

be predicted, and consequently cannot yet be specifically prepared for.

► Technical vocational courses do not solve the problem of educating the slow learner because the trades for which they prepare require both good general intelligence and a knowledge of the basic academic subjects. Vocational teachers do not want their courses to become dumping grounds for slow learners.

► The culturally deprived child needs an education that will bring him into the culture; only a basically liberal education that provides the cultural background not available at home will enable him to overcome his handicaps. He needs a better knowledge of English and an introduction to art, music, literature, history, science, and the principles of government at least as much as he needs vocational training. Allowance must be made for his limitations; in many cases the traditional academic program must be altered to meet his special needs. But the basic disciplines can be taught in different ways and at different levels to students who differ widely in both academic aptitude and cultural background. When properly taught, they can later be applied to many different vocations.

These considerations lead us to the conclusion that the needed expansion of technical training should take place, not in high school, but in junior colleges, adult evening schools, post-high school technical schools, and programs conducted by industry. Because vocational programs are firmly established in most high schools—where, for half a century, they have received massive federal aid that is denied the humanities—there is little likelihood that they will be de-emphasized. But they can be made broad rather than narrowly preparatory for specific jobs and they can be closely related to the academic program, as they already are in some schools. And they should take up only a minor portion of any student's time in order that each may have ample opportunity to gain the liberating knowledge and understanding essential to free men who, whatever their vocation, must make a wide variety of decisions.

We Americans pride ourselves on being "practical" men. To such men—unless they have thought deeply about it—it seems obvious that vocational training is more useful than a study of principles, theories, and ideas. But it was John Dewey—not an educational conservative—who once observed: "Theory is, in the end, the most practical of all things." It is the most practical because it has the broadest applications. In preparation for an uncertain future, the studies dealing with the basic principles will prove to be most practical in the long run.

—P.W.

Letters to the Editor



Campus Mores

THE GENEROUS SPACE you allotted to a discussion of "Campus Mores" [SR, June 20] makes this letter a necessity.

Having been raised in a class of about 1,000 (University of Vienna, Class of 1937), I experienced complete sexual liberty without bad taste, licentious compulsions, and obnoxious side effects. How? Simple: Vienna University has no dormitories. Hence, students live in the town, mostly in rented rooms. What goes on in these apartments is anybody's guess, but nobody's business. Public gatherings can thus be held with proper decorum, no complexes or obsessions either way. Dormitories, whether military, prison, or academic, breed sexual aberrations by sheer lack of privacy.

GEORGE VASH, M.D.

Baltimore, Md.

IN ANY KIND OF social order the idea of human freedom in any given field carries the implication of responsibility for acts and the results of acts performed in pursuance of that freedom. To all those college students, high school students, teen agers, and others who want to indulge in sexual intercourse without marriage I would propound this question and demand an answer: "Are you personally prepared to assume full responsibility for pregnancies, illegitimate births, or physical or psychological damage that may result to you or your sexual partner because of these acts and to relieve your parents and others of the burden of such results?" To those who can truthfully answer "Yes" to this question and prove the truth of their answer, I would say go ahead. To those who cannot truthfully answer "Yes" I would give an unqualified prohibition.

As the father of a daughter who made a "mistake" in college, gave the child for adoption, underwent psychiatric treatment for two years, and then had to go back to school to try to make some kind of new life, and who necessarily threw much of the burden on her family, I would say that sexual "freedom" is first of all a matter of responsibility and the ability and willingness to assume it. To those who have not the willingness and ability to assume responsibility, the freedom should be denied. In general, I would say that sexual intercourse is for responsible men and women and not for irresponsible boys and girls.

As for college women establishing any new sexual order, if it is established by women it will not be a moral one, or at best it is most unlikely. It seems clear enough that such chastity as has existed at times in the past was established and enforced by men because, among other things, they wanted to know who their sons were and who actually produced the burdens they bore. As for me, I think I would not want to marry one of the current college girls just because if there happened to be children I

could never be sure who the father was.

This letter is a testimony of a deep and harsh experience that has not ended after eight years and may never be ended, for there is little hope that my beautiful daughter will ever be anything like what she might have been. If this harsh aspect of "sexual freedom" has ever been discussed by anyone I have never heard of it.

W. J.

Vista, Calif.

Academic Freedom

MAY I CONGRATULATE Henry Steele Commager for his article on "Academic Freedom" [SR, June 20]. Dr. Commager so lucidly laid out the very foundations of higher education in a free society. I was much concerned to find my own alma mater involved in this very issue. It has become apparent that more Americans are attempting to accept a philosophy committed to specific lines of thought rather than keeping to a philosophy that is open to questions and examination. Academic scrutinization of our political and social structure has always been a mainstay of democracy. Without dissenters there is apathy. Choice becomes unimportant. Blind acceptance of rigid maxims becomes more prevalent. Apathy therefore leads to a total eclipse of independent thought.

