

The New—in Review

Alice Miel, Editor

● BEFORE THIS ISSUE of *Educational Leadership* is distributed, the last Monday evening broadcast of Education for Freedom, Inc., will be past, but the effects are probably yet to be felt. Those who missed hearing Mark Van Doren, Robert Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, Stringfellow Barr, and the other eminent persons who lent their talent to further the cause of this new group will be able to obtain copies of their addresses for 10 cents each by writing to Education for Freedom at 70 East Forty-fifth Street, New York 17, N. Y. A list of the thirteen distinguished speakers who made up the radio series and a statement of the "Principles and Aims" of the group may be obtained free.

All thoughtful educators will want to study the purposes and activities of Education for Freedom, Inc., and the effects of its work on local communities. All will want to note the composition of its advisory council, which is heavily weighted with college presidents, includes one principal of a college preparatory type of private high school, and has no representatives whatsoever of the field of elementary education.

In judging the program of the group, it may be helpful to know that the new "movement" was formed by a group of friends who wish to launch a theory about public education, but who are not necessarily experienced in the field.

Among them were Rev. James Harry Price of Scarsdale, N. Y., Rev. Stephen Bayne, Jr., chaplain at Columbia University, Stringfellow Barr, and Raymond Rubicam of the large New York advertising firm of Young & Rubicam. These individuals, who are now directors of Education for Freedom, Inc., became concerned over the seriousness of the educational situation today as revealed by recent American history tests, the findings of the Army and Navy with regard to selectees, and other "evidence." It is also interesting to note that thousands of letters have been sent to friends of the committee (mostly clergymen) in different parts of the country, urging them to form local groups and investigate their public schools.

Asked whether the methods being used by the new organization would be likely to lead to good thinking about education throughout the nation, one of the founders replied, "We haven't enough money to get all points of view presented. We are a protest group."

● FILM CATALOGUES are an invaluable resource, and the 1944 catalogue of the New York University Film Library—now ready for distribution—is especially so. Films produced for the Office of War Information and the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs are listed. The service charge on these is only 50 cents, regardless of the

number of reels. This makes the four-reel, technicolor film, *South of the Border with Disney*, an especially good bargain. Address: 71 Washington Square South, New York 12, N. Y.

A free catalogue of "Films of the Pacific Area" may be obtained from the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1795 California Street, San Francisco, Calif.

Russian films are notable for their excellent photography. Several are available at a nominal rental fee from Artkino Pictures, Inc., 723 Seventh Avenue, New York. These are sound films with English sub-titles.

● **TO ANSWER** the complaints of teachers that radio program logs are not announced far enough in advance to be of service, the Federal Radio Education Committee of the U. S. Office of Education began in October to offer a new monthly radio program listing service. This listing is made available *only* through State departments of education. The programs listed are well selected by a group of experts and are well described. However, educators will still have to check local schedules for time differences and station coverage. Teachers are urged to supplement the lists with good programs originating in their own locality or region. FREC has a service bulletin which some may wish to receive regularly.

● **KNOW AND WORK WITH** the social agencies of your community is advice frequently given to educators. A very pleasant way to learn the trends in thinking among persons engaged in social group work is to read Everett W. DuVall's new book, *Personality and Social Group Work—The Individual*

Approach (New York, Association Press, 1943, \$2.50). His opening sentence indicates the nature of the change that is occurring: "The center of interest for group workers is shifting from program to personality." The rest of the book explains the desirability of that shift and gives the kind of help that a person might need in trying to make an individual approach to social group work.

The educator will be struck by the similarity of problems which he and his community colleague encounter, as well as by the parallels in requisite insight and skill necessary for dealing with the problems. It is somehow much less taxing and just as educative to read good advice addressed to someone else—and refreshing to find all the illustrations drawn from a segment of life outside one's daily run.

● **DAIRY COWS** are not usually thought of as an American problem but the *Building America* study unit, "Dairying," published in January, shows just how, "all along the line, from cow to consumer, there are problems." Cartoons, graphs, and many pictures illustrate the unit. An excellent bibliography includes addresses from which free materials may be obtained and lists several appropriate films.

● **UP-TO-DATE MAPS** of a variety of types are an indispensable kind of instructional material. Two dependable maps of current interest can be obtained free of charge by simply asking for them in any J. C. Penney store. Both were developed by George T. Renner, Jr., of Teachers College, Columbia University. One showing the

"Pacific Theater of War" carries on the back a discussion of air-age geography by Professor Renner.

Population density as of the 1940

census is shown on a map which may be ordered from the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Washington 25, D. C., for 40 cents.

