

## THE CLEVELAND EDUCATIONAL SURVEY

THE Cleveland educational survey is a significant piece of work calling for attention from various angles. Accordingly the editor of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW asked an educational expert in the person of Howard W. Nudd, secretary of the public education association of New York, and Albert deRoode, a public-spirited member of the New York bar, to examine the several volumes from their respective viewpoints. The result is produced herewith in parallel columns showing the reaction of the same piece of work upon independent observers. Following is a list of the reports making up the survey:

Child Accounting in the Public Schools, Leonard P. Ayres; Educational Extension, Clarence A. Perry; Education through Recreation, George E. Johnson; Financing the Public Schools, Earle Clark; Health Work in the Public Schools, Leonard P. Ayres; Household Arts and School Lunches, Alice C. Boughton; Measuring the Work of the Public Schools, Charles H. Judd; Overcrowded Schools and the Platoon Plan, S. O. Hartwell; School Buildings and Equipment, Leonard P. Ayres; Schools and Classes for Exceptional Children, David Mitchell; School Organization and Administration, Leonard P. Ayres; The Public Library and the Public Schools; The School and the Immigrant; The Teaching Staff, Walter A. Jessup; What the Schools Teach and Might Teach, Franklin Bobbitt; The Cleveland School Survey (Summary volume), Leonard P. Ayres; Boys and Girls in Commercial Work, Bertha M. Stevens; Department Store Occupations, Iris Prouty O'Leary; Dressmaking and Millinery, Edna C. Bryner; Railroad and Street Transportation, R. G. Fleming; The Building Trades, F. L. Shaw; The Garment Trades, Edna C. Bryner; The Metal Trades, R. R. Lutz; The Printing Trades, F. L. Shaw; Wage Earning and Education (Summary volume), R. R. Lutz.

These have been bound in boards and cloth in pocket size. They can be obtained at \$7 the set from the survey committee of the Cleveland foundation, 612 St. Clair avenue N. E., Cleveland, Ohio.

It is difficult to summarize in a few words the significance of the Cleveland survey as a contribution to public education. It is without doubt the most comprehensive and suggestive school survey yet made. Its value lies not only in its specific recommendations for improving the Cleveland schools, but also in the standard of method it has established, which will have lasting influence upon future school inquiries.

The auspices under which the Cleveland educational survey were conducted warrant thorough and extended consideration of the published results. Additional importance is given to the work because, as stated in one of the monographs ("Educational Extension" by C. A. Perry, page 17):

What is found to be true in this Ohio city will also be found to be applicable in

Every study in the field of education which adds to the sum of accurate and specific information on points generally understood and accepted is in itself a valuable contribution, but when it points out new ways of measurement and evaluation and new ways of making the technique of education intelligible to the public, its value is immensely enhanced. The directors of the Cleveland survey aimed systematically to stimulate the public and the schoolmen to constructive action through carefully planned conferences, between the surveyors and those particularly concerned, at which the findings of the several studies were thoroughly discussed before publication. This not only enabled the staff to correct errors of fact, but served to prevent charges of bad faith and to win dispassionate and intelligent consideration of the monographs when published.

Those who do not wish to read all of the twenty-five monographs comprising the survey, which present in detail the special aspects of the educational system, will find in the two summary volumes a splendid digest of the aims, method, findings and recommendations.

In the first summary volume, entitled "Wage Earning and Education," R. R. Lutz of the Sage foundation has strikingly analyzed the opportunities for wage earning in Cleveland and has formulated from a study of the distribution of adult workers in the various occupations what he designates an actuarial basis for vocational education. His contention is that the haphazard method of providing vocational opportunities which has characterized the educational programs of so many communities in the past is not only economically wasteful but educationally unsound. The type and extent of vocational education afforded by a public school system, he maintains, should have a direct relation to the opportunities in the community for using it. He emphasizes also in a gratifying way the unsoundness of specific vocational training for young children and the need of enriching the curriculum of the elementary grades with practical work opportunities along general and fundamental lines which will enable children to discover their aptitudes and

practically every other municipality of the United States.

We have thus a survey of a typical public educational system and the facts, conclusions and recommendations bear gravely upon the public instruction in this country.

There are two fields to be considered in this review:

1. The facts.

2. The conclusions and recommendations based upon these facts.

As to the first field, that of fact, the presentation by the survey itself is the best review. Undoubtedly the facts published are reasonably accurate although one gains the impression through the constant commingling of fact and theory that they are collated to prove *a priori* educational theories. Still this seems to be the chief use of facts in this day and generation.

