

others and themselves, (v) aggressiveness, determination to get ahead no matter what happens, (vi) driving too fast for traffic conditions. The tendency to blame the manufacturers, aside from the socialistic implications of the federal government, represents a tendency in nearly all walks of life for people to blame external things for their own shortcomings. There is a greatly increasing tendency to abhor the acceptance of personal responsibility.

If the manufacturers ever contrived to build a car safe enough for all of the nuts on the road, it would look like a tank and cost like one. It is almost as though the flying public were to demand that passenger-carrying aircraft be designed and built to withstand any kind of crash from any altitude. Anyone who has driven cars for the past 45 years, as I have, will, I think, agree that through the years cars have become progressively safer. Anyone who has seen the wooden wheels of a Model T catch fire coming down Laurel Mountain will agree to this. In fact, it is to be wondered how enough people survived the earlier cars to nurture the automotive industry to its present state.

So please! Let's have more science in *Science* and less politics.

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Grants and Copyrights

The U.S. Office of Education has recently ruled that materials produced by its grantees are not to be copyrighted but are to be placed in the public domain. Although the clear intent of the regulation is to serve the public interest, it appears likely that, in practice, it will have the opposite effect.

What are the probable effects of this new regulation on the future production and dissemination of curriculum materials similar to those, for example, prepared recently by the secondary school science projects in biology, chemistry, geology, and physics, which have been quite widely regarded as of great public value? (I am not concerned here with the effect of the regulation on studies of primarily technical or academic interest.) If a USOE grantee were to produce a manuscript for a good chemistry textbook that could not be copyrighted, the reaction of the major textbook publishers would

be, I believe, generally negative. An ethical publisher might acknowledge the excellence of the new text and might recognize how satisfactorily it could supplement his line of textbooks. But he would realize that the same materials could also be published by any other publisher, with or without change, and perhaps more rapidly and cheaply. Thus, he might well decide that his necessarily extensive investment in such a book, for careful editing, preparation of illustrations, training of salesmen, national advertising, and printing and distribution, would place him at a competitive disadvantage with respect to other publishers who might use the same materials with a minimum investment. It appears probable that contemporary public-domain materials would be ignored by the more substantial publishers who have full facilities for national distribution, and might even be considered too risky by virtually all publishers.

But there is a more fundamental consideration. Such materials as these do not emerge simply as the result of a grant; they depend also on the creative efforts of scholars and writers. They have an intellectual as well as a fiscal component. Surely the traditional rights of an author should not be summarily discarded simply because his work promises to be of public benefit and has therefore been judged worthy of support from public funds.

The director of a curriculum project supported by the Office of Education may find it difficult to recruit writers who are seriously interested in producing new curriculum materials for our schools, if they are aware of the possible effects of the public domain policy on their efforts. They would realize that their materials might never be published and made available for use in the schools; that their carefully devised themes and logical presentations could be altered at will by editors and publishers; that they might be completely excluded from the opportunity to revise their original ideas on the basis of actual use in the schools. . . .

It seems clear to me that the public domain policy of the Office of Education requires further study. Execution of the policy should be postponed until it is abundantly clear that it is not contrary to the public interest.

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