

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Education Editor: PAUL WOODRING

Associate Education Editor: JAMES CASS



Leadership for Education

AT YEAR'S END President Johnson appointed a new U.S. Commissioner of Education to administer the burgeoning Office of Education within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He is Harold ("Doc") Howe II, a man of engaging personality who brings to his new position a wide variety of talents and experience. Since 1964 Howe has been director of the Learning Institute of North Carolina, a state-wide research agency that is seeking new means for improving policy and practice in the schools, with special emphasis on the educational problems of the disadvantaged. From 1960 to 1964 he was superintendent of schools in Scarsdale, New York, and for three years before that he was principal of the Newton (Massachusetts) High School. Previously he had been a teacher and administrator at a number of the nation's leading public and private high schools. A graduate of Yale, with an M.A. from Columbia, he is a trustee of Yale University and of Vassar College.

Long an exponent of a pragmatic approach to the problems of education, the new commissioner has never feared to advocate change when events indicated that it was necessary. In the pages of the first issue of SR's Education Supplement (Sept. 17, 1960) he warned that such serious inadequacies were then plaguing the schools that they "give rise to the prediction that, unless radical changes occur, our boys and girls will receive poorer education in 1970 than they do today." He is one of the new breed of educators who have begun to reshape the nation's educational enterprise in an effort to make sure that the dire prediction of 1960 does not come true.

As commissioner, Howe will assume the complex responsibilities relinquished by Francis Keppel as he moves up to the newly created position of Assistant Secretary for Education in the Department of HEW. In his three years as commissioner, Keppel brought to the Office of Education a combination of intellectual sophistication, political savvy, and personal style that Washington has not seen in that position for many years. The former dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Keppel has had a major hand in shaping the many new education programs of recent years, and has appeared as their most effective advocate before Congress.

Before the President appointed John Gardner to be Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare last summer (see SR, Aug. 21), it was widely believed that education would soon be elevated to cabinet rank and that Keppel would become the nation's first Secretary of Education. The significance, therefore, of his step up to assistant secretary of HEW is not entirely clear. Assistant secretaryships usually carry considerable prestige, but little real authority except when it is delegated specifically by the secretary. Keppel's years in Washington have been demanding. Crucial decisions have been made on many fronts, and he has discharged his responsibilities with great distinction, though not with unmitigated success. We hope that his new position will offer him more responsibility, and greater opportunity for service within HEW, and not merely a convenient step up—on the way out.

What does appear clear is that Secretary Gardner did not go to Washing-

EDITORIAL 57

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 58

HISTORY IS A DANGEROUS SUBJECT By Ray Allen Billington 59

THE PH.D.: NEW DEMANDS, SAME OLD RESPONSE

1. THE IMMUTABLE PH.D. By Everett Walters 62

2. THE CASE OF THE LINGERING DEGREE By Frederic W. Ness 64

PERSONAL OPINION:

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER By Anne Mitchell 66

SCHOOLS MAKE NEWS 67

ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER By Harriet H. Shoen 68

NEWS IN THE CLASSROOM By John H. Haefner 71

DE FACTO INTEGRATION IN BEL AIR By Alice M. Clark 72

BOOK REVIEW

"World Affairs Workshop," compiled and edited by the New York Times and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, reviewed by Bonnie Barrett Stretch 74

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ton to preside over the dismemberment of the sprawling department he heads. Health, education, and welfare, he believes, are so closely allied in their human objectives that the administration of their separate programs must also be closely coordinated.

It also seems clear that Gardner is attempting to organize and to staff his department to meet the vast changes that are appearing just over the educational horizon. Within the government, the quantities of educational legislation approved by the last Congress, with the massive federal funds made available to the schools at every level, would by themselves insure a revolution in the structure and the economics of education. Add to these the Civil Rights Act and the legislation initiating the War on Poverty, and the dimensions of change can be partially seen. Certainly, careful planning and administration are re-



quired to exploit this legislation so that all of its potential benefits can be realized.

But this is only part of the picture. Education has suddenly become the nation's "major growth industry," offering a commercial market that is expanding with astonishing speed as new funds, in large amounts, become available. American industry is eyeing this new market with interest, and many corporations with no previous experience in the field—IBM, Xerox, Litton Industries, and Raytheon, among others—are buying "pieces of the action." They bring to the field some of the nation's most highly qualified scientific and technical manpower, as well as other new resources, special skills, and, perhaps most important, innovative attitudes. Their interests range from new approaches to instructional materials and teacher training to radical innovations in school design. Their impact will be felt in almost every area of the education world—and in many it promises to be revolutionary.

