

OUR TOMORROW

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I WISH I possessed the skill of an Ingersoll to paint in words the vision of our past as a profession and as a professional association. I see a little group of courageous, far-sighted men breaking away from the National Council of Teachers of English to organize the forerunner of our present SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, thirty-four years ago. During that first year the predecessor of our QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH went to 160 subscribers. Now we print 5500 copies of each issue. Twenty-five years ago there was almost no graduate study in our field. Last year alone 450 advanced degrees were granted in speech by fifty-two institutions.

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Since our Silver Anniversary convention here in Washington eight years ago the number of our Sustaining Members has more than tripled (1200 now!) and our Association income has nearly doubled. The American Educational Theatre Association has tripled its membership within the last two years. It is estimated that last year in the United States more than half a million plays were produced by non-professionals (that's 1400 a day!); over twenty million sermons were preached; and quite a few political speeches were made—some in vain!

The General Motors organization estimates that 1200 of its employees re-

ceive in-service training in speech each year. The Ford Motor Company alone spends ten million dollars annually on its industrial relations program—and a large part of it is communication, discussion, conference and leadership training, *speech!*

Since the end of the war, the number of standard radio stations has doubled (2,000); the number of FM stations has increased thirty times (1,400); the number of television stations twenty times. The number of regular listener-observers of television programs has now reached four million. Since mid-summer people have been buying receiving sets at the rate of upwards of \$20,000,000 worth a month!

In the few years since the SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA was born have come radio, then the talking picture, now television. Yes, in the past, 20,000 heard Lincoln at Gettysburg, but in our time perhaps forty million heard one of Franklin Roosevelt's fireside chats. A single word increased in instantaneous power of influence 2,000 times! Even such a sketchy vision of our breathless past foretells inevitably tomorrow's decade, which will be—as has no other in history—the *Speaker's Decade*.

But recently there has come to our capital city, in desperate hope, that charming emissary from most distant China—and she made the full journey half way around the world in less time than in early May of 1787 it took George Washington to go from nearby Alexandria only up to Philadelphia for that 'Great Rehearsal.' So has the horizon of our influence expanded and the concern of our tomorrow become as wide

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as is the limit of our vision and our energy.

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And who are we to take such a happy view of our potentialities, such a heavy view of our responsibilities?

First, we are citizens of the nation which will have more influence than any other upon tomorrow's world. Second, our work is that of teaching those who will make up tomorrow's nation. Third, our field of teaching will better equip each future citizen to make his knowledge and his skill more influential.

Let me first point out that work which we can do as an Association. Then there is work which we must do as individuals. Since 'in today already walks tomorrow,' we have a first obligation in any planning ahead to maintain our present strengths.

The loyalty and essential unity of the members of the SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA is evidenced by the steadily increasing number of our Sustaining Members. Even, so, while the number of speech teachers must easily have trebled since the war years, our membership has not even nearly doubled. Somehow we must find a way to bring the full cooperative force of a greater majority of all speech teachers into tomorrow's SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

Does this mean that we cannot much longer postpone the decision to establish a permanently located and permanently staffed business office? Does it indicate that a responsibility as important as that of our Executive Secretary cannot much longer be regarded as a sideline, part-time job? If so, this may be the time to begin planning. But our planning needs to be courageous and far-seeing. I have been increasingly impressed by the inefficiencies and costliness of three separate business offices, for instance, for our three Associations:

the American Educational Theatre Association, the American Speech and Hearing Association, and the SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. I know the economies of a single combined office could be great—the results for each Association much more advantageous. At first thought you may consider such a suggestion unworkable. I am certain that it is not. I am sure it must eventually be brought about, and there are many in all three organizations who share this view. Short of that goal we must continue to be less efficient and less effective than we ought to be. All other officers except a full-time paid Executive Secretary might be as separate and distinct as now. All of the advantages of separateness would be retained, plus the advantages of more favorable purchasing of supplies in larger quantities, fuller utilization of certain equipment, a more specially trained staff, and the closest cooperation in all business matters.

