



Congressional Digest

Washington, D. C.

May, 1926

The New Education Bill

To Create a Federal Department of Education

Discussed Pro and Con

By Senators, Congressmen, and Educators

Organization of the Bureau of Education

History of Legislation to Establish
Federal Department of Education

Action on President's Recommendations to Congress
Day by Day Proceedings in Senate and House

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ALICE GRAM ROBINSON, *Editor and Publisher*

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Subscription Rates \$5.00 per Year

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Entered as Second-Class Matter September 29th, 1921, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., Under the Act of March 3, 1879.

The Congressional Digest

Volume V

MAY, 1926

Number 5

The Sixty-ninth Congress

First, or "Long" Session, Convened December 7, 1925.

In the Senate

96 members

56 Republicans 39 Democrats
1 Farmer-Labor

Presiding Officer

President: Charles G. Dawes, Vice-President

Floor Leaders

Majority Leader
Charles Curtis, Kans., R.
Minority Leader
Joseph T. Robinson, Ark., D.
Republican Party Whip
Wesley L. Jones, Wash.
Democratic Party Whip
Peter G. Gerry, R. I.

In the House

435 members

246 Republicans 182 Democrats
2 Socialists 1 Independent
2 Farmer-Labor 2 Vacancies

Presiding Officer

Speaker: Nicholas Longworth, Ohio, R.

Floor Leaders

Majority Leader
John Q. Tilson, Conn., R.
Minority Leader
Finis J. Garrett, Tenn., D.
Republican Party Whip
Albert H. Vestal, Ind.
Democratic Party Whip
William A. Oldfield, Ark.

Action Taken on President's Recommendations to Congress

For the Period April 12 to May 3, 1926

The President's recommendations for legislative action contained in his annual message of December 8, 1925, to the 69th Congress, were printed in the December, 1925 number of THE CONGRESSIONAL DIGEST, p. 327. The bills cited below embody the President's recommendations in whole or in part, but have not been specifically endorsed by the President unless indicated. The following report includes only those recommendations on which Congress has acted during the period April 12 to May 3, 1926. Action on these recommendations is reported in this Department month by month.

Appropriation Bills

Apr. 13—The bill (H. R. 10198) making appropriations for the District of Columbia for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927 was reported in the Senate with amendments. Report No. 587. Passed by the Senate, amended, April 15. Sent to conference April 19. Senate agreed to conference report April 27. House agreed to conference report April 29.

Apr. 15—The bill (H. R. 8917) making appropriations for the War Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927 was approved by the President. Public Law No. 123.

Apr. 16—Agreed to conference report in the Senate and in the House on the bill (H. R. 9795) making appropriations for the Departments of State and Justice and for the Judiciary, and for the Departments of Commerce and Labor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927. The President approved the bill on April 29. Public Law No. 156.

Apr. 17—The House agreed to the conference report on the bill (H. R. 9341) making appropriations for the Executive Office and independent executive bureaus, etc.,

for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927. Senate agreed to conference report April 19. Approved by the President April 22. Public Law No. 141.

Apr. 17—The bill (H. R. 10425) making appropriations for the Legislative Establishment for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927, was reported in the Senate with amendments. Report No. 607. Passed by the Senate, amended, April 26. Sent to conference April 29.

Apr. 27—Agreed to conference report in the Senate on the bill (H. R. 8264) making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927. House agreed to conference report on April 27. Senate agreed to conference report May 1.

Foreign Debts

"It is believed * * * these settlements * * * already negotiated * * * represent in each instance the best that can be done and the wisest settlement that can be secured."

Apr. 21—The bill (H. R. 6774) to authorize the settlement of the indebtedness of Belgium to the United States was placed on the Senate Calendar. Passed by the

Educators Discuss New Education Bill

Pro

JOY ELMER MORGAN

Editor of The Journal of the National Education Assn.

NO MEASURE in the history of Federal legislation has had back of it so large a body of carefully studied, sound, sincere, permanent opinion as the present proposal for a Department of Education with a Secretary in the President's Cabinet. The bills providing for such a department have been printed by the hundreds of thousands of copies. They have been carefully discussed before great groups like the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Federation of Labor, the League of Women Voters, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the National Education Association. They have been debated from one end of this nation to the other. They have been considered by local associations, State associations, and national associations over and over again. As a result of this thoroughgoing consideration, the movement for a Department of Education is so live and vital that it will go on in spite of every opposition and defeat until there is a secretary in the President's Cabinet.

