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AMERICANIZATION AS PUBLIC EDUCATION AN ADVISABLE STATE PLAN OF IMMIGRANT TRAINING

SINCE THE Americanization movement became a factor in public opinion throughout America, several states have adopted carefully planned and drafted measures for an intelligent program of Americanization under the direction of thoroughly trained teachers and directors of such activities. Training in Americanization—the study of racial background, the cultural values of old world nations and how they may be made useful in the process of training and assimilating the adult immigrant, standardized methods of teaching, social activities, etc.,—has for the last few years been a definite course of study in several eastern and midwestern universities where it has been grouped with courses in sociological instruction.

Sporadic and spasmodic activities of local invention have been found inadequate and often harmful, throughout the country, where no definite state program, properly headed, has been followed. While much commendable work has been done here and there in a few places in Oregon, a great many forms of so-called Americanization work done here had better been left undone. Too much "doctoring" of the "foreigners" has been indulged in by well-meaning people, producing anything but a beneficial reaction to the state and the nation. Much of this work furnishes the leaders of the foreign groups and the foreign language press the ammunition used in their caustic criticisms upon the Americanization movement, which is constantly under fire from these sources.

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The educational work that has been done through adult immigrant classes in the Public Night Schools of Portland, where primary, intermediate and citizenship training has been conducted and financed by the Board of Education, has advanced intelligence in citizenship, to a great extent, even if social Americanization activities have had little or no attention except what has been accomplished in this direction

through the agency of the Neighborhood House, the Hellenic-American League and through scattered denominational sources. Astoria, perhaps, has the most complete Americanization program in this state, due to the fine understanding of the immigrant people and their needs, from an educational and social angle, which Professor A. C. Strange, Superintendent of Public Education, possesses abundantly. In a few other scattered places where immigrants reside, some local work has been done, but little of the kind that has served the purpose of correct Americanization has been done in Oregon as a whole; and the alien people are yet, for the most, snatching a little information here and a little there in order to obtain their citizenship papers, which still is considered by them, as well as a large number of native Americans, to be all that is necessary to change an immigrant from his alien status to that of an American.

The intelligence some people have acquired haphazardly about the immigrant is worse than rubbish. Their patronizing air and unintelligent approach have been one of the chief sources in Oregon, as much as elsewhere, for the apparent lack of individual interest in educational facilities provided for their benefit, which to a deplorable degree has been shown by the aliens.

If Oregon is to overcome this unfortunate state of affairs and prove to the country at large that the people who live in this state have ideals and are willing to go to bat for them, that they are determined that it shall not be said of Oregon that it has no tangible interest in the higher standard of citizenship among its alien people, which America is demanding today; then the state legislative body must follow the course of procedure finally adopted in many other states and add to the educational program in Oregon a simple provision for a workable plan of Adult Immigrant Education and Americanization. The most economic and practical way to put such a