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THE TEACHING OF PHYSIOGRAPHY

Physiography

It is quite unfortunate that a subject as valuable as physiography finds such a small patronage among our high school pupils. This is probably due partly to the fact that there is still a lack of agreement among teachers as to the content or classification of the subject. In some high schools physiography is required of all freshmen. Often it goes under the title of "general science" or "modern geography." The subject matter of physiography is now fairly well organized. Yet its content varies greatly in different high schools, depending largely upon the training of the teachers. Unfortunately there are comparatively few teachers, except in the larger school systems, who are at all adequately prepared to teach it.

There are still many problems to be encountered in teaching physiography in the average high school, such as the organization of the course, the securing of proper laboratory equipment, the necessary time element involved, and the selection of the proper text. Each of these offers a real problem for the teacher to face and work out if the course is to prove its real worth and receive proper patronage and consideration.

Every teacher of physiography should, first of all, realize that the subject should be so approached as to relate it in every possible way to local problems and thus catch and hold the interest of the pupils. With a well trained and resourceful teacher, even though the laboratory equipment is not first class nor the text book the best, all of the necessary "local color" may be worked in and

the application side of the course made real and vital.

The selection of a text is not simple. As yet no first class text that has the distinction of being primarily for high school freshmen has been placed on the market. Most of the recent texts are too technical and too scientific to be readily adaptable to high school work. High school texts should show clearly the application of the principles of physiography to every day life. Since there is no satisfactory text, it might be preferable to have available in the library or in the class room, several texts to which the pupils might have access without purchasing any particular one. I would suggest the following texts as among the most practical: Elements of Geography by Salisbury, Barrows and Tower; Lessons in Physical Geography by Charles R. Dryer; New Physical Geography by Tarr and Von Engeln; Rocks and Minerals by Fairbanks; Physical Geography by Gilbert and Brigham; High School Geography by Whitbeck; College Geology, Part I by Chamberlin and Salisbury. These texts offer much that is valuable and within the comprehension of high school freshmen.

It is not necessary to have an elaborately equipped laboratory to teach physiography. Collections of the common rock making minerals and good samples of the great classes of rocks, as igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic can in most cases be collected in the field by the teacher and pupils. If such specimens are not available in the surrounding region, they may be secured from Ward's Natural Science Establishment, 84-102 College Ave., Rochester, New York. Topographic maps illustrating all the major principles may be secured from the United States