til such a committee is formally established the delegates to this Conference urge the associations which they represent to take appropriate informal action to aid international exchange of ideas and information in respect to the teaching of international understanding.

IV.

Finally, this Conference urges that each one of its members aid in giving publicity to the foregoing recommendations on the teaching of international understanding. This Conference especially urges that delegates publicize the recommendations among the teachers of their respective organizations and that they take appropriate steps to encourage adoption of the recommendations by schools of their countries.

No Age Barriers To World Understanding

MARIE ANNA MEHL

Learning to know *your neighbor should not be postponed until adulthood. This learning becomes part of the child's life when he first begins to visit the folks next door. Education can do a great deal in fostering understanding and providing the experiences whereby the student can also learn about the customs, traditions, and languages of his neighbors over the sea as well as those next door. Marie Anna Mehl, elementary supervisor, Boulder City Schools, Colorado, has described an elementary social-studies program in the Boulder schools which has reorganized its courses in order to cultivate increased awareness in today's youth of our shrinking world boundaries.*

TODAY, WE CAN HEAR the voices of people thousands of miles from us telling us what they need, how they feel, and what is happening at the present time. We are not only close to each other as the result of our ability to communicate, but we live in physical proximity by reason of developments in transportation. By means of the airplane we can move within several hours to any person, to any place, or to any meeting. Thousands of hundreds who are less than twenty-four hours from us by air are depending upon us for food. We had not recovered from the shock of the news of the power of the atomic bomb when we read of the "ATOMIC POISON GAS, CAPABLE OF GREAT LETHAL QUALITIES", and the power of a possible cosmic bomb. Today, as teachers, we find ourselves alternately amazed and frustrated by the speed at which things are happening. We cast about for bearings and know that, at the very least, learning experiences and instructional materials for children *must* take cognizance of this new and amazingly real and interdependent world.

"Grass Roots" of World Understanding

We know that we are truly living in a world community and in order to be good neighbors in this world community, we must understand the peoples of the world. The "grass roots" of this understanding of a world neighborhood are in the elementary grades, beginning in the kindergarten and moving up

through the grades. We must help elementary children develop understandings between themselves and other persons in the home, in the neighborhood, in school and in the wider community which reaches around the globe—be that person a playmate, a doctor, a bricklayer, a business man, or a tourist from Argentina.

Since world citizens must value activities and beliefs of an individual in the light of his culture and not in the light of his color, race, class, or creed, it is important that the "grass roots" of cultural understandings be started early in the elementary grades. In order to have children understand, appreciate, and judge behavior patterns of minority groups in our state, they must study the culture of those groups. In Colorado, the Spanish-speaking people are the majority of the minority groups. Therefore, Colorado's children should have an understanding of the Spanish culture which can be presented by studying the native life of people in Mexico. They must realize how these facts relate directly to problems of living in the new environment, so familiar to them, so new to many of their neighbors.

The "grass roots" of realism related to economic interdependence and to the fact that the people of the world must grow in economic cooperation must also be seeded down in the intermediate grades. Some of the "Haves" in the world's supply of grain are the United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Burma, Siam, and Russia; and some of the "Have Nots" are the Middle East, Central Europe, parts of Latin America, New Zealand, the Indian Ocean area, and South Africa. Since grains are the source of several basic foods, the preceding facts definitely show that some of our neighbors are depending upon us and the other "Haves" for food. In the light of this one fact, we cannot help seeing that the people of this "One World" are interdependent in the satisfying of their needs.

Because of the housing shortage, we are very conscious of the fact that it is difficult to get lumber. In 1620 our virgin forests covered 822 million acres. In 1945, they had shrunk to less than 100 million acres. Forest fires are rapidly destroying the woodlands. In 1942, 208,000 forest fires burned an area as large as New York State which has an area of 31,728,640 acres. In contrast, Russia's timber supply is greater than that of any other nation. In the near future, will Russia be the "Have" nation in lumber resources and the United States the "Have Not" nation?

Another understanding which should be rooted in the elementary grades is the fact that civilization has advanced slowly from a primitive state of existence to many kinds of cultures and governments, and that man has met his basic needs by exercising control over his physical environment. This means, then, that the physical characteristics of regions and places must be studied in the light of how people made use of their natural resources in order to live comfortably. Through time-saving inventions, people had more time to devote to other pursuits, such as picture-writing, beautifying their needed utensils for food, and entertaining by telling interesting experiences of the day. In this way, by each man making his contributions, the human race has made progress.

Teachers See the Point of Attack

With conditions, limitations, and

problems like these in mind, the Boulder teachers set out to re-evaluate and to reorganize the social studies programs. For the past three years members of the elementary school staff of Boulder, Colorado, had been engaged in curriculum building. During this period much had been accomplished in arithmetic and language. When school opened in the fall of 1945, consensus of teachers was that the curriculum project for the year should be in the field of the social studies, since units of work and statements of purposes did not follow the needs of the age in which we are living. Teachers also felt the need of reorienting themselves in this new age.

Curriculum building in Boulder is a cooperative program. The superintendent, principals, supervisor, and teachers work together, each individual serving in the capacity in which he can make the best contributions. It has been the policy to have a coordinating committee, which is composed of teachers, selected by the administrative staff consisting of superintendent, supervisor, and principals. Every grade and every elementary school has a representative on this committee. The supervisor is chairman of the coordinating committee which also serves as a vertical committee whose function it is to develop scope and sequence of areas and units of work. Members of this committee automatically become chairmen of horizontal committees which may represent the grades or the buildings. These committees function during the school year in teachers' "out-of-school time." The program is flexible and can be adapted to current conditions and immediate needs.

