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PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS
AT WORK

By

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JUNIOR SPECIALIST IN HOME EDUCATION

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CHAPTER XV

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INTRODUCTION

Need of cooperative action for the benefit of the children is at the root of the movement to organize teachers and school patrons into working units as auxiliaries to the schools. For many years parents have turned their children over to the school with little thought of whether the children were physically fit for school life; with little attention to the question of habit-forming during preschool years, and perhaps in many cases with a sigh of relief that with the children's entrance into school the responsibility for matters of morals, manners, and habits were to be placed in the hands of the teachers.

Originally, organizations of parents approached the schools with the desire to do something to benefit them; that is, to improve physical conditions and to offer new opportunities by furnishing equipment for playgrounds, hot lunches, and school equipment usually furnished by the use of school funds but which for one reason or another were not available. All of this was good, and produced results of great value. Material assistance is still necessary in some States because of the existing conditions, and these auxiliaries to the schools continue to supplement inadequate appropriations.

But the sentiment is growing that parents may make their best contribution to the schools by training their children during the preschool period, so that when they enter school they will be physically fit, mentally alert, and morally upright. Parents are already beginning to take back into the home some of the responsibilities which, in the past, they willingly surrendered to the schools.

The parent-teacher associations have emphasized the necessity of an educated parenthood, and to accomplish this they have organized within the associations small groups for the study of child problems. These groups are called mothers' study circles, preschool

study circles, reading circles, etc. The work of these circles is in harmony with the original purposes for which the National Congress of Mothers was formed in 1897. The incorporation of the parent-teacher association in the organization of the National Congress of Mothers took place when mothers discovered that they could do their work better by close association with the teachers, and the further inclusion of fathers as parents interested in the welfare of their children brought about finally another change of name for this organization to include fathers and mothers as well as teachers, when it became the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1924.

During the biennium of 1922-1924 new and important levels have been reached, according to reports, in parent-teacher associations in respect to growth, stability of organization, efficiency in methods, responsibility in leadership, and practical results obtained. The gradual molding of many small groups of school patrons into an efficient machine capable of giving effective service to a nation is a task requiring patience, and one that will hardly be accomplished in a decade of efficient management; but this is the goal set by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

In 1923 this organization set for itself a program which included an all-the-year-round parenthood; an effort to bring the things of the home back to the home; educating the membership and interpreting the value of education to the American people. This program has formed the foundation of the work of not only the National but of State and local parent-teacher associations.

Several types of auxiliaries to the public schools have appeared from time to time, emphasizing some of the needs of the schools. The names of these organizations have been varied, but their purposes have been more or less common. They are sometimes called home and school associations or parents' leagues, or school improvement associations or leagues, or parent-teacher associations. The parent-teacher associations, however, have reached the stage of development into a state-wide and national movement reaching every State and with the exception of the State of Nevada organized into a national group of considerable size. Nebraska, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Louisiana associations were formed into State organizations during the past two years.

Other state-wide movements, however, of some importance have developed to meet school needs, such as school improvement associations which in the past accomplished excellent results for the schools of the Southern States and still function in Alabama, Arkansas, Maine, and South Carolina. Another example of state-wide organization of school patrons is to be found in the community leagues of

Virginia. Here and there, city-wide federations of parents or school patrons have supported the interests of the schools. The best examples of these are found in the home and school leagues of Boston and Philadelphia, the parents' league of Washington, D. C., and the Salt Lake City (Utah) home and school leagues.

TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP IN PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

One of the most difficult problems facing the parent-teacher movement has been that of securing persons who were willing and prepared to lead either locally or in the States. There were no courses on parent-teacher associations in any of the educational institutions until 1922, when Columbia University offered its first course. In 1923 and 1924 this university began to offer credit courses in its summer sessions. This was reported to have been made possible in each case by the cooperation of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. In 1924 a credit course was offered in the summer session of the University of Georgia for workers in parent-teacher associations. These courses were attended by superintendents of schools, principals, teachers, and parents who studied the problems of organization and development of these groups of parents and teachers. Radcliffe College offered a course, in 1922 and 1923, in the beginning course in education in which there was a treatment of the purposes and activities of parent-teacher associations. Students in this course were required to study and report upon their own communities in Massachusetts.

