

which are the basis for physical fitness throughout the rest of life. Periodic surveys of the health of Columbia College alumni as compared with men who have enjoyed comparable education in other colleges might be useful in improving the college health program. Again, intellectual development of alumni of these colleges might be evaluated through surveys of their reading interests, levels, and critical ability. Unless a substantial proportion of the alumni have grown in these and other respects such as civic responsibility during a ten- or twenty-year period following graduation, the college can claim little credit as an educational institution.

The alumni do not enter the picture in either of these plans under review. They are, however, one key to the problem of evaluation of the worth of the college to society. Granting that this is an enormous, complicated, and expensive job and one which will not yield completely to scientific methods, some attempt certainly should be made by at least a few pioneer colleges and universities, perhaps with the help of funds from research foundations, to test the social worth of their product, not only on commencement day, but on the day of judgment. In this way the results of education can be measured.—Neil C. Van Deusen.

Controversies in Education

Education for Modern Man. By Sidney Hook.

New York, Dial Press, 1946. xiv, 237p.

Education may have few certainties but it has many controversies. Sidney Hook is one protagonist in the current controversy between the progressive school of thought, which has been entrenched in educational theory for some time, and the heritage or common discipline school of thought, which bids fair to dislodge the defenders. A disciple of John Dewey, Mr. Hook is on the progressive side.

The contribution of *Education for Modern Man* can be more readily appraised against some notion of the issue itself. Both contending groups seek by and large the same educational objective of high intellectual competence. One group, the challenger, stresses a central core of recurring problems and permanent values. It believes that critical examination of our heritage and of what great men have said about essential human problems will lead to the desired competence. And it holds further that all persons should be subjected to this common discipline. The second and more established group, which Mr. Hook defends, stresses the immediacy of problems and the pragmatic nature of values. It believes that emphasis upon the current scene will lead to the desired competence. And because men differ in their capacities and potentialities, it favors individualized programs of study.

The issue is clearer in theory than in practice and clearer in the accusations than in

the professions of faith of the protagonists. Most schools fall somewhere between the two extremes. Most educational theories contain some elements from both sides of the argument; Mr. Hook, for example, specifies study of the past among his content of instruction and recommends attention to the natural sciences by all students. The issue is really sharp only when one reads what the opponents on each side claim the other side stands for.

The controversy might be termed "The Battle of the Books." Perhaps when all the epigrams and recriminations are removed, it comes down to a question of whether *Mein Kampf* or *The Prince* is better suited to fostering an understanding of totalitarianism. The current controversy in education is partly a problem in book selection, a problem not unfamiliar to librarians.

Mr. Hook, following the prescription of polemic writing, divides his attention between demolishing his opponents and pressing his own views. He is most incisive in the role of critic. The "stupendous and dangerous ambiguity" of Meiklejohn, the "atrocious logic" of Robert Hutchins, the "recognizable absurdity" of Mark Van Doren are demonstrated. Judging from Mr. Hook's adjectives, his opponents are hardly worth his mettle. Yet he returns again and again to the fray, with all the fury of a fox terrier demolishing a rag doll.

Mr. Hook's criticisms would cast greater illumination if they had more light and less heat. His particular obsession is the program

of St. John's College which is based upon some hundred odd "great" books. He persists in treating the books as ends in themselves—"old material," "the past for the sake of the past"—rather than as means as claimed by their users, and he disregards the examination of the books in discussions which are quite likely to begin with a relevant question based on last night's newspaper. The great books program may be a mistaken means to the end in mind; it may be a means not suited to college students. But the repeated charge that it is a burying in the past reveals only a historical knowledge of the books and only a superficial knowledge of the program, and advances the discussion not one whit.

The opposition to new currents in *Education for Modern Man* does not mean that the book defends the status quo. Mr. Hook's scorn of present education is exceeded only by his scorn of those who are trying to do something about it. He calls for a return to the tenets of progressive theory, which he claims have seldom been widely and wisely applied. Those who associate progressive

education with complete freedom in education will be surprised at many elements in this application of the Dewey position.

The content of education should be "... selected materials from the fields of mathematics and the natural sciences, social studies, including history, language and literature, philosophy and logic, art and music." It should be taught by a controlled critical or scientific method. It should be aimed simultaneously at vocational and liberal education. The aim is set, the content prescribed, the method rigorous. Freedom of choice and adjustment to individual differences are to occur only within this framework. Mr. Hook in this volume has really adopted a middle ground, and from this stems whatever contribution he has made.

Education for Modern Man is by turn eloquent and turgid, balanced and intolerant, satisfying and aggravating. It has within it a positive program of modern education. I suspect that it will go down more as a tirade against one school of thought than as a contribution to the other.—Lowell Martin.

Responsibilities in Higher Education

Proceedings, 1945: Emergent Responsibilities in Higher Education. Institute for Administrative Officers of Higher Institutions. Compiled and edited by John Dale Russell with the assistance of Donald M. Mackenzie. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946. 142p.

The twenty-third Institute for Administrative Officers of Higher Institutions continues the series of contemporary inquiries into the status of undergraduate instruction begun in 1923. Many of the earlier volumes were devoted to particular academic issues, such as the training of college teachers or tests and measurements, and drew their value from the wealth of expert knowledge brought to bear on a specific problem. The present volume follows a pattern begun in 1937 with *Current Issues in Higher Education* and continued with such titles as *New Frontiers in Collegiate Instruction* and *Higher Education in the Postwar Period*. These are admirable subjects all, and quite proper material for an institute, but the very broad scope of the subject inevitably brings with it a thinness of

treatment which makes *Emergent Responsibilities in Higher Education* a high-sounding title which its eleven papers can hardly be expected to approach.

One quickly discovers that the "emergent responsibilities" have been present all of the time, that they are indeed the same ones meant or implied by "Current Issues" and "New Frontiers." The institute appears to have become a tradition; it must be held each year; and a program must be put together. Headlines of the commercial and educational press are scanned, a list of "emergent responsibilities" is made, and individuals are drafted to prepare the necessary papers to be given at the institute. So far, so good. All of this is right and proper. Administrators ought to meet once a year to thrash out the new and puzzling ramifications of their old problems. But before publication of that thrashing about is authorized, it should be fairly certain that all of the commotion has produced something more than a classroom presentation of seminar assignments. If the individual papers are good they can find adequate space in the