

A Book Review—

'Education of Free Men In American Democracy'

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"The Education of Free Men in American Democracy." National Education Association, Educational Policies Commission, Washington, D. C. 1941.

This book is the fifth of a series, published by the Education Policies Commission, in which the Commission attempts to define or describe the reciprocal relationship which should exist between education and our democratic form of government. The Commission states that "the present document is an extension and, to some extent, a synthesis of the series."

The reader is challenged at the outset with a very succinct and illuminating picture of the ebb and flow of the tides of freedom and despotism down through the ages. His attention is called to the fact that the tide of despotism is now rapidly gaining the ascendancy and is apparently sweeping all before it. In spite of the gravity of the present situation we are advised that we should not lose hope, for history has shown repeatedly that man's attempt to secure freedom has continued to move forward. This forward movement has not come without struggle. The Commission reiterates its belief that "American democracy can and will survive and, surviving, preserve for the world the vision of a society of free men." The challenge is clear, demanding, concerted, dynamic and intelligent action.

As a first step in meeting this challenge we must first achieve a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy, and must, while insisting on utter candor and realism, "hold fast to an unquenchable faith in the ultimate triumph of the principles of human freedom."

In an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy we must first define what we mean by democracy. The essence of the Commission's definition is that democracy is a great social faith. This faith has developed through the years "in response to the yearnings and struggles of many races and peoples." It is this faith that we are urged to uphold even to the point of meeting force with force.

"It is inevitable in this situation that an appeal be made to organized education" to assist with the struggle is the contention of the Commission. In the past this task has been difficult "due to the fact that the American people as a whole have never achieved a clear and adequate comprehension of the nature of education in relation to democracy or of the nature of democracy in relation to education."

The major portion of this volume is devoted to a searching analysis of what constitutes the contribution which education should make to the perpetuation of our democracy. This analysis centers around three broad areas, namely: "the loyalties of free men, the knowledge necessary for free men, and the discipline of free men." In this presentation one is impressed by the clear, logical, and convincing statement of the school's function toward the perpetuation and improvement of our democracy. It is interesting to note at this point that the Commission seems to place more emphasis on the individual's responsibility to his society than it did in the previous volumes of this series.

Finally the problem of the extent of freedom which the schools should have in the teaching of the principles of democracy is ably presented. The position taken may be illustrated by the following quotations. "If a democracy is to have a democratic education, the school must be protected not only against the assaults of minorities but also from the caprice and ig-

norance of the majority." "The control of such a program must express a delicate adjustment among the agencies of government, the profession of teaching, and the people." The obligations of each of these agencies is broadly outlined.

This book is one of the best, if not the best, source to which we may go for a statement of what democracy is and of how organized education can best contribute to the perpetuation and improvement of our democracy. It may well be used to help determine school policies, as a basis for faculty meetings, and as a source of material to be discussed in the classroom. It is a book which the layman can read with understanding and profit to himself. In short this a book which may well have a profound effect on our thinking and action as it affects our American democracy.

Dean Pleads For Liberal Studies

Despite the present need for great emphasis on technical studies, Dean Charles W. Stoddart of the School of the Liberal Arts made a plea today for students not to neglect a study of the liberal arts.

Dean Stoddart said that many of the 1,500 students enrolled in liberal arts curricula have wondered what part a liberal arts training can play in the national program in these days when defense and education for democracy have become great issues.

"The question deserves an answer," Dean Stoddart said, "and the answer must be inherent in the liberal arts themselves—in the study of history, languages, literatures, economics, governments, music—all studied for their own sakes and for the understanding, judgment, temperance, and tolerance which they induce."

Dean Stoddart pointed out that even in our country's immediate need, the liberal arts can and do play a worthy part. He explained that problems of labor and social adjustments, taxation programs and reforms, the economics of national and international affairs, free speech and a free press, are no less pressing than are the designing of machine tools or their operation. These problems, he said, are in addition, extremely vital to the welfare of the nation after the unnatural demand for material production has ceased.

