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During the current year, in addition to carrying the four experimental schools in Georgia, a great deal of attention has been given to means of spreading broadly the ideas of rural education, <sup>which we</sup> ~~have been formulating through exploration & experiment.~~ <sup>specially</sup> ~~through cooperation with teachers colleges, and through the preparation~~ of materials of instruction.

At the meeting of the Council on Rural Education held in New Orleans in January, 1936, the discussion centered on possible cooperation with normal schools, and the preparation of various types of materials of instruction as the next moves. The consensus of the Council was that

(1) It is highly desirable to cooperate with at least one white and one Negro normal college in developing sound and realistic education for rural teachers, giving special attention to the problems of rural life and education underlying farming, health, handicrafts, and a study of general and local social problems, as well as the more generally recognized subjects of instruction.

(2) The work of the normal college should include not only the education of pupil teachers, but also

(a) further education of teachers now in service:

(b) supervision and stimulation of instruction in the field (including possibly local district institutes--cultural missions);

(c) Special efforts toward the placing of qualified teachers in rural schools (including if necessary the paying for an initial period of supplementary salaries);

(d) the study of the problem of materials of instruction.

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tion and experimental efforts in the preparation of such materials;

(e) the utilization, development, and testing of techniques of the teaching of reading.

(5) It is of great importance that more effective materials of instruction be prepared, <sup>The Council or</sup> ~~and that~~ <sup>should</sup> the Fund <sup>cooperate</sup> in ~~any~~ procedures or organization of efforts <sup>in</sup> ~~which may~~ experiment <sup>with</sup> in the preparation of such materials, using commercial publishers where possible in the development and distribution of the material. Specifically, in view of the problems of rural education, ~~the Council regarded as peculiarly significant~~ the preparation of simple materials of instruction in the special fields of health, agriculture, and handicrafts <sup>is peculiarly significant.</sup>

It was understood that the officers of the Fund, in consultation with various members of the council group, would proceed to investigate (a) possibilities of cooperation with one white and one colored normal school in Georgia (which state now forms the area of concentration of the Rural School program) and (b) ways by which materials of instruction particularly adapted to rural teachers and rural children could be produced and put into general use.

<sup>agreed</sup>  
It was further ~~understood~~ that the South Georgia Teachers College offered the best possible opportunity of cooperation with a white normal school. Various Negro normal schools were also discussed as possible centers for work, but no decision was reached, ~~regarding a Negro normal school,~~ ~~it being suggested that the officers of the Fund would investigate this problem further.~~

#### SOUTH GEORGIA TEACHERS COLLEGE

In accordance with these suggestions, the officers, after extended





discussion and investigation, presented on April 1 to the Executive Committee of the Fund a request for funds to carry forward work in the South Georgia Teachers College. No similar work in a Negro normal school is yet suggested, though it is hoped that in the near future some arrangements can be made whereby it will be possible <sup>to cooperate with</sup> ~~for the Fund to go into a~~ <sup>a</sup> Negro normal school on <sup>similar to that</sup> ~~the same basis as is~~ proposed for South Georgia Teachers College.

The essentials of the plan for cooperation with South Georgia Teachers College are for the additions of strong departments in (a) agriculture, (b) industrial arts, (c) rural sociology, (d) health combined with home economics, (e) the teaching of the tool subjects, especially reading; (f) provisions for field experience by students and teachers in actual contact with rural life and rural schools, including the use for training purposes of demonstration schools which we have been maintaining in rural Georgia.

It has been agreed that the Fund will supply funds for the necessary additional personnel on <sup>an annually</sup> ~~a~~ descending scale, and that the state will put in additional money immediately and will support the new services increasingly in the future. The General Education Board, which has supported the development of field service at this college, has expressed an interest in continuing its aid toward enlarging that service. Thus it seems likely that this institution may represent the cooperative efforts of two foundations and of the state of Georgia <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>ing</sup> develop the potentialities of a normal school as an influence in rural education <sup>and rural life</sup>.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS

The Fund has been considering and discussing ways of cooperating in the development of basic text material to be used in southern rural

schools. Among other things, we wish to try out the possibility of using the normal school or schools with which we cooperate as centers for the creation of fresh materials. We are also conferring with the authorities of the University of Chicago as to ways in which we may cooperate in the larger plans of that institution for the preparation, testing, and distribution of new teaching materials.

