

HR 9011

Mrs. Winalski

TEACHERS OF THE DEAF

Need for the Especially Trained Teacher of the Deaf

The need for competent, trained teachers of the deaf is extremely critical throughout the country. This urgent need must be met now. Each year of delay exacts an irremediable toll. Schools for the deaf have long waiting lists of applicants who cannot be admitted because of the growing shortage of teachers and facilities. Failure to meet the basic educational needs of the deaf child infinitely compounds the handicap of deafness and creates bewilderingly complex problems to be faced by the deaf person, his family, and all the agencies public and private which seek to meet his needs. We must never lose sight of the fact that it is only through the special skills of those trained to teach the deaf that the deaf child can be brought into realistic contact with his world. Without this education, suited to his needs, the stream of our society and its culture flows past him in ambiguous and confusing undulations. For no other group in our population is the price of educational neglect so high, nor its resultant harm so irreparable.

The need for competent, trained teachers of the deaf is extremely critical throughout the country. This critical need must be met; 511 teachers are needed right now, and there were only 127 graduated in 1959! During the 1958-9 academic year, 6 of the 22 training centers for teachers of the deaf reported having not one student enrolled for teacher training, and others were not meeting their full enrollment capacity. At the same time, enrollments in schools for the deaf have been increasing rapidly (the increase was over 2,000 in 1958 and 1959;). Schools for the deaf have long waiting lists of applicants who cannot be admitted because of the growing shortage of teachers and facilities.

Role of the Trained Teacher of the Deaf

The art of conveying to the deaf child meaning -- i.e., comprehension and understanding of ideas inherent in "language"-- is an extremely specialized one. You realize, of course, that this meaning -- which comes to the hearing (and the hard of hearing) child through his ears -- is available to the deaf child only through his eyes. Herein lies the difference between the art of the teacher of the deaf and the other teachers in the educational milieu. Training in the special skills of this art is essential if we are to give to each deaf child a firm educational foundation. For the deaf child, the task of learning language -- this comprehension of the world about him in terms meaningful and accurate to him and to the persons to whom he wishes to convey his thoughts -- is a slow and complex one. He has a right to the teaching of one especially qualified to convey this meaning to him. To the extent that he is denied that right, this nation is failing in its duty to him, and is robbing itself of the benefit of his contribution to our society in his adulthood.

Results of the Shortage of Trained Teachers

One of the most difficult problems facing adjustment counselors and placement workers today is the so-called "marginal" deaf person who has reached employable age without benefit of proper education or of any education at all. The problem is frequently compounded because, faced with having to turn numbers of applicants away, the schools are forced into a selection process which frequently "selects out" the more difficult case -- the problem child. Of equal significance is the constellation of extremely complex problems posed by many deaf persons who have had school experience from untrained teachers.

Public and private programs are then confronted with the deaf client whose problems are complex and difficult of solution, who may lack not only the rudiments of education, but the positive patterns of social relations and work habits and attitudes which accompany the usual educational process and which must be established in the adult client if he is to succeed with any realistic vocational objective. Needless to say, these problems of personal, social, and vocational adjustment are more difficult to meet in a deaf person who has not had an opportunity to develop an understanding of the world around him or to acquire the communication skills needed to articulate his thoughts, feelings, and needs to professional persons who would serve him. (This is no exaggerated picture. One of the first things adjustment workers have had to do for many deaf clients is develop a sense of time -- how to tell time, how to make or keep an appointment "on time"; how to know what time to catch a bus, how to count -- how to count money -- all of these little things which we take so for granted, and which would have come to him through the schools if he had been given the opportunity of a proper education!!!)

Need for Federal Help

We can not say that responsibility in this crucial area lies solely with the States or the communities concerned. President Kennedy, in his Educational Message stressed that the human mind is our fundamental resource. To us this means the mind of the deaf child as well as the hearing. The Federal Government has a responsibility to see that every effort is made to assure that the deaf children of this nation have available to them the teaching skills of those especially qualified to meet their educational needs. Nor can we assert that the needs to which the bill is addressed do not have sufficient priority to warrant enactment at this time. We must recognize the priority of prevention. We must calculate the price of failure.

