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WE CAN HAVE BETTER SCHOOLS

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BY MAXWELL S. STEWART



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Participants in the Public Affairs Committee's ROUND TABLE ON THE WAR AND EDUCATION

For a more detailed account of the round table, see text on pages 1 and 2 of this pamphlet which is published with a view to aiding in the formulation of vigorous, realistic educational policies.

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WE CAN HAVE BETTER SCHOOLS

By MAXWELL S. STEWART

THE war showed us that American young people were not getting so good a schooling as most people thought they were. This was brought home dramatically during the early years of the war when more than half a million young men were either rejected for military service because of "lack of educational accomplishments" or were forced to learn the rudiments of reading within the Army.

And in addition to teaching hundreds of thousands to read and write, the Army and Navy had to teach basic mathematics, geography, and technical skills to millions.

The Challenge to the Schools

The Army also found it necessary to set up orientation courses to help the soldiers understand why they were fighting. Millions of our finest men, young and old, were

This pamphlet is based on discussions at a round table of educators held by the Public Affairs Committee, February 22, 1945, and on various educational documents, notably *Education for ALL American Youth,* a report of the Educational Policies Commission; *The Story of the Eight-Year Study,* prepared under the auspices of the Commission on the Relation of School and College of the Progressive Education Association; and *General Education in a Free Society,* Report of the Harvard Committee. See page 29 for other sources.

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at a loss when asked to explain the meaning of fascism or the underlying causes of the war. Worst of all, many seemed to be little interested—even though they were risking their lives to eliminate these evils. And few of our soldiers had any appreciation or understanding of the peoples of the foreign lands they were sent to liberate.

On the other hand, the speed with which the graduates of America's schools were able to learn technical skills and master the art of war were a tribute to the underlying principles of American education. Certainly, American soldiers showed themselves to be second to none in meeting the difficult requirements of modern warfare.

Everyone agrees that our schools, building on their substantial achievements in the past, ought to be geared to meet the new needs revealed by the war. But how? What was wrong with our schools before the war? How can they be made over so as to prepare our young people for their responsibilities as citizens of a great democracy?

Obviously, there is no simple answer to these questions. But if we start by examining what the war has shown us about our schools we may find some of the answers.

As a beginning, the Public Affairs Committee invited a score of leading educators to participate in a full-day discussion of what the war had taught us about our education. Those attending included professors of education from five of our leading universities, classroom teachers and administrators in both public and private schools, a college president, a leading psychologist, a specialist in adult education, a professor of physical education, and the editor of a group of periodicals widely used in the schools. Several of the participants had been closely associated with the educational branches of the Army and Air Force and thus were able to tell something of the problems encountered by the armed services and of the new techniques which had been developed to surmount these problems. Others had served in the ranks and viewed the Army's educational program from a different viewpoint.

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WEAKNESSES REVEALED BY THE WAR

Uneven Opportunities

Perhaps the most striking fact revealed by the war is the great difference in the quality of our schools in different parts of the country. Take, for example, the hundreds of thousands of young men who were found to be seriously handicapped by inadequate education.

Who were these men? Some of them came from foreign colonies in our great cities. Some were of Spanish or Mexican background. Some were from the mountainous areas where they had been cut off from schools several months of each year. Some had been forced to leave school at an early age in order to help earn a living. Relatively few were so stupid that they could not learn. Most of them came from parts of the country where they simply could not get a decent schooling. It wasn't that they did not want to learn or that they could not. When the Army gave them an opportunity to learn to read, they grasped it eagerly and they learned with surprising ease.

What kept most of these men from learning to read in school? A glance at the map on the next page suggests at least one answer. We see that there is a tremendous difference in the amount that the various states spend on their schools. New York, for example, spent $157 per pupil in 1939–1940, while Mississippi spent less than one-twentieth as much—$7.36—for each of its Negro pupils. And the states that spent the least are, almost invariably, the ones that have failed to provide good schooling. Yet some of these states spent a larger proportion of their income on education than did the wealthier states.

A very large proportion of the men rejected by the Army for educational weakness are from the southern states, particularly Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The South, as a whole, and these five states in particular, are near the bottom in the

