

1256 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS

States. Perhaps you will even learn that Maine's largest city, Portland, has a population of 72,000.

When you turn to the 1960 Census you find that in that year 22.8 percent of all Maine families had incomes under \$3,000. A further breakdown of that figure reveals that 40.5 percent of farm families were under the \$3,000 income level. In 1964, the U.S. Office of Education ranked Maine lowest among the states in the percentage of high school graduates going on to higher education, only 31 percent of whom do so. The educational statistics of the State reveal that, in 1960, the median level of schooling for the adult population was 11 years, and that the dropout rate in high school from 1961 to 1965 was 40 percent. The staff of the University of Maine Project to Train Auxiliary School Personnel offered as partial explanation for this revealing statistics, the fact that Maine has an abundance of tiny secondary schools which are unable to provide either a varied or stimulating curriculum, or even a curriculum which would prepare students to compete on the college level with graduates of better high schools in Maine and elsewhere. Further the staff noted that many teachers living in rural areas, in daily contact with rural poverty, do not, themselves, recognize the extent to which this poverty is a blocking factor in a pupil's ability or willingness to benefit from the learning-teaching process.

In recent years both emphasis and urgency have been given to the war on poverty in large cities where privation is immediately visible and threatening to the welfare of the entire society. The University of Maine, in its proposal to sponsor an institute to prepare auxiliary personnel for a role in education, said, "The plight of rural disadvantaged Americans, while less visible, is no less compelling of concern."

In 1965, The University conducted an institute on the needs of rural disadvantaged youth in Maine and the success of that institute confirmed the staff's initial judgment that "continuing attention is needed to solve the problems of rural education."

The University was able to provide that "continuing attention" in the present project, with funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity, in conjunction with an NDEA Institute for Advanced Study for Teachers of Disadvantaged Youth.

The primary objective of the project was to prepare auxiliary personnel to participate in the learning-teaching process in such a way as to make a genuine education contribution while offering the possibility of meaningful employment for welfare recipients. Speaking of other significant goals, the proposal continues, "An exploratory program of this type has goals beyond the training of 30 teacher-aides to assume already defined roles in the educational hierarchy. The role of the teacher-aide is really in the process of definition." The staff also believed that such a program, if successful, would produce shifts in the teacher's and the auxiliary's self-perception.

It was, therefore, proposed to incorporate in the program the study of possible self-perception shifts. This was particularly appropriate since mothers receiving Aid to Dependent Children were to participate as auxiliaries. The stereotyped notion of a person "on welfare" had had an impact on the self-image of these mothers.

The project base was an Orono (Maine) public high school which serves as the practicum school for the College of Education at the University of Maine. All the activities of the Institute were conducted at this school except for the audio-visual workshop for the auxiliaries. This component was held on the University campus because of the problems involved in transporting equipment.

To assist in planning the program, superintendents and principals whose teachers were attending the NDEA Institute were consulted by the project staff prior to the beginning of the program at the University. The Maine Department of Health and Welfare was invited to help plan selection criteria and recruitment procedures because the focus was to be on recruiting recipients of Aid for Dependent Children. The Maine Teachers Association (MTA) was also involved in the planning, and assisted in publicizing and supporting the program. The executive secretary of the MTA, who had one time served as a staff member of the Office of Economic Opportunity, served as a consultant to the program.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Thirty teachers, between the ages of 26 and 58, participated in the program as enrollees in an NDEA Institute for Teachers of Disadvantaged Youth. These teachers were recruited through the Maine Teachers Association and the prin-