

Gorgas Steam Plant Has Educational System

By S. S. SIMPSON

RIDING along the road from Jasper to the Gorgas steam plant recently, the writer wondered if it was cold and wet in the winter-time, as it was hot and dusty in the summer-time after a long dry spell. The writer also wondered what the company employes would do if they had to send their children to the public schools of Jasper or Cordova, which are the towns nearest the steam plant. It would be quite a problem to transport

a hundred or more children back and forth each day. However, the writer found that it was not necessary to do this, as the Alabama Power Company, the Winona Coal Company and Walker County are together maintaining a fine public school for the children in the community that has grown up around the steam plant.

A substantial wooden building was erected over two years ago on a convenient spot directly across from the Winona Coal Company commissary, facing the road that runs on down

to the Gorgas steam plant. It is centrally located, so that none of the lads have to walk very far. The grounds around the building serve as a playground for the children while the school is not in session.

The school consists of eight grades and operates nine months out of the year. The Alabama Power Company and Winona Coal Company maintain it five months of this time, and Walker County maintains it the other four

months. After completing the eight grades in this school the children are well prepared with a complete grammar school education and are ready for high school, which they can make arrangements to attend in Jasper, Ala.

There are from a hundred and fifteen to a hundred and twenty-five boys and girls living in the neighborhood of the steam plant who attend this school each year. They receive instructions from the best teachers that can be obtained, and thus are prepared for later life as well as the average boy or girl living in a town or city.

However, the public school for the boys and girls is not the only educational plan at the Gorgas steam plant. The men employed at the plant got together several months ago, and under the direction and supervision of Mr. Wood, assistant combustion engineer, organized a practical technical school for themselves. There are several other engineering graduates employed at Gorgas who have helped Mr. Wood map out a four-year technical course, and who are acting as instructors. The men meet two evenings a week from 6 to 7 o'clock for class work, and during the intervening time study definite assignments.

The benefits that will be derived by this plan, if carried to completion, to both the individual man and to the company will be incalculable. It gives the ordinary workman in the plant a new vision and inspiration, and as a result at the very start increases his efficiency. Mr. Lineberry, superintendent of the plant, told the writer that he believes they will gradually increase the efficiency of the employes, as a whole, as much as 25 or 30 per cent during the next four years.

The men who organized this plan and are carrying it on deserve praise for their vision, and desire to help each other get better education and training along the lines of their profession and work. The people at Gorgas are fortunate in having two such praiseworthy educational plans in operation for the boys, girls and men. The company is proud of the Gorgas steam plant and the employes working there.