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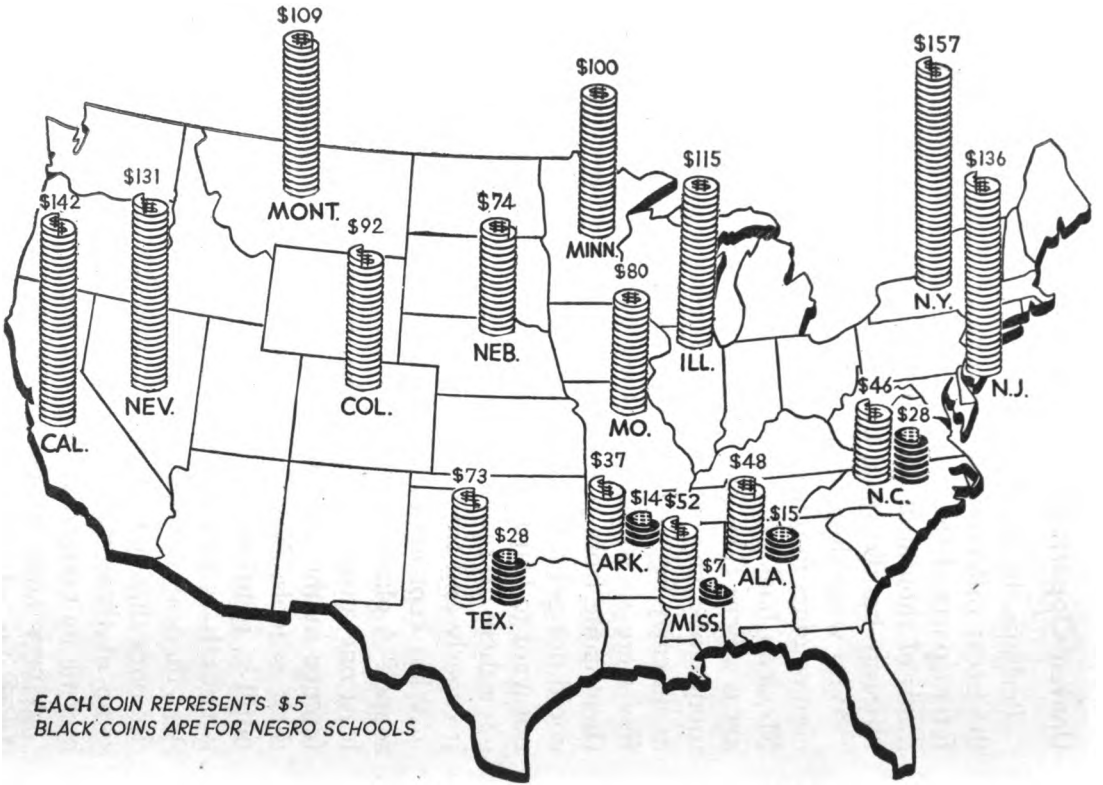
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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amount they spend, per pupil, for their schools. We get, by and large, the kind of schools we pay for.

There are several reasons for this appalling difference in educational opportunity. Most of the southern states are relatively poor. Families in these states tend to be large. This means that the community has less money to spare—per child—on education. South Carolina, for example, has twice as many children for each adult as Los Angeles County. But Los Angeles has five times as much wealth per person available for education. A similar probles is encountered in most country districts. Much less money is available for schools in rural areas than in the city; yet there are proportionately more children. As a result, teachers' salaries averaged only $959 in rural schools as compared with $1,955 in city schools. And even before the war lowered standards, only 38 per cent of the teachers in one- and two-room schools had as much as two years' college education.

Effect of Race Prejudice

On top of this we have the effects of race prejudice. In the South, where separate schools are maintained for Negroes, much less is spent on Negro children than on white children. In nine southern states the expenditure per Negro pupil was only 32 per cent of the amount spent per white pupil. Salaries for Negro teachers in seventeen states averaged just half those paid to white teachers in the same states. School buildings and equipment are far inferior.

The war revealed many glaring educational weaknesses, even among those who were relatively lucky in their schooling. But the chief problem is this tremendous gap in educational opportunity. If all Americans had an opportunity to get as good schooling as most children now receive in the city school systems of California or the District of Columbia, the Army and Navy would not have had to spend time teaching reading and arithmetic.

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Failure to Assimilate Minority Groups

Although Negro children and children in rural areas are the largest of the neglected groups, there are many other Americans who have not had a fair chance at an education. Spanish-speaking children in our Southwest have been especially handicapped. In some of the Army's



Special Training Units as many as 95 per cent of the men were non-English-speaking of Spanish or Mexican background. There are many other non-English-speaking groups within our population. New York has twelve such groups, Illinois ten.

Educational opportunities have also been unsatisfactory for the children of migratory agricultural workers, and for children in poorer districts throughout the country. Often the schools in our larger cities have been inferior to those in neighboring suburban communities where the well-to-do live.

Materials and Methods

War experience has done more than demonstrate an inequality in opportunity that we already knew existed. It has shown us that we have not always been using the right

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kind of materials or the right kind of methods in our schools. The Army's special courses showed us that men can be taught to read and to master figures in an amazingly short time. And it is highly significant to note that in the army courses Negroes with the same opportunities learned as readily as white recruits.

The comparison between the Army and the schools is not, however, a fair one. The schools deal with children; the army courses dealt with adults who had every reason to want to learn as quickly as possible. The army courses were far more intensive than is possible in the schools, and the Army had the added advantage of being able to direct its courses to meet the special, but limited, needs of army men. Yet there was much in the Army's experience that should be extremely helpful to the schools.

Take materials, for example. The Army's success was due in no small part to the use of materials specially adapted to the vocabulary and experience of army men, and to the development of special materials—notably, filmstrips, movies, and other visual aids—which helped keep the students on their toes. The books, pamphlets, and papers used in teaching reading were closely geared in with training in arithmetic, map reading, and other special types of activity closely related to the needs of the soldier. Moreover, classes were kept small so as to permit intensive training.

