

NEW HORIZONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

In November the Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education will be making its report for consideration by the next session of Congress. After spending two days with the Panel's staff and others who have met with the Panel or its staff, I am convinced that this report could be epoch-making. The report is likely to recommend much larger national funds and the removal of many restrictions which have hampered the development of education for useful employment. The recommendations are likely to be shaped toward favorable consideration by the Congress and the administration.

How are the recommendations of the Panel going to affect teacher education in agriculture? Two probable recommendations would have great influence: (1) the provision of substantial funds for research, development, and evaluation in agricultural education to be spent on a contractual basis by the universities and the state departments of education, and (2) the implementation of the Panel's great concern about personnel and leadership for vocational education. National funds for research, development, and evaluation would stimulate additional spending for these purposes by states and universities and would add to the structures of our university departments of agricultural education a dimension now almost lacking, as important in my opinion as the pre-service education of teachers, which used to consume our full-time.

The Panel has been surprised and concerned that, after 45 years of national aid, only 57 per cent of the rural communities of the country are served by vocational agriculture. It will try to provide the conditions which will make possible service to the remaining 43 per cent. If it should succeed, there would be demand for more teachers at a time when we have a shortage.

The Panel's feeling of need for better trained leadership in the field also has tremendous implications for us. It implies training more advanced and broad than we have been giving teachers, teacher educators, and supervisors. Our present arrangements provide reimbursement only for pre-service and in-service education, interpreted to end with the master's degree. It is to be hoped that new arrangements would encourage doctoral programs and useful in-service programs for those who have received the master's degree, but do not wish to pursue doctoral programs. The recommendations may make the national center for research and training effective but, more important, it may strengthen research and advanced training in nearly all teacher-training departments. The following very practical questions regarding the Panel's report face teacher educators in agriculture:

1. Are we preparing ourselves to react to the report when it appears and to give effective support to recommendations we can approve which affect us?
2. Are we preparing to use substantial, additional funds which might come to us, perhaps in the fiscal year 1962-63?
3. If the Panel's recommendations are good, why haven't we been doing more about getting them into effect in the states? Do we have to wait for national government to act? If the recommendations are good, but the national government does nothing about them, can we achieve a part or all of the ends that should be sought through actions by our states and our teacher-training institutions?

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