

satisfied attitude they would not obtain the alleged benefits of the training. (3) This compulsory training would cause hardship in many homes where there are large families and the parents are dependent upon their sons for aid financially. (4) This training would interfere with a young man's school training because his military age would occur at a time when it would, in many cases, conflict with his educational advance. (5) A year of military training would take many young men away from their trades and professions.

In addition to these disadvantages, we must remember that conscription and compulsory military service in peacetime are contrary to our democratic ideals. If the United States, which is the leading democratic power, arms its young men, then other nations would feel that they have the same right. Thus, we would be defeating the very purpose of this war and we would be reverting to what we have condemned in the totalitarian nations.

I personally have not reached a solution yet; for too little is known of the exact setup of this military program; how it will operate, how long it will last, and of what value it will be in the postwar world.

Do not misunderstand me. If the plan, or something like it, is ever adopted by the free choice of the American people, I think that all good Americans will take part in it. But it must be given full and free discussion by our people. It would be an awful mistake for us to become so hysterical over our present difficulties that we would rush into the adoption of this program. It would not only involve a complete break with all our past customs and traditions, but would upset our family life and social relations for uncounted years. "Look before you leap" is the best possible advice on a matter like this.

**MODERATOR:** We must now bring to a close our consideration of the plan which has been suggested for compulsory military training for our young men. In the words of one of our speakers, I believe that if the American people should, after proper deliberation, adopt this policy, our young men will meet the challenge at least gracefully, if not with enthusiasm; but that there is room for difference of opinion in regard to this proposition, the speakers of this afternoon have demonstrated.

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### ***When You Write to Your Congressman About a Bill***

Remember that congressmen listen carefully to opinions from "back home" and they want to be kept informed about conditions in their districts. Base your letters on your own experiences and observations.

In writing to a Senator address his letter to the Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.; and if to a Representative address him at the House Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.

Describe the bill you are interested in specifically. There are thousands of bills before Congress and unless you designate the specific bill your letter may be wasted.

Timing is very important. A letter to committee members should go to them while the bill is before the committee.

Remember that short letters are most effective. Ordinarily, such letters should be limited to one typewritten page or two pages in script.

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than the knowledge of how and when it should be used. It is easier to produce technicians than citizens who are the masters and not the slaves of their technology. If the country is willing to underwrite a program costing billions of dollars, would it not be wise to consider first the kind of program that will be most useful to its citizens?

The centralized control of a gigantic enterprise such as is proposed should likewise cause the citizen to pause and reflect. Those who shy away from bureaucratic measures even in an emergency situation may well pause before accepting a continuance of such measures when the emergency has passed. It may be argued with justification that centralized control is necessary under war conditions in spite of the many kinds of confusion incidental to it. But for peacetime education it is quite contrary to the American tradition. If we accept such control we should realize that we would be doing more than adopting a measure; we would be embarking on a new policy.

The American educational system has so developed as to include a high degree of local autonomy. The schools of a locality, within certain legally defined

bounds, are subject to the wishes and determined by the needs of the locality. The plan, while it has its weaknesses, nevertheless tends to develop a responsible citizenry and responsible local school management. The citizen may therefore well ask whether he wishes to relinquish this principle of local control unless it is absolutely necessary.

And after all, he asks, is it necessary to make this concession to "statism"? The European states have followed the plan for years. Do we need to imitate them in this and run the risk of building up a powerful military clique and a militaristic spirit among our people? We who have twice succeeded in maintaining our security by aiding in the overthrow of aggressor nations, who have developed our separate state educational systems with their high degree of local autonomy, peopled as we are by those who fled from the unhappy European continent in the hope of securing a new freedom across the sea, can we not find a better method of maintaining ourselves on this shrinking globe than by going back to the evils we sought to escape? Shall a vanquished Germany indeed succeed in taking her conquerors captive?

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#### When You Write to Your Congressman *(Continued from page 11)*

Do not threaten, scold, or intimidate. You will not win his cooperation by threatening to beat him at the next election or bragging about how powerful you are.

Do not wear out your welcome with endless letters on the same subject. A few letters from many people are much more effective than many letters from a few people.

Unless you represent an organization having strong influence in his district, or unless you know him personally, do not waste stamps on a congressman living outside your home district. The above advice does not apply to letters written to members and chairmen of committees.

In addition to writing your convictions concerning a bill to your congressman you might well find out whether other people have the same convictions and if so urge that they write letters.—DONALD DUSHANE, *Secretary, Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education, NEA.*

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