

November 7, 1928

In 1919, I believe it was, the American Legion made a proposition to the National Education Association that it would be well for the people of America to observe one week as American Education Week. The National Education Association appointed a committee to confer with the American Legion. They met with a similar committee from the Legion in the room of one of the legionnaires who was on that committee in San Francisco. The result of that committee meeting was that the National Education Association decided to ask the President of the United States to set aside a week to be known as American Education Week. This was finally done in 1921 and from that time until this we have had one week set aside for the people to study their schools and for the school people to get the facts about their schools to the folks. The World Federation of Education Associations took up the idea and adopted it and a number of the nations of the world are observing one week as education week for the people of those nations. Because it is a period of studying public schools and not only public schools but all school facilities and because it was proposed by the American Legion the week that contains the 11th of November is always designated as American Education Week. That, of course, is this week and it will terminate with Sunday.

The National Education Association gives the kind of programs that may be followed so that the people of America may make the study more or less along the same lines. Health Day was Monday, November 5th, Home and School Day Tuesday the 6th, Know Your School Wednesday the 7th, School Opportunity Day, on Thursday the 8th, Citizenship Day on Friday, Community Day on Saturday and America Day, of course, on Sunday. In writing on this

in School Facts the author of this little sheet says, "That nation or that state is greatest that puts the child first in its thinking, in its statecraft, in its purpose, and in its ideals of conduct. The nation or the state that has the highest regard for childhood will lead all others in health, intelligence, morality, efficiency, and happiness. It will reach the greatest heights of prosperity both material and spiritual. The nation moves forward thru its children." There is not anything in my judgment any truer than what I have just read to you. The reason, in my judgment, why America is the most prosperous nation on earth and has the highest, the finest type of citizens probably to be found anywhere in the world and you will find that the average American citizen in comparison with the average citizen from any other country will stack up a little bit higher, I believe that is brought about principally because of America's attitude towards universal education. To be sure, we own a large per cent of the world's natural resources.

There was a time in the history of this world when one business competed with another business by cutting the wages of those who worked for them so as to make a larger per cent of profit so that they might become prosperous in their line of business. The large businesses in America were striving to prosper by buying the raw product at a low price and paying a low price to those who converted the raw product into a finished product. But today they are striving by studying in the laboratories to invent and discover and these efforts to convert machinery into a servant for men has given the average American citizen the equivalent of thirty slaves to do the work. That means that one person today thru what has been mastered thru various sciences is equivalent to thirty-one persons thirty years ago. It is no longer a competition between individuals against large concerns.

Of course, I do not know whether the statement Mr. Ford made is correct or not but it illustrates what I have in mind. He says this, that the new Ford that he has recently put on the market actually costs more than it sells for on the market but that he has deliberately done it and has put it up to his men in his factory to bring down the cost of that machine to where it will be a profit making business to the Ford Motor Company. Whether the statement is absolutely correct or not has nothing to do with the proposition. The thought has to do with how people are conducting large businesses in this country today. All such things, young folks, come about thru the education of our people, it is thru the education of all people that America has made her wonderful progress.

It is for that reason that the people in America are taking one week to study their schools, we teachers to help create interest on the part of the parents and the parents to make a study of their schools to see if they are functioning the way the parents want them to function. Set aside a week to take stock as it were to see what we are doing and to see if in some way we cannot improve on the way we are doing. To me, it is a wonderful idea that in just a short time all of the enlightened nations of the world are going to spend the same week some time studying the schools that are giving the training and instruction to the youth of this world. That the world may be made a better place for human beings to live in and that we are going to take one day to know the purpose of our school, to see where it is meeting those purposes, where it is functioning as it should and to see where it can be improved to be the greatest service to those who attend our school. To take one day to find out how to take care of our health. Health leads to happiness. It is the healthy body and the sane mind that usually make good citizens. It is exceedingly fitting as I see it that the world should observe this week

and especially this particular week, that they should observe the week that ends with the 11th of November when the nations of the world laid down their arms and returned to their various people to become peaceful citizens. When the great carnage ceased and the men of the world shook hands with their comrades and bade them goodbye and each turned to his own nation to help make his nation a better place in which to live.

I think some ten or twelve nations are observing this week in this way.

---Robert H. Wright, President