

Confidential

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN MEXICO.

I. Public Education.

The public schools of the country are conducted either by the various towns and cities, by the States or by the Federal Government.

A. - In many States the different towns and cities have charge of their own schools, attending to their financial and educational affairs. They do this either through local boards of education or through commissioners. In other States the towns and municipalities cooperate with the State Government by allowing it to direct the technical side of education such as the selection of teachers, the forming of courses of study, the prescribing of methods, the ~~selection~~ selection of text books, etc., while the town attends to the financial affairs. An illustration of the first type is found in the State of Vera Cruz, of the second in the State of Coahuila.

B. - There are other States in which all the public schools are conducted by the State, leaving nothing for the various towns to do. Such has been the case in Zacatecas.

C. - The Federal Government takes entire charge of the public schools in the Federal District and Territories. In regard to the Primary Schools the course of studies embraces four elementary grades and two higher grades, making six altogether. During the years 1882-90 there was held at the City of Mexico a Congress of Education to which every State of the Union sent official representatives. This Congress formulated courses of studies for all the Primary Schools which almost all the States have adopted. As a result, there is at least uniformity in the number of years devoted to Primary Education.

There has been at least one Preparatory School in each of the States and one ^{at} the City of Mexico. These schools correspond somewhat to the American high schools with two additional years, making six years altogether. Because the most famous professional schools, located at the City of Mexico, require a certificate from the Preparatory Schools for admission, the courses in these schools have been uniform all through the Republic. They have taken the courses of

studies of the Federal Preparatory School at Mexico City as their type. But from my own personal inspection I must say that some of the Preparatory Schools of the States have done a great deal better work than the one at the City of Mexico. As an illustration, I would mention the one at Monterey, N. L., known as Colegio Civil. The main trouble with these schools results from the fact that they have tried to include in their courses all the work belonging both to the High School and to the College. At the City of Mexico, they attempted to give all the courses of a college, beginning with children twelve years of age who had only been six years in the Primary Schools.

NORMAL SCHOOLS. There are^a great many Normal Schools in the country, though several States ~~which~~ have no schools of this type yet. The States of San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas, Vera Cruz, Nuevo Leon and others established Normal Schools many years before the Federal Government established one at the City of Mexico. There is no uniformity in the courses of studies. In some places the course covers three years only and in others it embraces seven years. The Normal Schools of Vera Cruz, Coahuila, Zacatecas, and Nuevo Leon have been more fruitful and successful than any others, not excepting the one at the City of Mexico. These schools take pupils after they have finished the Primary course, and are bound, therefore, to offer in their ~~main~~ curriculum both a High School course and that of the Training School for Teachers. The Normal School of ~~Monterrey~~ Coahuila had a four years' course, and one year of practice in the public schools of the city before the candidates were admitted for the diploma. The schools of the City of Mexico, of Puebla, Vera Cruz and other States conferred two kinds of diploma, one for teachers of elementary schools, and another for teachers of Elementary High Schools or Grammar Schools.

There are a few industrial schools in different places of Mexico. The city and state of San Luis Potosi conducted one of the oldest and best industrial schools in the country. There is another very important industrial school in Toluca, State of Mexico. Several other States have similar schools. Besides these special schools, manual training has been introduced in many public schools. During the last twelve years of Gen. Diaz' administration, much attention was paid in Mexico City to industrial

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education. There is, however, no uniformity in the courses of studies or kind of work done in these schools; they only show a good ~~mann~~ beginning in a much needed field of instruction.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS. Nearly every one of the states of Mexico has one or more professional schools, and in most of them, schools of Medicine, Law, and Engineering are conducted. The best professional schools are located at the City of Mexico and are now a part of the University of Mexico. There is a great diversity of courses of studies and of plans of conducting these schools. Those established in Guadalajara, Puebla, San Luis Potosi and Monterey have been famous for many years.

THE UNIVERSITY. The present University of Mexico was organized in 1910, and ^{is} well described by Dr. Rowe.

II. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

There are a great many Parochial Schools in Mexico. In the Northern States they are not so numerous ~~mann~~ relatively, but in some of the Central States they have more students than the Public Schools. As an illustration, I will mention the State of Michoacan. Its schools are of a very old type, use very primitive methods and have teachers utterly unqualified for their work. The sanitary conditions in the Parochial Schools are so bad that many State governments have ~~mann~~ ordered them to be closed. Their main object has always been religious instruction, and the other studies are neglected.

There are several Colleges or Seminaries established in every bishopric of Mexico which have for their object the education of the clergy. Their courses of studies are ~~mann~~ classical and very rudimentary. They devote special attention to the old methods of philosophy and to ~~Theology~~.

The Jesuits established formerly three or four universities. I was well acquainted with the one at Saltillo, the one at the City of Mexico, and the one at ~~Manila~~ Puebla. These universities are of the type of the old Spanish universities. They followed the classical courses, the scholastic philosophy and the Catholic theology. They had many students. Owing to the fact that the ~~mann~~ Jesuits have been legally excluded from Mexico since 1857, very little publicity was given to their work. In recent years ~~mann~~ they have been tolerated by the government. It is to be expected that if the law is enforced in Mexico, these

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colleges and universities will never be reopened.

I can suggest the names of many prominent educators in Mexico who could render valuable services in completing this survey.

Ing. Miguel F. Martinez, who lives at the city of Mexico, is considered the greatest Mexican ~~man~~ educator now living. He was general superintendent of education at the City of Mexico till 1911, and then was appointed principal of the National Normal College. Prof. Emilio Rodriguez was the principal of the Nuevo Leon State Normal School at Monterey, Mexico. He is one of the best educators of the country. Prof. Abel Ayala was secretary to the superintendent of education at the City of Mexico, and lately he was appointed general superintendent of Education in the State of Nuevo Leon. I understand he is now living in Monterey, Mexico. I do not give ^{now} the names of ~~others~~ others because I have not heard from them for a good while.

THE GREATEST NEED AT PRESENT.

