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GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

Where Our Taxes Go

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Part 9

WE have many fine buildings where our young could be taught the universality of justice and the brotherhood of man, where they could be taught to venerate, to serve, to give and take. Most of our young learn these things; our splendid armies attest to how well they have learned them, but for the most of our children it has not been made easy by our method of teaching. How can we expect our young to get the most out of school when our teachers themselves feel wronged? A child is more sensitive and more keenly aware of moods and emotions than is the average adult, and with the great majority of our teachers dissatisfied how can we hope to give our children the kind of foundation training we feel they need? I believe that of all the public services, that of the transmission of knowledge and the kindling of ideas to be the most important. Why then should we not pay our teachers a decent living wage?

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WHY must a young teacher wait ten years before he or she can hope to make anything like a decent salary? We now require our teachers to have a college degree, yet we pay them only \$1,200 for their first year in the grade schools. Can there be a time in a child's life when he is less impressionable than in the beginning? Yet we give the lowest wages to those who must inspire confidence, overcome homesickness arouse interest, and be nurse and guardian all in one. I hold that it is more important to have the children taught by the very best teachers than it is to have modern equipment. If we must choose let us pay out in teachers' wages and conserve in the building appropriations, for a school without the teaching spirit of ingenuity, of patience and of fidelity to principle is no school. I am not speaking for a minority in speaking for the teachers. I am speaking for the coming generations.

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I believe that if we want first class teachers we must pay first class prices. I never yet saw a bargain that came cheap, and so it is with all public service. We may boast about how our taxes are lower than in cities such as New York or Los Angeles, but in the same breath we must admit that we do not have the public service that most progressive communities enjoy.