One series of facts, however, is of grave significance scarcely appreciated by the surveyors.

In "Child Accounting in the Public Schools" by L. P. Ayres, it appears, pages 66 to 67:

According to a study conducted by the survey, 29 per cent of the children in the elementary schools of Cleveland are above the normal ages for their grades. This is a smaller proportion of over-age children than is found in most other cities.

According to a study conducted by the survey, 32 per cent of the children in the elementary schools have made slow progress. This is a better record than is made by the average city.

The children who constitute one of the gravest of educational problems are those who are both over-age for their grades and are making slow progress. In Cleveland 22 per cent of the children belong to this class. There are more than 15,000 of them.

Certainly if the Cleveland system is typical of the general public school system in municipalities and if the statistics for Cleveland are better than in the average municipality it is apparent that our present public school system is notably inefficient. If nearly one quarter of our elementary pupils are over-age and backward our school system is failing in its purpose.

It is in the field of conclusion and recommendation, however, that the survey demands the instant attention of every thoughtful citizen and parent. If the

secure the fundamental knowledge and skill essential to making a wise choice when the time for intensive specialized training arrives. The concrete application of these theses to the Cleveland situation makes this volume exceptionally helpful and suggestive to educators and laymen, in large cities especially, who are grappling with the difficult problem of vocational education.

The usefulness of this volume is increased by the chapters summarizing the monographs dealing with the specific vocational studies, such as, "Boys and girls in commercial work," "Department store occupations," etc. These chapters not only give the gist of the findings and recommendations of the original studies but place them in proper perspective to the general subject.

In the second summary volume, "The Cleveland School Survey," by Dr. Leonard P. Ayres, who directed the survey, a concise and comprehensive view of the so-called purely educational studies is presented. This volume is a veritable mine of information and inspiration to educators and laymen alike, and creates effectively a desire to go more deeply into the special topics treated in the individual monographs summarized. There is hardly a question of administration, supervision, and teaching, which is not commented upon forcefully on the basis of carefully evaluated data. Special emphasis is given to the original contributions of the survey in the field of educational measurement.

Of the special studies, schoolmen will be particularly interested in the monograph entitled, "Measuring the Work of the Public Schools," by Professor Charles H. Judd, of the University of Chicago. This volume is a real contribution to the scientific study of education. It presents in a telling fashion the achievements of the children in the Cleveland schools as judged by the best known standards of scientific measurement of school progress. It has been discussed more widely in educational circles and has had a larger sale than any of the other monographs. Its value lies not only in the additional light it throws upon conclusions already established by recognized standard tests, but also in the

principles and theories propounded are to influence our public educational system and if those holding these theories are to have a hand in shaping the education of our youth, it is well that we should be acquainted therewith.

The reviewer challenges the survey on the following points:

1. The attitude toward education is crassly materialistic.
2. The political theory as to public education is undemocratic.
3. The underlying principles respecting educational methods and practices are pedagogically unsound.
4. The survey is a catchpot of absurd fads and educational foibles.

As to the materialistic basis of the survey a glance at the titles of the different monographs is illuminating. "Child Accounting in the Public Schools" is one title,—as if children were to be lumped together as so many cogs in a machine or so many pigs in a stock yard and their social and mechanical values computed. Throughout, there is the constant application of what may be called the "mass theory" of human life, in which individuals are deemed important only as they constitute groups and classes contributing to the material welfare of the whole. This materialistic attitude is emphasized by the constant use of the present day jargon of business utility and the shibboleths of "efficiency." An indication of the materialistic attitude may be gathered from the following excerpts:

"Summary Volume," page 120:

The social point of view herein expressed is sometimes characterized as being *utilitarian*. It may be; but not in any narrow or undesirable sense.

"What the Schools Teach and Might Teach," page 77:

Most of our civic and social problems are at bottom *industrial* problems.

"Education Extension," page 26:

In a democratic society the *motive of self preservation* demands public measures for insuring that all its young and its handicapped individuals should be fitted to discharge with at least a minimum of competency the duties of citizenship.

When we come to the political theories of the survey we meet a fundamentally

new contributions it makes to educational measurement, particularly in the field of reading and arithmetic. The conclusions regarding these tests are made so judiciously that they will be of signal service in establishing public confidence in the value of scientific tests and measurements in education.

