

in which the towns have grown up. They are local people, heavily dependent upon the wages they earn, for whom subsistence agriculture is either unattractive or impossible. For migrant workers, of course, wages are a supplement to farm income.

This is a pattern which, with substantial variations, is familiar elsewhere in Africa and in parts of Asia as well. The special merit of Elkan's work is that he questioned the usual assumption that short-term migration is essentially a transitional factor. He concludes that there are some decidedly positive advantages to migrant labor and that it is likely to persist.

Elkan provides the reader with a brief statement of his problem and with a summary description of Uganda, before proceeding to his more detailed discussion. The main part of the book provides a carefully drawn account of labor patterns: where and under what circumstances people are employed, variations in skill and in wages, the place of trade unions, the problem of labor efficiency, and the ways in which management enters into the picture. Since the employees are primarily Africans and the employers are ordinarily either Europeans or Asians, discussion of the former is most detailed.

Elkan draws useful comparisons with past and present English experience wherever possible and thereby highlights his own account. His writing is lucid, points which might be obscure to the nonspecialist are usually explained, and the implications for areas other than economics are often indicated. This book should appeal to—and be read by—a very wide audience.

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Schools in Focus

The Schools. Martin Mayer. Harper, New York, 1961. xviii + 446 pp. \$4.95.

"Why another book about the nation's schools?" Some hard-pressed educators may add, "And why one by an outsider?" There has been so much analysis, comparison, attack, and defense in other recent volumes, what more is there to say?

One need read only a few pages of

The Schools to find that these are the wrong questions. Let the author himself explain:

"It was because I had some sense of the unreality of the 'great controversy' in education that I wanted to write this book. . . . The critic shouts that the schools are lazy and the educators fools; the educator shouts back that the critics are reactionaries and their criticisms are ignorant. . . .

"What follows is the result of some thirty months of observing, interviewing, reading and (briefly) teaching. The work has taken me as far east as Helsinki and as far west as San Francisco. I have visited about 150 schools and spoken privately with more than fifteen hundred people involved in one way or another with the education of the young. I have read forty or fifty linear feet of books and an uncounted weight of periodical literature. I would not say that my preparation was sufficient, but six thousand pages of notes are all the file will hold; and there comes a time when a man who writes for a living must sit down and write his book.

"The effort throughout has been to get at the realities of education, to cut below the controversy to the problems as they present themselves inside schools both in the United States and in some countries of Western Europe. Shortly after undertaking the job, I spent three months attempting to find and remove my own biases on this subject, so that I might enter the schools with as neutral a view as I could achieve."

From this neutral, reporter's background Mayer has produced a book that rates an A for reading by teachers, school administrators, critics, or parents. With sympathetic understanding instead of passion, in clear vivid English instead of jargon, with frequent specific examples, he describes the nation's schools, what they are like, how varied they are, how they became the way they are, the standards of quality expected, the preparation of teachers, the examination system and the uses of intelligence and other standardized tests, the teaching of different levels from kindergarten through senior high school, and the teaching of the native tongue, mathematics, science, the social studies, and foreign languages.

In all of this, Mayer's objective is to describe and analyze rather than to praise or blame or preach. He analyzes with skill, gives enough of the history of current problems to provide background, and intersperses illuminating

vignettes from classroom observation in European and American schools. He contrasts some of the exciting and imaginative things being done in some schools with the dull and dreary work going on in others.

Two ideas emerge with special clarity. Neither is new, but both have been buried in much of the shriller writing. One is that the schools are extremely varied; they cover the whole range from indefensibly stupid to exceedingly good. The other is that slowly, gradually, but cumulatively, the schools improve. But if this conclusion is hopeful, it is also sober. Improvement requires better teachers, better preparation of teachers, better teaching materials, better understanding and support on the part of school board and society. The excellence of many schools indicates that we know how to improve others, but, in Mayer's words, "the damnable difficulty is that all those connected with schools insist on behaving like people."

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Miscellaneous Publications

(Inquiries concerning these publications should be addressed not to Science, but to the publisher or agency sponsoring the publication.)

Atomic Energy Levels in Crystals. National Bureau of Standards Monograph 19. John L. Prather. 88 pp. \$0.60 (order from Supt. of Documents, GPO, Washington 25).

Agricultural Research Council Radiobiological Laboratory Report. No. 4. "Strontium 90 in milk and agricultural materials in the United Kingdom, 1959-1960." Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1961. 94 pp. \$0.95 (order from British Information Services, 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20).

Food and Nutrition Council of Greater New York. "Selected films and filmstrips on food and nutrition." Columbia Univ., New York, 1961. 85 pp.

National Science Foundation. "Investing in scientific progress. Concepts, goals and projections." The Foundation, Washington 25, 1961. 30 pp.

A Systematic Laboratory Course in General Chemistry. Harry H. Sisler, Jay J. Stewart, and W. T. Lippincott. Macmillan, New York, ed. 2, 1961. 358 pp. \$4.

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. TID-12439. "Bioenvironmental features of the Ogotoruk Creek area, Cape Thompson, Alaska." A first summary by the Committee on Environmental Studies for Project Chariot. Division of Biology and Medicine, 1960. 76 pp. \$1 (order from Office of Technical Services, Department of Commerce, Washington 25). "SL-1 accident." AEC Investigation Board Report. 1961. 183 pp. \$0.55 (order from Supt. of Documents, GPO, Washington 25).