The university's luminescent effect hopefully rubs off on us. There are not many places in our society where we can question, dispute, and alter thinking as much as we can in a university. Here we are encouraged to do so with little fear of reprisal from standing institutions. Once into the structured atmosphere of everyday living we are more discreet in maintaining our position. Yet we have learned to question, we have seen the grey between the black and white. And hopefully this ability to discriminate will lead to meaningful appraisals of our pursuits and the pursuits others would have us follow. We must also have the right to know how others think in order to develop and justify our own thinking. Universities must not be compelled to deny this exposure to its future citizens.

RONALD COUN.

Buffalo, N.Y.

Two Points

CHARLES H. WILSON says in "Critics of the Schools Never Die" [SR, June 20] that "the only valid measure of a nation's schools is the economic, scientific, intellectual, and cultural well-being of the nation itself."

On the surface this contention is difficult to combat. But it may be that the upper third of our population is actually sustaining our highly complex civilization in the United States, another third is engaged in repetitive jobs that carry out the directives of the upper third, and the lower third is being supported by the other two groups. There is certainly a large body of evidence to support this view. If true, our educa-

tional system is inadequate—because less progress is being made than if all groups contributed to it.

There are two things about our educational structure that worry me, neither of which seems to get much attention from the experts:

Back in the last century schooling was a privilege. About 1900 it had grown into a right. Today, with our compulsory attendance laws, it is legally compelled. The feeling of a large group that constitutes potential drop-outs is that they are under a jail sentence with no time off for good behavior. As a consequence they do not exhibit any good behavior unless convenient and their “you can’t do this to me!” attitude makes them proof against learning. You and I are not without this reaction under similar circumstances.

My second point is that our selling job on the value of a good education has been poor. We tell the youngster that without it he can’t get and hold a good job. We tell him that a B.A. is worth an extra \$250,000 or so during a lifetime. But do we ever tell him that being an educated man is more fun, that he will find more things to laugh at and more people to laugh with? Do we point out that the educated man can get deep satisfactions from dozens of sources unavailable to the ignorant? Do we show him how education, regardless of its formal stopping point, can be a continuing thing? I am afraid we do not.

ANDREW J. KANE.

Hendersonville, N.C.

The Art of Grade Collecting

HAVING JUST RECEIVED a disappointing grade on a recently completed examination, I would like to make application for membership in Miss Bennett’s proposed organization, Beta Phi Kappa [SR, June 20].

There does not seem to be, however, any replacement for this objective grade standard in universities that graduate a thousand or more. And truthfully, the student with the A or B average is, 98 per cent of the time, not only the most ambitious and clever, but the most competent. Imagination and creativity demand discipline and lucid articulation, even if only the articulation of what the lecturer has said.

LUCIA GAY ADAMS,
University of Wisconsin.

Hollis, N.Y.

TWO OF YOUR RECENT articles have tried to put the emphasis on grades in their proper perspective. In “What Kind of Excellence?” [SR, July 18], Vernon Alden has examined the exact meaning of excellence on the college level. His incisive comments that too many of today’s brilliant college graduates are “merely commentators, observers, and critics of society” instead of “doers, innovators, and risk-takers” were significant, since I am a college student. I have come to believe that a college education is worthless if one does not use it to full advantage. Alden’s call for a new definition of excellence should be heeded by educators as well as students.

“The Pursuit of Non-Excellence” [SR, June 20] was an extremely witty effort by Margaret Bennett to spoof the race for grades. Surrounded by 33,000 shrewd stu-

dents, I am constantly aware of the “feverish pursuit of the almighty ‘A’” as Miss Bennett has suggested. Her satire was certainly meaningful in this age of competition.

IRVIN M. HAAS,
Ohio State University.

Columbus, O.

“Live-Wire” Lectures

THE ARTICLE “Person-to-Person Teaching,” by Charles F. Madden [SR, July 18], failed to mention the speakerphone set-up in use at Pace College, New York City, since 1962, which permits classes at the college to hear and interview government, business, and professional leaders anywhere in the world. Telephone equipment used at Pace can be found in any modern executive or professional office. It consists of a regular telephone to which a device the American Telephone and Telegraph Company calls a “speakerphone” is attached. The speakerphone has two tiny electronic parts: a microphone and a transmitter, permitting “hands free” talking on the telephone. This allows student-interviewers to consult or make notes without holding the receiver.