The schools, for their part, have failed to use the kind of materials that would teach the most. They have never adapted their materials so clearly to the lives of boys and girls or to the differing abilities and interests of their students. For this the schools themselves are only partly at fault. They have never been able to spend anything like as much as the Army spent on materials. Moreover, they have had to depend for their books and teaching materials on private publishers. And most private publishers have steered away from "experimental" materials, since they have found, perhaps to their regret, that greater

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profits can be made from materials that have gained acceptance. Schools and school boards have sometimes contributed to the difficulty by creating an elaborate system of red tape which must be cut before a new text can be adopted. There are some who feel that the problem of getting effective modern materials into America's classrooms will not be solved until some noncommercial agency, such as a state, a foundation, or a university, undertakes to provide these materials on a nonprofit basis.



Neglect of Special Areas

The war has also revealed serious gaps in our school subject matter. Army recruits, including officer candidates, showed a lack of knowledge of the basic facts of geography and of the characteristics of foreign peoples. This was particularly true with regard to the Far East and Russia. To meet this lack the Army was compelled to develop, for specially selected men, special area studies covering the regions where American troops were stationed. These area studies were, in general, very successful. Foreign languages were taught with remarkable speed and with this went training in the geography, history, and special characteristics of the regions to which the men were being assigned. The success which the Army achieved by linking its language, geographic, and cultural studies, and gearing them for practical use, indicates a pattern that might well be studied by the schools.

Too Large Classes

The army found that effective teaching could best be done with small groups. This was necessary if the teacher was to know each of his men and plan his work so as to

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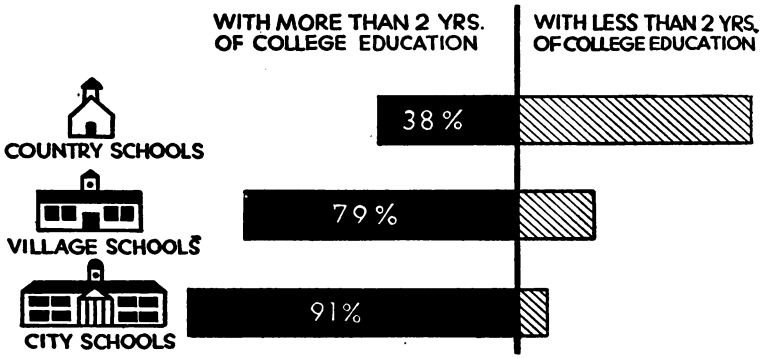
meet each individual's needs. In most of America's schools, particularly in the cities, classes are much too large to permit individual attention. In the country, classes are not so large, but one teacher often has to handle classes all the way from the first to the sixth or eighth grade.

HOW WELL ARE OUR TEACHERS TRAINED?



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Weaknesses in Teaching

Better teaching is also needed. Every study of our schools has emphasized this.

But, you may say, the Army did not have professional teachers in most instances. Yet it got results. Actually, much of the teaching in the Army's special courses was good. Although the teachers were enlisted men, many of them had considerable college and professional training. Some had teaching experience, and some had none. Although they practiced a regimentation that would be undesirable in the schools, the teachers took their jobs seriously and expected every man to learn rapidly. This attitude spread to the men. They, too, came to believe in their ability to learn.

Although we like to think that the schools have well-trained teachers, many of our teachers actually are poorly

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trained. This is particularly true in our country schools. Fully 60 per cent of our one- and two-room country schools have teachers with less than two years of training beyond high school. Few have specialized in the problems of the farm or the teaching of farm children. And many teachers who are well trained are immature in their attitudes toward their jobs. Although we have learned much about teaching in the past twenty years, many teachers still teach exactly as they were taught a generation ago. Classrooms are far too formal. Some teachers still tend to act more like dictators than like democratic leaders. Too rarely do we find teachers and students working together on problems of genuine significance. Still less frequently are students encouraged to go ahead under their own steam on tasks that mean something to them.

Lack of Clear-Cut Goals

In part, the poor teaching in our schools has been due to the lack of clear-cut goals. The Army had every advantage in this respect. The army teacher's job was clear-cut and limited. It was to teach the men to read well enough to perform their duties as soldiers. Most of the men were eager to learn. They knew that ability to read might, directly or indirectly, help save their lives in an emergency. Moreover, as older men, they had come to realize the value of reading. When one of the men was asked why he was so anxious to learn, he replied: "I want to be able to read letters from home. And I want to know what is going on in other places." Then he added: "I want to be able to read the things the other fellows do."

Given proper encouragement, children are also eager to learn. But they lack the same driving power. The school must find ways to arouse and maintain their interest. And it must help them to see the importance of the training they are receiving.

This is one of the teacher's biggest jobs. And it is difficult because many teachers are not sure exactly what

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they are trying to do. They know they are expected to teach arithmetic, reading, history, grammar, science, and vocational subjects. But too often they do not look behind these subjects and ask what it is that they are really trying to accomplish.

This is because the goal of our schools is necessarily a broad one. It is much broader than the task the army educators set for themselves. In the simplest terms, the task facing our schools is to help our children to grow up into useful adults who are prepared to carry out the responsibilities of life and citizenship in a democracy. The pioneers of the Eight-Year Study put it a little differently. They felt that the "primary purpose of education is to lead our young people to understand, to appreciate, and to live the kind of life for which we as a people have been striving throughout our history." And they were convinced that the best way to get young people to understand and appreciate democracy was to enable them to live and practice democracy every day in their schools.

