

Front Lines in Education

Galen Saylor

Health and Physical Education. Several popular magazines in recent months have publicized the sex education aspects of Oregon's new health education program, but little attention has been given to the comprehensive nature of the present program. The school people of Oregon take great pride in the all-round program of health education which has been developed and regard sex education as simply one part, albeit an important aspect, of the total program. The present Oregon program is the outgrowth of a health education law passed in 1945. Even though this law runs counter to the views of many curriculum people in that it sets up specific requirements for the school curriculum, it nonetheless has been effective in promoting the development of a good school health program.

The law makes it mandatory that the curriculum of every elementary and secondary public school in Oregon include health instruction in the eleven areas of: personal hygiene; nutrition; mental health; first aid; safety education; communicable diseases; physiology of exercise; community health and sanitation; structure and functions of the human body; choice and use of health services and products; and affect of alcoholic drinks, stimulants, and narcotics. If a parent or guardian of any pupil files objection to any phase of this instruction with the board of education, the child may be exempt from such instruction.

Some of the school people in Oregon desired this specific type of legislation since they felt that earlier programs of health education in both their own state and other states had indicated that such a requirement accomplished little unless it prescribed the broad aspects of a health program. The law empowers the state superintendent to make rules and regula-

tions necessary to implement the program and to issue courses of study and other teaching material which will aid the schools in providing the instruction. The law further specifies that health instruction in the schools must be evaluated periodically.

To help the schools plan instruction in accordance with this law, the State Department of Education has had prepared two curriculum guides; *Health Instruction, Elementary Schools*, published by the State Department of Education, and *Health Guide Units for Oregon Teachers (Grades 7-12)*, by H. S. Hoyman and published by Edwards Brothers.

The Oregon State Joint Committee for Health and Physical Fitness had charge of the preparation of the curriculum bulletins and developed the two of them as part of an integrated series. The program is planned as a four-cycle program, with grades 1-3 comprising cycle one, grades 4-6 comprising cycle two, grades 7-9 comprising cycle three, and grades 10-12 comprising cycle four. Nine areas of health instruction have been set up in the program to meet the requirements of the law. Each of these nine areas is treated once within each cycle, so that any pupil progressing from grade one through grade twelve studies each area four times during his school career.

The Oregon law does not specify any required time allotment for health instruction, but the committee has recommended a minimum of 135 class periods for the junior high school work and 155 class periods for the senior high school program. It is evident from an examination of the program that the much-publicized sex education is simply one aspect of the program, but it will be noted that it receives systematic treatment throughout the twelve-year program.

In spite of the prescriptive nature of the law, educators in Oregon feel that they have much leeway in planning the actual instruction. The law was passed at the instigation of school people to give legal backing to the belief that all schools should have some program of health education. Each local school under the law still has freedom to plan its own program and to adjust it to local needs and conditions.

Community Service Program. For several years now, many educators have been enjoying the *New Dominion Series* published by the extension division of the University of Virginia. It is in this series of bulletins that Mr. and Mrs. Jess S. Ogdens have reported examples of experimental approaches to democratic living developed by various communities in Virginia and in the south-eastern states. This series of studies has recently been published as a book on community development.

The accounts of community development given in the *New Dominion Series* grew out of the conviction of the Ogdens that good things are being accomplished by people in many communities, and that since the people concerned in them must, consciously or unconsciously, have learned something about techniques for helping communities to help themselves in developing their various programs, the publication of the best of these techniques might inspire persons in other communities to act and help them in improving living in their own communities. The series is interested only in describing programs of cooperative community development. The concern is with process rather than product so that the Ogdens do not describe a development in some community unless it has been the outgrowth of self-planning.

The community service program began in 1941 and had an experimental phase that was limited to Virginia. Parallel with the experimental aspect of the program was an exploratory project which took the Ogdens to communities all over the south-eastern states. It was out of this exploratory work that the accounts recorded in the bulletin came.