One tele-lecture resulted in an unusual field trip for five Pace students. In May 1962, international relations students of Dr. Jordan M. Young, an authority on Brazilian affairs, telephoned Governor Carlos Lacerda of Guanabara, Brazil, 5,000 miles away in Rio de Janeiro, to discuss the political and economic situation in his country. The tele-lecture took fifty minutes and cost the college \$308. Dr. Lacerda was so impressed with the ability of the Pace students to think and to ask searching questions that he invited them to come to Rio de Janeiro at his personal expense. Five of the forty-seven students in the class and Dr. Young were chosen by the college to make the 10,000-mile air round trip. It was probably the longest field trip ever taken by a group of American students. The students lived with native Brazilians, dined each day with the Governor—where international problems were discussed—and interviewed many government and labor leaders.

When the students returned to the States after seventeen days of exploring the Brazilian way of life, they had to submit a term paper giving their interpretations of what they learned. The students at Pace call the tele-lecture system, “live-wire” lectures. The professors call it “living textbooks.”

BRUCE HOREL,
Pace College.

New York, N.Y.

Words To Live By

JAMES CASS’S EDITORIAL of SR, July 18, mentions that “a number of states and local school systems are reported to be exploring ways in which the schools can introduce students to the moral values of our society and to its varied religious traditions.” I’m delighted to hear it. As a high school teacher of English, I have seen evidence to convince me students have a great, and unsatisfied, appetite for moral criteria to live by.

Before I go further, let me stipulate that I concur fully with the Supreme Court’s decision on Bible reading in the public schools, not only for the reasons on which their de-

cision was based, but because Bible reading as actually implemented in many homeroom settings was an insult to literature—let alone religion! Ten verses chosen carelessly and stumbled over by a student can be worse than useless; and even with the greatest of care and concern, it is difficult to find approximately two hundred excerpts—of approximately two-minute length—that are meaningful entities—that are comprehensive (even to adults). If you doubt this, you try.

Yet I ardently believe the presentation of moral principles to be a prime obligation of an educator, and there is ample documentation to support this as an aim of American public education. There must be some small step that can be taken. I’d like to suggest one. Why could not an interfaith group of teachers, at the invitation of our national Office of Education, compile for public school use a manual of several hundred quotations by men whose greatness of spirit all acknowledge—these to be worldwide in scope, comprehensive in time, and cosmopolitan in style and flavor.

Once compiled, the manual might be submitted to leaders of national religious groups for “clearance,” then printed and made available to whatever authorities are concerned with permitting or mandating their use. It is my opinion that such readings, prefaced by identification and followed by a brief period of silence, for contemplation, could have real moral impact on the days they began, for both students and their harried teachers.

VIRGINIA T. LE SUEUR.

Meadville, Pa.

Subway Stop

WE MUST FORGIVE the good Mr. Evans, “A British English Teacher in the Bronx” [SR, July 18], for a mistake he made. If he “stepped off a subway at Bedford Park Boulevard station” he would have been at Hunter College, not the Bronx High School of Science. They are about two miles apart. Either way (or at either station) he was correct—for at both he really would have seen “a crowd of bright, intelligent-looking young people.”

JOSEPH N. FEINSTEIN.

Sherman Oaks, Calif.

SR and the Whole Man

AS A SCHOOLMAN, I have just spent many hours on one of my favorite projects—clipping out the Education Supplements for the past year and binding them into a special book to which I may have reference easily. In order to conserve and preserve the wisdom in these pages, I might suggest to you that these gems of educational lore be collected in a separate binder for us schoolmen who value them so highly.

There is no publication on either side of the Atlantic that can even approach SR for its usefulness to the “whole man.” If I had to be faced with the ultimate necessity of being allowed one publication, and one only, there would be no hesitancy on my part in choosing SR. You are making an inestimable contribution to the culture of America with *Saturday Review*. Long may you publish this mirror of our civilization!

JACK H. CAUM,

Henrik J. Krebs School.
Wilmington, Del.

A COLLEGE IN THE ISLANDS

By DAVID C. STEWART, *who is Secretary of the Joint Council on Educational Broadcasting and has been working on a study related to the activities of the College of the Virgin Islands.*

THE U.S. Virgin Islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John—have a combined population of only 35,000, about 85 per cent Negro. When the U.S. purchased these islands from Denmark in 1917 for \$25,000,000 in gold, the most significant item on the American agenda was anti-submarine warfare. Thus, for some years, a succession of naval officers governed the islands. Since then civilian governorship has changed with the shifting tides of mainland politics (the governor serves at the pleasure of the President).