Discipline

Some critics of our schools object to the effort to introduce more democracy into the school on the grounds that it would undermine discipline. They say that a strong country, in peace or war, must be a disciplined country.

This objection appears to be the result of a lack of understanding of human nature. True, discipline is necessary for our survival during wartime. There must be centralized control. But there are three different kinds of discipline: (1) autocratic discipline of the Prussian variety; (2) a happy-go-lucky discipline, which leaves everyone pretty much free to do as he pleases; and (3) a democratic discipline.

Under autocratic discipline the teacher is *above* his class, directing what it does. Under the happy-go-lucky arrangement, the teacher stands apart and lets the class do as it will. Under a democratic discipline the place of

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the teacher is within the group, providing leadership and constantly striving for higher standards but sharing the planning with the students.

Much of our wartime experience points to the value of democratic discipline in contrast to the other two

WHAT KIND OF DISCIPLINE BUILDS DEMOCRACY



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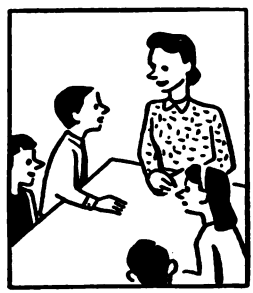

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forms. Major General Ulio, the Adjutant General, wrote in an article on *What It Takes to Be an Officer,* "I cannot overemphasize the importance of using persuasion rather than coercion in leading modern civilian armies. . . . Many men can drive others if given the authority, but only real leaders can gain the cooperation of their followers by knowledge, kindness, justice, and unwavering faith in the cause for which they are fighting." As a whole, the Army may have fallen far short of these principles, but it would be difficult to question their validity as applied to the schools.

Colonel Carlson's outstanding success with his Rangers was primarily due to his genius in training his men in these principles. His first step was to abolish all social distinctions between officers and men. Officers were forced to demonstrate their capacity for leadership, while the

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men were encouraged to share in the planning and to develop self-reliance and teamwork. The spectacular record of the Rangers under extraordinarily difficult combat conditions suggests that the schools should try from the very beginning to train young people in teamwork rather than to impose discipline from above. It must be admitted, however, that other generals, notably Patton and Montgomery, were successful in a more conventional type of warfare with autocratic disciplinary methods.

APPLYING THESE LESSONS TO OUR SCHOOLS

ALTHOUGH the war has revealed many weaknesses in American education, it has not provided us with a blueprint for tomorrow's schools. We cannot simply take army methods into the schoolroom. And we would not want to if we could. The soldier learned quickly and well because his life, in some instances, depended on mastering his lessons. The Army could develop a closely-knit program because it controlled the lives of its men twenty-four hours a day. But with better facilities, smaller classes, and greater imagination, teachers could bring public school education into much closer relationship to the lives of children and thus profit directly from the lessons gained from army training. The Army showed that it is possible to master the basic tools in a surprisingly brief time *if these tools are put into practice,* thus making years of emphasis on these basic skills unnecessarily burdensome. A change in emphasis should free teachers and students for more training in citizenship and other courses designed to aid in preparing for adult life and its responsibilities.

Reorganization Needed

In order to remedy the weaknesses revealed by the war, many schools need to reshape their programs, particularly in the upper grades and high school. This is necessary,

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first of all, if we are to provide 20th century educational opportunities for all American people, regardless of race, class, religion, age, or parentage. It is necessary also if we are to raise educational standards throughout the country to meet the requirements of our present-day complex manner of living.

Training for Life in a Democracy

The school's main task is to fit our young people to live in a democracy. This means that our education will have to be very different from the kind of education that may prove effective in a dictatorship. We could teach young people to accept democracy in much the same way that young Germans were taught to be Nazis. We could, by pageantry and other means, build up an attitude of worship toward the flag, the Constitution, the President, and other symbols of our system of government. But every American knows in his heart that you cannot teach democracy that way. Democracy must be understood before it can be revered. It must be lived before it can be fully understood. Neither of these can be accomplished by compulsion or psychological tricks such as the Nazis used. Yet, though democracy thrives on differences, it is stronger if the people have a basis of common understanding.

THE PLACE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

In recent years there has been a considerable increase in emphasis on the teaching of American history as a unifying influence. Since a knowledge of history is helpful in understanding the America of today, many people have assumed that a thorough knowledge of history is the best possible training for citizenship. Many schools have increased the amount of time devoted to the study of American history in the belief that they were in this way strengthening democracy.

Yet is this sensible? The problems that the young people of today will face as citizens will be very different

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from those faced, and conquered, by our ancestors. Many of these problems can be anticipated. But they will be much more closely related to the problems we face today than to those of George Washington's time. They will be the kind of problem that the student meets in good courses in economics, sociology, civics, and social problems.

