

The Importance of People

This year "The Importance of People" column is coordinated by the Editor of the journal. Founded by Ruth Cunningham and often called "the warm heart of the Association," this feature will, as in previous years, include selected essays.

Does your writing show a sensitivity to human beings—a light touch, yet with a feeling for the person and for the reality of his problems, frustrations and hopes? If so, why not send a sample of your work to the undersigned for possible use in this column?

—ROBERT R. LEEPER, *Editor*, Educational Leadership

A Minority and a Dream

Prudence Bostwick

WE WERE talking together after dinner in the garden. The dusk gave a setting of comparative anonymity which permitted us to reveal our thoughts with even more freedom and trust than usual. All of us were teachers in one way or another—elementary, secondary, community or higher education. We were seven long-time friends come together for a last feast before, with the end of summer, we parted to take up our several lives in schools and colleges in various parts of the country.

This last evening was both a reunion and a farewell. One of us had just flown in from seven weeks in Southeast Asia and one had returned from two weeks in Bethel, Maine, having attended the Laboratory in Conflict Management directed by the National Training Laboratories of the National Education Association.

As the evening deepened, our thoughts turned more and more to the problems of commitment and conflict which seemed to pervade the nation and the world and which came finally to enter our individual lives as well. We spoke of the irresponsibility of the "extreme right" and the "extreme left," of the tensions growing between conservative and

liberal views of life, and of the differences emerging with new bitterness between groups in areas of education, politics, and social action.

We pondered the apparently inevitable interrelationship between commitment and conflict. Strong beliefs strongly held, the kind that H. Gordon Hullfish identified as the things you believed in "by golly" and that you might even die for, were bound to lead head-on into different beliefs that others held as strongly.

Our Share of Commitment

Although none of us had engaged in strikes, street fights or riots, we had had our share of commitment and conflict in our professional lives. Most of us as younger teachers had participated in the Eight-Year Study of School and College in the 'Thirties and early 'Forties and had been caught up in the excitement of that adventure.

We had dedicated ourselves to the new democratic society; to cooperative planning of curriculum by administrators, teachers, pupils and parents; to a program free of Carnegie Units and col-

(Continued on page 39)

(Continued from page 35)

legiate restraints; to the study of social problems and to the application of knowledge, of whatever kind it might be, to their examination and possible resolution; to the use of literature for informing the mind and heart; to a counseling program based on new theories of personality development; and to new teacher-teacher and administrator-teacher relationships based on mutual respect. We expected children and youth to be eager for knowledge, indefatigable in learning, dedicated to joy in work, responsible for their own self-fulfillment in a supportive society.

We were a minority struggling with a dream. Our commitments were strong, yet our weaknesses were showing in the imperfection of our teaching and in the insecurity of pupils and parents. We forgot that experimentors, especially young ones, are often seen by their peers as gullible, threatening, or beneath contempt. Our wonder grew to see ourselves isolated and accused of both arrogance and ignorance.

Strong forces of opposition were moving hopefully to bring an end to the progressive movement which we espoused, to undermine our theories, to expose our weaknesses, and to restore the old way of life that had suffered humiliation. So strong were these forces and so unwilling were we experimentors to make compromises, it became impossible for progressive and traditionalist to live together in some kind of mutual respect and trust. The battle was joined with all the subterfuges and misrepresentations that characterize a conflict in which the contestants are blind to each other as human beings, each with his own values and his unique point of view and in which there is only the desire to



CORONET LEARNING PROGRAMS offer a unique series of **PROGRAMMED TEXT UNITS** for as little as \$1.20 each in a wide range of subjects. Prepared by Learning Incorporated and published by Coronet Films, these programs may be used again and again by the whole class . . . the slow learners . . . or the fast learners. All programs have been thoroughly tested prior to publication. Each is 300-400 frames.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE for various grades:

- The Bill Of Rights** (7-9)
- Cells: Their Structure and Function** (8-9)
- Chemistry Concepts:**
 - The Molar Method** (10-12)
- David Discovers The Dictionary** (4-6)
- Figures of Speech** (10-12)
- Grouping Animals: What Is a Mammal?** (5-6)
- How To Improve Your Reading** (7-9)
- How We Forecast The Weather** (4-6)
- Latitude and Longitude** (5-7)
- Maps: How We Read Them** (5-7)
- Number Bases and Binary Arithmetic** (8-10)
- Our Solar System** (7-9)
- Vocabulary Growth: Divide and Conquer Words** (10-12)
- Your Study Skills** (7-9)

Discover for yourself how programming can improve instruction in your classroom. Order single copies for \$1.50 each or try a classroom package of 25 copies of a single program for \$30.00 (\$1.20 each). Write to . . .

