

VII

TEACHING CITIZENSHIP IN A
DEMOCRACY

Better citizenship has long been a purpose in the education of the American child. The accomplishment of this purpose, however, is still presenting its difficulties to educators. These difficulties are due largely to the complex and apparently contradictory developments in our civic and political systems. We are citizens of the community in which we live, be it rural or urban; we are citizens of the state in which we claim residence and from whom we receive the right of suffrage; and we are citizens of the nation to which we owe allegiance and obedience. The policy of our statesmen has been to separate these three branches of government as much as possible, giving to each branch the right to deal directly with the citizen. On the other hand, our politicians in zeal for party organization and party success make the state a sub-division of the nation, and the community a sub-division of the state. Small wonder the teaching of citizenship and government presents its difficulties.

To teach citizenship effectively we must do more than present the mere facts and theories of government. We must create in the pupil a personal interest in his government, must make him feel and believe he is a part of his government and bears his individual responsibility for its failure and successes. We may introduce the idea of government and instill the germ of responsible citizenship in the lower grades without the use of textbook, but in the upper grades and high school a textbook is a most valuable asset, if not a necessity.

A book to be of value in the school room must not only contain material of real worth, but it must be both readable for the pupil and teachable for the teacher. We have had at various times in the past, and still have in a few instances, books in use in our schools which possess neither of these qualities, and consequently the results accomplished have been discouraging. However, conditions have changed within recent years, due to the influence of the World War and a more complete realization of the need for better citizen-

ship, so that today we have a number of textbooks which are real acquisitions to the educational libraries of our schools. The purpose of this article is to summarize and evaluate some of the more important of these books.¹

All of these books have been published during the past year and deal with government and citizenship in the light of present day conditions and developments. Only such books should be used as textbooks. In addition, the illustrations have been carefully selected, depicting recent events and emphasizing essential and noteworthy incidents and objects. This is particularly true of the three books by R. O. Hughes, *American Government* by Magruder, *Community Life and Civic Problems* by Hill, *Everyday Civics* by Finch, and *The Practice of Citizenship* by Ashley.

Everyday Civics and *Elementary Community Civics* are particularly well suited to the upper grades and junior high schools. They are readable and have proved teachable, as the authors have used them in class work. Real and individual citizenship is emphasized, and neither book presents the

¹*Everyday Civics*, by Charles Edgar Finch. New York: American Book Co. 1921. 326 pages. \$1.20.

Elementary Community Civics, by R. O. Hughes. New York: Allyn and Bacon. 1922. 475 pages. \$1.20.

The Practice of Citizenship, by Roscoe Lewis Ashley. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1922. 446 pages. \$1.48.

Community Civics, by R. O. Hughes. New York: Allyn and Bacon. 1922. 505 pages. \$1.40.

American Government in 1921, by Frank Abbott Magruder. New York: Allyn and Bacon. 1921. 478 pages. \$1.60.

New Era Civics, by John B. Howe. Syracuse, N. Y.: Iroquois Publishing Co. 1922. 420 pages.

Community Life and Civic Problems, by Howard Copeland Hill. New York: Ginn and Co. 1922. 561 pages. \$1.40.

Our Government, by Sheldon E. Davis and Clarence H. McClure. Chicago: Laidlaw Brothers. 1922. 291 pages.

Handbook of Municipal Government, by Charles M. Fassett. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1922. 192 pages.

Problems in American Democracy, by Thomas Ross Williamson. New York: D. C. Heath & Co. 1922. 567 pages.

Problems of American Democracy, by R. O. Hughes. New York: Allyn and Bacon. 1922. 646 pages. \$1.60.

subject in a formal manner. *Everyday Civics* deals more directly with our political government and its organization, while *Elementary Community Civics* introduces much material pertaining to the social and economic side of governmental activities.

Although exhibiting a tendency to the more formal and previously recognized method of organization, *American Government* by Magruder is an exceptionally valuable book and can be used in the grades as well as in the high school. It seems better suited to the high school, however, and the questions at the end of each chapter will be a distinct aid to both pupil and teacher. In addition to the customary questions on the text, there is added an excellent list of questions for discussion. These questions are particularly valuable. Every teacher in government will receive much help from the use of this book, either as a text for his class or as a reference book for himself and as a parallel reading for his class.

The Practice of Citizenship by Ashley, *Community Civics* by Hughes, *New Era Civics* by Howe, *Community Life and Civic Problems* by Hill, and *Our Government* by Davis and McClure, are suitable for use in the junior and senior high school. *Our Government* deals primarily with the political government, its functions and agencies, and does not introduce as much of the social and economic phase as the other books. Better results can be secured from the use of a book dealing with more than the mere political development of our government, as the pupil usually comes in contact with his government through its social, educational, or health branches early in life. This gives the personal contact between the pupil and his government, which offers a basis upon which can be developed the teaching of the political citizenship. Citizenship in all its phases must be taught if our teaching is to make better citizens.

In the *Practice of Citizenship* one part of the book is devoted to citizenship in the school. This application of citizenship is too frequently overlooked both by teachers and by writers. A good citizen in school will make the good citizen in the community, and this phase of citizenship should receive greater attention. The book is divided into six parts: Foundations of Citizenship, Citizenship in the Home, Citizenship in the

School, The Citizen and Business, The Citizen in Relation to Government, and The Citizen, America, and the World. This arrangement should prove very helpful, as it emphasizes the practice of citizenship as well as the teaching of citizenship. This book could be used in the upper grades as well as in the high school.

Community Civics by Hughes and *Community Life and Civic Problems* by Hill contain additional material pertaining to certain problems confronting us today, the solution of which we look to the Government to accomplish. Both of these books are better suited to the high school pupil and can be made the basis for a thorough course. The two books on the *Problems of American Democracy*, one by Williamson, the other by Hughes, are devoted entirely to the treatment of the problems confronting the American people. Among the topics discussed are such topics as transportation, banking, health, credit, immigration, business, and others of similar nature. The former is better suited to the later years of high school, and either or both should be available for reference and reading.

Fassett's *Handbook of Municipal Government* is a comparatively brief study of the various forms of city government. City government is undergoing radical changes at the present time and this book helps us to understand those changes, and offers a valuable text in the study of this all-important phase of our government. For schools in the cities particularly this book can be of distinct value, in addition to the regular text.

All is not in the text chosen, and every teacher of citizenship must realize this. The pupil of today is the responsible citizen of tomorrow. The teacher is doing more than teaching citizenship; he is training the citizen. The pupil must be given more than knowledge; he must be taught to live and use his knowledge constructively and helpfully.

RAYMOND C. DINGLEDINE

The vacant mind is open to all suggestions as a hollow building echoes all sounds—
Chinese Proverb.