Year after year Congressional hearings have been held on bills proposing to create a Department of Education. In the records of these hearings opposition from public school workers is conspicuous by its absence. One could count on the fingers of one hand all of the men and women in public education of sufficient prominence to have their names in WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA who are on record against the Education Bill.

This movement, like other great movements for the development of public schools, has had to fight its way from the beginning and is now nearing victory. It is winning against the same forces and the same kind of opposition that fought the creation of tax-supported schools in the beginning; that fought the establishment of the offices of city and State school superintendents; and that fought the movement for compulsory school laws which would guarantee the child's right to be in school.

Among the opposition to this measure there is a common impression that the educational workers of the nation are seeking the federalization of education; that they are standing for Federal control and administration of the schools. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The whole trend in education is toward greater freedom for the individual child, the individual teacher, the local school, and the State itself, guided by the kind of research which a Department of Education would foster. If the 800,000 teachers of this nation were lined up they would make a solid phalanx four abreast and one hundred miles long. A review of that army from one end to the other would hardly show a handful of American teachers who believe, or expect to believe, that this Federal Government should control and administer education.

Opponents of the New Education Bill often point to the Federal aid provisions of earlier bills arguing that this measure is but an opening wedge to such aid. It should be remembered, in the first place, that Federal aid under our system of government does not mean Federal control; in the second place, that the taxing situation has greatly changed since the earlier Education Bill was framed in 1920. Under the income tax amendment, the Federal

Continued on next page

Con

HARRY PRATT JUDSON

President Emeritus, The University of Chicago

I AM strongly opposed to the pending education bill. Education belongs to the States. The Federal Government can be useful, no doubt, by gathering information as to education procedure and disseminating this information among the States. But this can best be done through a properly supported bureau of the Interior Department. This bureau should be organized on a strictly scientific basis, like the Bureau of Standards. In the last-named bureau there have been but two heads since its organization some quarter of a century since, and the single change was made because the head resigned in order to accept the presidency of an important educational institution. Should the Bureau of Education be converted into a department with its head in the Cabinet there is the certainty of a change with every change of administration. What should be a scientific bureau becomes a political department. I deprecate turning over Federal educational agencies to partisan politics, which is the essence of this bill.

Anyone who is familiar with the history of this proposed legislation knows that for many successive years the bills on this subject have contained plans for large Federal appropriations to be distributed among the States. While ostensibly these appropriations did not propose to interfere with State control of their own educational affairs, at the same time it is obvious that the power of the purse must in the end be a controlling influence. The widespread resentment among the States to this attempt to dictate local education from Washington apparently has led to the elimination of such appropriations in the present bill. But can anyone doubt that this is merely an entering wedge? That when the vanity of an educational politician is once gratified by a seat in the President's cabinet he will at once begin to scheme at the expansion of his dignity and authority by securing appropriations which will enable him to influence State policies in accordance with his own ideas?

The bill proposes another long step toward the dictation of local affairs from a centralized government. I trust that this Congress in its wisdom will take the same view which seems to have been held by several preceding Congresses, and that accordingly the bill may be defeated.—
Extracts, see 1, p. 179.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

Princeton Theological Seminary

THE purpose of the bill is made explicit in the revised form of it which has been offered by Senator Means, in which it is expressly said that the department of public education, with the assistance of the advisory board to be created, shall attempt to develop a more uniform and efficient system of public common school education. The department of education, according to that bill, is to promote uniformity in education. That uniformity in education under central control it seems to me is the worst fate into which any country can fall.

The principle of this bill is that standardization in edu-

Continued on next page

Pro—continued

JOY ELMER MORGAN—continued

Government went into the States with a taxing program which robbed them of a great portion of the resources from which public funds are drawn. Within the past few years, as a result of income tax revision, there has been left for the States and localities billions of dollars which under the taxing program that prevailed when the original bill was framed would not have been available. The question of Federal aid is not now up for consideration. To drag it in as an argument against the creation of a Department of Education is virtually to admit that sound arguments are not available.