At present the staff of the Community Service Bureau is conducting community development workshops in four Virginia counties. In these workshops, the staff helps a group of citizens analyze problems, take stock of resources, and find ways of relating the two. Many communities have become aware in the course of the self-analysis that they must make many changes to achieve the goals which they have set up for themselves, and they are increasingly anxious that their program be one for the total community. The Bureau acts as a catalytic agent for such communities; and also charges itself with bringing communities into contact with state and federal agency resources as well as all the available research material.

Bulletins in the *New Dominion Series* are issued nine times a year. Anyone interested may receive them without cost by writing to the Extension Division, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Schools Share City Planning. Pupils of the Philadelphia public schools have been engaged in a rich and challenging study of city planning. This work in the schools has grown out of and been carefully correlated with the work of groups in Philadelphia interested in long-term city planning. During 1946-47, at the invitation of these various city planning groups, sixteen public schools participated as experimental schools in a study of city planning. Elementary, junior and senior high schools, and vocational schools were included in the sixteen experimental centers. The city planning groups provided basic materials and expert advice as desired. In the main, children in these schools studied the problems of city planning as related to their immediate neighborhoods. They made surveys of housing and recreational facilities in the region and studied problems related to the improvement of living conditions. On the basis of this study, they prepared charts, maps, models, and similar materials.

The second phase of the Philadelphia program included all of the schools that made use of the Better Philadelphia Exhi-

bition. This was a very extensive exhibition held in one of the large store buildings of Philadelphia and was planned by the interested groups to show the citizens of Philadelphia what needed to be done in the way of city planning. All of the schools of the city were urged to visit the exhibition and to use it as a basis for rich learning experiences on community planning.

The central curriculum office cooperated with the schools by preparing an excursion guide and suggestions for pre-excursion and follow-up study. From this extensive activity, Mr. Cushman, associate superintendent in charge of curriculum, and the staff of the Philadelphia schools felt that not only had the children participated in a vital learning experience, but that a better Philadelphia would result.

Weston Studies Its Schools. During 1944-45, the Weston (Mass.) public schools undertook a cooperative study of their problems. This study was undertaken in the midst of war—so that Weston might be able to bring to the youth of that town, with the coming of peace, the best possible educational opportunities.

The formal study, itself, took the form of a cooperative survey of the educational problems facing Weston. A total of sixteen different committees, composed of members of the staff of the school and citizens of the community, worked on the cooperative study throughout 1944-45. The first phase of the survey, for which nine committees were organized, was concerned with the formulation of objectives to be attained by the Weston schools. This phase involved a study of the existing situation in the schools as well as the formulation of directional guides for the program in the years ahead. Phase two of the study, which followed after the completion of phase one and involved much the same study personnel but reorganized into new committees, was concerned with the development of recommendations for ways and means of working for the attainment of the desired goals. The results of the study and investigation of each of these committees were

published in the report, *Weston Studies Its Schools*. This publication sets forth the results of the comprehensive investigation of the present situation in the Weston schools as well as recommendations for improvement. Consultative service for the survey was furnished by A. D. Simpson and his colleagues of the graduate school of education at Harvard University.

The High Cost of Living. Certainly in the front line of teacher problems nowadays, and hence in the front lines of education, is that of stretching a teacher's fixed salary to meet costs of living in an inflated economy. A particularly significant study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor on this matter of the cost of living was summarized in the *Labor Information Bulletin* for January, 1948. This large-scale study, initiated in 1945, presents figures on the actual living costs of workers in thirty-four large cities, with figures based on actual buying habits of American families.

The total cost of living as of June, 1947, for a family of four—which included a male family head thirty-eight years of age, his thirty-six-year-old wife, who does cooking and housework, a thirteen-year-old son, and an eight-year-old daughter, both of whom are in school—varied from \$3004 in New Orleans to \$3458 in Washington, D.C. Certainly these figures which represent a minimum budget for a family of four exceed salaries of many teachers. The items actually included in the budget are available in the *Monthly Labor Review* for February.

One of the most interesting things revealed by the figures is the small range in living costs in these thirty-four cities. The over-all range is only \$454, and if the three most expensive and three least expensive cities are disregarded, the range is only about \$200. Some cities frequently justify lower salaries on the grounds that costs of living are lower in their respective cities. Present studies contradict that claim.

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