May this not be the time to set up a study committee which might even be given two years to investigate all phases of this suggestion? I believe the loyalty and concern of all the members of all our associations demand that we somehow provide that kind of forward-looking leadership. Even as radio, talking-picture, and television have revolutionized our recreational lives, so have new equipment and new methods revolutionized the business world. Scholars and teachers may not necessarily be skilled in the arts of business. Just as we expect to be called upon as experts in speech to cope with the speech problems of individuals, so should we ourselves call upon business experts to help us with that phase of our Associations' lives.

I take pride also in the past and present QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH

and covet for it an ever grander future. A distinguished succession of leaders in our field has edited it to its position of high repute among the professional journals. There must ever be a JOURNAL in our future—perhaps someday it may come more often than quarterly. Certainly quality always will be more important than quantity.

I for one earnestly hope we may never make the mistake evident in some of our fellow associations of issuing separate journals for college and secondary and elementary fields. We must keep our thinking straight and our planning strategic. We ought not in one breath complain about the lack of understanding and cooperation between the university and the secondary and elementary levels—then in the next breath propose separate journals to make it more certain that university 'educators' will read even more narrowly, that our communication across all areas of our field may be further hemmed in and restricted.

You tell me you have no time to concern yourself with speech education all the way from kindergarten through the graduate school? Then I say to you: You might well check up on your speech philosophy—perhaps it's out of focus! Nor will I be even slightly intimidated from this position by those who excuse their narrow interests by wrapping about themselves the sainted guise of the intently deep scholar! Even atomic scientists these days seem intent upon *expanding atoms*. So may our JOURNAL never lose awareness of the wide horizons of its service to our whole field from the beginning all the way through the educational process.

Too much cannot be said about the important role of research in contributing to our future. Here, also, we have much in the past for which to be grateful. Since 1934 we have published an

annual volume of research in our field—recently two volumes per year. The bringing together in *Monographs* of the complete records of graduate work in speech has constituted a fine service to the profession. That we have now expanded this to include abstracts of theses is an additional service not only to scholars and research experts, but to every teacher who may have the imagination and the vision to see in some thus-discovered bit of research a way to improve his teaching.

In the promotion and encouragement of scholarship and research, there is much more that can be done. Perhaps we may secure research foundation support for broad projects in which many universities can participate. Perhaps through the JOURNAL, or in some other way, we might make it increasingly possible for graduate students to be helpfully in touch with one another's on-going projects. Also in this area our ASSOCIATION is proud of having brought to publication the two-volume *History and Criticism of American Public Address*—and several other volumes now in process of preparation. These are additional fruits of the cooperative efforts of our united profession.

We may well be proud of our ASSOCIATION'S continuing awareness that the college and university must build upon the product of the secondary and the elementary schools. As early as 1923 we had off the press our ASSOCIATION'S first pronouncement upon the aims, procedures, and course outlines for an entire secondary school speech curriculum. Excellent articles recently have been arranged in such journals as that of the National Education Association and the Bulletin of the Secondary School Principal's Association. There has been the special Elementary School book. And several more are being planned.

The demand for speech training in the schools grows steadily heavier. Yet everywhere there are the besetting obstacles of lack of time in already-crowded curriculums, lack of consideration from accrediting agencies, failure to include speech in college entrance requirements, and its absence from the qualifications for teaching certificates. Somewhere, somehow each of these obstacles has to be overcome. We need to make our counsel in these matters available to state departments of education, to local boards, and to superintendents and principals. The leadership belongs to us. If we neglect this responsibility it will be assumed by others.

Our Placement Service is not of lessened importance during a time when the demand for qualified teachers exceeds the supply. Constantly positions are opening offering magnificent opportunities. Is there anything more tragic than a position of opportunity occupied by a person who lacks the vision, the training, or the ability to make of it what it might be? To place each member in the position where he might do most for himself and for our profession is a proper and important function. It calls for a Placement Service staffed by experts, better equipped to function with speed and efficiency upon a national scale and with trained organization, facilities, and location as nearly permanent as possible.