And there is an ugly side to the picture. Some people seem to feel that if the students study more history and less sociology or economics, they will not learn so much about the bad spots in present-day society. So we often find powerful and wealthy groups favoring more history because they do not want students to become familiar with present-day social problems. Moreover, in part the demand for more American history may be a bit of propaganda for isolationism. Some of the pressure for more American history has come from groups who do not want our students to learn of other peoples.

In some communities the pressure of these groups may be so strong that it cannot be resisted altogether. About all that teachers can do in such places is to try to broaden the history course. But many of our leading educators will admit that some of the time now spent on history could be better spent on social problems, the study of other peoples, and citizenship courses. This does not mean that history should be neglected. A well-taught history course can be immensely valuable. Young people cannot be trained in citizenship without knowing something of the history of American civilization. The kind of history teaching that emphasizes the great changes that have occurred in American life and the necessary adjustments to these changes can be very instructive. But this kind of teaching properly belongs in the high school where students are reasonably mature. Yet if history is taught in the high school, the same ground should not be covered in the grades. Otherwise students will regard the high school history course as simply a rehash of what they have already covered.

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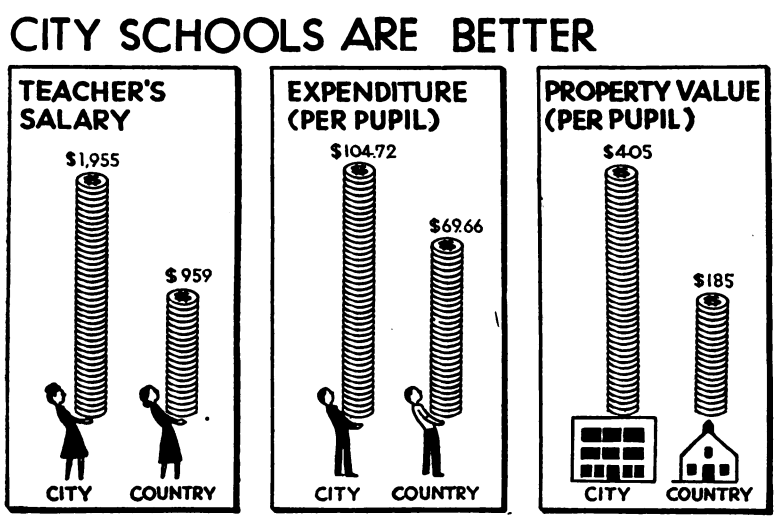
LEARNING BY DOING

Good citizenship and true democracy cannot, however, be learned primarily from books. We learn them, like everything else, by practice. We must remember that young people are citizens, even though they cannot vote.



Many local activities closely affect them. They can deal with many community and local problems. There should be youth representatives in most community organizations. On larger national and world problems, young people can participate in shaping policies like any other citizens. They can hold discussions and help build public opinion. They can write to editors, Congressmen, and other leaders. Experience has shown that they can have a constructive influence on their parents. They should be encouraged in their interest since no group is more concerned than youth in achieving peace, security, and prosperity in tomorrow's world.

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Studying Other Peoples

It is vitally important that as citizens our young people learn how to live and work together. But that is only a beginning. The war and the epoch-making harnessing of the destructive power of the atom have shown us that we must extend our concept of citizenship to world citizenship or perish. Thus, the greatest single challenge to our schools is that of teaching tomorrow's Americans to understand and appreciate other peoples, their problems, viewpoints, and aspirations. Here we are faced with an extraordinarily difficult and complicated task. We need only recall the appalling ignorance of the American people before the war of the simple facts of geography, or the prejudice that existed regarding Russia or China, to recognize how poor our prewar training in this field was. We shall need new texts, new methods, new facilities, and newly trained teachers.

Again, we must remember that the kind of training that sticks comes through experience and cannot be obtained solely from textbooks. The best way to understand other peoples is to live and work among them. It would be well if American children could travel widely, see other peoples in their own homes, and learn to know them. But this is not often possible. Fortunately, there are other ways of getting first-hand experience of other peoples. We have in many parts of America a number of national and racial groups, each with its distinctive problems, culture, and viewpoints. We have children from these groups in our schools. Our young people may not be able to travel in Italy, but they can get to know Americans of Italian descent and through them study Italian culture and learn something of Italy's history and contribution to the world. Similarly, children can be helped to see the Negro's contributions and to view his problems as interpreted by prominent Negro citizens. Experience has shown that a first-hand study of a few other peoples is more helpful

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than an effort to cover the entire world through textbooks. But both are important. Young people should know a few key countries well, but in addition learn to see the world as a whole.

MAKING THE SCHOOL DEMOCRATIC

SCHOOLS may teach democracy and a respect for other peoples and yet fail to lay the basis for a true democracy. They may fail through trying to meet the many obligations that are imposed on them by our complex society. From our point of view the schools were hidebound in our grandparents' day. Many of the things that were taught seem rather useless to us today. Yet because life was relatively simple, everyone studied the same thing. Then in recent years, to meet varying needs, we set up a system of electives so that each student could choose what he needed to prepare himself for his chosen vocation. This seemed like a marked advance. But it created a new problem.

