

Here would be a good place to plant some EFL seed money to see what would grow.

Plainview is a junior high school or, perhaps better, a middle school with a ninth grade. The school nicely reflects a combination of teaching materials, faculty spaces, and work areas for students. I hope its central resource area (read "library"), the audiovisual area, and the divisible auditorium will work well. It is a good job of design. The interior courts are wonderful looking spaces.

On the other side of the ledger, one school shows a gymnasium lovingly clustered with classrooms while a library has a solitary position on the second floor. Architecture triumphed over teaching again.

Another school built around a traditional program shows itself geared for disaster in proposals for possible future use. Design for innovation results in the appalling loss of the one science laboratory for 1,200 students, wiped out to make room for lecture space and a Kafka-like corral of carrels and faculty offices. Clearly not too much attention was given to what might be.

On balance *The Middle School* is a highly successful and useful booklet, attractively presented and containing many provocative ideas. A dogmatic assumption threads through the material insisting that team teaching and flexible schedules and carpet and movable walls constitute a kind of infallible and inevitable innovation. I would prefer that these techniques and gadgets be expressed in terms of aids to accomplish some end or aim of education. The changing tricks of the trade are not, in themselves, useful.

Schools Without Walls is an enthusiastic case for the use in elementary schools of the "big room." These are open areas without walls and containing three to five classes of children and their teachers working together or separately as the program dictates and finding it possible to survive and flourish in a king-size architectural togetherness. The booklet carefully reviews the "pros" of this approach, shows how the difficulties can be surmounted, and borders on panacea.

There is an unfortunate kind of Alice-in-Wonderland chatter in the booklet that causes it to lose some of its value. The sheep herding characteristics of well publicized innovation can be gleaned throughout. For example, it is stated proudly that currently in new school construction in California 20 per cent of the buildings contain nothing but open teaching space. Yet the booklet states that all teachers should not be involved in open plans and that really sophisticated open plans have an increasing amount of closed or closable space about them. Indeed—"To exclude such 'special areas' imposes a rigidity no

less undesirable than the rigidity imposed by rows of equal size classroom boxes."

The really cozy comment relates how children are color coded in one school. "These home groups are designated by the color of their chairs—red for fast-moving children reading on a fifth-grade level, yellow for students reading on a fourth-grade level and so on."

Essentially, in the open plan, floor area is substituted for walls. The rooms work well, according to the report, where the occupancy level is low. Higher density occupation of space results in distraction and interference.

The programs in these elementary schools described are organized generally as departmentalized tracks, with tight scheduling. In addition, any activities such as music, dance, or, in some cases, art demand that all classes do the same thing at the same time. It would appear that in order to get the freedom to regroup children frequently by sub-

ject and achievement level some other kinds of freedom may have to be sacrificed or more rooms with walls built.

The booklet describes several programs and buildings in enough detail to give a clear picture of how open plan schools operate. The plans are well illustrated and the photography of children in action is illuminating. Curiously, children, judging by a statistical study of the illustrations, sit on the floor more often than on chairs. The school furniture industry had better watch out.

It would appear that the chief advantage of open planning lies in bringing the teacher into closer working relations with other teachers. As in educational television, the advantage of the change is largely to the professional staff. The system allows for systematic induction of novice teachers for sharing ideas and for common planning by the teachers. The primary advantage for the children is "the freedom to move from group to group more easily."

Why Educate — and for What?

***The Genius of American Education*, by Lawrence A. Cremin (University of Pittsburgh Press, 122 pp., \$2), explores the purpose of American education and its bearing on the structure, nature, and politics of the education system. The three essays were originally prepared under the Horace Mann lectureship at the University of Pittsburgh. The reviewer is Education Consultant to the New World Foundation and SR Editor-at-Large.**

By FRANK G. JENNINGS

THE SPECIAL virtue of American education lies in its capacity to induce increasing enlightenment among the electorate. *The Genius of American Education*, by Lawrence A. Cremin, suggests that the distinctive purpose and animating spirit of our education lies in its commitment to popularization.

To make popular means, to some people, to make palatable to the greatest number of consumers some product, process or idea. To make popular also means to make as widely available as possible some product, process, or idea so that the greatest number of people will benefit and the community will be thereby enriched. It is in this latter sense that the phrase has significance for education.

The Genius of American Education is

the most important statement on our schools since the publication of Jerome S. Bruner's *Process of Education*. In fact, it provides the long-needed focus for that earlier work. Whereas Bruner discussed the "what and the how" of instruction, Cremin addresses himself to the "whys" and the "for-whats." He calls for and suggests the sources of what he describes as "a new, tough-minded progressivism that is at the same time consonant with the best in our tradition and appropriate to contemporary needs."

Cremin's purpose is frankly didactic: he examines the structure, nature, and politics of American popular education, warts and all. Fundamental to the discussion of purpose in education, as he sees it, is the answering of Herbert Spencer's nagging old questions, "What education is of most worth?" and "To what end should we educate?" As Cremin puts it, "There are no more important questions for us to be asking, and yet we have asked them neither insistently nor well in recent years." He points out that with all the new ideas about curriculum and all the new programs (and he wants more of the best of both), it will not add up to a row of wilted beans "... for Americans to quicken their pace in education if they don't know where they are going."

