

tional materials which may be utilized in enriching classroom experiences.

► State Department of Education. *A Guide to Teaching Effective Living, A Course in Health and Safety Education for Senior High Schools*. Florida Program for Improvement of Schools, Bulletin 4-B. Tallahassee: State Department of Education, May 1950, 341 p.

Health education and safety education are essential for effective living, according to this comprehensive bulletin

issued by the State Department of Education of Florida. Part One of this bulletin relates the philosophy basic to this program, and the responsibilities of administrators and teachers.

The second section of this bulletin presents resource units concerned with the broad subject categories in the area of health and safety education. For the teacher there is a unique and helpful feature included in each resource unit that deals with pre-planning.

Curriculum Research

C. W. Hunnicutt
Column Editor

Guest of the Curriculum Research column this month is Richard W. Rurkhardt, Director, Division of Teacher Preparation, School of Education, Syracuse University.

Neglected Areas in Social Studies

FROM PALEOLITHIC TIMES when Newfist gazed into his fire pondering the desirability of more purposeful activities for his children to the most recent convention of the NEA, educators great and small have examined and re-examined the question, "What shall our children learn?" Obviously, students need to understand the world in which they live, but the definition of this world arouses considerable debate.

Trends In History Teaching

In the past we have attempted to orient children to this world by teaching them history and, more recently, the other social studies. As the record of mankind has lengthened and deepened, the futility of attempting to teach it all has become more apparent. Thus only the history of the most important countries was taught. Which were these?

"Our own nation and those others which contributed to it in considerable measure," so the answer has run.

Some educators have described this process of curriculum selection as "walking backwards into the future," and they have observed that as we increase our speed of locomotion we increase our risks proportionately. With our attention focused primarily upon Italy, France, Germany and England, we have been neglecting crucial areas.

True, these nations have been highly important, and without some knowledge of our past we cannot understand the future. The error, however, is to neglect Canada, China, Russia and India while dwelling too exclusively upon the grandeur of Rome, the defeat of the Armada, and the French Revolution.

We know from history that the In-

dustrial Revolution rapidly and radically changed life in Europe and America. Riding to pre-eminence on its waves and taking it all for granted, we can scarcely appreciate the social impact of the changes wrought. A handful of people on a small group of islands became in effect rulers of the world because the Industrial Revolution began in England. As the magic wand of the Industrial Revolution touched a people, wealth increased; the population doubled and re-doubled. Civilization and machinery came to be synonymous so that those parts of the world without the Industrial Revolution were considered backward, of little importance, and were neglected.

Such parochial decisions as to what is important may be understandable in terms of patriotic pride but the result has been that we are walking backward into the future. Now the Industrial Revolution is reaching four hundred million Chinese, two hundred million Russians, and four hundred million Indians. Looking backward to see what happened in England, calculating the rapidity of change with the United States as an example, we can estimate that the key problems of tomorrow's world will involve the more than half of the world's population who live on the Asiatic land mass and about whom we know almost nothing.

It seems reasonable that we should study proportionately more about these peoples of the world who are *becoming* rather than those who *have been*.

Schools Tend to Ignore Russia

We are not teaching our children about the world in which we live. For example, although Russia is on the front pages of all our current newspapers, it is figuratively speaking, "buried in the back page" of our textbooks.

The writer has recently completed a

study of what is taught about the Soviet Union in social studies offerings of American schools. It is extremely little. Although Russia was one of the "Big Four" in 1814, the inspiration for Kipling's bogey, "the Bear that walks like a man" in 1854, the home of a 20th century revolutionary movement, it receives scant attention in current textbooks or instruction.

Textbooks Scarcely Mention Russia

To illustrate briefly, social studies textbooks in geography give seven per cent of their space to a presentation of the Soviet Union; world history books only six; American history books devote one per cent to materials related to Russia; modern problems, citizenship and civics books less than one per cent.

To put the matter in another way, there is more space generally given to nations of lesser importance than to Russia. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, now parts of the Soviet Union, receive more attention than does the entire nation.

As further evidence of our self-centeredness, and to show that the treatment of Russia is not unique, about half of our American history books contain no world maps.

Russia is casually treated in other aspects of instruction as well as textbooks. Teachers report giving about equal time to teaching about Russia in regular instruction and in current events instruction. All current events instruction characteristically receives about one fifth of the time allotted to teaching the social studies, hence Russia receives little time in the classroom.

When asked questions of varying importance about the Russian people, students do not know answers to the most important questions any more

adequately than to the least important questions. Our students do not learn much about Russia because the current curriculum does not provide much opportunity for them to learn about it.

Ignorance of Russia a Danger

The "enigma wrapped in a riddle," as Churchill put it, is made of the same stuff as the Iron Curtain, namely our ignorance of the Russian people. One need not attempt to describe the magnitude of our current difficulties with the "unpredictable" Russians except to re-

iterate that our inability to predict is largely a function of our neglect to attempt to learn about them.

Will we find a solution to our current problems with Russia only to face other countries in a few years over similar barriers of ignorance, suspicion and fear? If our learning experiences are to prepare our children for their world by providing significant and useful information and attitudes, we had better face the future equipped with truly significant learnings.—*Richard W. Burkhardt.*

Letters from Abroad

Gertrude H. Fitzwater
Column Editor

Rebuilding Austrian Education

The story of the tremendous task which Austrian educators faced at the end of World War II is told by Wilhelm Gross, principal of a senior and junior high school in Vienna. Mr. Gross tells not only of conditions in the schools at the close of the war, but of the measures taken to rebuild Austrian education. The job which Austrian education had to assume was a tremendous one and the manner in which rebuilding moved forward in the relatively short period of five years deserves our deep admiration for the courage and vision of the individuals involved. It is interesting to note that Mr. Gross recently spent several months visiting schools in this country.

—GHF.

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR was over we found in the Austrian school system a number of problems which were alarming in their magnitude and shocking in import. In Vienna alone, sixty-seven of our elementary and high school buildings were completely destroyed and 354 were partially damaged.

Schools were closed and about one million children of six to eighteen years of age had had no instruction for months. Many of them, throughout the country, were not even enrolled in any school. They had fled with their

mothers or relatives from bombed spots in the city or from the war fronts. A few schoolboys could, and did, enroll in rural schools.

Six or seven hours a day of air raids prevented normal teaching. Anxious parents kept their children at home. Some of the school buildings were occupied by the Allied armies. Sixty per cent of the teachers had served in the army. All of these depressing facts were alarming not only because of the shortage of schools and available schooling, but also because of the need for well-trained teachers for the schools.

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