The demand for trained instructors to give courses in educational institutions was and continues to be greater than the supply, but in spite of this many institutions inaugurated lectures, courses, or institutes during 1924 to develop leadership in these organizations. The following is an incomplete list of the institutions giving such courses during 1924 in some form or other: University of California (southern branch); University of Delaware; George Washington University, District of Columbia; University of Georgia; Indiana University, Biological Station, Winona Lake, and Fort Wayne Extension Center, Indiana; Chicago (Ill.) Normal College; State Normal School, Maryland; Boston University; Radcliffe College; Hyannis, Fitchburg, and North Adams (Mass.) normal schools; Central and Northern State Normal Schools and Ypsilanti State Normal College, Michigan; University of Minnesota and five Minnesota teachers' colleges; University of Missouri; State Teachers College, Nebraska; Newark, Ocean City, and Glassboro State Normal Schools, New Jersey; Columbia University; Bowling Green Normal College and Ohio State University; University of Oregon; Winthrop College, South Carolina; East Ten-

nessee and West Tennessee Normal Schools, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute and University of Tennessee; University of Texas and the seven teachers' colleges of Texas; four State normal schools of Virginia.

FINANCIAL WORK OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

Parent-teacher associations take the stand generally that equipment for public schools should be provided by public funds. But these same organizations have met emergencies rather than to deprive their children of the necessary and proper means of securing an education.

The almost universal attempt at retrenchment in the use of public funds for educational purposes during the past five years has made it necessary for parent-teacher associations and other similar organizations to assume many financial burdens. The total amount raised and expended by these organizations has reached considerable proportions.

Finance committees devise ways and means of raising funds. In a thoroughly organized State like California, the finance chairman reports to the federation chairman, who reports to the district chairman, who in turn compiles the report and submits it to the State chairman on finance. Even in this State complete financial statements are not available, but 12 out of 15 districts reported that they raised and spent, during 1924, \$160,000. This amount financed various projects, including nutrition, scholarships, and school equipment and play equipment. Three types of organizations, local, State, and National, present three kinds of financing. Membership dues for the national organization are 5 cents per capita for members in each local organization; the State organizations receive a like amount. Local organizations may tax themselves for any amount, and there is a wide range in the amounts which they actually raise. Besides the per capita dues, the national organization of parents and teachers receives the income of a small endowment fund, from loan papers, from bequests, from the annual child welfare day contributions, and from life memberships.

Funds for local parent-teacher associations are raised by numberless methods apart from the per capita dues—by salvage shops, bazaars, county fairs, moving-picture shows, food sales, fathers' dinners, carnivals, teas, plays, candy sales, dances, card parties, penny drives, minstrel shows, etc.

From the incomplete report of parent-teacher associations of Georgia, it appears that more than \$120,000 has been raised and expended by the parent-teacher association for school and association libraries, school lunches, family service work, scholarships,

school and athletic equipment, medical inspection and clinics, scholarship loan funds, and other purposes.

In another Southern State, Mississippi, the parent-teacher associations are reported to have contributed during 1923-24 a total of over \$66,000 for health programs, school and play-ground equipment, libraries, hookworm tests, student loan funds, free lunches to needy children, and aiding school authorities in enforcing the attendance law.

In Delaware the organization is financed by the per capita dues, but it is promoted also by the Service Citizens of Delaware. During 1923-24 nearly \$18,500 was expended by the Service Citizens on the parent-teacher associations.

In Virginia, two organizations serve the public schools, the Community League of Virginia and the State parent-teacher association. The community league, with a reported membership in 1924 of 37,107, is financed by State funds, a community fund, the Laura Spelman Foundation, subscribers, the Virginia Tuberculosis Association, the Carnegie Foundation, and local league dues. The budget of the Virginia community leagues for a year is \$26,625. Local leagues report that they raised \$165,125 during 1924.

SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATIONS AND STUDENT LOAN FUNDS

Loan funds, under several titles, have been promoted by a committee of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which does not furnish funds but promotes the idea throughout the States, acting as clearing house for information on methods of procedure.

In a number of States student loan funds or scholarship foundations have been the means of keeping children in school who could not be maintained by their parents. Many children are kept in the grammar grades or the high school, and a few are sent to college or teacher training schools. In some organizations the children are required to give a note for the loan; in others no pledge is required, but it is expected that the loan will be paid back as soon as the student begins to earn.

The California parent-teacher associations have conducted this work since 1923. The Kansas City (Mo.) council of parent-teacher associations has established a scholarship foundation which is financed by gifts from circles and by private contributions and by one-fourth of the income of the council.

Twenty-three children were enabled to remain in school during 1924 by the student loan fund of the Louisville (Ky.) Parent-Teacher League. In addition to the scholarships, this organization provided car fare to 38 children. Its budget for the year amounted to upwards of \$14,000.

Texas parent-teacher associations have accumulated a student loan fund of \$10,000, which is handled entirely by local clubs.

The movement in Oregon for student loan funds was started in 1923. Tennessee State and local organizations have assisted at least 45 students in the university, State normal schools, high schools, and business colleges.

Michigan parent-teacher associations inaugurated a student loan fund in 1923, which provides mothers with the same amount of money that a girl or boy would earn if taken out of school and put to work. Local organizations raise the funds, and the distribution is made by superintendents of schools, county commissioners, or other county officials.

State organizations of parent-teacher associations in New Jersey, Indiana, and Colorado also provide scholarship funds. In Ohio the student loan committee recommends that parent-teacher associations work through the Harmon Foundation for at least a year.

PARENT-TEACHER MOVEMENT IN STATES

Results of an inquiry instituted by the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association and the Massachusetts State department of education have been made public. It appears that 113 towns, out of 316, reported one or more associations each and a total of 273 associations throughout the State; 140 of them are affiliated with the State and National organizations. Thirty-seven towns reported organizations of somewhat similar character, called mothers' clubs, community clubs, etc. One hundred and twelve union superintendents consider the parent-teacher association a vital factor in promoting closer relationship between the school and the home; 28 replied favorably with qualifications, and 20 superintendents have not found that results have been produced; 82 superintendents depend upon these organizations to support programs for educational improvement.

The State organization of Michigan was effected in 1918, and it stood third in size of membership in 1924, when it was reported that 161 cities and towns and 97 rural communities have 521 associations, with a membership of 40,000.

The Ohio Parent-Teacher organization made a gain of 11,000 members during 1923-24, which gives to Ohio the fourth place in size. This increase is reported to be due to membership drives.

Unprecedented growth is reported in Minnesota, whose membership increased 267 per cent in one year; and in West Virginia, with a reported increase of 255 per cent in the same year. Both of these State organizations came into being in 1923. In 1923-24 Illinois showed a gain of 98 per cent in membership.

Membership of State parent-teacher associations, 1924

1. California.....	79,808	27. Wisconsin.....	8,920
2. Illinois.....	51,007	28. Alabama.....	8,293
3. Michigan.....	40,567	29. South Dakota.....	5,034
4. Ohio.....	40,027	30. Nebraska.....	4,874
5. Missouri.....	34,239	31. Rhode Island.....	4,787
6. Washington.....	32,158	32. Idaho.....	3,846
7. Texas.....	30,608	33. Vermont.....	3,824
8. New Jersey.....	29,114	34. Arizona.....	3,798
9. Colorado.....	25,888	35. Virginia.....	3,403
10. Iowa.....	25,126	36. District of Columbia.....	2,960
11. New York.....	24,648	37. North Dakota.....	2,751
12. Pennsylvania.....	20,150	38. West Virginia.....	2,041
13. Kansas.....	17,383	39. South Carolina.....	1,790
14. Indiana.....	16,427	40. Florida.....	1,638
15. Kentucky.....	16,000	41. Wyoming.....	1,226
16. Georgia.....	14,184	42. Maine.....	1,126
17. Minnesota.....	12,551	43. Louisiana.....	967
18. Oregon.....	11,164	44. New Mexico.....	776
19. Mississippi.....	10,534	45. Utah.....	500
20. Massachusetts.....	10,397	46. Nevada.....	444
21. North Carolina.....	10,108	Hawaii.....	254
22. Delaware.....	9,698	47. New Hampshire.....	106
23. Tennessee.....	7,792	48. Arkansas (unorganized).....	70
24. Connecticut.....	7,624		
25. Oklahoma.....	7,617		
26. Maryland.....	6,009		
		Total.....	651,387

