

*Sarmiento. Director de la Escuela Normal. 1842-1845.* [Ministerio de Educación Pública.] (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Universitaria, 1942. Pp. 192.)

This collection of documents is of singularly human interest. Covering the official decree which created Chile's first normal school and the various reports on the progress of its first complete course, it includes as well Sarmiento's statements of his educational aims, his laments over difficulties, and his rejoicing at accomplishment.

The school was to open with twenty-eight students—each at least eighteen years of age, “decently” trained in reading and writing, of good conduct, and belonging to a family which should be “honrada y juiciosa.” Each student was to receive 100 pesos a year for food, lodging, and clothing and—upon a successful termination of the course—the promise of employment, with a salary of not less than 300 pesos a year. In their turn, students promised to serve the State for seven years as instructors in the schools to which they might be sent. Other students in addition to those receiving the annual 100 pesos might also attend the school, but at the time of its opening candidates had not been found even for the government scholarships. The list of the first fourteen candidates is included among the documents, with note of the qualifications possessed by each. Periodic reports follow to record their success and failures and note new students and the substitutes appointed to replace those unhappily expelled. At last twelve students pass the final examinations; four are reported as in good health but too unprepared educationally to make the attempt; six are ill. A concluding list of all twenty-two students follows, with the Director's candid appraisal of each—even of one poor “flojo sin rival!”

The documents cover lists of supplies required, information about the subjects taught, work covered, hours of class, and—in particular—the Director's laments over matters of school discipline. Sarmiento reported a noteworthy student aversion to learning and absence from class against which not even the penalty of deductions from scholarship funds could avail. Students left the school to take positions elsewhere; they were flunked out, became ill at a horrendous rate, or proved of a character far from as irreproachable as their introductory good-conduct certificates had indicated. Gambling, stealing, going into debt, indifference to admonition, insubordination, the use of “indecent language,” as well as limited intelligence, were among the Director's complaints. Expulsion proved no remedy. Sarmiento

noted that such penalty fell upon youths already "poco delicados"; they hated study and hoped for—even provoked—expulsion from school as a good thing. One particular student was noted to have displayed singular strength of character in resistance to education; he had learned nothing at all in one and a half years! It was a rare day when at least one-third of the students were not missing from class.

Possibly the Director's ideals for the teachers he trained were inhumanly high. From the beginning Sarmiento had assumed the responsibility of watching over the conduct of students out of school as well as when they were in attendance. He stated that he had ever been assiduous in his attempt "to inspire in them a love of study, respect for the profession to which they were called, and a high idea of the influence which they would later wield for the improvement and progress of their native land." Few had the capacity for the arduous task ahead. Sarmiento continued:

Cualquier joven con mediana instrucción puede ponerse a la cabeza de una escuela, pero para introducir un sistema filosófico de enseñanza, para realizar un sistema de educación primaria que ha de traer por resultado cambiar la faz de la educación, en un país donde no hay generalizadas [sic] ni métodos, ni ideas, ni buenos hábitos, y al contrario dificultades sinnúmero, preocupaciones arraigadas, y una rutina irracional, se necesitan hombres muy preparados por la instrucción, de carácter, de talento, y aun puede decirse de genio; y de éstos hay muy pocos en la Escuela Normal y es difícil procurarlos en lo sucesivo.

Such educational "geniuses" are still few and far between.

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*Las constituciones de América. Textos Integros Vigentes.* Compiled by LIC. LEONARDO PASQUEL. (Mexico: 1943. 2 vols. Pp. xxxii, 570; pp. 505.)

Because of the kaleidoscopic and bewildering parade of constitutions across the political stage of the Latin-American republics, any published collection of their constitutions becomes out-of-date and merely an historical record soon after it issues from the press. For this reason it would seem a highly desirable procedure, in order to insure a more permanent value to collections of constitutions, to present them as historical milestones in the onward sweep of Latin-American constitutional development. This would necessitate therefore, in addition to the mere printing of the texts of the constitutions,