

Advice for the Brave

A Guide for School Board Members, by Gloria Dapper and Barbara Carter (Follett, 169 pp., \$2.95), is an examination of school board problems and responsibility, written especially for new board members and others who want a better understanding of the role of local school boards in American education. The reviewer is president of the board of trustees of the Unified School District, Palo Alto, California.

By AGNES C. ROBINSON

EVERY year in the United States, 50,000 newly elected members take their places on local school boards. As a rule they know little about the mechanics of their jobs and nothing about the history and philosophy of public education in this country. Consider what happened to one of them. I joined my board of five members on the first of July, 1962, and by August 10 had to accept responsibility for a \$15,000,000 budget. Within the last three years, our board has campaigned for a tax election for operating expenses; dealt with a group that opposed discussion of controversial issues in school; is currently working to pass a bond election for new buildings; struggling with merit pay for teachers; and last and most important, making daily decisions on what kind of curriculum to offer to whom under what circumstances.

A Guide for School Board Members would have been most welcome to me three years ago and should be in the hands of every incoming school board member. It starts a person off on his job by giving him a general awareness of what will be expected of him, what he ought to know, and offers an appendix, "Sources of Information," to help him further his own education. The authors are too wise to offer answers, even though the book is called a "guide," because there is no correct solution to any given problem faced by any one school board. Instead they provide information: historical, philosophical and practical. The chapter "How Did We Get Where We Are?" is historical; "What Do Our Students Learn?" involves philosophy of education; "Getting And Keeping Good Teachers" and "Dealing With The Public" are practical. The

chapter on federal aid to education is important and timely. The discussion of the board member's role and the personal characteristics that make for successful board participation are excellent.

There is one omission which concerns me. The authors state that "the schools are confronted with two major social problems—integration and automation." Later on they quote John Fischer, president of Teachers College, Columbia University, as saying: "Virtually every innovation in American schools during the coming decade will be influenced by two strong currents of change. One of these is the growing effort to improve relations between the races. The other is the increasing insistence of teachers on the right to express their views on school policy matters." While a good part of one chapter covers negotiations with teachers, there is no further discussion of automation and integration. The new school board member has to consider them. Integration is on his doorstep, and automation is waiting around the corner, about to influence every

aspect of the curriculum. If, indeed, public education is a major force for social change in this country, all school board members must concern themselves with both. The new member no longer has the proverbial first term in which to learn. Were there another chapter to this book, it might be entitled "Problems Society Expects the Schools to Solve."

Other omissions are minor. One such is mention of the new law in California, the so-called Winton Act, which provides for a negotiating council through which teachers' organizations negotiate with the Board. It has already proved useful in our district. I take issue with the authors only where they place school libraries under "auxiliary services" along with student transportation, health, attendance records, etc. To me the library is the core of the schoolhouse and the heart of any teaching problem. The cost of room and librarian is minimal in terms of value received by students.

The final chapter contains some well-chosen comments on "How Can Our Schools Be Better?" which should give both seasoned and new board members considerable pause for thought. As the authors rightly say at the beginning, school board membership is "a job for the brave"—and I must add, the well-informed. The authors cannot supply the bravery to the new board member but they make a fine contribution to his necessary fund of information.



"Nonsense!—A man of your standing has several good bankruptcies in him!"

New Books



A Community of Scholars. Edited by Frank Tannenbaum. Praeger. 177 pp. \$5. A series of essays by distinguished scholars—such as Albert Hofstadter, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Margaret Mead, among others—on the development and achievement of the Columbia “University Seminars,” which were founded by Columbia professors as a protest against the fragmentation of knowledge. The seminars bring together specialists—scholars and practitioners, from within and without the university—that they may learn from one another.

The Bible and the Schools. by William O. Douglas. Little, Brown. 65 pp. \$3.75. Justice Douglas discusses the reasoning behind the Supreme Court decisions regarding religion in the public schools.

Pickets at the Gates: The Challenge of Civil Rights in Urban Schools. By Estelle Fuchs. The Free Press (60 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011). 205 pp. Cloth, \$5.95. Paper, \$2.95. Two case studies: 1) a principal's efforts to acquaint his staff with their students' underprivileged backgrounds resulted in accusation of prejudice and demands for his dismissal; 2) the massive school boycott

against de facto segregation in New York City in 1965.

Guide to Support Programs for Education. Education Services Press (Visual Products Department, 3M Company, St. Paul, Minn.). 160 pp. \$12. A comprehensive listing of the major sources of financial assistance—the federal government, foundations, and business—from which educators can seek support for their needs regarding plant and equipment, research, development and demonstrations, and staff training. Explains who is eligible to apply, possible projects, benefits, and restrictions. Includes a section on “How to Cut Red Tape.”