FIELD SERVICE

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers employed, during 1923-24, two full-time field secretaries and two part-time workers, whose duties were to train leaders and to extend the work in districts which volunteer workers were unable to reach. This service was furnished in at least nine States. Several State associations, including North Carolina, Texas, Massachusetts, and Virginia, employ field secretaries.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

Thirty-three standing committees and one "bureau" constitute the machinery through which the National Congress of Parents and Teachers works. The standing committees are in five departments, which are under the general supervision of vice presidents. The committees have come into existence from time to time to meet definite needs. The committees assigned to the department of organization and efficiency include parent-teacher associations in churches, preschool circles, child welfare, child-welfare magazine, literature, membership, and publicity. Six committees function under the department of extension, parent-teacher associations in colleges, in high schools, in grade schools, and study circles.

Committees on children's reading, home economics, home education, social standards, standards of literature, and thrift are grouped under the department of home service; and under the department

of public welfare are committees on American citizenship, juvenile protection, legislation, motion pictures, recreation, and safety.

The department of education is made up of committees on art, humane education, illiteracy, kindergarten extension, music, school education, and students' loan fund; and the health department includes child hygiene, physical education, and social hygiene.

The resolutions adopted by an organization usually anticipate its future progress and program. For several years resolutions have been adopted by the parents and teachers on the bill to establish a Federal department of education, with a secretary in the Cabinet; the bill for Federal aid for the promotion of physical education; the bill to reduce the sale of drugs and narcotics; the program for peace; the effort to suppress the sale or distribution of salacious literature; the effort to secure better motion-picture films; and the wiping out of illiteracy.

WORK OF COMMITTEES

A good example of the procedure of a committee is the campaign to eliminate salacious literature from bookstands which has been instituted by the committee on standards of literature. Three "information forms" have been prepared and distributed.

The first form deals with: The "glorification of the woman libertine," in literature and on the stage; periodical literature ridiculing virtue and making vice attractive, which is sold at reputable bookstores and family drug stores; reputable dealers who do not wish to sell objectionable literature and will welcome some basis for discrimination; the insidious process of becoming accustomed to evil which has led to confusion with regard to standards of decency; the fact that parents are at a loss to know how to select literature for the family reading table; how organizations may be provided with bases for asking cooperation of reputable dealers; to find for reputable dealers a consensus of opinion on dangerous literature of value in shaping their policies; the aid in interpreting and enforcing existing laws which a survey will give public officials; the problem of photoplay regulation and other fields in which confusion as to standards of decency exists.

The second form is addressed to parents, and it takes up questions regarding their own reading habits and the effects of certain types of stories upon the character.

Two other forms contain directions for the procedure of active workers in the survey and a data sheet for use in judging a story.

The parent-teacher associations have been working on this problem for more than three years in the interest of the morals and character of the boys and girls of high-school age.

Another important movement is that of bringing representatives of national organizations together for counsel and advice on questions

of common interest. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers sits in the following councils, although it is not bound by the actions or opinions of the groups: The National American Council and the National Committee on Law Enforcement. It had membership on the (moving picture) committee on public relations, but withdrew just before the committee was dissolved. It has membership upon the committee on public relations of the National Safety Council.

The California Parent-Teacher Association has installed a radio program service to its 32,000 members in Los Angeles and to the Berkeley membership. This new method of informing the parent-teacher associations has also been inaugurated in Missouri and in Boston, where the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association gives a 15-minute talk once a week at the Shepard Store Radio Station.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Parent-teacher associations in high schools have become a factor in the solution of many of the present-day problems of high-school boys and girls. This is indicated by the reports of their activities in various States. Group action by parents has settled many difficult questions which would have baffled individual parents, even when they apply to their own children.

