

to form committees to meet that need.

In a recent publication of the U.S. Office of Education, *Citizens Committees for Better Schools*, Gene Fusco, USOE specialist in school and community relations, reviews the development of the local citizens' movement in the 1950s and assesses its strength today. He concludes that "There is currently much evidence to show that the citizens committee movement remains strong; that thousands of committees throughout the Nation are very actively engaged in making studies and recommendations on school matters; that school superintendents and school boards not only welcome, but also take an active role in encouraging formation of such committees; and that, for the most part, these committees are effective and accomplish their purpose."

At the national level, the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools (1424 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036) continues to seek new ways to stimulate more adequate financial support for public education. Established a little more than two years ago, the committee is, in many ways, the spiritual heir of the commission and council that provided national leadership in the 1950s, but its program is far more sharply focused. While eschewing any role as lobbyist for specific legislation, the committee has sought better understanding by the public generally of the need for a higher level of support for the schools. To this end it has sponsored a number of meetings and publications, and now has just issued the first of a new series of "NCSPS Reports to Business and Industry," which will offer case histories of ways in which business organizations have helped to meet the pressing problems of the public schools.

At the state level a new committee, the New York Citizens Committee for Public Higher Education (276 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, New York), announced last month, presages new dimensions of the citizens' movement. Its program, still in the early stages of development, aims not only at strengthening higher education, but at making college-level study more easily available to the disadvantaged. Almost certainly both of these objectives will receive increasing attention from the public in the months and years ahead.

Clearly, many Americans continue to believe that the best way to promote a worthy cause is to form a committee. It seems plain, too, that many Americans continue to believe in the importance of the schools and are willing to work in their behalf. We would have cause for serious concern if it were not so. But it appears likely that the citizens' movement for the schools will continue to grow and to serve the nation. —J.C.

Letters to the Editor

Kudos for the Peace Corps

APPLAUSE FOR THE truly fine and thoughtful article, "The Peace Corps Volunteer Returns" [SR, Oct. 17]. Observations were not off the top of the author's head. I am engaged in correspondence with a young female Peace Corps volunteer stationed in Nigeria, and her thoughts and experiences closely parallel those mentioned in David Pearson's article. The Peace Corps is an organization that promotes self-examination, to say nothing of the infinitely valuable cause of peace it is furthering.

VALERY TAYLOR.

Inkster, Mich.

AS A HIGH SCHOOL teacher of social studies who was fortunate enough to receive a grant to visit the Philippines and India this summer, I am most pleased by your article "The Peace Corps Volunteer Returns." I met people of all walks of life in the nations visited and spoke to Americans in various capacities, but no one impressed me more than the Peace Corps volunteers I got to know.

Upon their return, we must assure these volunteers that their talents so useful for American foreign policy overseas are not wasted and dissipated at home.

We need the Peace Corps returnees—more than they need us.

NORMAN ABRAMOWITZ.

Sunnyside, N.Y.

Reading with i/t/a

NANCY LARRICK's piece, "What 44 Letters Can Do" [SR, Sept. 19], is a precise and professional report on some of the developments in the burgeoning experimentation with Sir James Pitman's i/t/a in this country. However, when she says that "We do know that the effectiveness of any teaching materials depends in large part on the skill of the teacher in helping each child as an individual," she summarizes with a cliché that begs the question.

The point is whether this new method of teaching reading makes it possible for the teacher to get better results that are meaningful, rapid, and lasting. More significantly, does the use of i/t/a make the learning process by the child faster, more interesting, and productive of success?

I would like to refer to my own visit last December to the schools of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, when I had an opportunity to see children of diverse backgrounds and various scholastic potential learning to read through the use of i/t/a, although the materials were only in their first stages. I saw children dealing with the English language and enjoying a rational and logical relationship between the symbols and the sounds of words that they already knew.

As far as I could determine, the experi-

ment did not provide more time for the instruction of reading than in the traditional and conventional techniques, but allowed amply for concurrent work in enrichment, science, and the like. I believe there is much that can be learned from the unique ideas inherent in this experiment, which the students of linguistics have been pointing to for a long time. It is a happy culmination that those ideas are being applied at long last to the teaching of reading in English.