The Bureau of Education, as now organized, excellent as its work has been within its limitations, cannot meet the needs for educational research as they exist to-day. Questions vital to the administration of the schools arise daily on which facts are not available. Such questions as these: How many teachers are there in the United States with a normal school education? with only a high school education? with an eighth grade education, or less? Why do a million children each year fail to make their grades in school?

The Journal of the National Education Association, which now reaches more than 160,000 teachers, has kept in close touch with the position of educational workers throughout the country. It has seen during that period an awakening of the teaching force and of citizens in the matter of education, the like of which has never before occurred in all history. The movement for a Department of Education must eventually win because it has supporting it such a tremendous mass of disinterested, thinking, and persistent opinion.

 GEORGE D. STRAYER

Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

WE NEED a Department of Education rather than an enlarged Bureau of Education. The consolidation of the agencies of the Federal Government concerned with education and now distributed through the several executive departments requires the development of a Department of Education. No one would seriously propose that this could be accomplished by transferring these agencies to the Bureau of Education. If educational research is to be adequately supported, it will be necessary that this function of the Federal Government be presented to those in charge of the budget by a Cabinet officer. All matters of national concern involve education. It is of the utmost importance that the representative of this most important governmental service be a member of the President's Cabinet.

The creation of a Federal Department of Education does not involve Federal control of education. We have two kinds of Executive Departments in the Federal Government—those charged with administrative responsibilities, such as War and Treasury, and those organized for the promotion of the general welfare, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor. The Department of Education should be charged with the responsibility of promoting education through the researches which it undertakes and the information which it distributes. Those who have supported

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Con—continued

J. GRESHAM MACHEN—continued

education is a good thing. I do not think a person can read the literature of advocates of measures of this sort without seeing that that is taken almost as a matter of course, that standardization in education is a good thing. I am perfectly ready to admit that standardization in some spheres is a good thing. It is a good thing in the making of Ford cars; but just because it is a good thing in the making of Ford cars it is a bad thing in the making of human beings, for the reason that a Ford car is a machine and a human being is a person. But a great many educators today deny the distinction between the two, and that is the gist of the whole matter. The persons to whom I refer are those who hold the theory that the human race has now got behind the scenes, that it has got at the secrets of human behavior, that it has pulled off the trappings with which human actors formerly moved upon the scene of life, and has discovered that art and poetry and beauty and morality are delusions, and that mechanism really rules all.

I do not believe that we ought to adopt this principle of standardization in education, which is writ so large in this bill; because standardization, it seems to me, destroys the personal character of human life. I do not believe that the personal, free individual character of education can be preserved when you have a Federal department laying down standards of education which become more or less mandatory to the whole country.

I think it is perfectly plain that we are embarking on a policy here which cannot be reversed when it is once embarked upon. It is very much easier to prevent the formation of some agency that may be thought to be unfortunate than it is to destroy it after it is once formed. Now, I think, is the decisive time to settle this question whether we want the principle for which this department will stand.

But it will be said: "Why, do you actually mean that we should have these 48 States, each with its own separate system of education, and a lot of crazy private schools and church schools?" Why, people tell us we shall make a perfect mess of it if we have any such education as that. Well, I say, with respect to that, that I hope that we may go on making a mess of it. I had a great deal rather have confusion in the sphere of education than intellectual and spiritual death; and out of that "mess," as they call it—we call it liberty—there has come every fine thing that we have in our race today.

But then people say: "What is going to become of the matter of equal opportunity? Here you have some States providing inferior opportunities to others, and the principle of equal opportunity demands Federal aid." What shall be done with a State that provides opportunity for its children inferior to that provided by other States? Should the people of that State be told that it makes absolutely no difference, that Washington will do it if the States does not do it? I think not. I think we are encouraging an entirely false attitude of mind on the part of individual parents and on the part of individual States if we say that it makes no difference how responsibilities are met.

I believe that in the sphere of the mind we should have absolutely unlimited competition. There are certain spheres where competition may have to be checked, but

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Pro—continued

GEORGE D. STRAYER—continued

the creation of a Federal Department, are unalterably opposed to the centralization of the control of education in the Federal Government. It is just as certainly possible to promote education by reporting experiments which are undertaken and by informing those interested in education throughout the country of the adaptation of education to the needs of the particular communities as it has been to promote agriculture through the distribution of the results of experiments in that field.