In my opinion the greatest need in the field of education in Mexico at present is a great university to train the future leaders of the people. That university ought to give special attention to the training of teachers, not only for the Primary Schools but also for High Schools and Colleges. Another prominent branch of the University ought to be a College of Agriculture, adapted to the conditions and needs of the country. This University ought to provide a number of scholarships in cooperation with the various States and other educational organizations of the country.

Another prominent feature of the University ought to be the establishment of Summer Schools in Various sections of the country to offer educational opportunities to the present teachers who need encouragement and better training to do their work more efficiently.

The University should also provide a number of experts ^{who} could always be found to give advice and to help the Federal Government or the governments of the different States to organize Public School systems, or to reorganize any department of the same. Such experts could render very valuable services at this present crisis, for after the revolution, whatever government there may be in Mexico, it should pay special attention to public education.

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Nashville, Tennessee,

April 30, 1915.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Mexican Committee

The adjourned meeting of the Conference and the Committee to Study Educational Conditions in Mexico was held at the office of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on May 6th, 1915. The meeting was called to order by the chairman, President Dabney, at 2:30 P. M. The following members of the Committee were present:

Dr. Norman Bridge
President Frank J. Goodnow
President Henry C. King
President Samuel C. Mitchell
Doctor James Bassett Moore
Mr. Arthur W. Page
Professor Leo S. Rowe
Mr. Theodore H. Price and
President Charles W. Dabney

and the following

Members of the Conference

Mr. Chas. R. Hudson
President Henry S. Pritchett
Doctor George B. Winton

There were absent:

Doctor David Starr Jordan
Doctor John R. Mott
President Harry Pratt Judson

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted with some amendments, which the Secretary was instructed to make.

The Chairman informed the meeting that Doctor David Starr Jordan had expressed his regret at his inability to be present in person but assured the Conference of his entire willingness to cooperate with it in any way possible.

Doctor Dabney also stated that Doctor Mott had been compelled to leave for California but that he, too, had given assurance of continued cooperation.

The Treasurer stated that he had had a letter from Doctor Judson stating that he would be in New York to attend the conference but that although Doctor Judson was registered at the Manhattan Hotel he had been unable to communicate with him. He would do so and advise the Conference of Doctor Judson's attitude toward its purposes.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, Mr. Price read a letter which he had addressed to Mr. Doheny and Mr. Dohney's reply thereto. Upon motion, duly seconded, it was resolved that a copy of these letters should be spread upon the minutes. They read as follows:

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(Mr. Price to Mr. Doheny)

My dear Mr. Doheny:

I regret exceedingly that you find it impossible to remain in New York until the meeting of the gentlemen who are expected here today to consider the Mexican situation.

I am writing you this letter with the expectation of reading it to them if it meets with your approval. My purpose in doing this is to try and convey to them briefly your very interesting views and knowledge of the Mexican situation as expressed to Doctor Dabney and myself.

I understand, of course, that it is not your intention or desire to impose your views upon the conference and that one of your reasons for not attending it is a feeling that your presence might perhaps be misunderstood as delimiting its latitude of action. I am, nevertheless, exceedingly sorry that we are not to have the benefit of your collaboration and advice and the stimulus of your enthusiasm for Mexico in any plans we may adopt or any work we may undertake.

You have expressed yourself to us as believing that Mexico's greatest need at present is that a careful study shall be made of the social, political, educational and racial conditions which today exist in the Republic and that the result of this study should be put before the world at the earliest possible moment.

You believe that if such a study is made by men whose disinterestedness and enthusiasm for the cause of humanity is undoubted that it cannot fail to do good. You believe the effect and cogency of such a report will be greatly increased if it reflects the personal observation of such men. For these reasons it is your hope that as many members of the Conference as possible will visit Mexico in the near future. To this end you have authorized me to say that a fund of \$50,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is at the disposal of the Conference for the prosecution of the study and investigation suggested and that the Mexican Petroleum Company and its various officers will be very glad to forward and facilitate the work in so far as they may be able to do so.

(Signed) Theo. H. Price.

(Mr. Doheny's Reply.)

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paper. Your letter contains in substance my views and intentions as well as correctly states my guarantee as to funds and other aid.

(Signed) E. L. Doheny.

Doctor Pritchett expressed the appreciation of all present of Mr. Doheny's generosity and self-effacement.

The Chairman stated that the object of the meeting was to discuss a plan for a study of the educational conditions in Mexico. The informal discussion was opened by Doctor Rowe who had submitted the plan for the proposed Survey. Dr. Rowe stated that inasmuch as Mexican statistics at present accessible in the United States were far from trustworthy, it would, in his opinion, be better to rely upon the personal observation of agents sent to Mexico by the Conference, and from facts gained from persons in the United States personally acquainted with recent developments in Mexico. Doctor Rowe added that he felt it would ultimately be found necessary for the Committee or several members of it to visit Mexico in person.

The Chairman then called upon Doctor Winton, who had been for many years a resident of Mexico engaged in educational work, for an expression of his views. Doctor Winton affirmed the tenacity of the Mexicans in holding to their ideals of liberty and republican government, although these ideals had not yet been realized to any great extent. He explained President Diaz' work in the development of the country;—mines, railroads, telegraph, telephones and industrial interests—and pointed out that he had brought the country to a point necessitating educational development before there could be further advancement. He explained that several of the States had developed a rudimentary school system in spite of caste and ecclesiastical influence and said that he thought it would be unwise not to take account of the educational organization in each state, at least, in so far as this organization survived.

Mr. Hudson was next called upon. He expressed himself sympathetically with regard to the character of the Mexican people; their capacity and possibilities; their willingness and ability to learn; their aptitude and their aspirations. He had great sympathy with their aspirations and strong hope of the people. He said that he believed that they were eager and willing to learn and that although,

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perhaps, lacking in initiative and inventive ability, they would prove themselves apt pupils when given the opportunity to learn. He told of the experience of the Mexican National Railway in developing their aptitudes and increasing their wages and of their gratitude for the treatment thus received. He said that he believed the time for iron rule in Mexico is past and that the revolution which had been started by Madero would in one form or another continue until free institutions were established for a people whom, he believed, to be capable of self-government.

