

EDITORIAL

The substance of the articles which make up the main body of this issue are in most instances clearly indicated by the titles to which the authors formally address themselves. It turns out, however, that questions of educational opportunity are common to all. The Editorial Committee had no intention of developing this, the second issue of the Journal, on a theme basis. But it is impressed by the number and quality of manuscripts related to the subject of educational opportunity, and can only interpret the situation as indicative of strong general interest and concern.

It is scarcely more than a hundred years since Horace Mann, in his Tenth Annual Report as Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, issued an historic proclamation:

I believe in the existence of a great, immortal, immutable principle of natural law, or natural ethics — a principle antecedent to all human institutions, and incapable of being abrogated by any ordinance of man; a principle . . . which proves the absolute right to an education of every human being that comes into the world; and which, of course, proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all.

This proclamation was, of course, in ideal terms. In many parts of the globe it is far from fulfilled. Over a great deal of it, however, it has been fulfilled to a degree that would have amazed Horace Mann. (Would he have been equally gratified by the quality and direction of modern public education?) In this country and throughout most of the western world public elementary and secondary education are free. University education is available to a degree undreamt of even a decade ago. Intermediate kinds of education, and adult and continuing education are being developed at varying rates.

What are some of the implications of all this?

Thomas explores not only the characteristics of, but some of the problems and opportunities inherent in the contrasting roles of studentship and membership. Clark points up the varied problems that arise in contemporary society when the availability of higher education, and hence of power and prestige, is unevenly distributed amongst our population. Friedman traces the development of the "cultural deprivation" concept, and its impact on school systems. Lawson enlarges our perspective with an account of recent efforts in West Germany to adapt school organization to new aspirations and needs. And Wees, in a completely different way, wonders whether we are indeed doing in schools those things without which educational opportunity may be worthless or indeed pernicious.

It may be useful to recall that Vandenberg, under the heading of "Ideology and Educational Policy" in our first issue, dealt at length with grouping as an aspect of educational opportunity.

Systematically or sporadically, intentionally or otherwise, we will be continuing this theme in subsequent issues. Indeed it is difficult to think about matters of public education without, almost by definition, thinking of educational opportunity.