Clipping of Note NUMBER 61

Something for Nothing?

By MARK C. SCHINNERER Superintendent of Schools, Cleveland, Ohio

The writer of this editorial practices what he preaches. I know because I am well acquainted with him and his career. He has always given at least as much, and usually more, than he expected to receive. He is a stalwart American citizen. It is fortunate for all of us when men like Mark Schinnerer occupy important positions of leadership, especially in education. Dr. Schinnerer is a valued member of the National Advisory Council for Scholastic Magazines.

—John W. Studebaker
Chairman, Editorial Board

THIS is about economics. This is about the teaching of economics, not directed just to teachers of economics, but to all teachers. It is directed to all teachers because the job that needs to be done cannot be done by just the teachers of economics.

There is a colossal oversupply of people in my country who either never discovered some of the basic principles of economics or think that the economic laws have been repealed. We hear much wailing that the schools have failed in this regard and the cry is for required courses in economics. We have failed—in school and out—but the answer is not in required courses. The answer, in my opinion, lies in a continuous effort to inculcate in children, from kindergarten through high school, some basic and very simple facts.

There are three things which almost anyone can be brought to understand and if these three are ingrained, we can leave the more complicated principles to the experts.

1. *You can't get something for nothing.* Too many think they can. That is the basis of gambling and most speculation. Giving a higher mark in school than is earned is proving that the student can get something for nothing. That is bad business. When parents urge no homework, they somehow expect something for nothing. One gets out of school work about what he puts into it. Only parasites get something for nothing.

2. *You can't spend more than you have and remain solvent.* The longer such a system is followed, the more impossible it becomes to keep afloat. Know anyone who trades in a mortgaged car on a new one and has both a newer car and a bigger mortgage? The woods are full of such people. It is bad economics. It's somewhat like drug addiction. This applies equally to a person, a business, or a government.

3. *You cannot equalize ability by a handicap system.* It is wrong to expect as much from a youngster with a low I. Q. as is expected from a youngster with a high I. Q. It is also wrong to set up handicaps so that they come out even. Leave that for the exclusive use of the racing stewards. Competition still has a place in America, thank goodness, and I don't want it any other way.

In every school day, there are numerous incidents in each student's school experience when these three fundamentals are present. Just repeatedly bringing them to the pupil's consciousness will work wonders. If all our people accepted these three economic axioms and lived by them, we would live in an economic paradise.

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