All Are Americans

Some choice of subjects is clearly needed to meet the different requirements of different students. But many people are coming to believe that it is not democratic to give one kind of training to the children of the well-to-do, and another to the children of the poor. Or even one kind of education to the brilliant, and inferior training to the average child. Yet we have often done this without realizing it. This inequality is most evident with respect to college. Most of the children of the wealthy go to college; in many parts of the country only a few from poor families have the opportunity. But the difference starts in high school. The fortunate children take special "college prep" courses which set them off from the others. In many sections the children of poorer families usually do not get through high school. And while there, they spend most of their time in commercial or vocational courses. This

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breach fosters snobbishness and undemocratic attitudes among the children of the wealthy; the less fortunate students are denied broad citizenship training at an age when they would best be able to profit from it.

Since all persons in a democracy, rich or poor, brilliant or plodding, have equal rights and responsibilities as citizens, we should see that all of our children receive basic citizenship training. Educators are coming to feel that we have gone too far in specialization in the high schools. Although students differ in ability, in interest, and in their future vocations, many of their needs are the same. Every American needs to know how to speak and write English effectively. We all need to know the basic facts about the world in which we live. And all of us should know enough about our society and that of other peoples to be good citizens in that world. These are not things that can be taught in the grade school and neglected in high school. They need to be worked at throughout education; in fact, throughout life.

A "Central Core" for Everyone

To provide these essentials, many educators are reemphasizing an old idea—the need for a "central core" in the curriculum through the entire school course. Instead of spreading out over many different subjects, the students would be required to spend at least half of their time, either with one teacher or several, studying the things that all should know. The remaining time might then be spent, as it now is, in specialized courses designed to meet the student's special needs.

It is hard to express this new emphasis in terms of the traditional high school units. But, roughly, it would mean that eight units out of the usual sixteen in a high school course would be included in the "central core." Of these, approximately three would be in English, two or three in science and mathematics, and two or three in social sciences. This would be the least that any student would be

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permitted to spend on these subjects. But most students would want to spend more. This would be true both of the students who are going on to college and those who are not. Those who are planning to attend college will need to go into one or more of these subjects more thoroughly. Those who are unable to continue their education further should have another course in *each* of the three areas. The remaining time might be devoted to vocational courses, foreign languages, or the arts.

THE FARMVILLE SCHOOLS

FARMVILLE, of course, has very different educational needs from those of our great cities. In the past this difference has not been sufficiently recognized. Many rural schools were simply pale imitations of the larger and wealthier city schools. They taught the same things, but badly. Yet the Farmvilles of our country have a greater population than our hundred largest cities combined. And they have more than half of the nation's children.

The kind of schools that Farmville should strive for in the next few years is pictured by the Educational Policies Commission in its report, *Education for ALL American Youth.** It is written as a description of the Farmville secondary schools five years after the end of the war. Much of this program is already being carried out in our better schools. But much remains to be achieved.

In place of the usual high school, Farmville has a consolidated secondary school, combining the seventh and eighth grades from five district grade schools and two prewar high schools. The new school is an eight-year school, from the seventh through the fourteenth grade—that is, two years beyond the usual high school. It also provides educational services for adults and young people who

*Published by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators, Washington, D. C. 1944.

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have left school. The school also serves as a community recreation and health center.

In the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades—the junior high school period—the needs of all of the children are approximately the same. All of the students study the same subjects, although the teachers make an effort within the classes to take account of different abilities and interests among their students. During these years, the report declares, the pupil "continues to grow in knowledge and understanding of the world in which he lives; in ability to think clearly and to express himself intelligently in speech and writing; in his mastery of scientific facts and mathematical processes, and in his capacity to assume responsibilities, to direct his own affairs, and to work and live cooperatively."

But in the tenth grade—the sophomore year in high school—the paths begin to divide. Students are given special counseling service to help them plan their courses so as to meet their individual needs. And all students are given an introductory course called "The World at Work." This tells them of the many kinds of work that are necessary to keep the modern world going. Students make an occupational survey of Farmville, finding out what each job is like. They visit the nearest city several times during the year to observe the industries, commercial establishments, and professions. Movies are used, especially after the students have had some first-hand observation.

The youth of Farmville fall into three distinct groups with respect to their educational plans:

(1) Those who expect to remain in Farmville or in rural communities. For these farm-and-village youth the school seeks to provide occupational training through Grade XIV that will prepare them to move at once into adult employment.

(2) Those who are going to the cities to work in industry, business, transportation, and other fields—in positions that do not require college or university preparation.

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The Farmville school undertakes to carry this group well along the road of occupational training; but its staff and equipment are inadequate for complete preparation. These youth must go to American City or elsewhere for advanced training in Grades XIII and XIV, and occasionally in Grade XII.

(3) Those who look forward to study in colleges and universities as preparation for the professions and comparable occupations. These youth remain in Farmville through Grade XII.

The school endeavors to supply educational experiences related to the vocational plans of each student but leaves preprofessional training for the community institutes, the colleges, and the universities.

Citizenship Training

Farmville stresses citizenship training throughout its entire course. At least one period a day, and often more, is devoted to civic training, and the subject is stressed in all courses. The training can best be understood by referring to the seven principles set up by the faculty to guide them in planning their program.

