schools, the annual convention of division superintendents this year, as in previous years, has devoted much of its time to a discussion of the various features of industrial education.

While the main discussion of industrial instruction was in connection with the report of the committee to which this topic had been assigned, yet this subject is so closely related with every phase of school work that it found its place in the recommendations of practically every committee. Much that will be helpful was presented. In the main it was found that industrial education has made healthy progress during the present school year. Provinces, in which the work left much to be desired a year ago, are now producing articles of a high standard of workmanship in practically all schools. The general plans adopted some three years ago for the promotion of industrial instruction in the public schools and for standardization in workmanship, design, and materials have been found helpful and productive of uniformly good results, so that at this convention it seemed to be the consensus of opinion that industrial work was rapidly assuming a more businesslike character and that no doubt could reasonably be entertained of the ultimate success of the present program.

Of the resolutions adopted by the convention several are worthy of special note. Among these may be mentioned the prevailing desire to place industrial instruction in both primary and intermediate schools upon a sound business basis. "Industrial instruction should be self-supporting." Pupils are to be taught not only deftness and agility, they are also to learn the practices of the business world. Simple accounting for municipal industrial operations along the lines followed in trade schools and shops, involving the distribution and investment of earnings, is to be a part of the industrial instruction offered in the public schools. Time was not available for the full discussion of such a system of accounting, but it was recommended that a standing committee of division superintendents

be appointed to make definite recommendations to the next convention.

It has been demonstrated that Filipino industrial teachers, acting as traveling instructors, are a great help in perfecting the workmanship in both basketry and needlework, and the custom of assigning teachers as traveling instructors or division industrial supervisors was commended. Such teachers can be of the greatest assistance in bringing to a high standard of excellence the work of the lower grades of the primary schools. The work of an entire school division can be improved to a considerable degree in a few months by an energetic and competent industrial instructor who, with a small collection of finished articles of a superior grade and pertinent literature, travels from town to town, suggesting and helping wherever suggestions or help may be needed. The work of such a traveling instructor, supplemented by an annual division institute and an occasional vacation assembly, is perhaps one of the most effective means for promoting a high grade of industrial instruction.

The recommendation that may have the most far reaching influence is that which has to do with vocational high schools. The convention was practically unanimous in its belief that a two year vocational course in connection with every high school was advisable. The high school is not merely to serve as a preparatory school for those students who desire to enter the university. Its chief purpose must always be to prepare the students for the life work that awaits them. The percentage of high-school students enrolled in the first two years seems to indicate that the great majority of these find it impossible to spend more than two years in the high school. It is with these students in mind that the two-year vocational courses are suggested. In addition to extending the industrial work of the intermediate grades into the secondary course, it was suggested that a course for the training of teachers be outlined to cover the first two years of the high school. It was the belief of the convention that such a plan would tend to supply teachers of a high degree of efficiency not only in industrial lines but in academic subjects as well.

The further establishment of farm schools was highly commended. It is felt, however, that until the field of agricultural science in the Tropics has been more fully explored, the greatest of caution will have to be exercised in the administration of such schools. Gardening in the primary schools has been successfully undertaken and it is suggested that farm schools at

first confine work to the cultivation of such vegetables and fruits as can be successfully cultivated, and to a few experiments for the purpose of gradually extending this limited field of activity.

The need of more definite information as to the real commercial value of the handicrafts which the schools are introducing was discussed. The convention expressed its approval of the efforts already made along this line and suggested that they be continued. The Sales Agent addressed the convention on this topic and his remarks were very encouraging. There is no doubt that the Philippines is, in many ways, a country in which handicrafts and household industries will prove a great source of wealth. It is evident, however, that before a further effort is made to introduce any industry or craft, it must be ascertained whether the output will find a market and whether those engaging in the craft will be able to do so profitably to themselves as well as to the community in which they live. It was suggested that the field be thoroughly canvassed in order to obtain such information upon these two points as might be of use to those outlining courses in industrial instruction.

This eleventh convention has been a source of inspiration to the directing force as well as to the division superintendents. All are nearer to a mastery of the school situation in its many phases than they were prior to the convention, and that the convention will be fruitful in better and larger achievements in industrial as well as in academic lines seems to be assured.—W. F. M.

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Idleness is emptiness; the tree in which the sap is stagnant, remains fruitless.—HOSEA BALLOU.

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Plain clothes soiled by labor adorn, while fine clothes unearned disfigure the wearer.—*Selected.*

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The Department of Education of the Government of Guam is giving special attention to industrial instruction and the plan which is followed is that of apprenticing young men who are desirous of learning a trade for a period of four years in government work. They are given a small wage which is increased in accordance with their proficiency and aptitude. Each apprentice is under the direct supervision of competent foremen and is allowed to choose from the following trades: Blacksmithing, painting, plumbing, carpentry, and mechanics.

Very gratifying results are reported.