

support, and that those engaged in these services should be paid, in proportion to the revenue-producing power of the service rendered.

If the estimate of revenue-producing power were properly made in relation to essential value rather than to pounds shillings and pence, the Education Department, without subscribing to the soundness of the principle, would have little to fear from its application—in fact, the result would be the placing of education at the head of the list of all public revenue-producing services.

EDUCATION FIRST.

It would be difficult to overestimate even the monetary value represented in all forms of industrial, professional, official, and public services by the increased efficiency due to the education and training of the human elements engaged in those services. One could only faintly imagine the disastrous results that would accrue to those other services specially described as revenue-producing agencies if, even for a generation, the schools and colleges were closed and the schoolmaster literally went abroad. It must therefore be recognized that educational agencies are in reality the foundation on which all others are built, or, as the French report puts it, "Education is our mainstay." Expenditure on good education is the soundest of investments. Educational expenditure, by providing for increased human efficiency, is the best guarantee for a continuous increase in national income. In his interesting book "Citizens to be," Mr. Hughes says, "If the war has swallowed up vast sums of money, it has also revealed that these vast sums were available—that all the constructive work of educational and social reform which we know to be a real safeguard against war need not have been stunted and starved." In addition to this, however, educational agencies supply an element of the national well-being which none of the revenue-producing agencies can provide. It may fairly be claimed that the morale of a people—the national spirit—the racial idea which, as above stated, will stand the shock of disaster when all else seems to be tottering—is dependent in a special measure on the literature, the knowledge of history and biography, the trend of thought, the influences, and the standard of life which are presented in the schools of the nation.

A benevolent acquiescence to the above claim is, however, of little value in these days of reconstruction. It is time to act. If we believe that education is in reality the most important and fundamental factor in the well-being and progress of the nation, we must admit that in no adequate sense have we, as a people, acted in accordance with our beliefs.

THE TEACHER.

The most important phase, however, of the view that the human factor is the most significant of all is brought forward when we consider the position of the teacher and of the Inspector. However much we may improve our Education Act, syllabus, administration, school-buildings, playgrounds, and equipment, we shall succeed only to the extent that we have teachers in sufficient number and of the highest type, together with Inspectors capable of aiding and directing the personal work of these teachers. The importance of the "man behind the gun" is recognized in connection with all forms of activity, but, from the special considerations which have already been referred to, the proportional value of the human element is pre-eminently significant in the case of the teacher and the Inspector. Though this view may be readily accepted, and though people may vie with each other in extolling the value of the teacher, hard facts force us to admit that the public does not sufficiently believe what it says, for, if it did, the provision for the number and kind of teachers and Inspectors required would, to a more adequate extent, have long ago been made.

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS.

Not only in New Zealand but in every other civilized country there is a serious shortage of teachers. In the annual report of the Board of Education for England and Wales it is stated that the rate of advance in every grade of education must be conditioned by the supply of qualified teachers but that the present