For the valuable services being rendered by our Executive Vice-President, our gratefulness can hardly be overstated. The many publications which have devoted special issues to our field, and the influence which we have been able to exert through other associations have been invaluable. These must continue.

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Now, however, I would not wish to leave the impression that I believe today's dreams may become tomorrow's achievements just through organizations. No association can make up for incompetent scholarship, poor teaching, and undiplomatic leadership. We must, as individuals, measure up to the demands of the times upon us. And we must, first and foremost, do our job. Our job is to teach *speech*. It is quite possible to hear extemporaneous talks, discussions, debates, radio programs, and plays in which certainly the speech part of the communicative process receives minor emphasis. We might even gently question how far our graduate departments should lay the emphasis upon scholarship to the neglect of performance in the arts of speech!

And while we are noting that organization alone is not enough, let us bear in mind that there are limits beyond which it ought not to go. The recent increasing efforts of self-designated groups within the speech field to set themselves up as accrediting agencies can be not only unwarrantably egotistical but positively dangerous. Let us not seek to emulate their arrogance now called in such sharp question by the Association of American Universities.

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There is a more important point which some of us may be missing in our everyday teaching. President Conant's *Education in a Divided World* discerningly points out that education has failed to keep pace with our rapidly changing country. A writer in the November issue of one of the elementary school journals puts it more vividly: 'The curriculum of today's school is better adapted to the teacher's generation than to the pupil's.'

Think of what has happened within just a few years. I called attention earlier to the increasing speed of our transportation. One effect of this is to throw us constantly into close interpersonal relations with many times the number of people our forefathers met in whole lifetimes. Think of the multiplied opportunities for misunderstandings, for differences, for conflicts, for confusions! Is it any wonder that maladjusted personalities are such a problem, mental and nervous diseases greatly on the increase? Not only are there the serious neuroses and psychoses, but such associated ailments as colitis, arthritis, neuritis, bursitis, 'benign nervousness'! From the recent psychosomatic front, a research assistant at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center reports: 'Many cases of trench mouth and inflammation of the gums start out as inflamed emotions.' A psychiatrist from Temple University warns: 'Look for emotional troubles in a patient with eczema.'

Almost our only recreations are the super-colossal, emotionally gripping movies, the far from soothing be-bop rhythms, the high pressure I-must-tell-you-this-instant radio programs with their adventure and soap drama episodes leaving the listeners to wring their hands until tomorrow. Even if you set out for a quiet drive in the country to get away from it all, that right foot just unconsciously pushes lower and lower until a gentle voice at the right says: 'Are you in a hurry to get some place? I thought we were going to take a leisurely drive!'

This is my point: Once we talked of speech training in terms of its great valuable contributions to the whole personality. Now have we relinquished that responsibility to psycho-drama and socio-drama only? Woolbert and others

of our proud heritage of scholars pointed out long ago that not only is speech the product of the whole organism and thus a most sensitive index of nervous balance or imbalance, but it is one of the best avenues of approach through which to achieve a better balance. Our colleagues in speech correction know this well. Let each of us not forget it. You send a student out of your classroom a better speaker because he is a better-adjusted human being. This is important work for our tomorrow.

I cannot leave this point without emphasizing that it is good for each of us occasionally to reread such basic statements of the philosophy of our field as A. Craig Baird's *The Philosophy of the Teacher of Speech*, and Andrew T. Weaver's *The Case for Speech* in our 1938 and 1939 JOURNAL. Speech programs built upon the solid foundation of those pronouncements will be enduring because they are ever adaptable to current needs and to the pupil's generation!

