Curriculum Improvement in Maine. Under the leadership of William H. Burton of Harvard University the State Department of Education is stimulating an interest in the improvement of the elementary school curriculum. A workshop was conducted under his direction at the University of Maine from August 14 to September 2, 1944, which was attended by 114 elementary teachers, 27 principals and supervisors, 22 superintendents of schools, and 9 members of normal school faculties. The total enrollment was 172. This is being followed up by a series of regional meetings designed to give teachers of the state an opportunity to become familiar with the program and to plan the next steps.

Trends in Book Buying. The years before the war witnessed a new trend in book publishing—the mass production of inexpensive books which were put on sale at newsstands, drug stores, and low-price chain stores. The output of books both for civilian and military consumption has increased rapidly during the war years. The Army and Navy are distributing 3½ million pocket-size books a month to the armed services. After the war the American people will become a greater book-buying, book-reading nation. The quality of the popular demand for books will depend, in part, upon the level of taste developed in the classrooms and libraries of our public schools.

California Curriculum Commission. The Education Code of the state of California provides for a Curriculum Commission, the members of which are nominated by the superintendent of public instruction and appointed by the State Board of Education. The term of office is four years. The superintendent of public instruction is chairman of the Commission. The Commission which is a part of the State Department of Education is headed by the superintendent. It is charged with the responsibility of organizing and developing the curriculum for the public schools. Members of the Commission serve for a period of four years and are drawn from outstanding educators in the state. The law states that the various levels and areas in education must be represented. The Curriculum Commission meets at stated intervals and in extraordinary sessions if necessary. It forms a means of securing advice as well as service from highly competent persons in the field of education. California school men consider it a valuable agency.

Public Opinion. Out of every 100 Americans interviewed in a survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, 57 suggested no changes in the public schools as they are today. Of those who do make suggestions, almost half mention changes in curriculum and teaching methods. Persons with children of school age are more critical of public education than those with no sons or daughters attending school. Sectionally, residents of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific states are most critical, and Southerners least.

Bellingham Curriculum Laboratory. The curriculum laboratory of the Bellingham (Wash.) Schools was established to provide facilities for teachers to work on curricular problems. Over half the teachers are actively engaged in this work. Committees meet monthly to survey the needs of children and teachers; to organize a plan of action which will meet those needs. Where such plans require considerable time, the project

Readers are invited to send news of interesting activities in their schools to Henry Harap, George Peabody College, Nashville 4, Tenn., for possible inclusion in "Front Lines in Education."
is submitted to the curriculum director and
after receiving his approval is referred to
the curriculum laboratory. Teachers are re-
imbursed for all time spent in developing
such projects. The curriculum laboratory is
open each Saturday from 9 o’clock in the
morning until noon. A number of work-
rooms are available so that several different
interest groups may be in session at the
same time, all having access to library facil-
ities.

—Randy Oberlatz, Curriculum Director.

Portland Program of Professional Study. A
program of professional study has been
planned to provide the teachers of the Port-
land Schools with opportunities to improve
instruction. Arrangements have been made
with the State System of Higher Education
to recognize the program and grant credit
for all of the work. No differentiation is
made between requirements for university
credit and in-service training credit so far as
outside preparation and work are concerned.
The instructors are members of the super-
visory and administrative staff working in
the fields which they teach. The program
aims to provide close cooperation between
the teaching and supervisory staff in develop-
ing the educational program.

General Education for Armed Forces. Be-
cause the educational programs for service
men and women will probably demand new
curricular patterns, a committee has recently
developed twelve courses for general educa-
tion. The report was prepared at the request
of the United States Armed Forces Institute
which will prepare instructional materials for
use during the period following the end of
hostilities. The committee feels that the
courses developed for grades XI-XIV will
also be of interest to schools and colleges
which are planning programs for returning
service men and women. Outlines are in-
cluded for the following courses: health,
communication, social adjustment, marriage,
American institutions, international affairs,
science, literature, art, music, philosophy and
religion, vocational orientation. A Design for
General Education for the Armed Forces
sells for $1.25 and may be ordered from the
American Council on Education, 744 Jack-
son Place, Washington 6, D. C.

Michigan Program of Local Curriculum De-
velopment. How can local curriculum devel-
opment be initiated and accelerated? How
can information about successful or promis-
ing developments reach other schools? How
can the numerous consultative resources of
the state be coordinated and focused upon
local school problems? These questions are
currently being attacked in Michigan through
a regional survey of local curriculum develop-
ment. The survey is expected to uncover the
specific needs for consultative help and the
names of teachers or administrators who are
especially interested in the various areas of
curriculum development which need to be
studied. Conferences have been called in four
regions and plans are being made for five
other regional conferences at which local
school curriculum development will be ex-
plored.—Roland C. Faunce, Chief, Division of
Elementary and Secondary Education.

Policy Making in Winona (Wis.) Public
Schools. The elementary principals meet every
Monday with the superintendent of schools
and the elementary coordinator to formulate
the policies and determine procedures. Every-
one gets the benefit of the experience, the
training, and the thinking of each person
present. The principals meet their respective
teachers in a group on Wednesday of each
week to discuss and determine their activities.
Elementary teachers meet with the elemen-
tary coordinator once a month in grade
groups. At present, a philosophy for language
arts being formulated in each group, deal-
ing with one area at a time such as creative
poetry. Certain teachers will be invited to
read articles and books on the topic to be
considered and to lead the discussion.
Specialists will be invited to talk whenever
possible.—Myrtle E. Jensen, Elementary Co-
ordinator.

