

Front Lines in Education

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Supervision in Rural Areas Studied. State superintendent Eugene B. Elliott of the Michigan State Department of Public Instruction recently appointed a commission to study supervision in the rural areas of Michigan. At the first meeting of the commission in the fall of 1947 it was agreed that it should undertake the following responsibilities:

(a) To discover the different supervisory patterns that exist in Michigan; (b) to clarify the titles and duties of helping teachers; (c) to examine the supervisory situation in rural areas in other states; and (d) to make constructive suggestions to improve the supervisory situation in Michigan.

This study of supervision grew out of the discussions of the Michigan Helping Teachers Association. The Association felt that the rural supervisors in Michigan were facing a number of serious problems, chief of which were lack of adequate in-service training programs, lack of security, and lack of knowledge of functions and duties. The helping teachers felt that a study commission could clarify the situation and improve the program of supervision in the state.

Santa Barbara Workshop. Santa Barbara city teachers have a long history of workshop organization. In the past ten years workshops have become recognized as particularly effective techniques for the study of educational problems, since they are organized on a democratic basis and call in representatives from all levels of a school system. Santa Barbara teachers have been among the pioneers in developing this technique. As early as 1935 the California Bureau of Juvenile Research established a workshop for Santa Barbara teachers who needed special training to

become school counselors and case workers. Again in 1939 a large group of Santa Barbara teachers and staff members attended a workshop, at the University of Southern California, especially established to study Santa Barbara problems. Since then many Santa Barbara teachers have participated in workshops developed at university centers, and brief workshops have been held in Santa Barbara—chiefly to help in the orientation of new teachers.

The workshop held last year was the third in a series which has unique characteristics. Begun in 1945 under the leadership of Rudolph D. Lindquist, superintendent, this series has developed an important function in the operation of the Santa Barbara city schools. Problems to be studied come from two sources—needs of the individual teachers, and needs of the school system. Instead of centering in a university, therefore, this series in a sense brings the university to the teachers. Teachers indicate the problems to which they wish to devote time and study. The administration, together with the elementary and secondary coordinating committees, select problems which must be studied with the view to recommending improvement in educational and administrative practices. When these problems have been selected, the workshop planning committee secures consultants to help the committees which are to work together. Thus, teachers have the advantage of working on practical problems which concern the everyday functioning of their own schools and classrooms. At the same time they have adequate professional leadership to guide them in their study and to provide the inspiration which comes from contact with fresh ideas. Furthermore, the work is carried on in an environment with the advantages of pleasant, friendly informal-

ity which develops fine morale and improved relationships between schools and between teachers and administrators.

Planning for the 1947 workshop began in July, 1946, when those attending the workshop that year elected the workshop planning committee for 1947. Teachers and administrators were consulted at every step so that 1947 might provide a truly democratic opportunity for each workshop member. Each person was associated with a committee—some to work on individual projects and others to develop statements of policy and recommendations for administrative changes in the schools. A series of special lectures has enriched the program by presenting outstanding consultants and lecturers.

Educational Enrichment through the Use of Motion Pictures. To what extent can the high school curriculum, particularly in smaller communities, be enriched by the use of motion pictures?

In an attempt to answer this question, an experiment of wide scope was put into operation in Nebraska in September, 1946, by the University of Nebraska and the State Department of Public Instruction in cooperation with the state teachers colleges at Chadron, Kearney, Peru, and Wayne, and the University of Omaha. Twenty-nine secondary schools were selected for experimentation during the first year of the program.

The experiment is directed by a committee composed of representatives of the University and the State Department of Public Instruction, with Wesley Meierhenry program director. Direction of the program at the local level is the responsibility of six area directors located in the six publicly supported teacher training institutions, who, in turn, work with a local director in each of the secondary schools.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has given financial assistance to the project. The Teaching Film Custodians, Inc., and the Motion Picture Association of America have contributed to the experimental program, as have several of the ma-

ior instructional motion picture producers.

Although many girls and boys living in the towns of Nebraska, or attending rural schools, enjoy opportunities not available to city children, it is true that they lack certain opportunities for wide and varied experiences now generally found only in larger schools. This lack of opportunity is due in part to the absence of certain instructional resources and facilities. The main purpose of this program is to discover the extent to which the educational programs of these smaller schools may be enriched by means of carefully selected and properly utilized motion pictures. Enrichment is considered to involve making more meaningful the subject matter now taught, as well as the introduction of new material pertinent to the subject under consideration—but not now provided.

Since film distribution is one of the factors in providing wide use of motion pictures, the program uses experimentally a decentralized plan for film loan libraries. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers are vigorously emphasized.

During the first year of operation, experimentation was carried on in the following subjects: general science, biology, physics, world geography, world history, and American history, along with certain selected convocation films. The convocation films deal with areas so pertinent and valuable—international relations, aeronautics, health and safety, and art and music appreciation—that all high school students should have contact with them.

During the first year of the program various tests were given in the schools prior to the use of the selected motion pictures. After the year's work had been completed, tests were again administered. Control schools were selected which did not have a motion picture projector and hence could not show motion pictures to their students. The same tests were administered in the control schools as were given in the experimental schools and the contributions of the motion pictures could thus be ascertained. Results of the first year's program are now being evaluated.

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