CORONET LEARNING PROGRAMS

from **CORONET INSTRUCTIONAL FILMS**
Dept. EL-1064 · Coronet Building · Chicago 1, Ill.

destroy the opposition, not to find areas of compromise.

We had all of us been badly burned in the fire, from which we emerged with our commitments still strong but with our practices severely modified. We learned that what is true of government in a democracy is also true of the development of educational practice—it moves ahead, not so much by steady upward flow as by a kind of spiral growth based on compromise.

Commitment and Conflict

Now thirty years later we were still struggling with problems of commitment and conflict. We all agreed that if one had beliefs which he held strongly, such as the belief that human dignity is a central value in life, he might hold these beliefs with relatively little conflict so long as he kept them unexpressed. But, we asked, what is the good of a man who is apathetic toward the expression of his deepest commitments? Inevitably, if he is alive to the issues of the day, he will reveal his biases and beliefs in overt behavior. His greatest need is to be clear about his position both to himself and to others and to be willing to confront the collisions and conflicts which ensue. The question then arises whether the conflicts are to eventuate in chaos and severe hurt, or whether, through some such analysis of confrontation as that being developed experimentally by the NTL Laboratory in Conflict Management the conflict can be turned to constructive rather than destructive uses.

We fell into silence, thinking what it would be like to analyze the "roots of conflict" and to consider with scientific dispassion behaviors which might cope with both strategy and feeling.

Then one of us described the way in

a new text in education:

Schools in an age of Mass Culture

Willis Rudy, *Fairleigh Dickinson University*, reviews in historical perspective certain selected themes in the history of twentieth century American education. A limited number of questions which have loomed large in recent American education are probed here. Each of these themes selected for discussion is related to what appears to be the general direction of American education. **January 1965. approx. 384 pp., Text Pr. \$6.95**

recent publications:

American Educational Theory

Charles J. Brauner, *The Ohio State University*, brings into challenging focus six major traditions in American educational thought. Examines the possibility of establishing education as an empirical discipline. Considers educational philosophy in its historical context. **February 1964. 341 pp., Text Pr. \$5.95**

Handbook for Effective Supervision Instruction

Ross L. Neagley, *Temple University*, and N. Dean Evans, *Delaware County Schools, Pennsylvania*, apply the theory and concepts of modern school supervision to the practical situations in which administrators, supervisors, coordinators, and teachers are working. Theory and function of supervision is summarized and plans presented for its effective utilization in school districts of varying size. **January 1964. 274 pp., Text Pr. \$6.95**

English Today and Tomorrow: A Guide for Teachers of English

Hans P. Guth, *San Jose State College*, has written a basic book for teachers of English in high school and college that interprets current developments in the study of language and literature and relates them to a unified view of English as a discipline. **March 1964. 449 pp., Text Pr. \$7.50**

for approval copies, write: BOX 903

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.
ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N. J.

which potential conflict in a community-school committee had been dealt with. Instead of starting the discussion with the problem that was most serious and most difficult of resolution, the members selected for decision those areas in which the group might easily move, building agreement one step at a time, building slowly the sense of trust that is necessary before a group can face and deal constructively with compromise and possible sacrifice.

Before trust can be achieved, is it necessary, we asked ourselves, for a man to give up the central core of his belief? Knowing how deeply we were yet committed to the central premises of the progressive movement at its best, we understood how impossible it would be to deny these imperatives in ourselves. Commitments born out of a lifetime of experience cannot be changed without serious threat to the unique, individual person to whom these commitments are central values. The flexibility necessary for compromise must come in areas in which antagonist and protagonist share common values and gains in the proposed solution.

So it was that we talked together one late summer evening, thinking of our part in the months ahead, when conflict would continue to be the order of the day, when each of us would have to reassess and reaffirm the basic commitments which guide his behavior. At the same time each of us might work to build, as he could, bridges of trust and faith. Across such bridges people of differing allegiances might learn to communicate so skillfully that conflicts might be clearly analyzed and, perhaps, eventually resolved.

—PRUDENCE BOSTWICK, *Professor of Education, San Fernando Valley State College, Northridge, California.*

For new curriculum programming—help your teachers utilize more educational films

- for class viewing
- for self-instruction
- for individual and small group viewing



The Wilson Movie-Mover RP uses your school's projector to show motion pictures in undarkened classrooms

The unit is on casters, brings films to every room on a school floor. Darkening not necessary. Ideal for class viewing. For small group viewing, earphones can be used so as not to distract others nearby.

RP I \$149.50 plus lens
RP II \$189.50 plus lens

For complete information write—

H. WILSON CORPORATION

546 W. 119th Street, Chicago, Ill. 60628

Copyright © 1964 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.