Experience and the Law. Liberal educators
will be interested in Justice Oliver Wendell
Holmes’ theory of law which is discussed
incidentally in Catherine Drinker Bowen’s
biography Yankee from Olympus. He opened
his Lowell lectures in 1880 with a statement
of his approach to the law: “The life of the
law has not been logic: it has been experi-
ence. The felt necessities of the time, the
prevailing moral and political theories, intui-
tions of public policy, avowed or unconsciously, even the prejudices which judges share with their fellow-men, have had a good deal more to do than the syllogism in determining the rules by which men should be governed." Justice Holmes was an intimate of Charles Peirce, the brilliant founder of pragmatism. He had the same attitude toward the law as his good friend William James had toward philosophy, as John Dewey had toward education. He was no worshipper of formalism and precedent; the test of the value of a law was its effect on community living.

Promoting the Art of Discussion. The Junior Town Meeting League is an organization to foster discussion of current affairs among youth. It provides for its members a weekly publication Civic Training, which outlines the topic of the week and makes available the services of a guest moderator for high school demonstration assemblies. The League has published a free pamphlet which gives detailed suggestions for adapting radio forum techniques to discussions by youth. For information write to the Secretary, Byron B. Williams, 400 South Front Street, Columbus 15, Ohio.

Secondary English. Ellen Geyer of the University of Pittsburgh directed the preparation of a course of study in junior and senior high school English in Butler, Pa. Dr. Geyer met with the English teachers and supervisors for a period of eighteen weeks. During this time a careful study was made of the objectives to be attained and the methods and materials to be used. Committees worked out units for the various grades and submitted them to the group for criticism. After careful refinement, the entire course was made available for use in all of the classrooms. This experience made a substantial contribution to the work of the high school.—Roy W. Wiley, Superintendent.

Understanding Canada Through Films. The National Film Board of Canada has produced a number of films which may be used by the children of the United States to help them understand their neighbors to the North. In addition to war films the titles deal with the people and natural resources of the country. If the films measure up to Film Commissioner John Grierson’s reputation as a producer of documentary films, they ought to be good. National headquarters for the non-theatrical distribution of Canadian productions in the United States is located in the International Relations Center, 84 East Randolph Street, Chicago, Ill. In general, the Canadian films are marketed in the United States through the facilities of national 16mm commercial distributors who contract for exclusive distribution rights.

Foreign Language. The Army method of teaching foreign languages has been widely publicized. Although some of the published claims have been exaggerated, it is the judgment of impartial and competent investigators that the procedure has had considerable success. It should, therefore, have some influence on foreign language teaching in the secondary schools. On the basis of our first-hand observation, the characteristics of the procedure are briefly as follows: the subject matter consists of the culture of the people whose language is studied; instruction is almost entirely in the language being studied; while most of the time is spent in speaking, reading is an integral part of the process and, therefore, is mastered; individual errors are corrected immediately as they are written or spoken; and everything that is spoken or written is fairly familiar and, at least, meaningful.

In Brief. Henry J. Otto of the University of Texas served as consultant to the Bonham (Tex.) elementary schools in the program of curriculum revision. A teachers’ guide in the language arts was issued recently growing out of a study program. . . . Edgar M. Draper of the University of Washington will direct a curriculum survey of Hawaiian schools. Paul Grim of Western Washington College of Education will accompany Mr. Draper as his professional assistant. . . . A. E. Waters of the University of Tennessee directed a workshop last summer in Chattanooga which was sponsored by the Chattanooga Public Schools and the Hamilton County Public Schools. . . . Vernon Anderson, who for the past two years has been director of curriculum in the Washington State Department of Education, has become the di-
The rector of the Portland (Ore.) Public Schools... Congressional action on compulsory military service in peacetime should be deferred until the war is over. Fifty county and district school superintendents in the state of Washington agreed during annual meeting in Olympia, September 1944. ... Wilbur Dutton, who has been curriculum director in the Eugene (Ore.) Public Schools for the past six years, is now on the staff of the Western Washington College of Education at Bellingham, Wash.

**NEW CURRICULUM BULLETINS**

- Vol. II: Grades 4-8, 127 p. $1.25.


Fresno Public Schools—*Social Studies and Related Fields*. Fresno, Calif.: Fresno Public Schools, 1944. 17 p. Mimeographed. 20 cents.


**Keeping Up on Militraining**

RESPONSE TO the October issue of *Educational Leadership* on compulsory military training indicates that there is much interest in this significant issue. Worthy of adding to your list of source materials for reading and discussions dealing with this subject are the following:

Shall We Have Another Lost Generation? Summary of Jackson's Mill Conference.

Lots of twenty-five may be ordered for $1 from Arthur J. Klein, College of Education, Ohio State University, Columbus 10, Ohio.

Peacetime Conscription... *A Problem for Americans* and *Conscription and Conscience*. Two of a series of pamphlets on conscription which may be ordered for 5 cents each from the Peace Section, American Friends Service Committee, 20 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Conscription... *The Test of the Peace*. May be ordered for 10 cents from Postwar World Council, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York, N. Y.

“The Case For and the Case Against Peacetime Conscription” by Walter E. Myer, Civic Education Service, writing in the *Journal of the National Education Association*, November 1944. (An eight-page reprint of this and other articles appearing in the *Journal* on conscription may be obtained without cost from R. B. Marston, Director, NEA Legislative and Federal Relations Division.)


*A Plan of National Service*. Published by Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

“Labor Weighs Conscription,” *The American Federationist*, September 1940, AF of L, Washington 1, D. C.

Additional sources will be listed next month.