By permission of Mr. Doheny, Mr. Price then read in part a letter from a correspondent of Mr. Doheny in the City of Mexico as follows:

I haven't written you for some time, ~~due~~ to the fact that we have not had any means of communication for some time past. The situation has become so critical that such a thing as a postal service no longer exists. The last mail received from the States was dated the latter part of December and received January 11, since then we have had no letters, papers or magazines. However, we have been able to get out some mail by means of the Embassy pouch or by giving it to some personal friend to take to Vera Cruz.

Until recently we have been unable to get any news from the interior. Now foreigners are drifting in on foot, horseback, riding burros or with one of the military trains, and the conditions they report are indeed terrible. The rich agricultural districts of Jalisco, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Morelos and the State of Mexico have been laid waste, crops destroyed, animals driven off or killed for their hides, labor impressed into the so-called armies and such food stuffs as were being held over confiscated or destroyed to keep the other faction from getting it. This is the biggest producing section of Mexico. It supplies the major portion of the Republic with the cereals, and the situation spells famine for one third of the population of the country. Please don't think I am hysterical or am trying to exaggerate the facts. A commission, mostly Spaniards, who are the best posted on food supplies, and headed by an American, the associated press agent here, has made a very careful study of this

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question at the request of the International Committee, and they report a shortage of corn alone of over 43 million bushels to carry the country over until the next crop,— this not taking into consideration wheat, barley and other necessary cereals. Furthermore, to date very little has been planted, due to the shortage of labor and live stock, also the uncertainty of conditions. The conclusion is that if Mexico does not get outside aid and get her crops planted soon, we will have a famine which will astound the world.

It is apparent that this revolution will be over by the end of 1915; but not by any particular faction winning; starvation will be the winner. This so-called revolution has now been going on for over four years, but up until August of last year (the date of the commencement of the European war) nothing really serious happened. People went about their business and at least made expenses. Now there is no business, there has been more wanton destruction, murder, rapine, and general deterioration since that date than during all the previous years put together. The bandit chiefs will tell you, if you take the trouble to ask them, when peace will be established ("Just as soon as the European war is over.") but starvation will beat them to it.

We don't think conditions are bad here in the City, because with money you can still get something to eat. Still the poor are drinking the blood and eating the refuse out of the slop-gutters of the City Rastro, which out of charity has quit producing fertilizer and is giving this refuse to the City's poor. The relief committees are now trying to buy supplies with the funds they have collected for this purpose, but are unable to do so on a large scale as the only market in which to purchase these supplies is Toluca, which is also in the hands of the Zapatistas, but who don't work in harmony and make it very expensive. For example, to get a car of flour down from Toluca, first you pay \$65, per sack of 96 pounds, then you pay double first class express as freight,

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and then if you don't want the flour to rot in the car you tip the Jefe Militar in Toluca \$70, the standard charge per car to move it out of the Station, and if you are lucky and don't fall into the hands of another Jefe, or some under-stripper, you get off without further payments. Under these circumstances one doesn't feel like contributing. In fact, I deem it most advisable to wait until the line is open to Vera Cruz and the supplies begin to come in from the U.S.A. under the supervision of the American Red Cross or some other responsible organization. There will be plenty of time to contribute then not only once but a dozen times. Doctor Pritchett then expressed himself as believing that it would ultimately be necessary for the Committee itself, or at least some of its members, to visit Mexico in order to form an adequate idea of what was necessary to be done.

Doctor Goodnow also expressed himself as believing that a personal visitation would be necessary in order to obtain the information upon which the Committee could act intelligently and effectively.

Doctor Mitchell said that he believed that any work suggested by the Committee should have reference first to the need of instructing the people of Mexico along the same lines that have been so successfully followed in the farm demonstration work carried out under the direction of the Southern Education Board.

Doctor King spoke earnestly with regard to the ultimate need of a great educational institution in Mexico similar to the Robert College in Turkey and the independent universities that had been established in Japan and East India.

Doctor Dabney summed up the views expressed and said that it appeared that the gentlemen were all agreed that the study of educational conditions in Mexico might do much good in informing the world about real conditions in that country and as the basis for constructive work when order was restored and government established. He proposed that we go forward to prepare a report by working up all the information obtainable in this country and by a visitation of Mexico.

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Doctor Bridge briefly expressed his enthusiasm for the purpose of the Committee and his willingness to cooperate in every way possible in making the proposed survey.

Doctor Moore interrogated Messrs. Hudson and Winton as to their opinion of the Mexican's capacity for self-government and was assured that this capacity could be developed under educational influences.

Doctor Mitchell then moved the following resolution, which after discussion, was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED

- I That the Chairman of the Committee is authorized to make arrangements with suitable persons to prepare a report covering such parts of the plan of study agreed upon to-day as it may be possible to prepare from information obtainable from men and records in this country.
- II That as soon as the way is opened, the members of the Conference and Committee be invited to go to Mexico for the purpose of studying present educational conditions on the ground. The gentlemen undertaking this shall make their own itinerary and plan of study. The Treasurer is requested to make necessary financial arrangements.
- III Supposing that the Conference will adjourn at the close of this meeting until some time in the Autumn, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be an Executive Committee, to carry out in the interim the proposed plan of study and visitation.

Mr. Price then interrogated the various members of the committee present as to the probability of their being able to go to Mexico. Doctor Dabney said he thought it would be practicable for him to go shortly after the 20th of June. Doctor Rowe said that he had made arrangements to sail for South America early in June and that he feared that it would not be possible for him to go to Mexico. Doctor Goodnow said that he had intended to go to China but that in view of existing conditions he might not do so, in which case he would like to go to

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Mexico. Doctor King said he thought it possible that he could go for four or five weeks after June 25.

Doctor Mitchell said that he thought it probable he could arrange to go shortly after the 25th of June. Mr. Page said that he would try to go but that it was impossible for him to say at present whether he would be able to do so. Doctor Winton said that he would go. Mr. Hudson had been compelled to leave so that it was impossible to learn whether he could go or not. Doctor Bridge said he would go. Doctor Pritchett said that he doubted whether he could go. Doctor Moore said that it would be impossible for him to go.

The Chairman said that he would communicate with the other gentlemen and seek to learn their views on this matter.

