

The New—in Review

Alice Miel, Editor

FILMS FOR UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN and youth now available offer an opportunity to experiment with this medium for the education of pre-service and in-service teachers. These films are often suitable for use with parent groups as well.

One group of films (available from the New York University Film Library) comes out of the Vassar Department of Child Study. In these films projective techniques have been employed to reveal how differently individual children react to the same opportunities to "go all the way out" in behavior. For example, in *Balloons*, a two-reel sound film, one is able to contrast the responses of two boys of nursery age to an invitation to "break these balloons which are just for breaking." *Finger Painting*, a two-reel silent film in color, shows the differences in children as they approach an opportunity to use as much of this medium in as many different colors and

in as many different ways as they choose. *Frustration Play Techniques* (three and one-half reels, sound) pictures the reaction of different children to interference with their play. All of these films are rented for a three-day period to encourage reshowing to the same group of people. Rental prices, respectively, are \$3, \$6, and \$4.

This Is Robert is a somewhat longer film (eight reels, \$7.50 for three days). It attempts to show the individual characteristics and the development over a five-year period of one child. Robert's behavior in all of the projective situations described above and in free play is contrasted both with that of other children and with his own behavior at an earlier age.

It is possible to find in educational literature materials dealing with projective techniques for the study of children which would greatly enhance the value of these films. The order in which the films are presented here has been found to be particularly effective by groups using them.

Among the films available from the University of Iowa (Iowa City) Child Welfare Research Station is a little gem of a silent film entitled *Walking Upstairs for the First Time*, a perfect example of a *gestalt* in learning. Another film, *Various Conflict Situations at Different Age Levels*, would, if well interpreted, be useful for illustrating Kurt

Alice Miel, Instructor at Teachers College, Columbia University, will present each month timely summaries and criticisms of books, films, and recordings of interest to educators. Convinced of the increased importance of films and recordings as teaching tools, Miss Miel will keep you posted on new materials in these fields, as well as in the field of literature. We believe readers will welcome this enlargement upon the content of our review columns as an added service to education. Miss Miel will appreciate suggestions from readers of materials which they have found helpful.

Lewin's field theory. It has an enormously significant sequence showing relations between older and younger children. Both films are short, silent, and rent for \$1 a day.

Life Begins (available from the New York University Film Library, six reels, \$10 a day) is the result of Arnold Gesell's work at the Yale Clinic of Child Development. While not new, it does an excellent job of showing the role of maturation in learning in the case of infants. If implications for learning at later stages are pointed out in the discussion of the film, it can be useful for increasing the understanding of parents and teachers of children at any level of development.

Films of a somewhat different type may also be used to interpret children to adults. *The Wilson Dam School* shows children of all ages in an unusually pleasant and educational school environment. *A Child Went Forth* is a slightly older film portraying the day of nursery-age children in a summer camp on a farm. If emphasis on nutrition is desired, the showing of *And So They Live*, a picture of the life of a typical poor white family in a Kentucky mountain area, followed by *For Health and Happiness*, a film in color showing children and young people who possess healthy, well-nourished bodies, will present enough contrasts to dramatize the school's responsibility for dealing with a basic necessity of childhood. In addition, *And So They Live* gives one a good idea how barren of meaning a school curriculum can be. This group of films is available from the New York University Film Library, rental \$3 a day for all except *And So They Live*, which rents for \$4.

Commercial films represent another excellent resource for promoting understanding of children and youth on the part of laymen and school people alike. *My Friend Flicka* and *The Human Comedy*, released during the current year, are popular examples. One might also in this connection make a different use of the cuttings from feature films prepared by the Commission on Human Relations to help secondary-school students to understand problems of human association. These same sequences can give adults a clearer picture of children's problems as children become acquainted with the institutions of modern life. For this purpose the following are recommended: *Devil Is a Sissy* (Juvenile Court sequence), *La Maternelle* (a French film), *Captains Courageous* (fishhook sequence), *Dead End* (children), and *Family Affair*. The New York University Film Library handles these films, which rent for \$1.50 a reel per day. Excellent teaching guides accompany them.

In spite of the war, there is a growing number of films being produced by local schools which might well be shared with others.

Suggestions for expanding the foregoing list of films would be much appreciated. It would be desirable also to learn from those who experiment with films for teacher and parent education ways of using films that proved successful and evaluation of the film shown.