The Department of Education a fact-finding and fact-distributing agency.—Progress in education is dependent upon the scientific evaluation of current practices. Whenever unusual progress is made or a worthwhile experiment carried on, the Federal Department of Education should be in position to make available for the whole country the results of these undertakings. It is through scientific investigation, and in this way only, that we may judge of the value of the proposals which are made for the development of our school system. It is absurd to propose that we may not cooperate in such an important undertaking because this cooperation in order to be most effective must be carried on by a Federal agency.

The establishment of a Department of Education does not involve the nation in further Federal support for our public schools. The establishment of a Federal Department of Education is distinct from the issue of further Federal support. Scientific research may be expected to add to our resources. In a single field, like that of developing more adequate and more economical plans for school buildings, it is possible to save to the States and to the localities within the States tens of millions of dollars. Every improvement in methods of teaching, in the adaptation of schools to the needs and capacities of children will add untold millions to the wealth of the country. If scientific investigation should develop the fact that further Federal support should be provided, the responsibility for acting upon this evidence will still rest with Congress.

A great majority of those who are well qualified by experience to anticipate the contribution which may be made by a Federal Department of Education are agreed that it would do much to stimulate educational endeavor and to increase the efficiency of our schools. Surely no one who would promote education can object to the establishment of a fact-finding and fact-distributing agency with sufficient support to enable it to conduct inquiries in all of the more important phases of education.—Extracts, see 4, p. 179.

CHARLES H. JUDD

Director, School of Education, University of Chicago

OUR POLICY in the United States, historically, has been one of State control of education. In spite of that control of education in the States, there has been in our history a large national interest in educational questions and problems because our people migrate so freely from point to point and because in the various parts of the United States the different experiments that have been tried in education have matured in fashions that deserve attention on a larger scale than could be given to those enterprises in the local communities. In other words, we

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J. GRESHAM MACHEN—continued

not when it comes to the sphere of the mind; and it seems to me that we ought to have this state of affairs: That every State should be faced by the unlimited competition in this sphere of other States; that each one should try to provide the best for its children that it possibly can; and, above all, that all public education should be kept healthy at every moment by the absolutely free competition of private schools and church schools.

But then people say: "You know that this Federal department of education is in the interest of efficiency." They are always flinging that word "efficiency" at us as though when that word is spoken all argument at once is checked. Well, of course, "efficiency" just means doing things. I am unable to admire efficiency when it is directed to an end which works harm to me; and the end of the efficiency of a Federal department of education would be the worst kind of slavery that could possibly be devised—a slavery in the sphere of the mind.

A great many educators, I think, have this notion that it is important to be doing something, to be going somewhere. They are interested in progress, and they do not seem to care very much in what direction the progress is being made. I find in this bill a decisive step in a direction where the progress, if persisted in, will lead to disaster; and what I am hoping for is not merely that this bill may be defeated, but that this whole tendency toward uniformity in the sphere of education, and the whole principle of a central control as over against individual responsibility, may be checked.

I am opposed to the activities of the Federal bureau where they involve the laying down of standards of education—of certain standards for colleges, for example. I think it is very much better to have men who are engaged in education examine methods of education, examine standards, rather than to have such agencies of research come before the people with the authority of the Federal Government, with the fear at all times that we shall have an agitation to compel schools to maintain those standards. We have very frequently the principle that the States are to be allowed to do this and that; but if they do not maintain certain standards which have been laid down by Federal agencies of research, they should then be compelled to do it by some sort of an amendment to the Constitution or the like.—Extracts, see 1, p. 179.

FRANK J. GOODNOW

President, Johns Hopkins University

SO FAR as I see the bill, with its implications, it can be considered as an isolated bill without attributing to the proponents of the bill any ulterior motives; or it can be considered from the point of view of being a wedge which will be inserted for the purpose of securing later large Government appropriations, with all that those appropriations imply.

From the first point of view, I can see no reason for the provision of a secretary of education. The bill purports for all practical purposes to give to the secretary of education the powers which at present are possessed by the Commissioner of Education. The only change in the conditions which now exist in the Government that would

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