(Signed)

SECRETARY

CHAIRMAN

Secretary's Note. The Secretary is requested by Doctor Dabney and Mr. Price to add a note to these minutes stating that they saw Doctor Judson on the morning of May 7th and that he expressed his great regret that he had misunderstood the date of the meeting which he had come on to New York specially to attend, understanding it was the 7th rather than the 6th of May. He expressed his entire sympathy with the purpose of the Conference and his willingness to act as a member of it and promised to seriously consider going to Mexico with the Committee, if they decide to make the trip. Doctor Dabney visited Mr. Hudson with Doctor Bridge to extend him an invitation to go on the trip to Mexico with the Committee. Mr. Hudson said that he would do so if the condition of the affairs of the National Railways of Mexico permitted. He promised the Committee to do everything in his power to facilitate the proposed trip.

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EDUCATIONAL SURVEY OF MEXICO

Plan submitted to the Committee for the Study of Educational
Conditions in Mexico

by
Dr. L. S. Rowe
Logan Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. *

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the present status of public education in Mexico, it is necessary to bear in mind certain characteristics of the Mexican constitutional system, which have had a far-reaching influence in bringing about the present situation. Mexico has long suffered from the fact that in 1857 a constitution was adopted, the provisions of which are not in entire harmony with the real needs of the country. The members of the Constitutional Convention of 1857 were political idealists dominated by a real enthusiasm for democratic institutions and with unbounded admiration for the French and American constitutions.

An analysis of the political and social conditions prevailing at that time as well as the history of the country during the last six decades clearly shows that the primary need of Mexico was and is a vigorous and centralized national government. The country presents none of the political conditions essential to the development of a well balanced federal system. Imbued with the highest patriotic purpose, but unmindful of the manifest needs of the country, a form of political organization was adopted which has been a real obstacle to national progress, not only in preventing the solution of pressing national problems, but contributing both directly and indirectly toward political instability. Inasmuch, however, as the proposed survey is to be confined to educational conditions and educational needs, it will not be necessary to examine this phase of the situation in greater detail.

Following the model of the political system of the United States, the responsibility for education -- primary, secondary and university -- was placed on the individual states. The only sections

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of the country in which the National Government was given control over public education was in the Federal District (the site of the National Capital) and in the National Territories. The experience of the last sixty years has clearly shown the necessity of placing the educational system of the country under the direct supervision of the National Government. The individual states do not possess the financial resources necessary to meet local educational needs. Furthermore they lack anything approaching an organized educational public opinion.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Madero revolution, the Minister of Public Instruction in the Diaz cabinet drafted a plan for the nationalization of public education in Mexico. This would have required a constitutional amendment, but with the vigorous support of President Diaz, there is no doubt that such an amendment would have been passed.

The present situation demands either

- (1) The nationalization of public education, or
- (2) A thorough reorganization of state finances in order to increase local revenues.

Of these two possibilities, the former promises better immediate results. With the nationalization of public education, Mexico would be able to meet her two most pressing needs, namely the development of a system of manual and vocational training, and the introduction of a well organized system of agricultural education.

From whatever point of view we approach the Mexican situation, the final conclusion always points to the basic need for the solution of the present educational problems confronting the country. The Mexican nation, considered as a whole, is a peace-loving people, but the lack of anything approaching an enlightened and organized public opinion makes it easy for selfish political leaders to deceive and mislead the ignorant masses.

In addition to the system of public education, it is necessary to take into account the educational activity of the Catholic Church. This has been less important in Mexico than in the countries of South America. Nevertheless, these activities

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must be considered and should be made a matter of careful inquiry. Furthermore, there has been established, in different parts of Mexico, a number of mission schools under the auspices of American missionary boards which have been doing excellent work. The precise scope of these schools should form a part of the investigation.

In order that Mexico may be assured of a normal, peaceful and progressive development, certain basic reforms must be undertaken. The constitutional system must be brought ~~mmmm~~ into harmony with national needs and a well conceived plan of social legislation must contribute toward the improvement of the economic ~~mmmmmmmm~~ condition of the great mass of agricultural laborers. In order, however, that these changes should rest on a permanent and stable basis, the people must be prepared through education to respond to and cooperate with any plan of national re-organization. Nothing but a comprehensive educational policy will meet this need.

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PLAN OF SURVEY

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN MEXICO

I. PERSONNEL

(A) General inspection of educational conditions.

A small commission of not more than three (3) persons to visit typical sections of Mexico in order to secure a general view of the situation, and be able to co-ordinate the material secured through more specialized investigations.

The plan recommended is that the results of the detailed investigations be first submitted to this commission of three persons, who with their general acquaintance with conditions in typical sections of Mexico, derived from visits to the districts indicated, will be in a position to present to the Conference a definite plan for the improvement of educational conditions in Mexico.

This commission should visit the states of Chihuahua, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Vera Cruz, Oaxaca and Yucatan.

(B) Detailed Investigation

For the purpose of a detailed investigation of educational conditions, it is suggested that the Republic be divided into the following districts, to each of which one (1) investigator ~~mm~~ should be assigned. The question as to whether each investigator should be required to visit every section of his district will depend on the amount of time at his disposal as well as the funds available.

District No. 1

Sonora, Sinaloa (with some information concerning the ~~mm~~ territories of Lower California and Tepic)

District No. 2

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~~Guamamamam~~ Coahuila and San Luis Potosi

District No. 4

Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas

District No. 5

Zacatecas, Aguas ~~mm~~ Calientes

District No. 6

Colima, Jalisco, ~~Guamamam~~ Guanajuato

District No. 7

Vera Cruz, Puebla and Oaxaca

District No. 8

Michoacan and Guerrero

District No. 9

Federal District (Mexico City), Mexico, Morelos,
Tlaxcala, Hidalgo.

