

5-1929

Has Commercial Geography Been Left on Your Doorstep

Alison E. Aitchison

Iowa State Teachers College

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/science_bulletin



Part of the [Health and Physical Education Commons](#), and the [Science and Mathematics Education Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1929 by Iowa State Teachers College

Recommended Citation

Aitchison, Alison E. (1929) "Has Commercial Geography Been Left on Your Doorstep," *Science Bulletin*: Vol. 1: No. 7, Article 7.

Available at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/science_bulletin/vol1/iss7/7

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Science Bulletin by an authorized editor of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

HAS COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY BEEN LEFT ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Geography

If one of the chief aims of a teacher is to induce her pupils to know and love a subject which she herself knows and loves, then commercial geography in many an Iowa high school is in a sorry plight. In cases too numerous to cite, the home economics teacher, the mathematics teacher, the physics teacher, the english teacher, — in fact anyone who is so unfortunate as to have one period of the day unfilled by his or her own special subject,—is likely to have that foundling child, commercial geography, left on the doorstep.

The reason for this proceeding is as obvious as its results. Iowa is a state with hundreds of small high schools. In many of these the only geography work given is one term of commercial, unless there happens to be a term of normal training geography. Except where there is a regular commercial teacher, it is not likely that there will be on the staff any person who has had a course in commercial geography and few who have had any course in geography since the seventh grade.

The superintendent is put to it to find some one to take the work. He must have teachers with special preparation for the subjects in which there are several classes. Among these teachers he must find some one who does not raise too violent objections to assuming the burden of commercial geography. For the teacher thus selected, it means much extra work and the very uncomfortable feeling that she is fumbling around in a subject whose principles, objectives and subject matter are foreign to her. After several years of such teaching this feeling may wear off and she may become very much attached to the subject, but the process is rather painful to the teacher and not without tribulation to the pupils.

This brief article is addressed to those who find themselves struggling in this new field. Let us first consider the chief aim of commercial geography. Geography is the science of

relationships; it is concerned with the way in which man fits himself into his natural environment. Commercial geography is but one branch of this science and it must follow in some highly specialized way the general trend of all geography. Its special aim is to study the relationships of commercial activities to natural environment.

If the class is studying the production of certain commodities it is not enough that they should know the great producing areas. The pupils must be able to recognize the environmental factors which make these areas able to produce. For example, they find that the great wheat producing belt of North America extends from Texas to central Saskatchewan. This information becomes geographic only when they clearly understand that the factors of semi-aridity, of large areas of gently rolling surface and of fertile soils have made possible this production. The commercial geography of the situation involves also the transportation problems which the inland location of the wheat belt impose, its relation to the milling centers and to the markets of the eastern United States and of Europe. With the reasons for our own wheat production in mind the pupil is ready to understand our relations to world markets, the competition of such sparsely populated countries as Canada and Argentina, and the prospects of our own declining export as population increases.

Even this one example demonstrates clearly the need of up-to-date statistics in the teaching of commercial geography. Producing areas are constantly changing, but there is abundant evidence that not all teachers are changing their statistics in response to these changes. There are those in Iowa schools who in this year of grace are still teaching that Europe depends upon the United States for most of its wheat and corn, and that the world's supply of rubber comes from Brazil. One may have to use an old text, as text editions cannot change very frequently, but it is generally possible to bring statistics up to date by the use of some government publication, such as the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture or the Yearbook of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

Even if the text book which is used by the class is old, it is possible for the teacher to supply herself with the more recently published ones. Among these are: *Industrial Geography* by Whitbeck, *American Book Co.*, *Commerce and Industry* by J. Russell Smith, Holt and Co. 1925, *Commercial Geography for High Schools* by C. C. Colby and C. Foster, now on the press, Ginn and Co.

With several texts as a guide in the selection of subject matter, a liberal use of outline maps and graph paper, and the burning of much midnight oil, even those who have had the subject unexpectedly thrust upon them may do a piece of work of which they will have no cause to feel ashamed.

ALISON E. AITCHISON

NEW-TYPE TESTS IN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture

Modern methods of testing a pupil's knowledge have been applied successfully in the teaching of agriculture. The writer submits a few sample question sets as illustrative material.

I—Single-word answer.

Unit: Babcock Test for Butterfat in Milk. Answer each question with one word. Arrange the questions in a column and place answers in right hand margin.

1. How much milk is used?
2. How much acid is used?
3. What kind of acid is used?
4. What is the specific gravity of this acid?
5. When was this test developed?
6. Who developed this test?
7. In what University was he a teacher?
8. Give the name of the instrument which is used in measuring the amount of milk used?
9. What is used to preserve the sample of milk?
10. What does this test measure?

II—True-False.

Unit: Characteristics of Legumes. Arrange in a column, with a parenthesis preceding each statement. In parentheses, put a (+) if true and a (—) if false. Impose a penalty for guessing.

1. Legumes are high in proteins.
2. Legumes are high in nitrogen.
3. Legumes grow best in sour soils.

4. Legumes rank below timothy as a hay for dairy cows.
5. Legumes grown on rich soil are higher in feeding value than those grown on poor soils.
6. Legumes secure their nitrogen from the soil.
7. Legumes secure their phosphorus from the air.
8. Legumes are hard to harvest.
9. Legumes do not make a good hay for horses.
10. Rhizobium leguminosarum live on the roots of legumes.

III—Multiple Choice.

Unit: Breeds of Swine. Underline the word or words which make the correct statement.

1. Poland-China came from (China, Poland, New York, Kentucky, Ohio.)
2. The (Tamworth, Chester white, Berkshire, Poland-China, Duroc-Jersey) is the best mother.
3. The average size of a litter of the Duroc-Jersey is (4-6-7-8-9-10-11-12).
4. The lard type is the most popular in (England, Denmark, Germany, United States of America)
5. The (Yorkshire, Duroc-Jersey, Berkshire, Tamworth, Hampshire, Poland-China, Chester white) belong to the bacon type.

IV—Enumeration.

Unit: Seed Corn. Arrange the answers in columns and designate them as "a," "b," etc.

1. Name 4 leading varieties of corn.
2. List 4 characteristics of an ear of corn, which have no bearing on its value for seed corn.
3. Give the 2 main reasons for selecting seed corn from the field.
4. Give 4 requirements of storage bins for seed corn.
5. Give the 3 main reasons for testing seed corn.

V.—Association.

Unit: The Dairy Cow. Opposite each term write a short accurate paragraph which will explain the meaning of the term.

1. Dairy temperament.
2. Constitution.
3. Quality.
4. Texture.
5. Mammary system.
6. Capacity.
7. Conformation.
8. Registry.
9. Advanced Registry.
10. Tuberculine Test.

VI—Matching.

Unit: Breeds of Chickens. Arrange lists "A" and "B" in columns (A and B). Place three sets of parentheses before each term in list "A." From column "B" choose terms which match terms in column "A" and place the corresponding numbers in