High-school parent-teacher associations in Illinois stress the value of nourishing food, more rest, less excitement, no indiscriminate automobile riding, no cigarette smoking, an appreciation of good music, of good books, and of good times at home, athletics of every kind for every boy and girl, hikes, glee clubs, orchestras and bands, dramatic clubs, neighborhood parties, and suitable dress.

The Austin High-School Parent-Teacher association of Chicago, with 1,573 members, claims to have the largest membership in the State, including a 100 per cent teacher membership.

At Springfield, Ill., the matter of testing the law barring secret societies from high schools was brought before the parent-teacher association in a resolution and adopted. A test case supported by both parents and school officials was tried in the courts. The validity of the law was sustained.

A high-school parent-teacher association in Spokane, Wash., undertook to understand the school better by use of a list of queries prepared by the school principal and used as the basis for the program of the association throughout the year. It brought to the attention of parents such questions as, what course their child is taking; whether the child is ahead or behind her grade; the equipment used for her work; the child's interests in school aside from regular classes; the responsibility for moral training; actual knowledge of the library and whether the child is using it; cooperation

with the teacher. Parent-teacher associations are organized in several high schools in six cities of Washington State.

Not only senior high schools and junior high schools have parent-teacher associations in Oklahoma but also ward schools, the opportunity school, the school for crippled children, and a "find yourself school." The Oklahoma State organization has developed these activities within three years.

LEGISLATION

Since all of the interests of the fireside are affected by National and State legislation, it is considered by parent-teacher associations the duty of all parents to study bills that are introduced into State legislatures and into Congress. Therefore parents are urged to give strict attention to laws affecting child labor, education, and all public welfare measures. In one State the members of parent-teacher associations are urged definitely to study the qualifications of those who aspire to fill public offices in order to work for a better National, State, civic, and community government. Monthly bulletins of these organizations in some States publish a list of the bills pending in the legislature, with comments on the status of the bills and the action taken by the State board of managers for or against them. Other State organizations urge their members to give their assistance in promoting good legislation and in defeating bad legislation.

PRESCHOOL STUDY CIRCLES, MOTHERS' STUDY CIRCLES, AND READING CIRCLES

The formation of preschool study circles, mothers' study circles, and reading circles, fulfills the original purposes for which the National Congress of Mothers came into existence.

Realizing the universal lack of knowledge of child training, the Washington State branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers promotes these circles in order to study all problems of child nurture prior to the school age and to promote training for motherhood and home making. Among the subjects in these programs may be found such questions as the child as heir to the past; how the child impulses can be strengthened or subdued; putting good in the place of evil; the blighting effect of fear, etc.

Among the States reporting that special emphasis has been placed upon these study or reading circles are California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Washington.

Sixty-one reading circles have been organized in Los Angeles County, Calif., in which it is stressed that the reading circle is the training ground for efficient membership in local associations; that it is a place where every mother may ask herself how nearly she approaches 100 per cent efficiency, and where mothers may work toward this end. Cooperation with the county library is one of the

necessities of this work. In many of the reading circles the home reading courses of the United States Bureau of Education are used as guides to the reading. Leaders are trained in these circles who go into districts to interest the parent-teacher membership in reading.

Council Bluffs, Iowa, reports that 12 preschool-age circles are organized, and others are reported in Des Moines and Iowa City. Membership in these circles includes mothers of children under 6, expectant mothers, recently married women, engaged women, and others who are keenly interested as nurses, kindergarten and primary teachers.

Such circles are organized in seven counties in Colorado, and nine new circles were started during 1923-24. In Georgia the preschool study circles have been active for several years, and the movement has grown and has proved itself valuable. The work is to be operated from the extension department of the State college of agriculture.

Preschool circles have been in operation for several years in Washington State, where it is reported that there are 35 affiliated preschool circles. In a few of the States training for parenthood is emphasized. Kansas City, Mo., has 42 active circles.