The underlying principles which the social studies committee set up as their guide are:

1. To make the planning of the Social Studies serve as an educational experience.
2. To use any person who can make a contribution in helping to clear issues.
3. To increase the powers of children to learn through participating in developing Units of Work within specified Major Areas and Optional Areas.
4. To aid teachers in locating source materials.

Thinking Is Clarified

The first activity of the committee was to clarify its own thinking in terms of the New Age through reading and discussions. Next, all teachers were requested to submit to the committee their point of view pertaining to changes needed in social studies in the light of the interests and needs of children living approximately in the second half of the twentieth century. Then, with this information the committee proceeded to set up general objectives in terms of behavior patterns under the following major topics: basic understandings, appreciations to be developed, attitudes to be developed, habits and skills. Following this, definite areas of work with specific units within each area were worked out for each grade, thus making possible a continuity in the learning process. This report was then presented for an evaluation to non-committee teachers, who in turn made recommendations to the coordinating committee which again re-evaluated the Areas of Work.

Kindergarten Is the Starting Point

The way in which Boulder Public Schools hope to lay a foundation for world understanding is to begin in the

kindergarten. Since attitudes and appreciations developed during these years are changed rarely, it behooves us to take advantage of these years. Many understandings and attitudes which can be developed in child society will fit also the adult's understandings and attitudes needed to live peacefully in "One World." However, we must remember that children must live according to the value patterns of their own age and as the child advances from one level to the next the understandings will take on deeper meanings.

The child entering the kindergarten comes from a world of his immediate family and therefore his concept of the world in which he lives is often quite narrow. In meeting forty other children, he loses the peculiar position which up to this time he has held in the family. Now a social consciousness is emerging and he increasingly realizes that he must learn to live peacefully in a larger group. He must take his turn, he must learn to wait, he must learn to lose if his loss will benefit the group. He also must learn to feel as other children feel. He learns that the needs of other children are as important as his own needs. He also discovers that there are many differences among children—some move slowly, some go to church on Sunday and others on Saturday. In games he must cooperate and he looks upon his playmates as friends. In developing these characteristics of group living, many short elaborations of interest which arise in the group are used. For example, the playhouse may become a center of interest which may continue informally throughout the year, but it should be simple enough to allow the imagination to function in its use. Group interests may also suggest excursions or group discussions, both in and outside the building, or on and off the school ground. All experiences should be flexible enough to meet the needs of each child as he learns to live with others in a group.

Since the approach to world understanding is also emotional, we must place children in situations in which they can come to some understanding of how others will feel. The kindergarten child who said, "I know that the little Chinese boy who is wearing my underwear is happy, because it made me feel so good," was well on the way to understanding the interdependence of man in satisfying his physical needs.

In the primary grades the basic understandings are developed by presenting problems related to food, shelter, clothing. The concept of cooperation is clarified by developing the understanding that members of the family work together in meeting their needs; father earns the money; father and mother buy the supplies; mother prepares the meals. By learning how the resources of our community are used, children will understand that we must depend upon each other to satisfy our needs. The milkman brings the milk to our doorstep; the poultry dealer provides us with eggs; the farmer raises our vegetables and grains for flour and cereals. This idea of interdependence is broadened when children learn that in providing shelter, the needed supplies are secured from lumber yards, hardware stores, and furniture stores, and that in turn our business men must get these materials from forests, mines, and factories.

Industries Are Worldwide

The concepts of interdependence and cooperation take on a deeper and wider

meaning in the intermediate grades by the study of industries which help supply man's needs the world over. For example, one of these industries is "wheat." Since the United States is one of the "Haves" in the world supply of this grain, many peoples depend on us for this product. The content of the "Wheat Unit" will be taken from many sources—books, bulletins, newspapers, and various types of audio-visual aids. Through the radio, newspapers, and magazines children will be in touch with facts of the day and can follow with keen interest the product to its destination.

This fall the children in Boulder will learn that droughts have reduced wheat crops in several of the world's "Haves" —Australia, Argentina, North Africa, and South Africa—and that even though the United States has had a good harvest, the Department of Agriculture states that in the United States not more than 250 million bushels will be available for foreign countries, which is 150 million bushels less than in the year 1945-46. In India, due to drought, crop failure was between 6 and 7 million tons of food grains, which, in addition to the normal deficit of 10 million tons points to the fact that many people in India will starve if wheat cannot be imported from some country. China and the Balkans have been hit by drought also.

After discussing the problems stated and many others not mentioned, intermediate grade children who are emotionally sensitized to the needs of others should understand and appreciate the fact that people in the wider community, or the world, are as interdependent as people in the smaller communities; that in order for all to survive, it is imperative that everyone in our "One World" cooperate in meeting the needs of all peoples.

The concept that civilization grew slowly and was advanced by individuals making a contribution to the common cause is developed in the sixth grade. By studying the growth of primitive peoples and the contributions made by Old World civilization as they advanced from one period to the next, children will learn to appreciate the reasons for different cultural backgrounds of the peoples of the world. They will also learn that man progressed because of his ability to use the natural resources of his environment. Another fact to be noted is that all civilizations and cultures did not survive, but because of some weakness lost their identity by being conquered by another people. From these facts, children should note that it cannot be taken for granted that our civilization is permanent, that if we are to survive, every individual must make material contributions toward that end. The struggle of the development of a democracy also must be presented to the children so that there will be a deeper understanding and greater appreciation for our form of government.

Children must leave our elementary schools as *active, cooperative producers* in the groups to which they belong. They must have personalities which are attuned to the needs of those within their group and to the needs of the wider world group. They must be able to evaluate all peoples in the light of their cultural patterns. They must understand that people of the world are interdependent and that all must grow in economic cooperation. They must be actively aware of the part they must play in the "One World" in which they are living.

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