

The Changing World

Paul R. Hanna

THE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

AN EXCITING publication is being distributed by the United States Chamber of Commerce. This sixty-page bulletin deals with the problems and technique of planning for full employment in American communities in the postwar period.¹ The document describes how one typical community, Albert Lea, Minn., has gone about charting a course for agricultural and industrial production that will offer employment to all who desire work in the period immediately following the war. The publication is exciting for several reasons: (1) it demonstrates that a community can, within certain limits and under adequate and trained leadership, set about shaping its own future; (2) it contains a manual of directions for community planning which the United States Chamber is urging its local organizations in 1,700 United States cities and villages to use in making similar analyses and plans—a movement which could well be the beginning of a period of raising standards of living throughout the nation; (3) it has implicit in it many opportunities for the schools of a community to tie into planning activities and make a signifi-

The shifting fortunes of mankind are a professional, as well as a personal, concern of educators. In addition to meeting changes in their personal lives, teachers must be prepared to help children understand and cope with the new demands of a changing world. Before they can fulfill this obligation to young people, educators themselves must be aware of the forces which are shaping our lives. This department of Educational Leadership is designed to focus the attention of educators upon some of the situations and problems which are arising today. Paul R. Hanna, who conducts "The Changing World" department, is Professor of Education at Stanford University.

cant contribution to community betterment and at the same time improve the quality of the learning process for children and youth.

For decades the idea of planning has struggled to put down firm roots into the subsoil of American communities. Until the beginning of this war, that effort has not been very rewarding. Many sporadic attempts at community planning have been made but usually by small groups not representative of the more powerful community forces, or the plans were not based on sound techniques of fact gathering, analysis, projection of plan, and programming.

Within the war period, we have seen that we cannot hope to win a military victory unless we engage in total war.

¹ *A Procedure for Community Post-War Planning: Jobs and Production at War's End*, Committee on Economic Policy, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, D. C.

Total war means first a statement of objectives in terms of material and manpower. Second, the resources—physical, human, and technological—must be inventoried. Then a production schedule or plan must be drawn up to show how the various component parts will be fitted together to assure the maximum efficiency in reaching the objectives. Such planning has made possible the unprecedented magnitude of our wartime agricultural and industrial output and is clear proof that over-all planning is an indispensable tool in the modern industrial world.

Now planning is the postwar watchword of practically all leadership groups. The national labor unions are busy planning their place in the post-war economy. The political parties are not neglecting the planning instrument. Various federal agencies, associations of industries, states, regional and local bodies have recently created planning bureaus or are seriously considering doing so. Where planning was only yesterday frequently associated with dark and sinister movements or with dreamy-eyed dwellers of ivory towers, today the idea of planning is associated with hard-headed schemes for winning the war and securing a decent standard of living for the peace. While it is certain that the high expectation now held for the new controls will not be universally achieved, nor do most of the plans go far enough to be safe guides, nevertheless, the net gain from this wide acceptance of so useful an instrument as planning cannot but be very great.

This wider use of planning offers schools a unique chance to get into the current of community life. For example, in any community that launches into

local planning, the school officials and teaching staff can lend support, encouragement, and aid in interpretation of the need for planning. Further, some of the block and section interviewing to collect the facts concerning the number of people desiring work, number of jobs available, productivity of agricultural hinterland, sources and amounts of farm income, consumer demands and desires, etc., can be done by youth in schools under the mature guidance of community technicians and teachers. Tabulation of returns and preliminary analysis of the facts can be assigned to advanced classes in the high school and junior college. The schools can thus serve the planners by supplying critical manpower for getting together the basis for a community plan. Obviously, the final plan must be the responsibility of the best technicians and leaders representing all community groups.

Equally important to school workers is the chance that community planning offers pupils to engage as junior partners in the tasks of charting programs for agriculture, industry, commerce, and public welfare. Through such work experiences pupils learn lessons of hard work, responsibility, accuracy, and cooperation. They learn first-hand the lessons of economics, sociology, and political science. They develop greater efficiency in such basic skills as reading, writing, speaking, observing, listening, and using numbers through practice in the collection of accurate information. In short, they build the understandings, attitudes, skills, and abilities necessary to become effective citizens of the modern community and, with appropriate related experiences, of the state, nation, and world.

Copyright © 1944 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.