Until a few years ago, education in the Islands languished, as one governor after another appointed new Commissioners of Education. Under the Danes the literacy rate was 98 per cent; after nearly fifty years of American rule it has slipped to 87 per cent. On the U.S. mainland the public school drop-out rate is about 30 per cent; in the Virgin Islands it is more than 60 per cent. The tropical climate is fine but the cost of living is

relatively high and many public school teachers recruited on the mainland leave after only one year. The most talented Island high school graduates often continue their education on the mainland and many never return. Until recently there have not been many jobs for college graduates to return to. This drain on talent is experienced in most Caribbean islands, something that retards progress in nearly every phase of island life.

These and similar problems occupied the time of a special Governor's Conference on Higher Education in the Virgin Islands, called by Governor Ralph Paiewonsky in July 1961. About two dozen people were invited to St. Thomas to look over the situation and suggest what might be done. It is typical of the governor's own brand of pragmatism that this group of "education experts" included two well-known Washington lawyers closely associated with the Administration. One was Representative Edith Green of the House Education Committee, the other a knowledgeable foundation executive.

The conference recommended that the Islands establish a two-year college emphasizing a liberal arts education. But few of the conferees thought that it could be gotten under way in less than

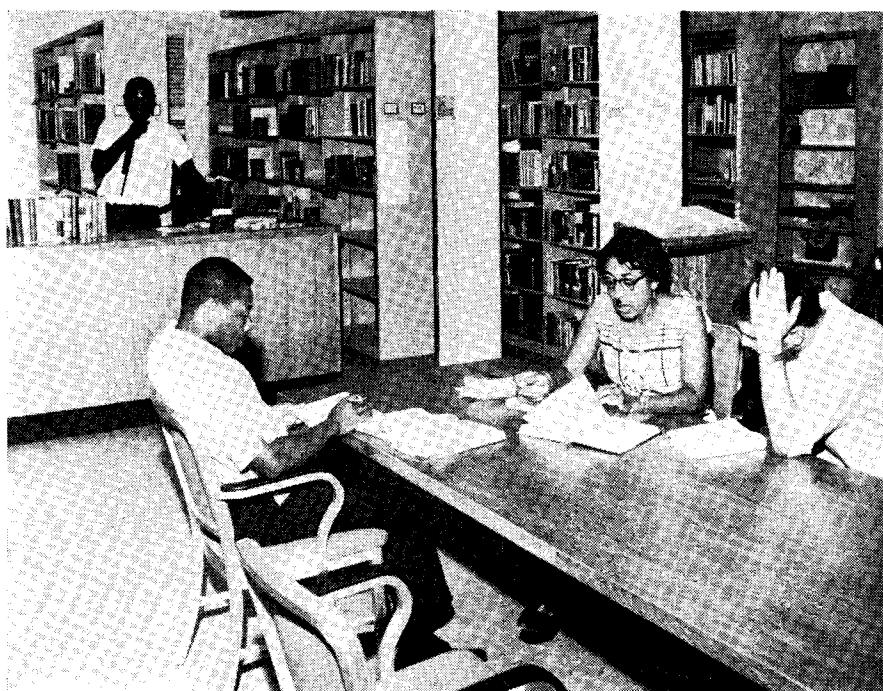
four years. The most venturesome thinking predicted that after one year of operation the College *might* have a combined full and part-time enrollment of seventy-five students.

Many of the residents of the Islands were equally pessimistic when the governor pledged in his 1961 inaugural address to establish a college. Some were plainly antagonistic. As one resident put it, "What do we need with colleges when we don't even have decent roads?" A number of taxpayers complained that it was senseless to establish a college before the Islands' Department of Education had raised the standards of the public schools to a bare minimum. The critics were saying, in effect, "Look, we're for better education, all right, but let's put first things first." Those whose views prevailed said, "There is a time for putting *second* things first." Paiewonsky, a wealthy rum merchant and native Virgin Islander, insisted that the establishment of a college was going to be the first order of business on his section of the New Frontier.

Two years (and an extraordinary amount of work and patience) later, Justice Arthur Goldberg formally opened the college to a class of more than 400, of which about forty-five were full-time students. Most of the students are Virgin Islanders, but there are some from the U.S. mainland, Canada, other Caribbean islands, South and Central America, and Africa. Current plans call for expansion from two to four years in nearly all college divisions beginning with teacher education.

The President of the college, Lawrence C. Wanlass, came to the Virgin Islands from Sacramento State College, where he was assistant to the president. Before this he was a professor of political science at Mount Holyoke. Typical of other members of the new administrative and teaching staff he is young (thirty-nine), harassed, and enthusiastic.

Sensitive to the local school problems and the fact that only a small percentage of students now graduate from the high schools, Wanlass nevertheless believes that the college will finally break an educationally unproductive chain of events. The college now represents a goal, a good reason for finishing high school. Besides, without local teacher education the schools will never reach the standards they seek. To those who say that the college is an unnecessary luxury



"The college now represents a goal for local students, a good reason for finishing high school."