METHODS OF READING CIRCLES

The first large reading circle in California for mothers was organized in Glendale, Los Angeles, by the chairman of the committee on education of the federation of parent-teacher associations. From this organization the idea spread, and there are now 61 circles in Los Angeles. The second largest group is in Berkeley. Methods of this group, as well as of the other circles, are patterned after the original Glendale circle.

The aim is the enrichment of child life through the application of scientific knowledge of child development. Meetings are held in the children's room of the public library once each week from 10 a. m. to 1 p. m. The reading is done by the same person each week, for the listeners grasp the meaning better when they get accustomed to the same voice. Handwork is carried on during the reading, and there are frequent interruptions for discussions and suggestions from personal experiences from members. Each member brings her own light lunch, and a tea committee serves tea. The half-hour for luncheon is the opportunity for mothers to become better acquainted.

The Berkeley circle has chosen the reading course of the United States Bureau of Education, No. 21, "Twenty Good Books for Parents," for their reading. All books in the course are on the library shelves, and from two to six copies of some of the books are provided.

By questions placed upon the blackboard, the leader outlines the reading taken up at each meeting, and reports on the book under consideration are given in response to the roll call. Reviews of

magazine articles enliven the program, and clippings of interest are placed upon the bulletin board. Dues of 25 cents per year are used to meet the expenses of the meeting, for subscriptions to the Child Welfare Magazine, School Life (issued by the Bureau of Education), and the Federation for Child Study bulletin. This is characteristic of the other reading circles in the State of California.

BUREAU OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES

State headquarters for the parent-teacher associations of Indiana are established in the extension division of the Indiana University at Bloomington; the Indiana Parent-Teacher Association functions as a bureau of the extension division. A member of the staff of the university acts as the executive secretary, and the university in addition furnished clerical assistance. The extension division acts in an advisory capacity to the associations on questions of general policy and specific undertakings.

In 1923 Tennessee parent-teacher associations affiliated with the University of Tennessee through its general extension service. An office is furnished to the North Carolina Parent-Teacher Association by the extension division of the North Carolina College for Women, at Greensboro.

COOPERATION OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

State departments of public instruction cooperate with parent-teacher associations by making surveys, issuing literature, by sponsoring lectures, and by furnishing State headquarters for the associations.

The office of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers is located in the State department of education at Austin, and in Massachusetts the university extension department of the State department of education cooperates with the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association by offering courses to parents on such subjects as story-telling, appreciation of music, music for mothers, interior home decoration, and child study.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN CHURCHES

The parent-teacher association has found a field of usefulness in the church. In some of the States these organizations are bringing the parents and the teachers of the Sunday schools together.

The home and parent-teacher section of the general Sunday school board of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has issued for this work a general leaflet on home and parent-teacher work and another leaflet on the mothers' club of the section on home and parent-teacher work. These leaflets are used as organization leaflets throughout the South.

Organizations in churches are not confined to any one denomination, but reports show that they are organized in Methodist, Christian, Baptist, Congregational, Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches. The only States reporting these organizations are Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, but it is probable that other States have similar organizations.

CONFERENCE ON HOME EDUCATION

The second national conference on home education was called by the United States Commissioner of Education at the University of Minnesota in May, 1924, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Librarians and directors of extensions, as well as leaders in parent-teacher associations, were brought together to discuss problems of adult education of common interest to the whole group. Thirty-three States were represented by a total of 80 delegates, and more than 600 people were in attendance.

The program consisted of discussions on the place of the university extension service in a cooperative plan for the extension of educational opportunities; on cooperation for adult education; courses for parents; the library in the home education movement; how libraries educate; what parent-teacher associations can do for libraries; a State library commission conducting home reading courses; the educational adviser in the public library; practical methods in cooperation in educating for parenthood; psychic values in the home; literature in the home, etc.

The outcome of this conference was the appointment of a national committee of seven to study the whole subject of home education. It consisted of two representatives each of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the National University Extension Association, and the American Library Association, and one member from the Bureau of Education.

