At a meeting in Washington in mid-October of the officers of ASCD, with the Executive Committee and the chairmen of commissions and committees, it was decided, upon the recommendation of the chairman of the Commission on Forces Affecting American Education, to dissolve this commission. This recommendation was not idly made. The National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education of the National Education Association is organized to deal with those forces that openly impede the proper work of the schools or that insidiously subvert such work. Moreover, as we all know, the Defense Commission gains in effectiveness as it gains experience. There is no need to duplicate its efforts. At another level of "dealing with forces," a program of reporting and of publication (the Southern Education Reporting Service is illustrative) might be an appropriate activity for ASCD to promote. Even though the Commission on Forces Affecting American Education is now disbanded, interest in this area is evidenced by continuation of this column. As always, an invitation to its readers to participate in the creation of its substance is cordially extended.

—H. Gordon Hullfish

Habits and Change

IT IS becoming increasingly apparent, with each succeeding decision of the United States Supreme Court that bears on any aspect of the denial to the Negro of full participation in the life of his communities, that the law of the land will no longer support deliberately instituted discriminatory practices. The accumulation of decisions is becoming a steadying force within the culture. And the Negro, released as he has been by the removal of barriers of humiliation, is becoming a supporting force, also, as representative of the country we share (say, from the Olympic Games to the United Nations) as are any of the rest of us.

This substantial gain is easy to overlook, much as we tend to overlook the fine print in an insurance policy, as our attention is given the headlines our failures receive. Something else that is passed over is the general educative effect of the decisions. This effect is created, first, by the unvarying impact of the law and, second, by the changes in thought and action, in conception and event, that now play upon young people as they grow among us. The growing climate, so to speak, has been transformed. The significance of this fact was long ago noted by John Dewey in his Human Nature and Conduct, where he said:

We cannot change habit directly: that notion is magic. But we can change it indi-
rectly by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighing of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfillment of desires.1

The point of the above has recently been illustrated by the published results of a study made in Florida of the "attitudes of certain university groups toward desegregation." This study was initiated by the Florida Supreme Court after it had ruled, on October 17, 1955, that a Negro could not be denied admission to the University of Florida. The Court did not specify when admission was to become effective. It appointed a judge to investigate the possible consequences of admitting a Negro to the University of Florida immediately (admission has not yet occurred). The State Board of Control undertook a survey "to make a determination as to whether or not serious problems may be encountered."2 The results of the Board of Control survey are what concern us here.

The Board sent out questionnaires to white college students, to the parents of white college students, to white faculty members, and to white alumni—all, of course, related to Florida institutions of higher learning. It was determined that 56,294 questionnaires reached their destination. Of these, 58.75% were returned. Each group was asked a specific question bearing on desegregation in higher education in Florida and given an opportunity to select among alternative replies. For instance, the white college students (14,877 questionnaires were mailed; 11,507 returned) were asked:

If Negroes are admitted to white State Universities, which statement [the alternatives and the percentages follow] best describes the thing you would be most likely to do?

2% drop out of college
15% transfer to a college which does not admit Negroes
9% continue in school and try to discourage Negro students from attending
39% continue in school just as if there had been no change in policy
34% continue in school and try to make this new policy work well
2% no reply.

There is evidence, as 73% of the replies reveal, that those now being educated have felt, or are feeling, the consequences of the cultural change here under consideration. The situation is different when the replies of the parents of the students are considered (13,551 questionnaires mailed; 1,175 returned). It is not what many would have predicted, however. They were asked what they would do if they discovered that the white university attended by a son or daughter would admit Negroes in the fall (the questionnaire was sent out during the academic year, 1955-1956). Six per cent would withdraw their children from the institution; 36% would have them transfer to a segregated university; 8% would have the children return and try to discourage the Negroes from attending; 22% would send them back quite as if no change had been made in admission policies; 23% would send them back and have them try to help the new policy work well; and 5% did not reply.

A further change occurs when the replies from faculty members are considered. This group was mailed 1,303 questionnaires; it returned 1,147. White alumni were asked, in one part of the questionnaire, the same questions as the faculty members and their answers are placed in contrast below (17,148 questionnaires were mailed alumni; 9,075 were

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2 "Board of Control Reports on Desegregation Study," Alumni Bulletin. Vol. XLIX, No. 6 (August 1956), Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. p. 15 (all material further quoted appears on pp. 15 and 16).
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Each group was asked (the wording of the faculty question is used below), to indicate how it felt about admission of Negroes to white state universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Faculty Members</th>
<th>White Alumni</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38% we should admit them immediately</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44% we should admit them after a reasonable period of preparation for integration</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% we should delay admitting them as long as we legally can</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4% we should not admit them under any circumstances</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% no reply</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The alumni were asked questions related to their continuing support of Alma Mater, in the event of desegregation. 47% indicated they would continue full support; 19% were uncertain; 33% said they would not give support; and 1% did not reply. When asked about their readiness to participate in alumni activities where Negro alumni might be involved, such as dances and banquets, 37% said they were ready to participate, 13% were uncertain, 50% said they would not participate, and 1% did not reply.

The results of this study may lead to no immediate decision in Florida and the reader may make of the returns what he will. The writer is clear on just one point. Where education is going forward (i.e., in classrooms where faculty and students share ideas) significant change has apparently already occurred, as the tendency of the replies within these groups to correspond suggests. The results, then, may reaffirm for the educator his understanding that habits change as the conditions under which growing is done change.

—H. Gordon Hullfish, professor of education, The Ohio State University, Columbus.