With student enrollments moving toward new highs each year, the U. S. educational system requires a proportionate increase in teachers. But due to lack of public esteem the teacher is becoming

"Why teach?" the young professor repeated the question. "I think you've come to the wrong person. I can give you a great many reasons for not teaching, but it's hard to give positive reasons for doing so."

A colleague joined the discussion. "You will have difficulty in getting good reasons for teaching from those of us who are teaching. Oh, you can get the usual answers: 'We teach because we love it.' 'There's an inner satisfaction to developing minds.' 'It's a secure occupation.' These things are true but they represent only a rationalization. They're a sop for those of us who are teaching to continue."

The question was raised because the U. S. school system, grade school through college, is experiencing a great enrollment boom, but without accompanying increase in the teacher supply. It is essential that an argument for teaching be offered America's youngsters that will convince them they should prepare for a teaching career. If teachers cannot provide the argument, then who can? The answer is suggested in the following report.

If your child is to receive an education in the next ten years, who will teach him? The answer may be, "No one." The teacher, long the Forgotten American, rapidly is becoming the Vanishing American. Perhaps the two terms are synonymous, for it was when America forgot her teachers that the exodus began.

To call an important segment of our society "forgotten" and "vanishing" is to invite ridicule. Yet there is nothing ridiculous about the end result of too few teachers for too many students. Nor about the chances...
of our children receiving a second-rate education, for that matter.

There was a time, not too many years ago, when a teacher was a first class citizen, respected in the community, seen as a positive influence on the general society. Gradually the picture changed. Though 30 years ago a former school teacher was in the White House, today his profession is regarded as fostering only the man-chasing year because of retirement, death or change in the spring of 1955 graduated only 87,-

95,000 who left the teaching ranks that year. In addition, colleges were employing a teacher of the teaching force and to stock it properly.

W hat can be done to stop the dissipation of the teaching force and to stock it properly?

The answer may be found by a look at the causes. Would you expect a college student to choose teaching for a career with the following concepts before him?

A teacher is a second class citizen. He must be a paragon of virtue, grounded in the high ideals of America, but he must have no political convictions. He must be brilliant, but careful to hide that brilliance; few school boards want a teacher to appear more intelligent than themselves.

A teacher is a flunky. He’s a ticket-taker at a football game, a chaperone at a dance and other social functions, a sponsor of several extra-curricular activities.

A teacher is “different.” He is because his patrons say he must be so. He’s an idealist in a day when practicality rules. No one must ever guess he has a practical side or he may be fired for wanting too much money.

A teacher is poor. And, somehow, it seems right to the tax-payer that a teacher should be poor. After all, isn’t the minister poor? The teacher had best prepare himself for a life of modesty. His beginning salary probably will range from $2,000 to $4,000, and slight increases are all that can be expected. Most professions hold some hope for the Horatio Alger success story; teaching does not in the financial sense.

A teacher must be all things to all people. An overload does not lessen his responsibility or his myriad roles. He must be a baby-sitter for some parents, an intellectual giant for others. To his students, he must be Daddy, Mama, Big Brother, Mother Goose, Mr. Chips, and any other individual they are determined to see in him.

A teacher must “get along.” In the community he must originate all cooperation. He must be a born leader and a born fol-

Three Distinguished Citizens
View Teachers and Teaching

“We have given too little attention . . .”

By SEN. MARGARET CHASE SMITH

In some ways, the teacher is the forgotten American. We have given too little attention to our school systems. We expect teachers not only to teach efficiently—but also to carry on the campaign for better equipment and facilities for our school children. Yet sometime ago it was taboo for the teacher to speak up for himself or herself. If they did they were charged with violating rules and engaging in politics. Public education is a public interest and . . . the salary of the teacher is a public responsibility. Yet because the school sessions are for only nine months out of the year some “penny pinchers” say that teachers should be paid on a nine-months basis . . . We look to our teachers to strengthen, sustain and promote what we rightly call the American way of life. Yet these people to whom we entrust so much are among the lowest salaried people of . . . the world’s wealthiest nation.
ought to have in the community, but we find too often that they do not. However, a good teacher can be of inestimable value in any community. She can create the intellectual influence over the children in her care and develop a curiosity to read, which is essential to the beginning of all education. The raising of salary is only an outward token we should make to recognize the value of the teacher, but the consideration due the teacher and the position she should be placed in, in every community, goes far beyond the mere raising of the salary. /That is, I think, a question of paramount importance in this country as well as the increasing of facilities . . .

“A good teacher can be of inestimable value . . .”

By MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

I wish that the teachers in our country had the influence they should have in the community, but we find too often that they do not. However, a good teacher can be of inestimable value in any community. She can create the intellectual influence over the children in her care and develop a curiosity to read, which is essential to the beginning of all education. The raising of salary is only an outward token we should make to recognize the value of the teacher, but the consideration due the teacher and the position she should be placed in, in every community, goes far beyond the mere raising of the salary. /That is, I think, a question of paramount importance in this country as well as the increasing of facilities . . .

So as to produce . . . virtue.”

By BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

Teach because the mission of a teacher is the prolongation of the missions of the Word of God, namely the communication of Truth in all forms. The second function of a teacher is the stirring of the will so as to produce Truth in action, which is virtue.