Preparing for Citizenship

— — Education is More than Training

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Persons at that—who have raised loud voices against more education for youth. They proclaim great fears of an "educated proletariat". They seem to think that if a farmer reads too much he will become dissatisfied with being a farmer. Or a brick-mason might learn too much about the constitution and object to the police breaking into his home without a legal warrant. They are afraid that too many people might become interested in government and demand to know where the taxes are going.

In short, these persons fear that the less privileged classes will demand more privileges.

This is exactly the same attitude that the master takes toward the training of a slave. He does not want to teach the slave too much for fear he might become dissatisfied with slavery.

A woman, who runs a small textile factory near Garmisch, was asked recently how long it took to train her workers. She said that they normally served four years' apprenticeship. But she complained bitterly that more years in school would deprive her of young workers. Thus her only thought about better education was that she would lose some cheap labor.

Fortunately there have been a large group of progressive educators in Bavaria who reject this type of medieval thinking. They believe that all youth, rich or poor, must have better and broader education.

For many months they have been working in a series of committees to expand and improve education in Bavaria. They have drafted plans for improving vocational and professional training. New courses in education for citizenship have been drawn up. New teaching methods have been developed.

This progressive group, which has drawn on the services of teachers from all over Bavaria, is now submitting its plans to the Bavarian Education Ministry and the legislature. They will become a basis for the new standards and direction of education in Bavaria.

One very important study of this group has been their consideration of new teaching methods. The old role of the teacher as a drill sergeant, ruling his class with a hickory stick, must be banished forever. The teacher must not bombard the pupils with facts to be committed to memory. The teacher should guide the students to knowledge. He should impart information and encourage his pupils to discuss it, to ask questions, to form their own opinions.

I remember once visiting a Bavarian school. The children sat rigid with hands clasped. They did not move a muscle. To relieve the tension I asked them to sing me a song. It took some persuasion to make them do so. This may not have been a typical situation but I consider this the wrong attitude to be developed in a schoolroom. The children should not be afraid of adults. They should be respectful, but they should also be inquisitive.

Youth must develop active minds, eager to ask questions and expectant of fair answers. In other words, the young people today must be educated to think for themselves. They should be taught to respect the other man's opinion, but not be required to accept it.

Publication Resumes

The return of religious freedom to the Western Zones of Germany was pointed up with the revival of "Der Rosenkranz" (The Rosary) in Limburg, Hesse. "Der Rosenkranz," which will appear monthly in an edition of 100,000 copies, is a Catholic periodical which was prohibited by the Propaganda Ministry during the Nazi regime.