IF ONE-HALF OF EXPERIENCE is concerned with choosing, using, and enjoying goods and services, it is about time this fact was taken into account in curriculum planning. Education for production is at least well established, if

not as effective as it will some day become. To complement this present emphasis in the curriculum, education for enlightened consumption is needed to promote the fine art of living. These are among the beliefs of a group of twenty-two individuals of wide experience who have contributed to *Consumer Education: Background, Present Status, and Future Possibilities*, edited by James E. Mendenhall and Henry Harap for the Society for Curriculum Study (D. Appleton-Century, 399 pp., \$2.50).

To this group of writers consumer education is more than testing materials in the laboratory and reading consumer bulletins, although it is that too. Ways of getting dependable information are important, but there are other areas worth investigating also. Consumer education should include things as different as the role of aesthetics in making choices and the effects of taxation and tariffs on consumer levels; the collective responsibility of consumers to counterbalance the political and economic power of producer groups so as to make available a nutritious diet at low cost; buying insurance and buying a winter wardrobe; buying public health, schools, and fire protection and conserving what one has in the way of material possessions.

In one compact volume, *Consumer Education* accomplishes all this: (1) makes the reader feel that here is an important phase of living that should receive serious attention at once; (2) gives the reader a good idea of the many aspects of the problem that could profitably be made part of learners' experiences all through their school life; (3) shows various possibilities of including consumer education as a sep-

arate course or courses in the curriculum at the elementary, secondary, and college levels; as a special emphasis in courses already set up, such as social studies, mathematics, science, business education, home economics; or as a part of general education or of core curricula; (4) furnishes a helpful account of sources of information complete with addresses and with some evaluation of these sources, as well as a summary of research in the field of consumer education, an excellent bibliography, and suggestions for use of community resources. There is a splendid chapter on the contribution of various adult groups to consumer education in this country and another containing special suggestions for consumer education in wartime. One chapter is useful for method, giving a practical discussion of the laboratory approach.

The group which prepared this book has done us a service. The rest of us should now take their suggestions and act upon them. But let us hope we can do a great deal that is pertinent and valuable without labeling each step as consumer education. We are so likely to overwork a new term as a short cut to the idea it stands for. A good many decent "movements" in education have died that way.

DESPITE ROUGH HANDLING by a reactionary section of the press, *My Part in This War* is one of the most significant pieces of writing to come out of the present urgent need for consumer education. (Prepared for the Consumer Education Study of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Education Association, 93 pp., 25 cents. Discounts

for quantities.) Written in lively language and filled with topnotch illustrations, this pamphlet gives a clear, fair, and even thrilling picture of how a large, peace-loving democracy has gone at its difficult task of mobilizing for war. Mistakes are admitted but no individual or group in particular is blamed. The material should have great appeal to the high-school youth for whom it is intended. It is written to them but not down to them. It could also be read with interest and profit by any adult with eighth-grade reading ability.

Many misconceptions are cleared up in the development of various phases of the discussion. For example, this paragraph follows the story of how SPAB changed first to OPM and later to WPB:

It would be easy, looking at such a list of changes, to throw up your hands in disgust and assume it was all a hodgepodge of meaningless alphabetic arrangements. But if you look at the record soberly, you will see that each change has represented new and improved ideas for getting a tremendous job done. At each step we devised the best system we knew how; we tried it out; and as experience showed possibilities of improvement, we made changes.

The simple yet adequate treatment of inflation alone justifies publication of the pamphlet. Rationing, consumer conservation, personal economy, taxation, planning and organizing for production are all equally well handled. In no instance is the problem of transition to a postwar economy neglected.

Two appendices are included to suggest useful materials and problems and activities. Add *My Part in This War*

to the bibliography listed in *Consumer Education*.

ADD ALSO to the bibliography of *Consumer Education* Edward William Heil's *Consumer Training* (Macmillan, 584 pp., \$2.72 list). This high-school textbook contains a great deal of valuable material. The first two of ten units are devoted to broad consumer problems and to the consumer movement in general. Commodity buying is emphasized in the remaining units. There is relatively little space given to the purchase of services. Suggested projects and activities at the end of each unit are varied, and many of them deal with the student's own consumption problems. The "sources of information" for the units would be more useful if publication dates had been included.

IF YOU WANT PARENTS, colleagues, and other interested persons to learn about a forward-looking program for a new organization launched in wartime, you may order reprints of the "Program of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development" which appeared in the farewell issues of *Educational Method* and *Curriculum Journal*. The statement of beliefs which it contains, the long-range program which it lays out, and the problems it suggests for immediate attack give the reassurance, inspiration, and sense of direction needed by all who are concerned about what happens to education in the next few years and who want their efforts to be effective. Price of the reprints is 5 cents a copy. Obtainable from the Department.