ABRAHAM TAUBER,
Dean of Faculty,
Bronx Community College.

The Bronx, N.Y.

NANCY LARRICK's very fine article on the Initial Teaching Alphabet raises several questions that need a brief reply.

The alphabet developed by Sir James Pitman is a medium, not a method. The Tanyzer-Mazurkiewicz books use that alphabet to teach reading. But more than reading is involved in their "method." From the first workbook, children are encouraged to listen, to speak, to write, *and* to read. All communication skills are attended to. "Chatter should be stilled" only when it *interferes* with learning—and this must be left to the teacher's good sense, just as the teacher's good sense guides her in her use of the teacher's guides. Because these manuals are very complete, a teacher with no previous experience in i/t/a can use the series with no special training.

Miss Larrick mentions the problem of "unlearning." i/t/a is designed as a *transition* alphabet; its spelling and designs are geared to transition. A child no more unlearns i/t/a when learning the traditional alphabet than he unlearns walking when learning to run. One is a step toward the other; compatible skills and symbols are involved.

Miss Larrick worries that, as adults, i/t/a-trained individuals will read no better than their neighbors. All indications are that many who would not have read at all will be reading because of i/t/a. But, more important, all evidence to date indicates that i/t/a children have a confidence in their own abilities and an independence toward their learning experiences that is very special. They not only read better, write more freely, and speak better, but they are somehow different children. A child who knows that *red* begins with an *r* cannot understand why *wreath* begins with a *w*. His sense of logic is frustrated by his first experience with school. With i/t/a, however, logic works for him. He meets success instead of frustration and this makes a difference in the human being.

THEODORE B. DOLMATCH,
President,
i/t/a

Publications, Inc.

New York, N.Y.

THE FIFTEEN TEACHERS who volunteered to try the initial teaching alphabet in the first-grade classrooms in the Bethlehem Area schools willingly accepted visitors. They averaged at least one group of three visitors every week. The teachers themselves were learning to use the initial teaching alphabet, developing materials, trying new methods. The curriculum each provided in the classroom differed as individual teachers differed, but it was rich in activities that differed from the classrooms Miss Larrick uses as criteria because the children had available resources that were previously denied first-graders. A daily activity in one classroom, for example, was a discussion of articles from the local newspaper.

Initially teachers felt they were teaching reading all day long—not an unusual reaction for a teacher of first grade. But when they were asked to write down their schedule of daily activities, they discovered that the writing, oral language, and reading activities, integrated when the initial teaching alphabet was the teaching medium, involved no more time than under the traditional program. First-graders took field trips, enjoyed art and music, had science experiences, in social studies learned more about the communities in which they lived, and were introduced to the science and language of numbers.

In the classroom there is a time for quiet, a time for chatter. When visitors are present to observe reading instruction, any teacher would hope the children not involved in the reading group would work independently and quietly.

The Bethlehem Area School District has a staff to be proud of. All we ask is a small measure of what is granted the scientist in the laboratory—reservation of judgment until the facts concerning the three-year Lehigh-Bethlehem project can be evaluated.

REBECCA W. STEWART,
Director of Elementary Education,
Bethlehem Area School System.

Bethlehem, Pa.

THE QUESTION THAT needs answering before the use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet becomes too widespread is this: Will experience with i/t/a be more or less beneficial to youngsters than the same amount of experience with the conventional alphabet *when their performance using the conventional alphabet is the criterion?*

There is no question that a start has been made in answering this question (see John Downing, "Teaching Reading With i/t/a In Britain," *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1964). However, an educational psychologist would expect users of i/t/a to encounter the greatest difficulty when the time comes for them to transfer their skills to writing (not reading) traditional orthography. Especially, difficulty should be encountered in spelling words that require a special symbol when written in the Pitman alphabet. Data relevant to this problem are conspicuously absent.