District No. 10

~~Ymm~~ Tabasco and Chiapas

District No. 11

Yucatan and Campeche

II. OUTLINE OF INQUIRY

(A) Character of Population

(Ethnic makeup, literacy, economic efficiency,
industrial standards)

(B) Economic Conditions

(Natural resources, character of employment,
relation of employer to employee, wages, con-
tinuity of employment)

(C) Social Conditions

(Family organization, family life, peonage,
religious and moral conditions)

(D) Public Educational Organization

1. Relation of state to municipal
educational functions and activities.
2. State and municipal budget, with
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for educational purposes
3. Distribution of educational facili-
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4. Adaptation of educational facilities
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5. Recommendations for changes in educational organization, ~~mm~~ methods and support

- (E) Educational Activities of the Catholic Church
- (F) Educational Activities of other Religious Denominations
- (G) Educational Activities of Organizations other than Religious
- (H) The Improvement of Agricultural Conditions through Farm ~~Demonstrations~~ Demonstrations similar to those undertaken by the General Education Board in the Southern States.
- (I) The Improvement of the Industrial Efficiency of the Factory Employee and Artisan through Continuation Schools or similar agencies.

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EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN
MEXICO

PREPARED FOR
THE COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN
MEXICO
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I. RACIAL SETTING!

Summary.

Conditions in Mexico cannot be understood without a study of ethnology. The Nahua people - Toltecs, Chichimecs and Aztecs - came from the north by the west, and displaced an earlier race, the Mayas perhaps. Their records were destroyed by the Spaniards. We suspect their origin to have been Asiatic - Japanese, probably. They are oriental in type of mind and in physique. The Aztecs had been the leaders for only a century or two. They had developed as a warlike tribe, and their religion had followed the same lines. It was not really typical, as Mexicans are not bloody in their tastes. The line between "nobles" and "plebeians" was the most noteworthy social phase of native life. Agriculture flourished. The Conquest introduced new racial influences and two new classes mestizos and creoles. The Spanish settlers took possession of people and lands. Education was left to the Church. Doubt was entertained at first whether the Indian could be educated. There was no attempt at education by the government. The Spanish crown and the superior authorities in the Church made provision for the protection of the Indians. These measures were brought to naught by the avarice of the colonists. Repartimientos and encomiendas were intended for the good of the natives, but only resulted in oppressing them and enriching the colonists.

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Any study of educational conditions in Mexico must take account of the racial history of the Mexican people. Not only is that history without a parallel, but there is no phase of the people's life that does not throw the student back upon the extraordinary intermingling of race currents at and before the Conquest, and the influence which those currents have exerted upon each other and upon the mass during the succeeding centuries. The ideals and practices for the training of the young, which have prevailed during the six centuries of Mexico's recorded history, have been the outgrowth of the social, military, and governmental standards existing first among the native tribes, and later modified by the coming of the Spaniards. A rapid review of these racial elements and tendencies will serve, therefore, to give the setting for our examination of the educational status of today.

The Nahuatl peoples, who displaced an earlier stock, believed by many to be represented now by the Mayas of Yucatan and Central America, had been in possession of the Mexican plateau, according to their own records and estimates, some six or seven centuries before the coming of the Europeans. They had themselves arrived in three successive migrations, or had, at least, been dominated by three successive groups or tribes, the Toltecs, the Chichimecs, and the Aztecs. The Aztecs were in power at the time of the Conquest. Vigorous tribes of cognate stock lay just outside the

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sphere of their control - the Tarascoes, the Huastecs, the Mixtecs, the Sapotecs, and others.

This whole group consistently traced its presence in Central Mexico to migrations from some northern point down the west coast and then up unto the plateau. That southern extremity of the Mexican table^{land} differs from the wider reaches of the north in receiving usually sufficient annual rainfall to grow grain. The records of these people were kept by means of picture writings. Whether these were a development of generations recently antedating the conquest or had long been in use, it is impossible now to determine. Nearly all of those writings were lost. They had been prepared and kept by the priests of the native religions, and the Spanish conquerors in their zeal for the destruction of idolatry made way with them, along with the other contents of the temples. This was unfortunate, as being inscribed upon a peculiarly strong and durable paper, made from maguey leaves, they doubtless might have been long preserved as of interest both in themselves and for the history which might be deciphered from them. The few that escaped seem to describe wanderings within the bounds of central Mexico itself, and it may be that the art was a recent one. Whether all these documents (if the word is permissible), had they been preserved, would throw light on the vexed question of the origin of the Nahua peoples, may well be doubted.

On that question a word or two may be ventured. While the elaborate theories and speculations which have been a favorite diversion of students of Mexican history are in the main far from convincing, one must allow that there is much in the way of justifiable inference pointing to an Asiatic origin for these peoples. The physical resemblance which is still marked and de-

sphere of their control - the Tarascos, the Huastecs, the Mixtecs, the Zapotecs, and others.

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ish conquerors in their zeal for the destruction of idolatry made way with them, along with the other contents of the temples. This was unfortunate, as being inscribed upon a peculiarly strong and durable paper, made from maguey leaves, they doubtless might have been long preserved as of interest both in themselves and for the history which might be deciphered from them. The few that escaped seem to describe wanderings within the bounds of central Mexico itself, and it may be that the art was a recent one. Whether all these documents (if the word is permissible), had they been preserved, would throw light on the vexed question of the origin of the Nahua people, may well be doubted.

On that question a word or two may be ventured. While the elaborate theories and speculations which have been a favorite diversion of students of Mexican history are in the main far from convincing, one must allow that there is much in the way of justifiable inference pointing to an Aethiopic origin for these people. The physical resemblance which is still marked and de-

tailed, is re-enforced by mental and spiritual traits all pointing to a kinship of the Mexicans with the people of Japan or of China, rather than with any race of Europe. It is scarcely too much to say, indeed, that one outstanding phase of Mexico's long and tragic history, has been the inability of the European mind to sound the distinctively oriental processes of Mexican thinking. To this day there is an ever-present menace of tragedy in the forced contact of the American people, intellectual heirs as they are of Northern Europe, with the Mexicans, whose aboriginal orientalism was but slightly tintured by contact with Spain, and that at a time when Spain herself had for centuries been sitting at the feet of Arab school masters. As I write these lines I am beset by daily reminders of the inability of our people to understand Mexico and the Mexicans, spread before me in the pages of American periodicals. It is so grotesque that it is comic, yet behind the mask of Comic grins still the threat of tragedy.