The Federal Government has a vital role to play in giving loud and clear recognition to this vital educational need of the deaf children of this nation and to enunciate its own good faith and exercise its leadership in moving toward meeting these needs.

Russian Action for Her Deaf

Probably no other group of American people is so neglected as its deaf citizens. This is the case because we are inclined to be satisfied with our past efforts, to resist innovations, however serious our unmet needs may be. Recently I have had brought home to me most forcefully that we can ill afford to relax our efforts. The March, 1957, issue of Social Welfare, a publication of India brings out that public services for the deaf of Russia are considerably further advanced than those in the United States. For example, Russia had already in print in 1959 a comprehensive modern sign language dictionary with 1800 odd photographic illustrations while we in America are still studying the matter. Russia has recently completed a well illustrated book for language development work for deaf children and adults. We are only at the stage of considering a book on English idioms especially adopted for deaf people. Russia has 56 production training centers for deaf adults while we have none. While we have more than 300 schools and special classes for deaf children and the only college for the deaf in the world as compared to 270 special schools for the deaf in Russia, the latter has 2 correspondence schools for the deaf, 451 deaf adult education classes, 100 State supported special houses of culture for the deaf, as against none in our country. Russia also offers her deaf citizens 350 club rooms as against about 150 privately supported clubs in America. Russia had a captioned film service

for her deaf people prior to 1957 while one was begun here in 1959. Moreover, interpreters are supplied for her uncaptioned films while we have only volunteer workers for this service.

I cite these facts to emphasize that this legislation for training teachers of the deaf is only a beginning and must be only that, for we have a long way to go before we can say to American deaf people that their nation offers them educational and cultural opportunities relatively equal to Russia. All along the service frontier we must galvanize for action. An important early step is giving help to our dedicated few who have borne a heavy load these many years. Their record appears less sorry in comparison to Russia with the knowledge that Russia had 30 full time program development workers in 1957 in comparison to one part time in the United States.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES }

REPORT
No. 1144 }

TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF THE DEAF

SEPTEMBER 7, 1961.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. POWELL, from the Committee on Education and Labor, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 9011]

The Committee on Education and Labor, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 9011) to make available to children who are handicapped by deafness the specially trained teachers of the deaf needed to develop their abilities, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 9011 is to assist in providing more trained teachers of deaf children. The bill authorizes a 2-year program of grants-in-aid for this purpose.

BACKGROUND OF THE LEGISLATION

H.R. 9011 is designed to help alleviate a serious shortage of trained teachers to provide the special education which deaf children require. Testimony was received that the shortage has existed for some time and is becoming more acute.

Reports indicate that the 365 schools and special classes for deaf children need about 500 trained teachers annually, while fewer than 200 of these teachers are graduated from training centers each year. The number of graduates in 1960 was 158.

There are nearly 30,000 children in residential schools and special classes for the deaf. One teacher is needed for every 10 pupils in order to provide the special instruction they require in learning a language they cannot hear.

There are 30 higher education institutions with approved centers for training teachers of the deaf. However, five of these had no students in the 1960-61 academic years.

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE LEGISLATION

The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to make grants-in-aid to higher education institutions which are approved for training teachers of the deaf.

The grants would be used for (1) assisting in covering the costs of providing and improving courses of training and study and (2) providing scholarships for students who desire to enroll in such courses, with the amount of the stipends to be determined by the Commissioner of Education.

H.R. 9011 establishes an Advisory Committee on the Training of Teachers of the Deaf, consisting of the Commissioner and 12 persons with experience or interest in training such teachers or in education of the deaf. The Advisory Committee would review applications for grants-in-aid and operation and administration of the grants program.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

H.R. 9011 authorizes appropriations of \$1,500,000 annually for fiscal year 1962 and fiscal year 1963, for a total cost of \$3 million.