BOOKS ON BEST-SELLER LISTS and education generally do not mix.

Unless forewarned, one would hardly expect Walter M. Kotschnig's *Slaves Need No Leaders* (Oxford University Press, \$2.75) to turn out to be an important book on the international role of education after the war. In the flood of writing and talking about postwar adjustments, education has received far too little mention. Dr. Kotschnig has done a good job of opening up the subject for our attention. After first tracing education's share of the responsibility for developments in European countries between wars, he shows what will be the nature and size of the task of educational reconstruction in occupied and enemy countries following the present war. The author makes a number of practical suggestions in this connection, including curriculum changes to help young people grasp the idea of an international social order.

THE VERY TITLE of Fern Rives' first novel, *Friday, Thank God!* (Putnam, \$2.50) prepares one for a story laid in a school. Although it is a bit unusual for a school-teacher to have in the short space of time from one Friday to the next the amount of excitement that befell Mrs. Allison Bourdet, one has no doubt that the book was written by one who knows the inside of a schoolroom. Amid the dramatic events, there are some spots that give a good idea of the satisfactions that come to teachers who enjoy their students. There is a realistic account of a teachers meeting where "progressive education" is discussed.

THE SCHOOL SHOULD do this; the school should do that. Wartime has added some new demands, sharpened others. Must we and can we extend

educational opportunities in these days when schools are already understaffed? If you would have your thinking on this problem challenged and guided, consult "Extending Educational Opportunity for Children, Youth, and Adults," a discussion guide prepared for the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development by Gordon N. Mackenzie and J. Cecil Parker, co-editors of the forthcoming yearbook on this subject. The guide to discussion is divided into questions relating to these major considerations: (1) Should schools extend educational opportunity to new groups of people (children of nursery age, out-of-school youth, adults)? (2) Should schools extend the school day or the school year? (3) Should schools provide new kinds of educational experiences (community service, work experience, others)? Price of the outline, 10 cents a copy. Secure from the Department.

TO GIVE STUDY GROUPS throughout the country an opportunity to plan programs using related films, pamphlets, and recorded broadcasts, three institutions are now combining their offerings. These institutions are the University of Chicago Round Table, the Public Affairs Committee, and the New York University Film Library. The new merger has opened a special office called "New Tools for Learning" at 7 West Sixteenth Street, New York City. Write to this address for a free catalogue of these related audio-visual materials. Also from this address, you may obtain free copies of lists of other films available from the N. Y. U. Film Library and free copies of lists of University of Chicago Round

Table transcripts and announcements of Public Affairs Pamphlets.

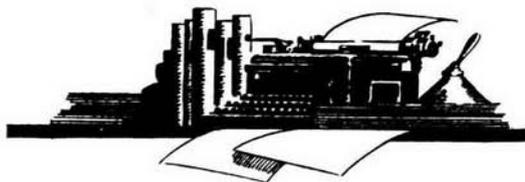
This is an example of how the merged services work. On the subject of China one may select one of several movies, such as *China's Gifts to the West* or *Smile with the Children of China*. A recording of *Songs of New China* sung by Paul Robeson and chorus is available. One may also secure a transcript of a University of Chicago Round Table broadcast regarding the war needs and accomplishments of China.

WHAT MAGAZINES should be ordered for the children in the elementary school? This is a question that faces many of us each fall. During last school year a committee of teachers in the Madison (Wis.) Public Schools made a study of this problem and now has a seventeen-page mimeographed report ready to share with others. Thirty-two magazines have been described and appraised in the report, which is entitled "Magazines for Elementary Grades." Order from the Curriculum Department, Public Schools, Madison, Wis., for 10 cents a copy.

Other materials published by the

Madison Curriculum Department last June are of value also. There is "An Index to 500 Favorite Poems for the Elementary Grades" (32 pp., printed, 25 cents). With titles and first lines the poems are grouped under such headings as "Just Living," "Interesting People—Mostly Grown-Ups," "Creepy-Crawlers and Hopping Things," and "Story-Telling Poems." The poems are keyed to forty books of poetry used as sources, and suggested grade levels are indicated for each poem and poem collection.

"Good Books for Boys and Girls," which sells for 10 cents, is a mimeographed collection of book reviews written by Madison teachers and originally printed in the Sunday editions of two local newspapers for the benefit of parents and children. The Children's Books Committee, which was responsible for this project, has issued, also, three printed lists of books for boys and girls: one containing patriotic books is entitled "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"; a second, called "Around About Us," lists out-of-door books; and a third includes books on aviation, "Wings Around the World." These lists sell for 5 cents each or three for 10 cents.



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