

Loudoun's School System

By Supt. O. L. Emerick

The public school system of Loudoun County is a vast business enterprise having for its purpose the training annually of about 5000 children of ages ranging from 6 to 20. It is the aim of our schools to so train these children that they will be better able to enjoy the richness of life and also that they will be prepared to be of the highest service to their fellow beings. Our schools are concerned not only about the mental growth of the children but it is also much desired that they attain as nearly as possible to moral and physical perfection.

This great business enterprise employs 165 teachers and numerous janitors for its 84 school buildings. It is directed and managed by a superintendent and 21 district school trustees who form 7 district and one county school board. Class-room supervision is done mostly by 2 rural school supervisors, 11 high school principals, and 4 elementary school principals. These principals also teach in their schools.

Our teachers are earnest, hard-working, professional experts. Nearly all of them hold first grade or higher certificates, many are college or normal school graduates, and nearly all have had some special training for their work. They are almost with one accord inspired artisans, in love with their children and sympathetic with them in their life's ambitions, both loyal to authority and to the interest and welfare of the children they teach. Without this expertness, this inspiration, and this loyalty of our teachers

our schools would be as nothing, with them the schools at once are the true foundation of our democracy, a source of pride for our elders and a credit to a prosperous county.

The last generation has been a period of marked change and improvement in our schools. Then only two or three communities in the county had schools with more than two teachers. Now there are 10 communities that have 6 or more teachers, all of them enjoying the advantages of ~~x~~ four-year ~~x~~ high schools. Our high schools are, in fact, so located in this county that there are very few families ~~x~~ from which children can not reach a high school daily. Thus there has been set up in Loudoun County a higher grade of education within reach and within the means of nearly all children, a grade of education to secure which parents were sending their boys and girls away to so-called "colleges" a generation ago.

Old, dilapidated, ill-kept school houses in Loudoun are now almost just abandoned relics of our past. Our school boards have come to the realization that the high school wave did actually cause neglect of the smaller schools and as rapidly as possible the old small school buildings are being repaired, remodelled, or replaced by new structures and in these improvements it is being recognized by all that the small country school is entitled to the same building standards as the large town high school.

Our public schools have annually a net expenditure of about \$160,000. Three-fourths of this amount is spent for the pay of teachers. The other fourth is used to provide the proper direction of the teachers and the proper physical facilities for the comfort and convenience of the children and teachers. The

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finances have been managed for 5 years on the budget basis.

In recognition of the fact that the child's health demands attention and consideration along with his mind this county was one of the first in Virginia to have a county-wide medical inspection of all school children by a physician and it was the very first county in Virginia to employ a school nurse. It is a great credit to a small band of our public spirited citizens who have labored so hard in this worthy cause that ~~xxxx~~ throughout a period of 7 or 8 years we have always had a school nurse at work even though for many years the project was financed without any help from public funds and was never financed entirely from public funds.

The State Department of Public Instruction at Richmond has adopted a scheme for rating the efficiency of the county school systems. Loudoun enjoys the distinction of standing fourth among the one hundred counties of Virginia and further of being excelled by no other strictly rural county.

Back of the official organization, back of the teachers themselves in their work, there stands a wonderful and powerful organization known as the Community League or Parent-Teachers' Association. The Community League works for other community improvements but it centers around the school, is promoted chiefly by the school, and hence the school lays claim to it. This organization has studied the needs of Loudoun's individual schools and it has been the most effective means of developing improvements in them. During the present year all except 5 or 6 white schools of the county have had live community leagues which have raised for

school improvements over \$6000. Last fall our community leagues in competition with those of the other counties of Virginia won a first prize for the best work done during the preceding twelve months.

While we have cause for pride in our achievements of the past and in our present condition or state of efficiency, our faces are turned toward the rising sun to discover by its early morning light some means of excelling our own best. We confidently look forward now for better things and our energies are being directed to the end that there might be provided still better facilities for the education of our children, our most valued and most precious asset.