

Ret CC

FOR RELEASE ANY TIME

September 26, 1966

A blueprint for redirecting the focus of English teaching in Anglo-American countries emerged this month from the deliberations of more than fifty scholars and specialists in the teaching of English at a month-long meeting at Dartmouth College.

In concentrated sessions conferees from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States reviewed current practice, research and development, and promising new ideas affecting the teaching of English at all educational levels.

The Dartmouth Seminar was financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and cosponsored by the Modern Language Association and National Council of Teachers of English in America and Great Britain's National Association for the Teaching of English. Director was Albert H. Marckwardt, Professor of English and Linguistics, Princeton University; Associate Director was Frank Whitehead, Senior Lecturer, Sheffield University. Arthur Jensen, Professor of English and former Dean, Dartmouth College, served as chairman of arrangements. The participants and consultants, almost equally divided between England and North America, represented all levels of education--elementary, secondary, college and university, and teacher education. (See attached list.)

Two books, to be published in 1967, will present the detailed findings and recommendations of the Seminar. Herbert Muller, Distinguished Service Professor of English and History, Indiana University, author of The Uses of the Past, is preparing a report for the general public. John Dixon, Senior Lecturer, Bretton Hall College of Education, England, is writing a report for the profession. Additional statements and articles will be released by the cosponsoring associations during

the next twelve months. One noteworthy result of the Seminar is the organization of the first Anglo-American committee to mobilize the resources of English-speaking countries for the improvement of instruction in the native tongue.

The complexity of the month-long deliberations prevents detailed discussion of particular issues and recommendations. Conferees stressed, however, the importance of integrating instruction in all aspects of English (reading, literature, speaking and listening, writing) at every educational level, and of viewing English as part of the total social process affecting children. English thus was regarded as the most complex of all school subjects, one inevitably linked with teaching in other fields as well as with the home and community culture. Calling for determined action to review and reform the teaching of English in British and American schools, Seminar participants reported general agreement on the following eleven-point program:

1. The centrality of pupils' exploring, extending, and shaping experiences in the English classroom.
2. The urgency of developing classroom approaches stressing the vital, creative, dramatic involvement of children and young people in language experiences.
3. The importance of directing more attention to speaking and listening experiences for all pupils at all levels, particularly those experiences which involve vigorous interaction among children.
4. The wisdom of providing young people at all levels with significant opportunities for the creative uses of language--creative dramatics, imaginative writing, improvisation, role

playing, and similar activities.

5. The significance of rich literary experiences in the educative process and the importance of teachers of English restudying particular selections to determine their appropriateness for reading at different levels.
6. The need to overcome the restrictiveness of rigid patterns of "grouping" or "streaming" which limit the linguistic environment in which boys and girls learn English and which tend to inhibit language development.
7. The need to negate the limiting, often stultifying, impact of examination patterns which direct attention of both teachers and pupils to aspects of English which are at best superficial and often misleading.
8. The compelling urgency of improving the conditions under which English is taught in the schools--the need for more books and libraries, for better equipment, for reasonable class size, for a classroom environment which will make good teaching possible.
9. The importance of teachers of English at all levels informing themselves about scholarship and research in the English language so that their classroom approaches may be guided accordingly.
10. The need for radical reform in programs of teacher education, both preservice and inservice.
11. The importance of educating the public on what is meant by good English and what is meant by good English teaching.

Conferees from the three countries agreed that if there is a

"new English," it is to be found by reexamining and reinterpreting the child's experiences in language, not by introducing new content as has been characteristic of curriculum reform in mathematics and the sciences. Such a new attitude toward the teaching of English, resulting from the reexamination of aims, purposes, and method, will be reflected in the forthcoming reports on the Anglo-American Seminar at Dartmouth.