Manifestly, if changes of this magnitude are to be understood and channeled effectively, national leadership of a high order will be required. Fortunately, Gardner, Keppel, and Howe have already displayed their capacities for bold and incisive leadership. We wish them well.

—J.C.

Letters to the Editor

Sex Education

A STANDING OVATION is in order for your editorial "What Is Sex Education?" [SR, Dec. 18].

CORLISS HARDING.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

YOUR EDITORIAL "What Is Sex Education?" was logically sound, practically without significance. Why single out sex education? Why not preparation for adulthood? Or preparation for marriage?

It is ironical that 90 per cent of the boys and girls in our high schools will marry and few receive any guidance on meaningful dating, matched traits, emotional maturing, money matters, petting, sex in a frame of everyday good relationships, contraceptives, ideal family number, how to quarrel and still love and stay married. Sex is one small piece in the whole problem. Let's fight for intelligent courses in school that prepare youth for the adventure of a happy marriage.

H. RICHARD RASMUSSEN,
Director,
University Presbyterian
Church (All-Student).

West Lafayette, Ind.

THANK YOU for raising the question about sex education. All institutions and agencies that are concerned with young people need to be working in this area.

(The Rev.) ARTHUR W. SHAW,
Pastor,
First Congregational Church.

Greenfield, Mass.

IN YOUR editorial "What Is Sex Education?" you raised the question of which teachers are qualified to teach sexual attitudes. In it you managed to give remarkably short shrift to literature's claim to have anything meaningful to say to young people. "It is doubtful," you write, "that a study of the lives and loves of Romeo and Juliet or of Antony and Cleopatra is of much direct help to a student in solving his own problems."

The problem is one of an *attitude* toward sex, an attempt to see it in its fulness—its ecstasy, its beauty, its shoddiness, its humor. It is as many things as men and women are.

May I remind you that literature encompasses not only Shakespeare, but also D. H. Lawrence, Henry James, Dostoevsky, and Salinger, all of whom have things to say about sex? Literature deals with complex people and real passions, among other things. Yes, I think *Madame Bovary*, Lawrence's *The Rainbow*, and even that remote old warhorse *Antony and Cleopatra* provide fairly adequate beginnings for a sexual education.

CAROL NIEMAN.

Berkeley, Calif.

JUST FINISHED reading your recent editorial on sex education. It was a very good statement of the issues involved in this area of concern. Your editorial policy in this regard seems very sound.

As a religious educator—an experimental job for a layman—for the Catholic Church I am also concerned about this problem. Some efforts are made within the Catholic school system to handle this area of concern, but many need to be rethought and others dropped.

The direct concern of the CCD is the Catholic student in the public school. Well over half of the Catholic students in this country attend public schools. Their sex education from the school viewpoint is, of course, one in which we are quite interested. Generally speaking, as you have so well put it, teachers are not qualified for the moral and religious or perhaps even psychological aspects of sex education. They can repeat what they have learned from their experience and training, both of which might be very limited in nature.

JOSEPH NEIMAN,
Executive Secretary,
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.
Reed City, Mich.

MANY THANKS for your editorial on sex education. This is an important and necessary opening for debate.

In it you come close to throwing up your hands concerning the role of the schools in sex education. This is somewhat disappointing—not so much that you do not have ready answers, but that the public education milieu does not yet have the confidence to permit bold and solid effort.

You will be interested to know that the National Council of Churches convened a consultation among member denominations as long ago as 1959 to take initiative in this area. Subsequently several denominations, including the Methodist Church, have begun programs and published supporting materials for them.

FRANK E. WIER,
Board of Education,
The Methodist Church.
Nashville, Tenn.

Grappling with Real Problems

HOW EXCELLENT to read the practical words of someone coming to grips with the real and world-opening problems of the high school English student in "Janus in the Classroom," by Mary Frances Claggett [SR, Dec. 18].

As an English teacher still required to assign *Silas Marner*, I share the anguish of those who know too well the impact of books like *Lord of the Flies*, or *The Fire Next Time*, or Sartre (only experienced as "outside reading")—an impact largely lost because it is impossible to discuss fully the ideas and questions raised by such books.

(Continued on page 77)