LIVING DEMOCRATICALLY IN SCHOOL

Instead of talking *about* democracy, Farmville school tries to practice it. Students and teachers share in planning the school's activities. A conscious effort is made to give Negroes and the members of other minority groups a full share in these activities. Moreover, every student is expected to do some work outside the school, so that there may be no stigma attached to such work.

EXTENDING CIVIC ACTIVITIES INTO THE COMMUNITY

Students not only make careful studies of Farmville, such as the occupational survey mentioned above, but they are brought into contact with the local agents of the government—the county agricultural agent, the home

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CITIZENSHIP TRAINING



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demonstration agent, and the many other agencies working in rural America.

MOVING OUT INTO THE LARGER SCENE

From the local community, students are encouraged to move out into a study of the state, nation, and world, using the experiences which they have had in the school and community. They are taught to see how national policy and even international policy affect Farmville and

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its efforts to earn a living. Foreign trade, for example, is not something remote, but an outlet for Farmville products and a source of things badly needed in Farmville.

DEVELOPING COMPETENCE IN STUDYING PUBLIC PROBLEMS

Students in the twelfth grade—senior year in high school—spend the greater part of their time in social studies on a few vital public questions. They plow deeply. They attend adult meetings; read newspapers, books, and magazines; and discuss controversial matters freely. Often they find background study essential. Older students may even direct discussion of such problems in a civic group or farm organization.

LEARNING EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ACTION

By means of contacts with adult groups and a knowledge of governmental machinery, Farmville's students are taught how to get things done in a democracy. They watch the county commissioners and state legislature in action. They talk to their local representatives and other officials.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

Farmville teachers realize that community contacts, though highly important, cannot replace systematic knowledge. They try to help the students obtain a thorough knowledge and understanding of today's society and of the past in order that they may know how to deal with new issues as they arise. The theme of history, as it is taught in Farmville, is "man's age-old struggle to achieve freedom and security." This gives Farmville students the world viewpoint that is so badly needed today.

FOSTERING LOYALTY TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

This is not achieved by telling students that they must be loyal, or even by stories of past greatness. Instead, an effort is made to appeal to youth's natural idealism by

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encouraging them to set up goals for achievement by their generation that will surpass those of their fathers and grandfathers.

This is, of course, only part of the Farmville program. Considerable time is devoted to the study of family life, to problems of personal health, and everyday problems of living in a rural area. Science is not neglected. Nor are sports and other types of recreation. Perhaps the greatest difference between these activities in Farmville and in prewar schools is in the vast increase in the number of activities. An effort is made to suit every taste. And many of the recreational activities—and educational activities—are community affairs. A special effort is made to serve the needs of young people who have left school but have not become completely immersed in adult life.

SCHOOLS IN AMERICAN CITY

IN its broad outlines the school program of American City (population over 200,000) resembles that of Farmville. Throughout the junior high school period a uniform course is given to all pupils. But beginning with the tenth grade, an effort is made to meet the differing interests and plans of the students. At the same time it is well recognized that even in the upper high school years the students have many interests in common. A "common learnings" course—using two or more hours daily throughout the high school years—has been developed to deal with the needs of youth in the fields of citizenship, economics, family living, appreciation of literature and the arts, and the use of the English language. The teacher of this course also acts as counselor to the students in the class. Although the study of science should logically be included in this "common learnings" course, few teachers are prepared to teach science in addition to these other subjects. So a separate course in science has been added in the sophomore year.

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"American City at Work"

In the sophomore year the "common learnings" course provides tests to determine whether the student needs special help in reading, speaking, mathematics, or in developing habits of study. Students who need such assistance receive it promptly. Eight to ten weeks are given over to a study of "American City at Work." This is similar to the Farmville vocational course, except that it is geared to city life. Other phases of community life are also examined: recreational facilities, housing, health activities, and city planning. Time is also devoted to a study of family life and consumer problems.

In the junior year the emphasis is on civic competence. Building on their previous year's work, the students make a more thorough study of their city government and the problems of city life. They see that these problems are frequently national or world-wide in scope and have roots in the past. From this they move into a half-year study of the history of American civilization, emphasizing the issues in American life of today.

In the senior year the course looks at American life in its world setting. This includes such problems as the maintenance of full employment, world organization, American foreign policy, and the study of other peoples. The time given to literature and the arts is closely tied to the study of other peoples and their contribution to world civilization.

These studies continue in the thirteenth and fourteenth grades—formerly called junior college. One-sixth of the student's time is still devoted to the "common learnings" course, and the emphasis is divided almost equally between problems of the city and region on the one hand, and the nation and world on the other. Considerable time is given to the study of peoples who are frequently neglected, such as those living in the Soviet Union, China, India, and Latin America.