WILLIAM B. GILLOOLY,
Assistant Professor of Education,
Johns Hopkins University.

Baltimore, Md.

ALTHOUGH THERE MAY be drawbacks, and although we don't know the effect on the child's later attitude toward reading, I take

it as proven that first-graders exposed to reading through the i/t/a read significantly better than other first graders.

There is at least once case, however, where the effect of i/t/a could be positively harmful, and that is the case, not too unusual, of the child—whether he is extra bright or has been exposed to reading in the pre-school home environment—who enters the first grade with, say, a second-grade reading vocabulary. Is such a child to be required to *unlearn* what he knows, and then at the end of the first grade again *unlearn* what he has just been taught and relearn what he already knew in the first place?

JAMES W. HURSEY.

Newark, O.

Help for Foreign Students

I READ with great interest your provocative article "Do Not Bring Foreign Students, Unless . . ." (*SR*, Aug. 15). Certainly there can be no quarrel with your thesis, or its presentation. I would, however, like to call your attention to the positive efforts which are being made by colleges and universities, professional organizations, the Federal Government, and others to improve the situation which you so well describe.

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs was established in 1948 to assist Foreign Student Advisers and their colleagues in developing effective programs for foreign students. Had you been familiar with this Association, you would have known of the grant given to it by the Department of State in May, 1963, to establish a Field Service Program designed to assist colleges and universities in strengthening their programs for foreign students in eight areas of concern.

I would like to call your attention especially to our new publications project *Guidelines*, which is being sent without charge to

every named Foreign Student Adviser in the United States. The first two sections deal with "Responsibilities and Standards in Work with Foreign Students" and "Initial Orientation of Foreign Students." The Standards were first proposed by the NAFSA Ethics Committee and then adopted by the Board of Directors. I am sure that you will find that NAFSA has thought through the fundamental problems and issues related to having foreign students on an American campus. It is our hope that, through this wide-spread distribution, every college and university in the United States will give these matters more thorough consideration.

KATHERINE C. BANG,
Director,
Field Service Program,
National Association for Foreign
Student Affairs.

Cleveland, Ohio

Educational Hall of Education

AS THE FATHER of four children who are now, or have been in the recent past, engaged in varied educational pursuits with varied success, I paid an early visit to the Hall of Education during our recent trip to the New York World's Fair. Early and quick!

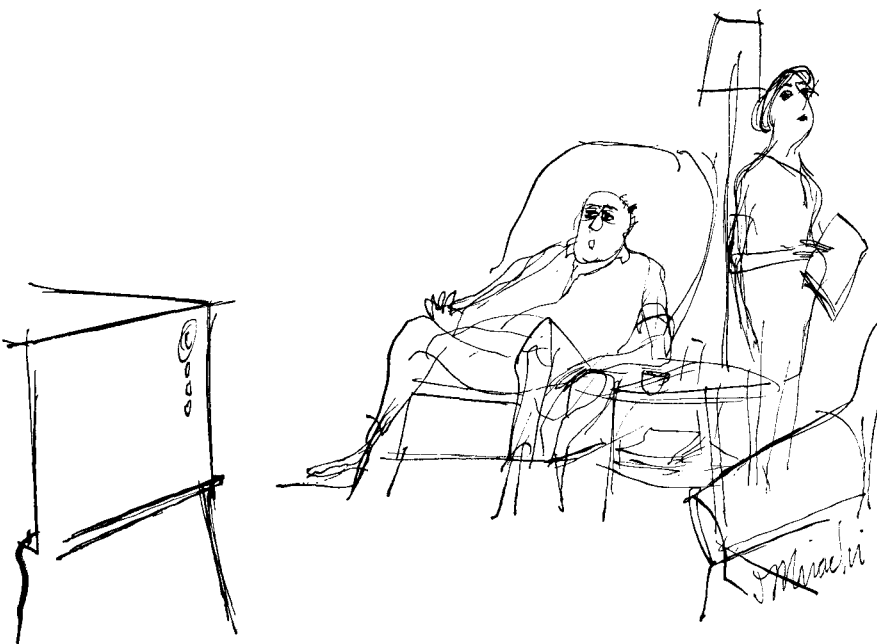
I would agree with everything that Professor Redefor said about the Hall of Education [*SR*, Sept. 19] and still protest his inference that it is non-educational.

