Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

The city superintendent and the board of education.—Much has been written about the principles and practices of school administration, but the purely legal aspects of the subject have up to this time received inadequate treatment. And yet efficiency in the management of city school systems, which increasing costs make so imperative, is to a considerable extent conditioned by the legal relationship existing between the superintendent and the board of education.

It is to set forth this relationship, both as to what it is and what it should be, that Mr. Morrison has prepared his book on the city school superintendent.¹ After pointing out that there are three theories relative to city school administration—(1) the theory that the superintendent is merely the executive of the board, (2) that he is the representative of the state in a local area, and (3) that he represents both the state and the locality—Mr. Morrison describes the scope and purpose of his book:

It is with an examination and evaluation of these three fundamental theories in their application to city school administration that this study is concerned. Their expression in the law admits of varied and complicated relationships. . . . While it is necessary to consider all of these problems in searching for the best legal organization of city school administration, it is the superintendent and the board of education that the American people will hold responsible for satisfactory returns from their investment in the public schools. The relationship between these two agents of the people and their specific responsibilities in the law, then, constitute the problem for this study [p. 8].

The author traces the historical development of the office of city superintendent in Connecticut and Ohio. He then examines the school laws now in force and the charters of a number of representative cities in the various states in order to determine the distribution of the legal authority between the superintendent and the board of education. A chapter is devoted to the judgment of professional and lay educational leaders as to what is a desirable distribution of this authority. Finally, attention is given to the relation of the legal status of the school superintendent to the general principles of administrative law.

¹ JOHN CAYCE MORRISON, *The Legal Status of the City School Superintendent*. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1922. Pp. 162.

The treatment of the historical development of the city superintendency is somewhat technical and impresses one as being less thorough than the rest of the book. The legal aspects of the problem, however, are set forth clearly and in detail. Use is made of numerous tables and charts which make clear the legal relationship of the superintendent and the board. Most readers will perhaps be surprised to discover the marked tendency of the law to consider the superintendent in many ways the agent of the state and to bestow upon him considerable legal authority. The book is a distinct contribution to the literature of public-school administration and should meet with a wide use by students of the subject.

NEWTON EDWARDS

Intelligence tests.—The practical value of general intelligence tests has steadily increased with the refinement of the tests and the standardization of the methods of scoring the results. The attempts to utilize these tests for practical purposes in connection with the public schools have many times led to serious mistakes in dealing with individual pupils. The chief reason for the unsatisfactory employment of the intelligence tests as a means of properly placing pupils in school work has been the lack of training in the giving of tests to children of different school ages and of different levels of intelligence. Individuals with meager training in the field of intelligence testing and with little technique in administering the tests have been intrusted with an undertaking that demands scientific knowledge and a high degree of technical skill. In order to enable these individuals who are now in the field and those who are in training for this very important phase of educational work to become more proficient in the technique of giving intelligence tests and more thoroughly acquainted with the principles underlying the year intelligence scale, Dr. F. Kuhlman¹ has made a thoroughgoing analysis of the nature of mental tests and how they should be given. The purpose of Dr. Kuhlman's book is stated by O'Shea in the Preface as follows:

Especial pains have been taken to present this revised Binet-Simon system in such terms and in such an arrangement of type, headings, and paragraphing that it will be clear to anyone who wishes to use it how it is to be employed, alike in respect to the method of administering the tests and the method of scoring the results. It will be possible for a teacher, a student of psychology, a parent, a worker in a juvenile court or in an institution for defectives or delinquents, to use the Kuhlman scale readily and accurately after reading this volume. The use of the scale does not require an extended knowledge of the sciences, especially psychology, upon which it is based [pp. 2-3].

Chapters ii, iii, and iv discuss in a thorough manner the general principles of the year scale, the conduct of an examination, and the directions for giving tests. These chapters are of most value to educational workers in general,

¹ F. KUHLMAN, *A Handbook of Mental Tests*. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1922. Pp. 208.