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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

CAN DISCUSSION MUZZLE THE GUNS?

A proposal "to move more rapidly in the direction of general civic literacy than we have in the past" was made in a radio address last month by John W. Studebaker, United States Commissioner of Education, during which he used the recent European war crisis as an example of the need that "public opinion in the democracies be invested with understanding of the problems which must be solved if we are to have a permanent peace." The proposal: "I should like to see a group of American leaders make a national call to study and discussion, selecting perhaps one vital national or international issue each month. Through the Office of Education, the educational forces of the nation might be mobilized to help people come to an understanding of the monthly No. 1 problem of America. The radio, press, and thousands of organized groups might concentrate special attention on the No. 1 problem. By an organized approach, using every means available for clarifying the issues and making the alter-

native arguments and proposals vivid and meaningful, we might speed up the formulation of public opinion enough to keep pace with the problems being put to us so insistently. . . . A presidential proclamation might well call on us to think through and discuss some of these issues and make it the patriotic duty of all our means of communication to contribute to this national discussion program. . . ."

"In my judgment, it is the responsibility of the educational forces to keep the discussion going and to prepare for better use of the press and radio in organized education in the future. . . . It is worth any trouble it takes to arrange and organize the high school and college schedule these days to enable the students to hear first hand the most important pronouncements. *The student who missed hearing Chamberlain or Hitler because he was forced by an inflexible school program to conjugate German verbs or to report on the Elizabethan periods of English history, was deprived of some real education . . .* if radio broadcasters can interrupt profit-making schedules to substitute numerous non-commercial news releases portraying up-to-the-minute changes in world history, and if newspaper representatives can stand by in the four corners of the earth during every hour of the day and night to supply accounts of personal observation of swift-moving world events, those of us in organized education who have not done so should be able to adapt our traditional schedules to the most vital influences available for educational use."

APPRECIATION OF GREAT DRAMA STIMULATED BY N.B.C. FEATURE

"A great deal has been done to further the appreciation and study of music and we feel that the same opportunity should be offered to students and patrons of the theatre," says Dr. James Rowland Angell, educational counsellor of the N.B.C. "The

new series of great plays will parallel courses taught in departments of drama in high schools and colleges. There is an ever increasing demand for the classics which have made theatrical history, and we believe that Great Plays will satisfy in a large measure the desires of a theatre-going public which today does not have the opportunity of seeing the masterpieces which were formerly presented by professional companies on cross-country tours."

The American Library Association in endorsing the "Great Plays" will provide for their patrons copies of the masterpieces and complete reference material on the development of the drama. The splendid support which the public libraries will give throughout the country will aid the listener materially in his preparation for the broadcasts. These great plays will be the chief works of representative dramatists whose masterpieces caused the spotlight of the theatre world to be turned on their respective countries of Greece, Italy, England, France, Germany, Spain, Norway, Russia, Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, and America.

The plays to be broadcast between October and May include Euripides' *The Trojan Woman*; *Everyman*; *The Great Magician*, a commedia dell'arte; Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*; Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Othello*; Corneille's *The Cid*; Calderon's *Life Is A Dream*; Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentleman*; Goldsmith's *She Stoops To Conquer*; Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*; Schiller's *Mary Stuart*; Lytton's *Richelieu*; Boucicault's *The Octoroon*; Tolstoi's *Redemption*; Ibsen's *A Doll's House*; Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*; Dumas Fils' *Camille*; Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*; Fitch's *Nathan Hale*; Barrie's *Peter Pan*; Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*; Galsworthy's *Justice*; Pinero's *The Enchanted Cottage*; Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*; Robinson's *The White Headed Boy*; and Maxwell Anderson's *Elizabeth the Queen*.

THE READING TABLE

THE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A Handbook for Principals, Teachers, and Parents. By Robert Hill Lane and others. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. 208 pp. \$1.90.

Written by the vice-president of the Progressive Education Association, 1936-1938, and his associates, and based on the philosophy of John Dewey and William Kilpatrick, this book excites the interest of the reader in its very first chapter, A Philosophy of Education; and in the last chapter—Assets and Liabilities—answers and answers well twenty charges made against progressive education. Some of the charges are that "this new education insists on complete freedom," that "children in the informal school must not be told to obey," that "the selection of units . . . is a haphazard affair."

The intervening chapters touch requirements for teachers and other members of the personnel, the contacts with parents, the services rendered the children in the matter of environment, teaching principles, experiences, development of social habits, etc. The book contains good pictures of child activity in various forms at the different levels and gives a good reading list at the end. It will stimulate any teacher or parent who reads it. B. J. L.

CREATIVE WAYS FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS. By Josephine Murray and Effie G. Bathurst. New York: Silver Burdett Co. 1938. 410 pp. \$2.40.

Realizing the great need of teachers in small schools for ideas and materials to aid in building programs, the authors offer many suggestions that will help children develop creative activities. In the first chapter the old form of programs is contrasted with the new form, showing the superiority of the latter. The teacher can set the stage for a program, but the children should initiate and plan it. It should be an outgrowth of their ideas and opinions.

These creative types of programs have many distinct advantages. They not only give the children an opportunity to develop