While I stood gaping, just like the professor, at "The School for Tomorrow," one son visited the commercial exhibits for a few minutes. He returned with a deck of marked playing cards.

I submit, sir, and anyone who has served in his country's armed forces will agree, that there is a great education to be had in playing cards with a marked deck. Especially someone else's deck.

G. K. HODENFIELD.

Greenbelt, Md.



"I'm worried Alice. It's been weeks since it has insulted my intelligence."

A University Presidency: What It Takes

By ERIC ASHBY, *Master of Clare College, Cambridge, England, and former President and Vice Chancellor of The Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland.*



—Eva Luoma (Monkmeyer).

"Decision-making is very wearing and a considerable strain upon the character."

WHEN I left scientific work to become a university president, after having been a professor for thirteen years, someone gave me this advice: "Remember," he said "that in the eyes of professors all administrators are an evil. Say to yourself every morning: 'I am an evil; am I a necessary one?'" I took his advice; I have often asked myself that question and I propose to put down here some of the answers.

How have academic administrators—these apparent parasites on honest endeavor—come into being? Let us start with some axioms and assumptions. Both in the United States and England we are dedicated to the belief that people are individuals with free will and choice. We observe that they attach themselves to groups, communities and institutions. The purpose of their attachment is cooperation. They can choose, within limits, which units of society they will join. They still retain a personal and private life apart from the group, and in this area they continue to make decisions which are their personal and private affairs. But in joining a unit of society they agree to allow some decisions to be made for them by the group. This is true of small units of society like a college and it is true of large units of society like an industry or an army. In some groups they surrender all participation in the making of certain decisions; in others they take part in whatever decision-making is done by the group.

Even in small units of society decision-making can be difficult; some of you will know of this if you have driven your family into the country and the family has had to decide where to stop for a picnic. In large units of society, where the purposes of cooperation may be hard to define, decision-making becomes extremely difficult. One of two things is likely to happen: either the group fails to

make a decision, in which case cooperation—the purpose of the group—disintegrates and the group disperses; or someone in the group assumes leadership, concentrates and clarifies opinion, and, as it were, precipitates out a decision. If he is skilled in exercising this leadership, cooperation is improved, the group's purpose is better fulfilled; and he may find himself repeatedly called upon to make decisions on behalf of the group. If he is not skilled, the group may disintegrate or it may seek another leader.

Such is the origin of the administrator. He is a man who precipitates out decisions on behalf of units of society.

No one is likely to dispute the importance of administrators for decision-making in certain institutions—for example, armies, industries, and jails. And no one is likely to dispute the utter irrelevance of administrators for decision-making in personal affairs like marriage (though this is a matter for administrative decision in some African societies) and in the creative arts of poetry and music and painting. When we come to science and scholarship the question is not so easy to answer.

The need, of course, is evident. It arises simply from the size and diversity of the cooperating groups necessary to support these activities. Robert Boyle and Charles Darwin were able to do their work without having to obtain the consent or even acquiescence of large numbers of people. When Boyle wanted to make a new piece of apparatus or Darwin wanted to build a new shed in his garden their desires did not have to be set against the rival claims of other scientists for apparatus and buildings. There are still a few corners of science and scholarship which can be cultivated in this way; but the vast majority of people who want to do research or pursue learning now have to join a unit of society organized for this purpose. Their wishes cannot be fulfilled without impinging on the wishes of others; they have to practice cooperation; over some decisions they must be willing to consent to authority: in a word they must put up with administrators.

When this change first came over science and scholarship, the problems of administration were simple; the cooperating groups were small and informal; the administrators were part-time amateurs, little more than spokesmen

This description of the university president's task is taken from an address delivered May 13, 1964, at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.