The Mexicans physically resemble more the Japanese than any others. They have the small feet and hands, the long bodies, the wide faces and prominent cheek bones which mark the people of Nippon. Along with these physical resemblances may be traced moral likenesses. There is in the two peoples the same astounding indifference to death; in both may be found the same mixture of gloomy fatalism and childlike good cheer, the same easy complaisance coupled with invincible obstinacy, the same subtle unanimity in their mental processes, invisible and incomprehensible to the onlooker, the same estheticism and warm-heartedness linked with childish ferocity, the same unbending and deathless loyalty. The question is often asked me whether the Mexicans are not "very treacherous". The suggestion is ridiculous. They are almost criminally loyal.

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The hegemony of the Aztecs was a matter of two or three centuries, less or more, preceding the advent of the Spaniards. They had forced themselves to the front by sheer fighting ability. Once a weary and dilapidated tribe, they had found refuge on a rocky island of the salt and marshy lake of Texcoco, where for a time they eked out a scanty subsistence by fishing, hunting, and marauding. When later their numbers had increased, and they had grown skilled in arms, they overthrew the pacific agriculturists round about them and came to dominate the whole beautiful valley. Their warlike life begat a bloody religion, and the worship of Huitzilopochtli, God of War, culminated in human sacrifices - of captives only, at first - and cannibalism. This, though a recent and localized development, impressed itself so on the European invaders that it has ever since colored the conception of the Mexican national character entertained throughout the world. The fact is that the great mass of the Mexican peoples were neither warlike nor bloody-minded, and their religions were agricultural and pastoral in type, far removed from the sanguinary cult of the Aztecs. Indeed, the very fact that the Mexicans in general were farmers and artisans rather than warriors accounts for the sudden rise to power of the Aztec tribe. Some similar phenomenon must be the explanation of the hastily abandoned granaries, houses and irrigated fields throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

As is usual in such cases, the Aztec conquerors absorbed much of the culture of the peoples whom they dominated. They learned the art of stone work and wood work, of architecture and city planning. They received the benefits of the expert farming, already developed by their predecessors, the planting and cultivation of corn, beans, potatoes, etc., and the reduction of grains to food; also those of the weaving of cotton and other fibers into

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cloth, of skilled labor in gold, silver and copper, of fine arts in feather work and hieroglyphic writing. All these, there is reason to believe, originated before the time of the Aztecs of Tenochtitlan, though naturally the Spanish invaders attributed all that they discovered to the people whom they found in power.

This, then, is the situation which faces us at the beginning of our definite knowledge of Mexico. On a high, healthful and fertile plateau, at the heart of which is a beautiful basin or valley, adorned with jeweled lakes and watched over by sentinel mountains, two of them capped with perpetual snow, has been gathered a group of tribes, henceforth to be known (through mistaken geography) as "Indians". They are in the early stages of civilization, beginning to cultivate the soil, to build cities and to organize governments. Divided into jurisdictions that were primarily tribes, they are yet racially homogeneous. Their several languages are nevertheless distinct from each other, and their separate governments of varying form. They are in a chronic state of antagonism and jealousy among themselves, often breaking into warfare. Together they make a population variously estimated at from two to four millions.

While largely differing among themselves in the matter of social standards and customs, one or two aspects of community life pervaded all the tribes. Of these the most important was the line drawn between nobles and people. Despite the frequent descriptions and expositions of this social system in which the writings of the chroniclers abound, it is difficult now to trace the conceptions out of which it had grown. It appears to have been a fairly normal case of feudalism, that state of society likely to supervene during the transition of any people from warlike maraudings to settled agriculture and mechanic arts. The war chiefs come to

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the front through skill in fighting. Their following in battle remain loyal when the fighting ceases. If lands and villages and strongholds are beginning to be desired, the chief and his vassals aid each other to secure them. Within a generation or two there has been developed an hereditary chieftainship. Then there is but a step to the permanent distinction between noble and serf.

Some process like this has evidently taken place in Mexico. The event discloses that there was no real foundation for the distinction. The caciques were in no essential point superior to or even different from the macchuales. Yet since the discrimination was quite in line with what they were used to at home, it was accepted by the Spaniards as vital and final, and it exercised a far-reaching influence on social institutions long after the conquest.

As one result of the work of early missionaries among the people of Mexico, a considerable group of native scholars and writers grew up. These men, masters at once of their own and the Spanish language, took great pride in expounding the institutions, customs, history, and glories of their people. With them collaborated not a few of the missionaries, men who had come to understand something of the significance of the native culture, and even to have some measure of tolerance for the native religion. They admitted, at least, that many of the acts of worship belonging to it were of themselves innocent, and they allowed their converts to bring with them into the Christian temples the garlands and dances and music with which they had once honored the gods that had been displaced. It is interesting to observe that these native scholars were quite as apt to represent plebeian blood as to be from among the nobles, despite the fact that never, to this day, in Mexico, have the sons of the common people had equal opportunity with those who

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were looked upon as of better birth.

No phenomenon of the social history of Mexico so constantly impresses itself upon the student's attention as this discrimination against the lowly born. Yet nothing is plainer than that there is no physical or moral or intellectual factor in the life of the people themselves that justifies it. It was, nevertheless, both before and after the advent of the Spanish, a stubborn fact - often a bitter and unhappy one. It has scored traces in the national character and raised barriers in the national life that have not disappeared to this day. How it affected the educational undertakings will appear later.

Following the Conquest there were social developments quite as significant in their future influence as was the political change from autonomy among the native Mexican tribes to government by representatives of the Spanish crown. For almost a generation after the final victory of Hernando Cortes in 1521 there was no immigration of Spaniards except soldiers and friars. Nothing was more natural than that the soldiers should form alliances with the Mexican women. This was in a large measure with women of the plebeian class, and the majority of the unions were irregular. At once there was thus added to the existing population a new element, the mestizos, or mixed-bloods, children of Spanish fathers and Indian mothers. Within another generation, when Mexico had begun to be a field of investment in mines, plantations, and stock ranches, instead of simply the arena for the exploits of soldiers or the diligence of missionaries, there commenced a more orderly immigration. Spanish citizens came bringing their families. They came usually armed with concessions granted by the crown, prepared to take over native lands and mines, and with them native miners and farmers. The children that were born of these Spanish parents add-

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ed still another clearly defined strain to the population, the creoles (criollos). (In English usage this word is often taken to mean the same as mestizo, but that is incorrect. It means American born, of European parentage.)

