

To Hell with Education

The art of plausibility—to hide a truth—is being used by New York realtors to make the public swallow an unpalatable fact: educational facilities for children and adults have been curtailed by an "economy" measure recently passed in Albany.

It might be true, as they say, that school teachers, measured by the wage-standard for similar capabilities in competitive fields, are overpaid. Why a teacher, with far less training, should be paid three thousand dollars a year while a doctor must live on half that amount, it is rather difficult for the average citizen to understand.

It might be true, as they say, that our educational system is a mass of expensive experimentation, born of conflicting theories of pedagogy, the value of which is purely conjectural, the price of which is real. To the public, knowing next to nothing about pedagogy, such an argument is quite plausible.

Our school teachers—as politically minded as any other group that feeds at the public trough—are meeting these arguments with sob-sister stuff about education, for the like purpose of gaining public sympathy. Being even more ignorant of economics than the realtors, they completely ignore the real reason for the cutting down of State-aid-to-cities for education.

Whether teachers are overpaid or not will never be determined until we have a competitive system of education. In a free economy, where every worker will get all that he earns, it is quite possible that the high wage level will permit parents to buy education, just like clothing for their children. The best school, like the best clothier, will get their patronage. To compete with superior private school education public schools and public school teachers will have to prove themselves. In a truly competitive system, no one is ever over-paid or under-paid. He who does not serve is rejected by the market.

As for the new-fangled theories of pedagogy—the development of schools for defective children, the fitting of the curricula to a depres-

sion economy, the special training courses—how much of this is due to the social conditions brought about by poverty and the fear of poverty? The answer to this question is in a statement made by the head of a State mental institution, that many of his 6000 patients would not be there if they could find jobs.

Much could be said about the defects of our school system, but all that could be said is equally true of our courts, our sanitation, our legislatures, our police, of every community endeavor.

But the important point in this controversy, completely overlooked by the frothing school teachers, is that the proponents of this measure to curtail New York's educational facilities are the landlords. And what are they fighting for? More rent. Every increase in social service threatens their graft. Therefore, they fight it.

In the present instance this fact is so obvious that one wonders how the teacher organizations overlooked it. The main proponents of the "economy" measure were the landlord organizations—and they made no bones about their identity. But, did the teachers point out that these rent hogs were squealing for a full trough, and to hell with education? Hardly. We can't blame the teachers. They studied economics at college.