This volume is a striking example, also, of what can be accomplished through the skilful use of the graphic method in presenting statistical data and by paying heed to the appetizing effect upon the reader of attractive typography and the simplification of statistical tables. No survey can be truly successful which fails to "put over with a punch" its findings and recommendations. Professor Judd's study is unique in this respect. Furthermore, by setting forth in an elaborate appendix the scales and tests which were used and the directions which were given for applying them, it has been made a veritable text-book for students of education.

The monograph "Overcrowded Schools and the Platoon Plan" by Superintendent Hartwell, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, has also created wide comment, which has been due, doubtless, to the nation-wide discussion of the work-study-play schools of Superintendent Wirt of Gary, Indiana. To those who are interested primarily in the enriched school life which the flexible program of the Gary plan provides, this volume is disappointing. The platoon type of organization recommended utilizes little more than the traditional activities of the school and increases only slightly the capacity. It misses almost entirely the spirit of the work-study-play school as developed by Mr. Wirt. While it will doubtless be of assistance, therefore, to those who are seeking to solve the problem of school congestion without changing materially traditional school practice, it will have little influence with those who are seeking to enrich the school life with social values made possible by using extensively the auditorium and playground, and by vitalizing the old academic training through supplementing it, from the kindergarten to the college, with practical activities in the workrooms and science laboratories and in the community

wrong conception of democracy. The entire survey proceeds upon the theory that the value of education is the development of useful citizens of a state which is something separate from and superior to the individuals composing it. Children as potential citizens exist merely for the benefit of this state, the welfare of which is measured by its material progress. The idea of a government of the people, by the people and for the people, has no place in the survey. For example, "Educational Extension"

If the masses are to participate in the task of ruling themselves, they must be trained for the job. . . . Left entirely to themselves it is not certain that the mass of people would secure that knowledge of how the government is run and how the people outside of their own spheres live which is necessary to intelligent civic action.—Page 26.

The function of the school is to assume, and thereby improve, the carrying on of those activities, not adequately managed by any other social agency, which prepare human beings for useful membership in a democratic society.—Page 34.

The political theory of the survey seems to be "government of the people, by the schools, for the teachers and educational experts."

In the field of purely educational method and theory there is a fundamental and corrupting principle of the survey which is pedagogically unsound. In "What the Schools Teach and Might Teach" by one Franklin Bobbitt, page 101, this principle is set forth as follows:

The fundamental social point of view of this discussion of the courses of study of the Cleveland schools is that effective teaching is preparation for adult life through participation in the activities of life.

The only correct basis of education is training *for*, not *in*, the activities of adult life. This theory of a child being a miniature adult capable of being educated by diluted experience and training in the activities and mental processes of adults is at the root of much of our educational evil. The beginning of all educational wisdom is the recognition that a child is essentially different from an adult, not merely in degree but in characteristic functions. This "Lilliputian" theory of education results in the production of

life of the school and neighborhood.

Superintendents, members of boards of education, and those interested primarily in the problems of school organization and administration will find the monograph by Dr. Ayres on that subject of great value. The analysis of the Cleveland situation and the solution suggested give the key to the solution of administrative problems in practically every city school system of the country. The compact scheme of organization proposed, with centralized professional responsibility and leadership—which has recently been secured, as a result of the survey, through the election of Superintendent Spaulding—is absolutely sound. In fact, it is fundamental to all other measures of administrative reform in the public schools.

The contribution of the survey to the method of reaching and interesting the public in school affairs, although already commented upon, cannot be too highly praised. Before publication, each section of the report was put into tentative final form, revised by the author and director, and submitted to careful study and discussion at a conference of local school people and the members of the survey committee. In this way, all questions of fact were submitted for discussion to the persons primarily concerned, and changes made wherever error was clearly found. The survey committee reserved, of course, the right to make on its own behalf whatever recommendations it deemed desirable. After each report had thus been checked up and printed, it was presented to the public, before release to the press, at one of a series of weekly public luncheons, at which the essential points were outlined for discussion by either the author or the director. In this way, the schoolmen were fully informed before the publication of the findings, and the particular monograph was released to the public under favorable auspices.

Those who are familiar with the New York school inquiry,<sup>1</sup> made a few years ago, will appreciate the value of this method of publication. The New York inquiry, like the Cleveland survey, was published in a series of monographs, each

nothing but "smart Alecks," or perhaps, to accord with the language of the survey, one should say "immature sciolists."