A report of this conference was issued by the Bureau of Education intitled, "Cooperation in Adult Education," Home Education Circular No. 6, 1925.

SCHOOL-IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Excellent results have been accomplished by an organization of school patrons called "school-improvement associations," which developed in the Southern States some years ago to meet a special need. A few States are still using these organizations as a means of school betterment. In Alabama the division of school and community betterment is an integral part of the State department of education and is supported by State funds. At the request of the state parent-teacher associations, this division includes the organiza-

tion of parent-teacher associations in its activities. A director of community organization is in charge of this work and organizes school-improvement associations or parent-teacher associations at the request of local communities.

It was reported in 1922 that Arkansas had 600 or more school-improvement associations with a membership of approximately 15,000. Since that time, however, the growth and development of parent-teacher associations has reached the point of state-wide organization.

The school-improvement league of the State of Maine was organized in 1898 and was probably the first organization of the kind in the United States. It is an informal organization toward which the State department of education, through an agent for rural education, exercises informal supervision. These leagues are made up of both parents and children. There is no chief State executive officer, but each league has its own staff of officers, whose duties are determined more or less by the individual school. The school-improvement league is a distinctly rural project in the State of Maine, for the larger towns and cities maintain a State parent-teacher association.

A school community organizer, under the direction of the State superintendent of public instruction, organizes school-improvement associations in South Carolina. The work is financed by State funds and by the funds raised by the organizations. The purpose is to unite all the people of the community in the interest of school improvement. Prizes have been awarded to schools making the greatest material improvement during each year. The prize money is used in school improvement. This movement has the active support of the South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs.

Among organizations of state-wide significance, the community leagues of the Cooperative Education Association of Virginia represent one of the most successful. They provide avenues of cooperation between the citizen and the official in building better community life in Virginia. This movement has the approval and support of the State department and of the governor. Its membership is 75,453, in 1,971 leagues, and is directed by a board made up of officials and citizens. Local leagues operate in the respective communities, and a county organization is maintained.

The activities of these leagues show that they interest themselves in almost every activity in the State, including the county Sunday school convention, the tobacco growers association, county medical society, preservation of antiquities, health clinics, schools' educational programs, public libraries, tuberculosis clinics, home and farm demonstration; and it appears that every curative, preventive, and constructive agency in the State has been influenced by the organization.

The organization of parents and teachers in Virginia, begun in 1920, is also recognized by State officials. Its purposes are confined to education and child welfare, and it is financed by per capita dues.

RURAL PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

The State of Delaware with its typically rural conditions has parent-teacher associations in 84 per cent of the school districts outside of the city of Wilmington.

The plan used in Delaware was the basis of the demonstration in rural organizations in parent-teacher associations in North Dakota, which was initiated in 1924 by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. It was intended to demonstrate organization and development of rural parent-teacher associations as an inspiration for all States. This State was chosen because of its typical rural conditions, with nearly 5,000 rural schools, and because of the sympathetic State educational system.

Local agencies in North Dakota have organized whole communities of foreign-born people into parent-teacher groups, and good citizenship has been thus promoted. This has been accomplished usually with the cooperation of the county superintendent of schools.

In one section of the State, Sioux Indian women wearing shawls and moccasins organized a parent-teacher association. Not only Indian women, but Indian men participated in the organization. The majority of the 50 people attending the meeting were Indians.

LITERATURE OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

With the growth of parent-teacher associations a demand has developed for literature for programs and for printed material for propaganda. The Child Welfare Magazine, which is the official organ of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, was for many years the only periodical issued for these organizations. As the incomes of State parent-teacher associations have increased, monthly bulletins have been issued. These bulletins are usually issued to provide a medium for the exchange of plans and results and an opportunity to give and receive help.

In Michigan, it is reported that the parent-teacher bulletin was distributed free to more than 40,000 members. The State organization obtained the assistance of the schools in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Saginaw, and Battle Creek, in printing the bulletins.

During the past biennium an increasing number of leaflets and bulletins have been issued by the National and State organizations showing by their subjects the attempt that committees are making to strengthen and guide State and local committees.