

THE LISTENING POST

Your ASCD Legislative Committee

IN VIEW of the strategic importance of legislation affecting education either directly or indirectly, your Association several years ago set up a committee to help bring to the attention of the members the pertinent happenings taking place on the local, state, and national levels. Many phases of legislation are being reported; those which make possible the improvement of services and facilities; pressures which seek to dictate what materials are undesirable or what schools should or should not teach; approaches which are used to bring about desirable results; and social legislation which has implications for the education of children and youth or their general welfare.

From time to time issues have arisen which invited the Association to take a stand and let its feelings be known. There will be times when the Association will again want to take a stand and let its position be known. At such times all members will want to be fully aware of the conditions and the eventual possible consequences. Such action will be taken only after the committee concurs in the gravity of the situation and sends a resolution to the Executive Committee for its approval or rejection. This body must approve any plan before committee resolutions can eventuate into action on the part of the Association.

It should be the responsibility of all school personnel to know what legislation is pending, what laws have been passed, and what is anticipated which will affect educational opportunities and social conditions affecting children and youth. Beneficial results will come only as professional school people keep informed and work closely with lay and parent groups in the study of the entire educational enterprise. Legislation is one of the important means which can help make possible the advancements school people desire. Over the past few years there have been many instances both on the state and

local levels where alertness and information have made possible widespread participation which eventuated into desirable school legislation. The committee hopes that members will take occasion from time to time to pass on to the representatives on the committee in each region the happenings which would be of interest or value to other members of the Association. Many such comments have already been received and future reports will share this information through "The Listening Post" and also the "News Exchange."

During the past few months reorganization of this committee has gone forward in order to make it more truly representative of the entire country. Don Patterson in the Elementary Division of the U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., as chairman of the committee acts as the coordinating agent and makes direct contact with the ASCD office. Members of the Committee of Twelve, representing each one of the twelve regions, have appointed Legislative Committee members from each region. At present, with ten members working in various parts of the country, the organization of this committee is almost completed. These ten members are: Gertrude M. Lewis, State Board of Education, Concord, N. H.; C. W. Hunnicutt, University of Syracuse, N. Y.; Juliet Ware, State Department of Education, Richmond, Va.; J. M. Leps, University of Florida, Gainesville; Zeno B. Katterlee, Washington State College, Pullman; Charles Garner, Webster Groves Public Schools, Mo.; Howardine Hoffman, Los Angeles County Schools, Calif.; Lester Ball, Highland Park Public Schools, Ill.; Leslie Johnson, Superior Public Schools, Wis.; J. G. Umstatted, University of Texas, Austin.

The annual meeting at Cincinnati will make possible the first meeting of the entire group. It is hoped that many Association members will plan to meet with

(Continued on page 284)

grades just? Finally, what did the course contribute to the intellectual development of the student? Did it assist him in recognizing problems, making decisions, and taking effective action? Was he stimulated to further study and a genuine interest in the field? Could the course be improved?

"The results of the study, although difficult to generalize, are interesting. On the whole, students preferred an effective teacher to an advanced scholar who was unable to achieve a genuine meeting of minds with beginners. The bulk of criticism was directed at those whose lectures seemed poorly organized or excessively diffuse, who failed to illustrate their abstractions with applications, or whose classroom manner was weak, ineffective, drab, or pretentious. Although not all courses presented problems which students could accept as their own, any course when well taught was considered of value in one's general education. The least forgivable failure of an instructor was an inability to make his material interesting. It was assumed that if a man is devoting his life to a subject he should possess an enthusiasm for it which could be transmitted to others. 'Cute' and 'coy' devices were rejected as were obvious examples of 'talking down.' Both teachers and textbooks occasionally failed to do their job

well due to 'rambling,' 'lack of inspiration,' 'dogmatism,' 'repetition,' and simply being 'dull.'

"The Cornell editors plan to extend their study to the remaining divisions of the university. If other schools would publish guides of equal quality, a valuable commentary on the character of higher education under the G.I. Bill would be obtained."

Chicopee Plans Curriculum Improvement. Teacher-principal workshop committees of the Chicopee (Mass.) schools made intensive studies of the commercial curriculum and guidance areas during the past school year. The guidance committee proposed a comprehensive plan for guidance and counseling which is to continue from grade one through a three-year period following the termination of school attendance. The plan, according to Superintendent John Fitzpatrick, has been adopted by the school committee and a supervisor of guidance has already been appointed to implement the plan.

The commercial curriculum committee surveyed the requirements for office workers of Chicopee business firms and secured suggestions for improvement of the program. The report proposes a revision of offerings in this area so as to adapt the course to present demands.

THE LISTENING POST

(Continued from page 273)

the committee at its open meeting. The interest and suggestions of the members will make possible a better service. The entire committee has a real desire to develop the most helpful reports possible.

The major trends in legislation seem to be in the direction of benefits in many areas. This has not come about without

effort on the part of a great many school and lay people. It will continue only if teachers and administrators continue their interest and vigilance on behalf of helpful legislation. This is a program which invites the concern and the participation of school people throughout the nation. *ASCD Legislative Committee.*

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