

Our Job

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ANY NATION that seeks to preserve its future must at all times safeguard the educational program of its emerging citizens. Citizenship is not a part of the child's native endowment. It is a cultural way of thinking and acting acquired during the growing-up years. Since the growing-up period of our children and youth cannot be postponed for the duration, it is essential to the nation's welfare that an adequate program of public education be maintained during the war years. There seems validity in the view that the work of the schools in wartime is more important than in peace because war introduces many abnormal influences.

Two obligations for the American citizens are imperative. We must win the military victory in order to provide free people the opportunity to continue the democratic way of life. At the same time, an adequate program of public education must be provided to insure the quality of citizenship essential to the winning of the peace. It now appears that in the effort to win the war undesirable weaknesses are emerging in the public school program.

If democracy is worth fighting for, it is equally important for the nation's schools to educate for democracy in after-war years. In this article, E. T. McSwain, Northwestern University, points to the need for perspective in teaching in wartime and for better education today for a better world tomorrow.

Such wartime difficulties should be accepted as a challenge to one's belief in the importance of education in achieving our war goals. No teacher need undervalue the significance of his contribution to the war program when he seeks to fulfill with vision, courage, and scholarship his patriotic duties as a teacher during the war emergency. If the battle for preservation of the child's right to an opportunity to prepare himself for postwar citizenship is lost, the future of the Four Freedoms is endangered.

The potential citizenship of our school population represents a large portion of the nation's true wealth. This year approximately twenty-two and three-quarter million boys and girls will attend the elementary schools. About six and one-half million youth will be enrolled in the high schools. In cooperation with the home and other community agencies the responsibility of the schools is to plan and administer a program that serves adequately the personal and social needs of each member of the school population. Thus, the wartime responsibility of teachers is to serve their country by guiding and motivating the growth and development of America's children and youth of today.

Daily the newspaper and the radio issue calls for manpower in industry and other war services. Seldom does one hear or read of an urgent call by the Government for qualified teachers to ac-

cept teaching as their post of duty. More recognition is given for services in other wartime occupations than for teaching. A shortage in teacher leadership may give rise to grave consequences in later years. Every means needs to be provided to encourage teachers to accept teaching as a patriotic duty. Until the Government issues a direct call for service elsewhere, the opportunity to serve in the nation's schools deserves a wartime priority.

The work of teachers in schools does not require the wearing of a uniform as in other war positions. However, each teacher does wear a uniform of an intangible fabric. Creative, effective teaching requires scholarship, self-discipline, courage, social vision, faith in democracy, and competence in understanding the growth-educative process. Each teacher in the exercise of his patriotic duty gives daily evidence of the quality of his uniform and of the readiness to safeguard its appearance. The opportunity for service and the call for all-out effort will be as great in teaching as in any wartime service.

The school year 1943-44 will introduce unusual difficulties for many teachers and pupils. Classes in some schools will be oversize, some parents and children will show the frustrations of a war environment, transportation will be inadequate, salaries will not be increased to cope with the rise in the cost of living, numerous demands will be made on the schools for war service, supplies and materials will be curtailed, some schools will suffer from inadequate health services, the demand for more formal instruction will be voiced.

To educate effectively for democratic citizenship, teachers must utilize every

worthwhile means to provide understanding, guidance, and cooperatively selected experiences which motivate interest and growth in:

1. The discovery and development of personal integrity.
2. The value and purpose of acting in terms of reflective thinking.
3. The understanding that problem-solving ability results from purposeful learning.
4. The discovery and acceptance of one's responsibility as a builder of a self and a co-builder of a new society.
5. The readiness to interact with change with courage and thinking.
6. The study and discussion of contemporary affairs.
7. The ability and readiness to engage in cooperative planning and evaluating.
8. The learning of the fundamental tools required in reflective citizenship.
9. The understanding of the meaning and duties inherent in democracy.
10. The recognition for high standards of workmanship in all activities.
11. Learning how to plan work and to share cooperatively in terms of ability and accepted purposes.
12. The need for information and facts as means to acquire discipline in thought and action.
13. Understanding the causes of war and the requirements that people must accept in order to live in peace.
14. The interdependence of people and of nations and the needs for collective security.
15. One's opportunity and responsibility to accept reflective citizenship as a patriotic service to one's country.

To teachers is given, therefore, the opportunity to help today's children and tomorrow's citizens acquire the ideas, purposes, values, and skills essential in their inevitable duty to carry on the postwar campaign for ultimate victory of a social, economic, and political democracy among free people.

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