Professor Cremin is well qualified to raise these strictures. He is a productive and respected historian who writes philosophy better than most of the practicing philosophers of education. He knows

Plato, Whitehead, and Dewey as well as he knows the historical documents of nineteenth-century America. He writes with economy and fluency, with grace and a sense of style that is a rare delight.

He knows the tensions that develop between centralized policy-making (which can be creative and health-giving for the body politic) and centralized administration (which at the state and national level can be deadening). He is sensitive to the issues raised by Dwight Macdonald and his dour associates who see mass culture leading directly and only to the degeneration of taste.

Television soap opera, Cremin reminds us, drawing on the work of Edward Shills, is not the warped descendant of Shakespeare and the folk ballad; it has taken the place of bear-baiting and public executions. Put quite bluntly, we stink less than the eighteenth-century. We live cleaner, healthier, and generally more useful lives than any of our ancestors. And we do so in the main as a consequence of popular education. We may never develop a general public that has a taste for formal philosophy, but the basic issues of the human condition do stir our souls. We are concerned, as Plato was, about the making of The Good Society. We are persuaded that it must be the work of all of us. As Cremin puts it, "Ultimately, the case for popular education rests on the proposition that culture can be democratized without being vulgarized."

Popular education is a blend of two potent but unequal forces: the formal instruction of the schools and the informal induction into the ways of society by all the other agencies of life. The newspaper, the street gangs, the church, the family, the library, the mass media, the games that children play, the causes that people espouse, their hates, loves, and prejudices—all of these teach the child for more hours in the day and more days in his life than school can ever command.

It is a uniquely twentieth-century and specifically American notion that the school must, for the sake of order and sanity, preempt some of these informal functions. It must do this because, so runs the argument, industrialism has had a corrosive effect upon so many institutions within society that they have lost much of the salutary educational functions they once possessed.

It was John Dewey who made this analysis most tellingly and who offered as a corrective the enlarged role for the school, which he saw as "society's great instrument for shaping its own destiny."

The consequences of Dewey's decision were far-reaching: greater sophistication was brought to the uses of the school; popular education was infused with new vitality and high purpose. Cremin points out, however, that public educators, with their more sharply de-



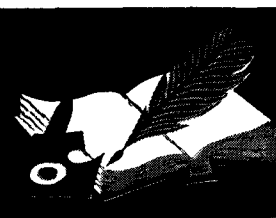
fined roles, almost completely lost sight of the agencies of informal instruction. This loss of vision and contact took place at a time when these agencies, especially the press, the film, radio, and the youth agencies, to name only the obvious few, were entering upon periods of extraordinary development. "And for years," Cremin reminds us, "Dewey's disciples continued to confuse notions of schooling the 'whole child' with nonsense about providing the whole child's education."

When one considers the range of the agencies that educate outside the school, it becomes very clear what the school is uniquely equipped to do and wherein a central purpose of education lies. It is the school's job, Cremin insists, "... to make youngsters aware of the constant bombardment of facts, opinions, and values to which they are subjected; to help them question what they see and hear; and ultimately to give them the intellectual resources they need to make judg-

ments and assess significance." And, it must be added, to act upon these judgments and deal with the consequences.

We are left, then, with the question Plato raised twenty-five centuries ago: how can we achieve the good life? There are, Cremin reminds us, prior questions. We must ask how we can build the good society. We must discover the kind of citizen who can build that society. Those questions lead us around and back to the question of the school and the making of teachers and students. For *The Genius of American Education* is concerned fundamentally with *purpose* in education. That concern makes this book immediately required reading for every school administrator, every official of government who has an assignment that relates in any way to education, every layman who has any community responsibility for the governance of our schools, and all the rest of us who would celebrate with Professor Cremin this faith: "With all its limitations, man's rationality remains his best instrument for comprehending and dealing with his experience ... men will learn to face their problems more intelligently in the future than they have in the past."

New Books



New Life for Old Schools. *Great Cities Program for School Improvement* (228 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Ill. 60601). 99 pp. Paper, \$2.50. The first report in a study of the updating of outmoded school buildings in fifteen major American cities.

The Dynamic University. By Zakir Husain. Asia Publishing House (Tappinger Publishing Company, 119 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019). 119 pp. \$4.50. A collection of addresses by the Vice President of India, examining the need for reorientating higher education to suit national needs in a developing country.

Society and Education: Readings. Edited by James Rath and Jean Dresden Grambs. Prentice-Hall, 281 pp. Paper, \$3.50. A source book for students' use in courses focusing on the sociological foundations of education.

Children Discover Reading: An Introduction to Structural Reading. By Catherine Stern and Toni Gould. Random House. 226 pp. \$6.95. De-

scribes a new method that has been tested and is being used to teach reading to very young children, including those from culturally deprived backgrounds, and to older children with reading problems.

Prescriptive Teaching. By Laurence J. Peter. McGraw-Hill. 246 pp. \$5.95. Deals with the means of achieving sound educational goals for disturbed or handicapped children; links medical, psychological, and social diagnoses in a synthesized plan for the individual child whether in the classroom or in special education.

Tradition and Change in Education: A Comparative Study. By Andreas M. Kazamias and Byron G. Massialas. Foundations of Education Series, Prentice-Hall. 182 pp. \$4.95. Aims to examine education in a variety of cultures and to point to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of comparative education.

Instructional Materials for Anti-poverty and Manpower-Training