New Books on the Teaching of Reading

Reviewed by

BERNICE E. LEARY, Curriculum Consultant, Madison (Wis.) Public Schools

AT THE AGE of 6 it is no light matter to *learn* to read. Nor is it a light matter, at any age, to *teach* one who is 6 or 7, or more, *how* to read. Such are the solemn reminders that appear year after year in virtually every book on the teaching of reading, seemingly as a justification for the book's attempt to lighten the task.

• Experience is the watchword proposed by Lillian A. Lamoreaux and Dorris May Lee for initiating the child into reading—experience with other children, with pictures and books, with language, with number concepts, with games and puzzles and form boards, with everything that can be seen or heard or smelled or tasted or felt in the everyday world. All of these forms of experience, it is believed, develop a readiness for reading through an "all-round development of the child." Yet *Learning to Read through Experience* (New York, D. Appleton-Century, 1943, \$1.75) does not stop with theory. It offers detailed suggestions for providing valuable experiences, measuring child-growth, recording experiences on charts, making the transition from chart-reading to book-reading, and for arranging a stimulating reading environment. The book might well be a part of every primary teacher's professional equipment.

• Renew emphasis on oral reading, and by so doing "aid (1) beginning reading, (2) comprehension, (3) reading motivation, (4) diagnosis and remediation, (5) language development, (6) literary appreciation, (7) speech development, (8) personality development, (9) cultural growth, (10) socialization, and (11) social sharing." This is the recommendation offered by Ada V. Hyatt after picking up the dangling threads of oral reading from 1880 to 1941 and weaving them all into a modern pattern, carefully balanced as to social needs and educational trends. It is a useful pattern, on the whole, particularly for teachers and supervisors who feel the need for giving new form or direction to their oral-reading programs. But probably of greater significance than the pattern itself are the threads from which it is woven, for in their looping and twisting and knotting can be traced the historical development of oral reading in the elementary curriculum. The threads are many and often difficult to follow in *The Place of Oral Reading in the School Program* (New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943, \$1.85).

• An enriched basic program promises the best solution to the perennial reading problem, according to Guy L. and Eva Bond in *Teaching the Child to Read*

(New York, Macmillan, 1943, \$3). The Bonds are all for using basal books—materials that are “nicely graded so that the vocabulary load and the concept load will not be too difficult.” To this core they would add “readers” dealing with the various content subjects; “supplementary readers” and other books of both fiction and facts; and “on occasion,” materials prepared by the teacher or by teacher and pupils—charts, picture dictionaries, and the like. With all this variety of material they would provide a diversified program, aimed to develop skills and abilities, both general and specific, as well as desirable interests and tastes. What is more, they are willing to show precisely how they would go about it. And they do so in concrete, practical language that every reader can understand. For this reason, most teachers will like the book. Some won't like it for upsetting their old, cherished ideas of a basic program, while a few may even oppose it as being *too* circumscribed—*too* “basic.”

•Be discreet in using the mechanical approach to increase speed of reading, at least at the third-grade level. Such is the gist of conclusions reached by Eloise Boeker Cason in a controlled experiment comparing the efficacy of training eye movements as against free library reading. Her findings, reported in *Mechanical Methods for Increasing the Speed of Reading* (New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943, \$1.75), show no significant difference for groups as a whole in speed of reading and ability to read by phrases as developed through the two approaches. Middle-group or average readers, however, seemed to be most helped by a direct attack on speed; whereas best readers were actually hindered. The author rightly concludes, therefore, that an evaluation of the reading status of each child should be made before his speed of reading is attacked by any method.

•How to lessen the visual burden of reading is considerably more than a teaching problem, but it is one that many teachers will be interested to learn about in *Reading As a Visual Task* by Matthew Luckiesh and Frank K. Moss (New York, Van Nostrand Company, 1942, \$5). In this book the reader discovers, if he has not already done so, that making a book, like learning to read or teaching others to read, is no light matter, that it requires the best knowledge of “publishers, printers, art directors, book designers, and production executives.” He also discovers, as his eye runs easily over the pages, that here is a book designed to approximate the authors' ideal specifications for optimum readability for adults—optimum size of type, boldness of type-face, leading, line-length, and brightness of material; maximal brightness-contrast between ink and paper; non-glossy ink and paper; and adequate margins.

If the book did no more than reveal the qualities of a readable printed page, it would be a valuable volume. But it does much more. It shows how criteria for determining readability were arrived at through years of research in seeing. And it shows further the importance of certain environmental factors on reading, such as light and brightness, noise and distraction; and of personal factors, for example, posture, location, eye-glasses, rest periods, etc., all of which are controllable and help to determine the ease or difficulty of reading as a visual task.

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