I have been asked to edit a page in Educational Leadership to be entitled Letters from Abroad. I have written to friends and acquaintances in all parts of the world asking for contributions. I hope they will come in fast enough to make it possible from now on to have an article in each issue. But it is possible that during the first few months, there may be some gaps owing to the slowness with which some people respond to requests of this sort.

I propose to publish the letters almost exactly as they come, leaving in the characteristic idiomatic phrases used by people in writing a language not their own. It seems to me that the articles would lose savor were these edited out. I shall only indulge in such editing as is necessary for clarity of meaning, and to keep the articles within the space limits of the page. It is my hope that these letters may give to American readers a much better world-wide understanding of how educational problems look to our colleagues in other lands.

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The New Curriculum Movement in Japan

UNTIL the end of World War II our education was completely under the control of the Ministry of Education. A uniform curriculum and national textbooks were imposed upon all the schools, and teachers' freedom consisted solely in their teaching methods.

About thirty years ago new education movements were started by progressive educators in this country as in other countries, and various new plans and methods of the U. S. were introduced. But it was only the Dalton Plan that was adopted in most schools, and this was because the Dalton Plan did not attempt to change the curriculum, but tried to give pupils freedom to study a given curriculum and textbooks individually. Some progressive educators tried to investigate and make new curriculum in order to promote pupils' spontaneous activities, but even these progressive teachers were unable to incorporate the new idea in their regular lessons except as extra activities. Such modest experiments as those were often resented by the authorities, and progressive curriculum could not be successfully developed.

When the War was over, our school systems and teaching methods went through a number of changes in order to be democratized. Among them the most significant was that teachers gained freedom to plan their curriculum for their own schools, and also the freedom to choose textbooks they thought best. And a great many teachers are now engaged in a research of teaching materials and curriculum development individually and cooperatively. The center of these movements is the "Core Curriculum Association," which is leading the research activities throughout the country.

The Core Curriculum Association was organized in 1948 by professors and graduates of the Tokyo Education

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University and thousands of educators all over the country who had interest in making a new curriculum. The president of the Association is Professor Shuhei Ishiyama of the Tokyo Education University, and the executive secretary is Mr. Katsuo Kaigo, principal of the Wako Gakuen School.

The Association publishes a monthly journal, "The Curriculum." It has an experimental school, "The Wako Gakuen." It often gives lectures and holds meetings in Tokyo and other cities to promote the research and development of progressive curriculum.

Here are some of the fundamental policies of curriculum making of the Association:

"We believe that education should contribute to the democratization of our social life, and the curriculum we propose should be so designed as to bring up citizens who will cooperate in establishing a democratic society.

"We believe that education of the youth should be so organized as to center around the experiences desirable for them, and the curriculum we propose should be the new experience curriculum and not its academic counterpart.

"We hope to raise the standard of living and to emancipate people from poverty, and the curriculum we propose should be so designed as to develop pupils' ability to increase the industrial production and make the domestic life scientific.

"We do not believe in an exclusive nationalism, our aim being the establishment of a peaceful world community, and the curriculum we propose should be so designed as to develop international understanding of pupils, and to make them good members of the world community."

—Yonekichi Akai (former director of the New Education Association), 2658 Kichijoji, Tokyo, Japan.

**Filmstrips on America**

Everyone connected with education is concerned that children have rich experiences with the ideas, concepts, and attitudes which are fundamental to understanding American democracy.

More than ever before, the teacher needs many of the right kind of instructional materials. Not just textbooks, supplementary books, pamphlets, and reference books are needed. Visual materials, rich in historical learning, alive with the color and progress of American life, are needed.

To assist teachers and children in this most important of learnings—the meaning of useful and intelligent citizenship—Silver Burdett has produced a series of filmstrips entitled **THEN AND NOW IN THE UNITED STATES**.

Each filmstrip in this series develops the following significant understandings about a particular region of the United States:

1) What the region is.
2) What kind of place it is: that is, with what assets and handicaps it is endowed.
3) What big things men have done in each particular environment; that is, how they have used the available resources and coped with the handicaps.
4) How what occurred in the past helps to explain present-day life in the region.

Each filmstrip is a useful teaching instrument by itself. Each filmstrip correlates history and geography, drawing wherever necessary from many fields of knowledge, when those fields have specific contributions to make to the child's understanding. Clarence W. Sorensen, geographer and teacher, did the planning and writing. Milo Winter supervised the artwork and production. **THEN AND NOW IN THE UNITED STATES** embodies the same meticulous concern for visual skills, insights, and values as are to be found in our geography series, **MAN IN HIS WORLD**.

Twelve strips, all in color, are ready this fall. Others will be announced. For full information, write to our nearest office.