A few illustrations of the absurdity to which this point of view is carried may be cited:

"What the Schools Teach and Might Teach," page 30:

The purpose of real reading is to enter into the thought and emotional experience of the writer; not to study the methods by which the author expressed himself.

Fancy a child in its second year of high school entering into the emotional experiences of Franklin's autobiography and "The Vision of Sir Launfal," which constitute part of the prescribed reading in the Cleveland high schools.

The history should be so taught that it will have a demonstrably practical purpose. . . . The history should be developed on the basis of topics . . . we have in mind such topics as: (Here follows a list of 57 varieties among which may be cited "Sociological aspects of war," "Capital and labor," "Taxation," "Government control of corporations," "Conservation of natural resources," "Women in industry," and "Co-operative buying and selling.")—Page 56.

Portions of any of these topics would amply serve for Ph.D. theses. It is comforting, however, to know that this expert recognizes the need of some training in history as it is generally understood, for he says, page 59:

Naturally students must have some familiarity with the general time relations of history and the general chronological movements of affairs before they understand the more or less specialized treatment of individual topics.

As might naturally be expected from the unsoundness of the underlying point of view the survey has served as a catchpot for fads and foibles. The whole survey seems to have been seized upon by those conducting it as an opportunity for exploiting pet whims without any desire for constructive improvement or real analysis of the educational situation. When an author of what purports to be a serious monograph on educational extension writes the following:

As Percival Chubb has remarked, "If man can no longer save his soul through his work—and only a few of us can under

<sup>1</sup> See NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, vol. ii, pp. 88 and 92, vol. iii, p. 327

dealing with a specific phase of the school system; but the monographs of the New York inquiry were not attractively printed, nor were they written, in many instances, in a style that would attract and hold the attention of the general public and the majority of the teaching body. Furthermore, they were not tactfully released. The schoolmen whose work was criticized were given practically no opportunity to see or to comment upon the findings until after the reports were published, and the first impressions—usually the most lasting—which the public received, were secured from inadequate and misleading newspaper digests. As a result, the New York inquiry was received with great hostility, and the public and the schoolmen wasted their energies in fruitless wrangling over misunderstood motives and misrepresented facts, instead of in constructive discussion of ways to improve the schools.

The primary purpose of a school survey is to educate the public regarding the needs of the schools. Unless it does so effectively and wins general support, it is not only useless, involving useless expenditure, but it may be actually harmful and act as a retarding influence. In contrast with the New York school inquiry as a type of survey which failed to make the most of its opportunities, therefore, the Cleveland survey is a shining example. Taking advantage of the weak points of the New York inquiry, which was a pioneer in the field, it has shown the way toward achieving maximum results for the money expended and for the stupendous and painstaking work a comprehensive school survey entails.

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modern conditions—there is all the greater reason why he should be enabled to save his soul through his play—

one is prepared for pretty nearly anything in the way of a fad. But perhaps the prize absurdity is a monograph on "Education through Recreation." A few excerpts will suffice:

The school-room is ill adapted to serve as a laboratory of citizenship or for the practice of democracy. School-room management is established on an almost purely autocratic basis. The teacher is much more like a ruler on a throne than like a president or a parent. Unless other satisfactory provision is made, then, from the standpoint of preparation for citizenship, the recess can no more safely be omitted from the school program than can the study of American history.—Page 15.

Therefore, the organization of inter-group school games in a democratic country is a fundamental duty and unavoidable responsibility of the educational system.—Page 36.

Play, by which is meant the organic predisposition towards characteristic human activity, preceded work in the race as activities preceded subject matter.—Page 86.

The reviewer offers a reward of \$5 for the most lucid explanation of the phrase "organic predisposition towards characteristic human activity." It reminds one of Mark Twain's comment that "there is a great deal of human nature in mankind." The contention that "activities preceded subject matter" contains as much error as could possibly be crowded into four words though the phrase serves well to indicate the character of the survey's own activities.

The net result of the survey seems to have been the publication of twenty-five volumes neatly bound and attractive in appearance. The content of the volumes is unimportant except for two things:

First: The fact that the public school system in a typical municipality has failed measurably in that nearly one quarter of the elementary pupils are over age and backward.

Second: That the only conception of a remedy by those who have conducted the survey is to raise to the *n*th power the very theories and methods which have resulted in the breakdown of the public school system.

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