

11. Appendix: It's Not *What* You Know but *Who* You Know!

1850, Henry Barnard

The officers of the school cannot encourage for a moment, the idea that a person who does not understand a subject thoroughly, can ever teach that subject well, . . .

1866

One can judge how unpleasant it is for the school superintendent when young men and young women, with fine feathers and good recommendations from some of our best schools, yes, and I am sorry to say, from our Normal School too, are brought to the superintendent to get their license, and when asked a few simple questions by him in geography or arithmetic they cannot answer them, but in place of answering them, they will hand you a piece of paper, saying that Professor Brown, or Professor Smith, or Professor somebody else says that they think from their good scholarship, &c., they will make good teachers. But I have had to inform more than one that I did not care anything about Professor Brown or Smith, that I did not want to know what they had done, but what they could do now; and it was but a few days ago that I had to reject one on that account. She came with a good recommendation but without an education, and she had so much confidence in her recommendation that she came the second time, and insisted that if I would license her that she would give satisfaction to the district, and yet she could not answer one question that I asked her. I do believe that this is the great cause why our schools are not in a better condition than they are.

1950,

Thirty-three years ago I heard a former president of this organization for the first time. It was Otis Caldwell speaking at a meeting of the Iowa State Teachers Association. I could not believe my ears when he told us that a majority of those who were teaching biology had never had a course in biology in their lives and he defined training in biology as consisting of having had a course in it at the high school level. That statement of his made me mad and I set out to prove that he was wrong. Instead I found that he was right, a characteristic which I have generally but not always found to be the case with him during the intervening years. I was appalled at that situation

. . . if the Iowa situation disturbed me thirty years ago the general situation had disturbed me this last year. While I found from Caldwell that a majority of the Nebraska high school biology teachers had not had biology, I was not prepared to learn that today there is an associate professor of science education with a doctorate in science education from a major eastern university who from his record has never had a college course in science in his life at either the graduate or undergraduate level.

. That guy is training science teachers to meet the problems of the atomic age in the community, the state and the nation.

1923.

In the meantime everything possible should be done to improve the present situation. One of the most vicious and widespread practices consists in assigning a class in mathematics to a teacher who has had no special training in the subject and whose interests lie elsewhere because in the construction of the time schedule he or she happens to have a vacant period at the time. This is done on the principle, apparently, that "anybody can teach mathematics" by simply following a textbook and devoting 90 per cent of the time to drill in algebraic manipulation or to the recitation of the memorized demonstration of theorems in geometry.

1935, Robert M. Hutchins

In the preparation of teachers we are thus involved in a vicious circle. The teachers are badly educated. They educate their students badly. Some of the badly educated students become badly educated teachers who educate their students badly. We have tried to improve the quality of our teachers by working for higher salaries, greater security, and academic freedom. All of these things are important. None of them will supply the fatal lack of an educated teaching staff. Nor will that gap be filled by all our splendid achievements in the realm of administration, organization, and finance. The best paper scheme carried on in the best building in the best organization with the most up-to-date materials is nothing in the hands of callow and uncultivated educators.