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Finally, I would lay upon our ASSOCIATION the heavy obligation to be a dual voice for our field: a voice of unity and a voice of strength. Our past presidents were almost unanimous in fixing upon the SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA the responsibility to promote a greater sense of solidarity and unity in our field. As one put it: 'We must throw the emphasis upon what we have in common in order to counteract strong centrifugal forces.' Another said: 'We must act against further fragmentation of Speech Departments.' And one, with I think considerable wisdom, suggested that at the university level more reliance upon the democratic process within departmental functioning might help. That is why we must have more democratic functioning within our ASSOCIA-

TION also—and the constitution makes that possible to you at any time. There are several members of the once-famous young Turk rebellion now in reasonably high places who can tell you how if you have any doubts! In unity there is strength. In division there is weakness.

You theatre people know well that when theatre is under English it is more often drama than theatre—what your own Kernodle has well-called decadent drama is mere literature rather than drama come-alive upon the theatre stage. When discussion, argument, and debate go elsewhere than in Speech, they are too often but weak shadows of their potentialities. When radio goes elsewhere, when television goes elsewhere, the speech essence of its art is neglected. And so one might go through all the elements of our field.

I make this one generalization without the slightest fear that I may anywhere be refuted either by catalogue evidence or by the evidence of practice: *Where there are separate departments within our one field the students suffer!* That ought not to be. It may also be a little questionable how we may talk with a straight face about the contributions of our field to human harmony and understanding if we cannot come to some unity among ourselves. Personally I am much encouraged about our outlook in this respect.

As associations and as a profession, we are reaching maturity—the kind of maturity which one of our distinguished founders, J. M. O'Neill, eloquently pictured at our Silver Anniversary convention. We are holding in increasing respect the welfare of our whole profession and our common broad objectives. We will not let pettiness hold us back from the attainments of our better selves. And we have been petty, we of the SPEECH ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, even about

choice of convention cities and convention dates. What trivia of difference within which to lose sight of our common destiny! Times like these call for our unified effort.

Consider the challenge of television which must bring theatre and radio together. Even in speech correction we see the significance of television and are already working with the potentialities of drama. The further deterioration of commercial theatre as it has been known in the past and the healthy upsurge of the combined community and educational theatre assure a greater than ever future for this phase of our field.

The demands for adult classes and industrial in-training programs particularly for leadership training, discussion techniques, and development of general expressional ability further emphasize that the demands of tomorrow upon us are too varied and too extensive to be met by us with any but our most united efforts. And this means above all, that we shall sense the breadth of our field and the important contribution of each and every phase to the whole pattern.

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Just as a university originated as a center—as a place for the in-gathering of learning—so originated our ASSOCIATION. It should be a center, not from which pieces break away for the greater glorification of little egos! Some will learn in time that unless they become parts of movements greater than their own lesser activities, they will never make their maximum contributions either to human learning or to human kind. Our ASSOCIATION should become a center into which the common elements of all our area will flow and from which all of us will derive new and greater strength. Together in harmony and unity, and only together can we be equal to the challenges of tomorrow.

While we are speaking with the voice of unity, we must speak to the nation with a voice of strength. Unless we speak with a voice having authority, the quacks, the uninformed, and the incompetent will. If we shrink back from the responsibilities which these times place upon us, all professions and all men will be the losers, whether we shrink from cowardice, from complacency, or from timidity and deep humility!

There is nothing either brazen or contemptuous about the life guard who plunges in to save a drowning person. And in a world where freedom is drowning, men and women who command speech are needed. Freedom of speech

is a mockery to those whose abilities to speak instead of having been developed have been allowed to atrophy. It will be great to be living through tomorrow, greater still to be living in the most influential nation in the world, rarest privilege of all to be a teacher from whose classrooms go the makers of tomorrow.

I am proud and count myself fortunate to be a teacher of speech, guiding to richest possible fruition the highest potentialities of those who ever determine the future. In this age when telephone, talking picture, radio, and television have made the role of speech overwhelmingly transcendent, it will be, indeed, *our* tomorrow.