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VALUING CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AMERICANIZATION AS A STATE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

By H. J. LANGOE

THE CONFERENCE on Adult Education, held last fall at Asilomar, California, under the auspices of the State Board of Education, the State University and the State Libraries, brought out many new and interesting phases of the Americanization movement, which gradually has become one of the foremost social and educational activities in that state.

Scratching the surface is no longer acceptable to the men and women in California who have dedicated themselves to the cause of adult education. In justice to the people, and particularly the educators, in California, it may be truthfully said that they have always considered the field of Americanization, one requiring both training and intellect. When the grand army of visionary uplifters, ever ready for reform action, swooped down upon the immigrant colony to apply their transformation cure in California, as they have tried to do elsewhere, they found the teachers and leaders in education in that state already in the field, organized, and carrying on with an extensive program, backed by intelligent public opinion and public funds. It cannot be over-emphasized that by this fortunate turn of events, the foreign group leaders in California, opposing Americanization work, had to go beyond the borderlines of that state to find the much sought for causes of grief and aggravation to the foreign born—causes which unfortunately can be traced to the Americanization movement, due to the fact that for a time, radical intolerant, stupid and meddling people, without training, understanding or sympathy, have been able to use the movement—here, there and almost everywhere—to the detriment of the community, the state and the nation. California did not have to learn that haphazard Americanization work was detrimental to its standards in citizenship, as many other states have had to do. California regarded the matter at the outset of sufficient importance to proceed in a scientific manner, hence called for adequately trained leadership.

It will take a long time, in some states, to offset by trained workers the damage done by the untrained,

though invariably well-meaning volunteer, who often without knowing it has given rise to unwarranted hostility from the community of the foreign born. In many states the volunteers are still in the saddle, because the citizens at large are indifferent and almost hostile to the foreign born. Until the last ones have been removed, the foreign propaganda makers will find "timely topics" for anti-Americanization discussion in the foreign language press and in the social and fraternal organization.

To the recent California state conference on Adult Education and Americanization, at Asilomar, came the teachers from every nook and corner of the state, to tell their experiences, take notes and plan for a higher standard in their work. For two days they deliberated on this subject alone. Brief summaries, practical treatises and papers were read. Directors and field workers sat in common council. A participant writes: "Both teachers and administrators.... received an inspiration and obtained a new outlook which filled them with enthusiasm and a determination to go out and do greater things in this advanced field of public elementary education and citizenship building."

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The United American, in this issue, takes pleasure in introducing to its readers the views of some of the California teachers. Ethel Richardson, the State Supervisor of Immigrant Education, presents an excellent discussion of "The Program of Adult Education in California." Huldah Youngberg, a teacher in Oakland, discusses in a masterly way the "Social Activities in Americanization Work," citing some delightful experiences from the field. Grace MacCormack and Susie Corpstein places the Americanization night school principal in the limelight in a frank discussion headed: "Educating the Night School Principal." Both principals and supervisors in the Americanization schools, in other states, should find this article interesting, provided their minds are open to suggestion.

Marion Yeatman, directing the Americanization