Such was the Mexican population at the beginning of Modern Mexican history. Consisting originally of various related tribes, made up of nobles and plebeians, it had had injected into it the Spanish conquistadores and their successors, the non-descript mestizos, and the proud creoles. The Spanish invaders themselves were of various classes, but the opportunities of the new world were such, and its fields of exploitation so wide, that all of them^{that} showed any aptitude, whether for politics or business, were able soon to place themselves in positions of advantage. The distinction between noble and serf is everywhere but skin deep, at best, and is easily rubbed out when circumstances are against it. The Spanish soldiers were mostly illiterate and crude peasants. In their contact with the proud and disciplined nobles of the Indians they are often far from showing to advantage. Yet by the power of arms and later of wealth they came soon to be the aristocracy of the new world.

Of interest to our purpose was the attitude toward these various strata of early Mexican society of two classes of the Spaniards, the governing class and the teachers. The alliance between the government of Spain at that time and the authorities of the Catholic Church was a very close one. By common consent the work of educating the new subjects was left to the representatives of the Church. One historian says very bluntly that this was inevitable since none others of the Spanish immigrants were capable of teaching them letters. This is rather severe, but that the soldiers were mostly illiterate is not open to doubt. The same

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writer (Icazbalceta) adds that the income of the government was not sufficient to enable it to establish a system of public schools. On this point his accuracy is less self evident. The speed with which the governing class enriched themselves would indicate that the country did not lack in productiveness. The crown revenue suffered from a defective system of taxation. From the very beginning a head tax had been laid upon the Indians. The Spanish colonists managed usually to evade taxation, even after they had become land owners and exploiters of the wealth of the country. It was still the Indian - the poor man - who carried the load, a condition of things not yet properly remedied. Yet I have seen somewhere a statement that Spain's clear revenue from Mexico during the colonial period averaged five or six million dollars a year.

In the matter of colonial administration there was usually remarkable unanimity between the political and ecclesiastical authorities in Spain. The Crown virtually accepted all the suggestions of the Church in regard to the treatment of the native peoples of the New World. The authorities of the Church, however, from the Pope down, while moved by benevolence and a sincere philanthropy, were so often so far afield in their understanding of conditions among the Indians that their dispositions are a queer jumble of beneficent and disastrous provisions. The spiritual status of the low-class Indian was at first solemnly discussed. Soldier and missionary alike doubted whether he was, properly speaking, a soul, a rational being. This doubt persisted so long that it crystallized into a phrase. Spaniards, creoles, Indian caciques and most mestizos were spoken of as gente de razon, (rational beings) a class from which indigenas - just plain Indians - were by inference, excluded. This Sixteenth Century psychology has in it a humorous spice, but the scholars of that day took it in all seriousness. It

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certainly was serious enough for the Indian, for it affected, as we shall see, the provisions that were made for his education, and the system of education thus early introduced affected the whole subsequent history of the nation.

While in Spain there was usually harmony between political and ecclesiastical powers, in the application of the orders coming from Spain by the representatives in America of these two branches of authority there was often friction. The secular Spaniard, whether an office-holder or a soldier, while usually a devout Catholic, and desirous of seeing converts added to the Christian fold, was primarily interested in the search for gold. The resources of the New World (New Spain, it was called) were so fabulous, and riches often came with such ease and suddenness, that men became drunk with greed. This avarice astonished the Indians, and was at times the occasion of sarcastic comment. It thus came about that the plans of the government, advised by the Church authorities, looking primarily to the Christianizing of the native peoples of Mexico, in the hands of the colonial administrators and settlers were often distorted to serve the most selfish interests. If the royal orders were that the lands should be divided up among those who had merited well of the crown, the native people were seized along with the land, and made to work for the new "owner" in virtual slavery. Thus repartimientos were abused, and the system had to be abandoned. If a large land-owner had "commended" to him a certain number of Indians, that he might civilize and Christianize them, he promptly enslaved the whole lot, binding them as serfs to his land, which they could not leave so long as they were in debt. Thus the encomiendas were abused. More than one effort was made to abolish the system. Enlightened missionaries thundered against it. Even Viceroyes condemned it and from time to time a royal decree

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was launched against it. But it was most profitable to the colonists. Many of them were far in the interior. Not seldom the monks themselves were brought to think well of the situation. Were not the Indians submissive? Had they not all received baptism? What could be safer for them than thus humbly to take the orders of their superiors in religion and otherwise? As for working, that was also good for their souls. Left to themselves they would loaf and gamble and fight.

So the encomiendas persisted - in fact, if not in name. The masses were enslaved. It was not slavery in name. Men and women were not bought and sold - not usually, at least. But they belonged body and soul to the men from over the sea. They were helpless. Their paternal lands had been taken from them. Their weakness made resistance of any kind impossible. Their very language faded out, their tribal organizations disappeared, and in all the fertile and desirable sections of their country they settled down to three hundred years of ignorance and peonage. Some results of this our further studies will disclose.

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II. THE COLONIAL PERIOD.

Summary.

The early mission work was done by monastic orders, and was educational. They debated how much to teach the Indian. The missions were at first attractive and useful establishments. The mestizos increased the number of the lower class, especially in cities. Schools were established to meet the needs of various classes. A university was provided for as early as 1551. The Jesuits came in 1572, and soon engaged in educational work. Various institutions were provided for.