"No special course in democracy," he concluded, "no demagogic preachments, no narrowed technical training can guarantee the survival of democracy, either in our present emergency or in the long reconstructive years ahead. Such guarantee is to be found only in an enlightened and characterized citizenry."

Continue Athletics, Coach Robertson Urges

Post-graduate athletic activity should be the goal of all American college athletes, particularly at this critical period, according to Lawson Robertson, Penn. and Olympic track and field coach.

"From the standpoint of physical condition it is wrong for a young man who has been competing for eight years through high or prep school and college, upon his graduation from college, suddenly to stop all athletic activity," said Robertson.

"Most athletes are graduated when they were 21 or 22. That is an age when they haven't yet reached their physical majority.

59 Students Win Engineering Honors

Fifty-nine students in the School of Engineering won outstanding academic honors during the past semester by securing a scholastic average of 2.5 or better. Under the College grading system 3.0 is the highest mark attainable.

The engineering students, 26 of whom graduated last month, were placed on the "Dean's List," released by Dean H. P. Hammond, of the School of Engineering.

Ferguson Reports On Power Rates

Householders using less than 250 kilowatt hours enjoy lower rates when served by municipal electric plants in Pennsylvania towns of over 7500 population, while consumers of larger amounts buy at lower rates if the plant is privately owned in this size city.

In boroughs under 7500 population, however, municipal rates are higher than private rates for both small and large users.

These conclusions result from a two-year study just completed by Dr. John H. Ferguson, assistant professor of political science.

"In considering the higher rates in small boroughs, however, one must remember that most municipal electric plants render free service for municipal purposes such as community street lighting," Dr. Ferguson said. "Furthermore, 25 per cent of the total operating revenues is surplus transferred to the borough's general funds to ease the burden of local taxation."

Although study of municipal ownership of electric utilities is handicapped by the lack of a uniform system of accounting, 1939 statistics revealed that 37 of the 39 municipal plants operated with revenues exceeding expenses, and only 12 have any bonded debt.

"Boroughs have had no difficulty in borrowing funds for constructing electric plants," Ferguson reported. "The plants are not now heavily in debt, nor has any borough defaulted its obligation for plants. Most small boroughs, however, have found it unprofitable to degenerate."

New Methods Boost Placement

A practical approach to training teachers for specific lines of work that surveys indicate will be in demand at the time of graduation.

How well the plan works is illustrated by Stout's placement record. All recent graduates have obtained employment. With all available graduates placed, employers even have been "raiding" the senior class, according to Registrar Gertrude M. O'Brien.

"In the last semester," she said, "I received calls for 20 more women than I have been able to fill."

Stout limits its curriculum to training men for industrial education and women in home economics. "It is the only school in the nation with such a singleness of purpose," asserts Dean C. A. Bowman.

With the present emphasis on defense production, the result has been that Stout graduates average \$140 to \$150 a month in their first teaching positions and some get as high as \$200, according to Bowman.

Burton E. Nelson, president, collaborates with Bowman in working out surveys used to determine types of training. To predict what specialized training will be in demand four or five years hence, Nelson and Bowman study past and present educational trends, both political and economic. They consider trends in national affairs, world conflicts, trade unionism and their effect upon journeyman development, scientific discoveries and education.

Youth Hostel Opens In Pittsburgh

South Park, Pittsburgh, boasts of its first youth hostel which is now functioning and available to hikers and cyclists wishing to make over-night stops, the State Department of Commerce has been advised.

The structure is provided with separate sleeping quarters, a kitchen and showers with a superintendent in charge. It is under the supervision of the Allegheny County Youth Hostel Committee which is associated with the American Hotel Associations, Inc.

Additional hostels are planned so that persons can proceed from one to another and enjoy the benefits of outdoor exercise and comfortable accommodations.

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