Meanwhile, we are continuing our efforts to provide supplementary reading materials for the children in the rural South. The particular difficulty which has arisen in the assembling of the small libraries which are distributed to rural schools, is the finding of books of adolescent or of young adult interest written in sufficiently simple vocabulary to be readable by the over-aged but only slightly literate pupils in these schools. Having failed to find such books, and having been told by librarians and publishers that there is an almost complete lack in that area, we have begun some experiments in persuading authors to write with this group particularly in mind. Miss Winifred Wise (author of Thomas Edison, Jane Addams, and many short stories for children) has written for us Away with the Circus, which has been accepted for publication by Albert Whitman Company, and appears on their October lists; Mr. Arna Bontemps, author of You Can't Pet a Possum, Popo and Fifina (with Langston Hughes), Black Thunder, has almost completed a manuscript for us, with a tentative title of Sad-faced Boy. We have discussed our particular problem with many authors and publishers, and have promises of cooperation from Langston Hughes, Rhea Wells, May Justus, and Lois Donaldson. The latter three are exclusively children's authors. Eva Knox Evans, who last year produced Araminta, one of the few good books about Negro children, has also expressed great interest in what we are trying to do. We hope to be able to persuade her to work with us



on her next book.

It is our plan to have all of these books published by commercial publishers. There seems no doubt that there is great need for simply written books of young adult interest, not only for the children in whom we are particularly interested, but among many other groups. In the production of these books, therefore, there will be no expense to the Fund, except that in certain cases we will pay honoraria to the authors, which are repayable to us in royalties.

As a first step in investigating methods and procedures of producing basic text materials, arrangements have been made with the University of Chicago to have Miss Parker, who has worked with Dr. Judd in the preparation of his Social Science Readers, visit the schools in Georgia in which we are working. She is staying for several weeks in Fair Play, where she will of course be able to watch the work of teachers and pupils in both colored and white schools. It is hoped that after this study of conditions and opportunities, she will be able to suggest to us an approach to the immediate problem. In cooperation, then, with the University of Chicago, in its much larger attempt to reorganize materials of instruction, and through similar undertakings in which we may have a part, it is hoped that we will be able to produce texts applicable to our particular group of people.

Meanwhile the experimental schools and the study of rural problems have gone forward with increasing interest to school people generally and with cumulative results as to indications of feasible procedures in rural education. Mrs. Cannon and Mrs. Duncan are showing what a small two-teacher school can mean to an otherwise impoverished rural Negro community. This school is to be used this summer as a demonstration center for the Atlanta University teachers institute.

At Fairplay, in addition to the continued work of Miss Lockman, Ralph Gaskins is undertaking the experiment of a year-round school. It is believed that a twelve-month school year may have a distinctive influence, especially in agricultural instruction, and may be financially feasible to an extent quite beyond current practice or thinking. Miss Cheney, in the one-teacher Negro school of the same community, is working slowly and cautiously toward a unified educational program for the two races in a given school district.

The experimental school under John MacLachlan in the new farm colony, Pine Mountain Valley, while beset by the many problems of a rapidly developing new social order, is showing clearly the fresh educational vigor that can come with a good school in a setting of economic hope. The atmosphere and the achievement in this new school makes it hard to believe that these pupils are but a cross-section at very low economic level of the children who are so lethargic and so incompetent in the usual rural school setting.

These three school centers, begun as experiments for our own guidance, are being used increasingly as demonstrations of new ideas and new procedures. Teachers and school officials from other states as well as from many parts of Georgia are beating paths - often covered with a good deal of mud - to these schools. Already there is a problem of avoiding too great



disturbance to regular school work by the presence of too many "foreign" visitors.

The Council's research committee (Charles S. Johnson and Lloyd Warner) has been directing the work of our two investigators with a view to presenting a compendium of information on rural life and the resulting problems in rural education in various areas of the South. This material will be presented for preliminary discussion at the autumn meeting of the Council and will then be developed further as basic information for the guidance of various efforts - educational, economic, social - which may be undertaken by various agencies both private and public.

The realistic studies of rural problems, begun through the general efforts of the explorers and continued through the more intensive research of the Committee and of the Commission which studied Cotton Tenancy, have thrown fresh light on the needs and possibilities of the southern countryside. The present efforts of the federal government in rural rehabilitation and resettlement and the further proposals now before Congress are to a substantial degree the results of these studies (as expounded in Rural School Bulletin No. 3, February, 1935). While the direct efforts of the Council will be concentrated upon the school, it is clear that the basic problems are economic and social as well as educational. It is gratifying to realize while we are trying to improve the school other powerful agencies including the federal government are attacking related aspects of the same problems. It is clear, therefore, that in addition to specific educational experiments the Council should continue to study and to reveal as clearly and comprehensively as possible the total picture of southern rural life.