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The work of education in the new world was given over, as I have pointed out above, to the Church. This meant in Mexico at first the monastic orders, chiefly the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Augustinians. Later came the Jesuits. The Missions established among the Indians by the monks of the sixteenth century were largely based on teaching. Nothing else, indeed, was possible. These people needed to learn everything. Some of them were, in their way, not bad farmers. But the coming of the Europeans had introduced farming implements, domestic animals, fruits, vegetables, and grains not before known, about which the Indian has to be informed. Most important of all he needed to be taught the Christian doctrine. He did not need a great deal of this, to be sure, to induce him to accept baptism. That seemed to him an innocent enough rite, a good deal like some of those employed by his own religion. Just what mental reservations he might be entertaining did not greatly concern the average simple-minded monk. He believed in the efficacy of baptism, ex opere operato, and had no doubt that a soul was redeemed for heaven each time that he administered the rite. Just how much of letters should be taught in these mission schools was a subject of prolonged study and sober discussion. The issues involved were such as these: Can the Indian with his limited intelligence understand letters? (Facts of experience soon put this out of court, though at first it was given great

weight.) What use will a knowledge of letters be to him? Will it not endanger his soul by teaching him to think and thus to be less submissive in matters of doctrine? Will it not make him dissatisfied with his lot, and less desirable as a laborer? This question the land owners and mine masters urged with an insistence that is perfectly intelligible. Further, why should the common Indian wish to be able to read unless he was to pursue his studies in higher schools? Of course, ^{that} was out of the question. He could not be allowed to study theology, for its mysteries were not for such as he. If he learned jurisprudence, it would certainly give him ground for dissatisfaction with his social and economic status. As for philosophy, it was inconceivable that people so new to the ways of thought could penetrate the mysteries of that recondite science. Moreover, since there were no periodicals and few books, why should people wish to know how to read, anyhow?

Such questionings, suggested first, it must in all candor be admitted, by some of the leaders of the Church itself, and naturally taken up and urged by the majority of the Spanish colonists, served greatly to cool the zeal of the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries. From the beginning they had not believed it worth while to teach girls, and in dealing with the Indians had shown a marked preference for the sons of the nobles. Such primitive institutions as they had built up gradually disintegrated under these attacks. The missions ceased to be centers of teaching, and gradually came to be settlements of indolent monks, who lived off the labor of the Indians in the fields which were an appurtenance of the establishment, said masses, baptized babies, married the young people, buried the dead, and otherwise went through the routine of official duties, but had almost completely

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abandoned their teaching function. This process was hastened and finally consummated when at length the administration of these missions - most of which had now become an asset and not a liability - passed by pontifical order from the monks to the secular priests.

Of the idyllic character of many of these missions, and of the unflagging zeal of not a few of the monks, there is ample evidence. The boys of the community were gathered into the school rooms and taught the rudiments of letters, along with the "Christian doctrine", which had always the prime emphasis. In the early mornings and late afternoons, before or after their work in the fields, the men came to the patio, or open court, of the school, and received also their instructions. This was even more rudimentary. To the same open air school room came the girls, who were not thought to require anything more than teaching in religion, morals and household arts. In rare cases provision was made for boarding and lodging students - boys, of course. Mostly, however, the schools were day schools only. As the Indians were accustomed to gather in settlements about these mission stations, which always occupied eligible and well watered sites, there was usually no lack of students for the monks who felt moved to teach. By the labor of these same Indians churches, monasteries, granaries, storehouses and fort-like inclosures were raised, and widely extended glebes were cultivated, under the supervision of the farmer monks. The Indians were attached to their spiritual leaders and teachers, and gave freely of their time and labor. Neither parents, nor pupils, however, could be impressed with the need of systematic daily attendance upon the schools. Such regularity did not square with Indian temperament or habits.

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In Mexico City and other centers of population the educa-

tional problem early became a pressing one. It is in these centers that extremes of poverty and wealth tend to show themselves. Even before the coming of the Spaniards Mexico had its rabble. The utter demoralization of the social organism which the conquest induced greatly increased the number of this proletariat. To it were added in a very few years more the despised and abandoned offspring of the Spanish soldier and the wretched Indian woman. Many Spaniards even, caught in the meshes of native vice, and especially beguiled by the native drinks, sank to the level of this motley and hopeless throng. Within fifteen years after the occupation of the government by the Spaniards, when at length the vice-regal system was inaugurated, the condition and numbers of this lower class were such as to cause grave concern to the first viceroy, and to the early bishops of the new diocese. Their representations, and other reports of the situation of the poor mestizos, resulted finally in the issue of a royal edict in the year 1553 for the opening of an institution of learning for the special benefit of the youths of this class. This was the "college" of San Juan de Letran. In it were taught reading, writing, and Christian doctrine. It received a small income from the royal treasury, and had a charter direct from the Crown. One of the objects, as stated in its constitution, of this foundation, was that the young men educated there might go out as teachers in other schools. It seems thus to have been the forerunner of all normal schools in the new world. At a still earlier date, in 1536, twelve years after the arrival of the first missionaries, had been founded by the Franciscans in Tlaltelolco, a suburb of Mexico, a school for the Indian boys of the type which has been above described. The course there was somewhat more extended than in most of them, for to reading, writing and Christian

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doctrine were added grammar, Latin, rhetoric, philosophy, music and medicine. (Arithmetic is not mentioned by the authority whom I have consulted.) (1) One singular outcome of this educational enterprise was the fact that Indian boys educated there came to be ^{the} teachers and spiritual guides of creoles and even of Spaniards. (In the social scale of the time the order of precedence was Spaniard, creole, Indian, mestizo.) In 1544, after twenty years of work by the missionaries, Bishop Zumarraga in seeking to secure the translation into the language of the Indians of a certain book of doctrine gave as his reason that "there were so many of them that could read". Considering that the native language had had to be mastered by them and reduced to writing, it is no small tribute to the zeal and ability of these early missionaries that within the space of twenty years they had produced among the Indians a generation of readers.

(1) Icazbalceta.

Among the ecclesiastics who came to Mexico during the first century of Spanish rule were many university men. As the wealth and social status of the colony advanced, these men were the leaders in agitating for the establishment of an institution of learning of high grade. The colonists themselves, whose wealth had rapidly increased, and whose sons, if they secured an education, had to return to Spain, or to send there for private tutors, joined in the demand. In 1551, therefore, a royal cedula was issued ordering the foundation of a "college of all sciences", and in 1553, two years later, the University was formally inaugurated. This was, as will have been noted, the year of the opening of the college of San Juan de Letran. The Dominicans had been the leaders in urging the establishment of the University, and its administration was at

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