

Are Teachers People?

TEACHERS ARE PEOPLE. It's a *trite* statement. So trite that we read right over it. "There's nothing new there," says Jack Ryan, Center City's school superintendent. "We all know that," remarks Anne Carson, curriculum director. "Yes, we know it, but I wish that little Jim Jackson's mother believed it," retorts pretty young Sue Brady, fourth-grade teacher.

Teachers are people. It is a trite statement. So is "Teachers are human" and "Each teacher is an individual." There is danger in that very triteness. *Theoretically* we believe that teachers are people, *vocally* and *mentally* we subscribe to it, but in the *realm of action* it is a neglected area. We give it a cursory glance and work at *really important things*—a new report for teachers to turn in to administrative offices four times each year!

"Of course teachers are human," says Jack Ryan. But he hasn't thought that four new reports a year multiplied by ten hours per report means forty more hours of sedentary, indoor clerical work for Miss Murphy, Mr. Hansen, and Mrs. Leslie. Forty hours that might be used in discussion groups, at a good play, on the tennis courts, or in the garden. And he's just beginning to realize that one reason why Miss Murphy and Mr. Hansen always have that harried expression is because every month means an eternal round of making salary fit living costs. Of course Miss Murphy could stand some attractive clothes, but there are her mother's doctor bills, and one needs food and a place to live, so there's nothing left for that red dress she saw in the Style Shoppe the other day. Joe Hansen wants to play golf, but three children mean bills, so there's nothing left for golf. Besides, what about the time? Those new reports! Jack Carson's a good chap and he does his best, but—!

"It's important to remember that each teacher is truly an individual in her own right," remarks Anne Carson to the county supervisor. Anne is *working hard* with her teachers on a new social studies program. It's *such a good* program and it's going to mean that children throughout the city will all have the same experiences. That'll eliminate the difficulty of transfer. Of course, there is Miss Peters. She has given good service and she is only three years from retirement. But she'll just have to make a try with the new program even though she's dead set against it. And Joe Mason does work particularly well with twelve-year-olds, but he does have some rather startling ideas. Well, when he gets to working with us, he'll forget his ideas and begin to think as we do. It'll be easier all around.

"If only the community would realize that we're human," sighs Sue Brady. Pretty Sue whom her pupils and fellow teachers love and her superintendent calls one of his best teachers. She does her share of dating, too, and she loves a good movie. But she can't be bothered with community forums or discussion groups. In fact, she doesn't know many of the city people. But then why should she? She has enough friends among the other teachers. And she'd like to go to that art group but she's never tried anything like it before. Besides, she doesn't know the people. It would be a good idea to swim, but a movie takes less effort. No, she's never worked in a factory or on a farm, or in a store. Her family wouldn't think of it. She went right through college and now she's spending her summers in school working toward her M.A., with fun on the side.

We believe that a careful consideration of the basic human needs and rights of teachers is an important educational issue at the present time. In this number of **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**—through the statements of educators in many and varied positions—the case is presented.

G. H.

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