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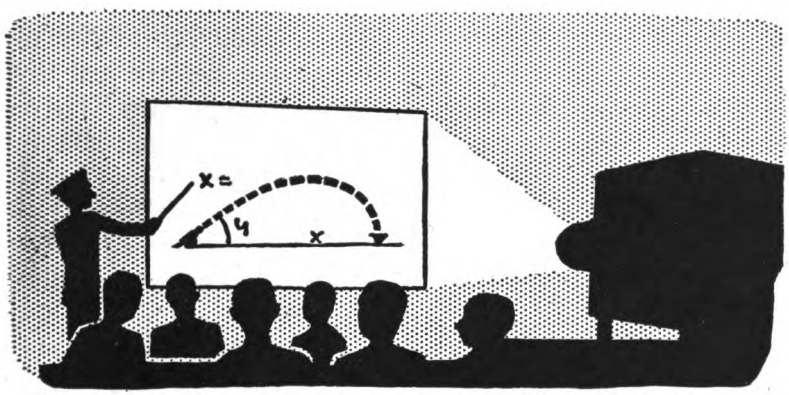
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The New Techniques

The experience of the Army during the war showed what progressive schoolmen have long felt: that education can be greatly speeded by using movies, filmstrips, the radio, and specially designed pictorial material to



supplement textbooks. Television also offers great possibilities. And the textbooks themselves need to be geared much more closely to the student's vocabulary, interests, and experience.

Films serve particularly well as awakeners of interest. They can summon the emotions to drive home a point that is relatively unimpressive when expressed merely in print. Many films are defective in balance and emphasis. But these weaknesses are not necessary; they arise from the faulty judgment of the director. The Army found filmstrips more successful than movies for many educational purposes. They are simpler and more direct in their emphasis. And since they can be stopped at any place, they can be used much more effectively as a basis for class discussion.

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The radio has not proved so successful as the film as an educational device. It has the defects of blindness which can only partially be overcome. While it is useful in stirring up discussion, it has a tendency to glorify a dogfight between sharply divergent points of view rather than the less exciting methods of orderly group discussion. In music instruction the radio is, of course, of great value.

Although recordings have many of the weaknesses of radio, they can more easily be created to meet the special requirements of classroom use. Like filmstrips, they can be turned on and off at will and played repeatedly to enforce their impact. It is probable that we are just beginning to learn how to use these new techniques. There can be no doubt that they will play an important role in the education of the future.

Federal Aid

To achieve a program such as we have outlined, we shall need more schools, new and better equipment for the new techniques, an increased number of teachers, better training for our teachers, and better candidates. All of this will require a considerable amount of money. Since the largest families and the highest proportion of children will be found in the poorest parts of the country, the local communities cannot be expected to bear all of the increased cost. Nor will we get the kind of schools we need if the states have to pay all of the bill. The federal government must be prepared to help support education all of the way from the primary school through the university. Experience with the land-grant colleges and other types of aid shows that federal assistance can be given in such a way as to encourage better education without direct federal control. But this does not mean that the government's responsibility can or should be limited to the giving of money.

Our schools' main job is to develop capable Americans. This involves interests stretching far beyond the local

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community—national interests. Can we trust the local schools to develop a sufficiently broad program of citizenship training? Or should the government guide our studies in the interest of greater national and world understanding? These are not easy questions to answer. Our educational policy dare not be out of step with the nation's basic interests. Yet most of us would not like to see the federal government tell the schools in detail what they should teach. This dilemma could be solved if the federal government sought to encourage citizenship studies as much as possible, by financial grants where necessary, but left the details of the courses to the states and local schools. Beyond this, the federal government might cooperate with private educational agencies, such as the larger universities, in encouraging the preparation of experimental materials not provided by commercial book companies.

Creative Teachers

Although most of our present teachers are as loyal and hard-working people as could be found in any occupation or profession, it is evident that many of them would not do in Farmville or American City. We shall need new teachers, specially trained for the new responsibilities of the postwar world. They must be imaginative, familiar with the most modern techniques, and have a clear understanding of the purpose of the new education. Many suggestions have been made for improving the caliber of America's teachers. A good deal of emphasis has been placed in recent years on better teaching methods. But the results have been disappointing. Good teachers are usually successful with either old-fashioned or modern methods. Poor teachers fail to get results with the best methods.

So today the emphasis has shifted. There is need for higher salaries, greater security, psychological screening to eliminate the emotionally unfit, longer teacher training

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courses, and frequent "refresher" courses. All of these suggestions are important. But none of them gets at the root of the problem. What teachers need, above all, is a sense of challenge. They need to feel that the education of the country's youth is a vital task, and that they must find new ways of making it more effective. Teachers who feel this challenge create a zest for learning among their pupils and thus become superior teachers. This implies a change of attitude by the public. In order that they may have confidence and freedom to do their best work, teachers should be accorded the standing and rewards of a first-rank profession.

The results of the Eight-Year Study indicated that ordinary, intelligent teachers may be roused to new heights of achievement under the challenge of reshaping their educational goals. But it is important that they be permitted to have a free hand to develop a creative approach to their task in cooperation with their students, and that they not be bogged down by tradition or an undue number of tests, records, and other unimaginative details. It is important also that their principals and superintendents provide real leadership in developing teamwork among the teachers, and that Boards of Education give full backing to their administrators and teachers in charting new paths. For the key to success in education, as in any other democratic endeavor, is a clear eye on the goal and teamwork among students, teachers, administrators, and boards. With such teamwork, American education can rid itself of the weaknesses inherited from the past and fit our young people to carry the immense responsibilities of life in tomorrow's world.

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