Automation, Education, and Human Values. Edited by William W. Brickman and Stanley Lehrer. School and Society Books (Division of the Society for the Advancement of Education, 1860 Broadway, New York, N.Y.). 419 pp. \$7.95. A collection of essays on the effects of modern technological change on all phases of human life.

New Universities in the Modern World. Edited by Murray G. Ross. St. Martin's Press. 190 pp. \$5. Case studies of the establishment of new universities

in the United States, England, Nigeria, Australia, Canada, India, and Pakistan. Each contributor describes the origin of his university, the development of its character, staff recruitment problems, initial difficulties, subsequent changes in objectives, and what he would do differently if he could do it again.

Catholic Education: A Book of Readings. Edited by Walter B. Kolesnik and Edward J. Power. McGraw-Hill. 512 pp. Cloth, \$5.95. Paper, \$4.50. A compilation of essays, each reflecting a—not the—Catholic point of view, on problems that confront education generally and problems of particular concern to Catholic schools, parents, or teachers.

Education and Society in Tudor England. By Joan Simon. Cambridge University Press. 452 pp. \$13.50. A reassessment of English education in the Tudor period. Contrary to the accepted opinion, the author shows, important educational advances were made during this time, and the way had long been prepared for them.

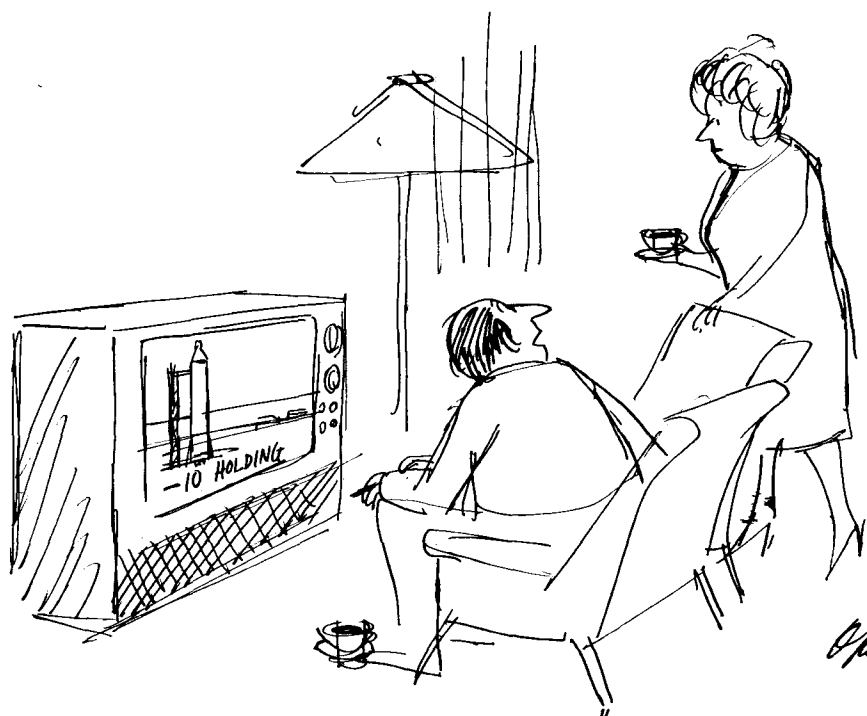
Education and Training in the Developing Countries: The Role of U.S. Foreign Aid. Edited by William Y. Elliott. Praeger. 399 pp. \$7.50. Assessments of the wide variety of American activities that comprise our role in the African-Asian-Latin American educational revolution. Includes essays by government officials, foundation executives, and educational specialists.

The University in the American Future. Edited by Thomas B. Stroup. University of Kentucky Press (Lexington, Ky.). 111 pp. \$4. Essays by Kenneth D. Benne, Sir Charles Morris, Henry Steele Commager, and Gunnar Myrdal, analyzing the tensions affecting the American university today and the forces which will shape it in the future.

Universal Higher Education. Edited by Earl J. McGrath. McGraw-Hill. 258 pp. \$5.95. Predictions on the forms and purpose of higher education in the next decade, by such authorities as Nevitt Sanford, Henry Steele Commager, Daniel Moynihan, and Harold Howe II.

Teaching the Disadvantaged. By Joseph O. Loretan and Shelley Umans. Teachers College Press (Columbia University). 242 pp. \$6.50. Discusses new curriculum approaches, and questions many entrenched notions about how to educate the disadvantaged. Written especially for principals, teachers, and others directly involved with education.

Students, Scholars, and Parents. By Stephen White. Doubleday. 143 pp. \$3.95. An exploration of the ideas behind the new math and other curriculum reform.



“Walter Cronkite is caught in a traffic jam.”