

■ Dr. Conant gives us his views on how to make a good teacher.

## HOW TO TRAIN TEACHERS

James Bryant Conant, former president of Harvard University, has written another book which was published a few months ago and entitled "The Education of American Teachers." Dr. Conant tells us nothing new when he states that "vast numbers of youth are being taught by inadequately prepared teachers." But his fame as a great educator is sure to make his book the subject of talk, newspaper editorials, and faculty-club discussions. According to a magazine review, this book represents two years of work, hundreds of interviews, and thousand of miles of travel to college campuses and state capitals by Dr. Conant and his nine assistants. The subjects which are discussed in it include the problem of how to teach, train, and certify the nation's teachers.

Dr. Conant, as many others before him, is convinced, on

the basis of his actual findings that the present system of certifying teachers on the basis of course credits and licensing exams does not guarantee that they will know either how to teach or what to teach. He condemned the so-called survey courses in education which have been boring to students in many teachers colleges. "I have found little evidence that these courses stimulate a student to read either deeply or widely," says Conant. He recommends the elimination of courses in "The Foundations of Education" because "not only are they usually worthless, but they give education departments a bad name."

He is completely convinced of the uselessness of the "methods' courses and Audio-Visual Techniques." The best place to learn how to teach, says Conant unequi-

vocally, is in the classroom. The most dependable test of a teacher's qualifications, he asserts, "should be how he actually performs in a classroom." To make certain that teachers really can teach, he suggests overhauling the present "slipshod" and "apalling" system of practice teaching. Instead of filling out forms and helping children put on their shoes, a student teacher should be trained gradually "to assume full responsibility for an extended period of

instruction, which he plans, executes, and evaluates." So he suggests the establishment of an efficient practice-teaching program, and urges the abolition of the system of course-counting and licensing exams. In his key recommendation Conant proposes that any graduate of a recognized college be permitted to teach provided he has successfully functioned as a practice teacher and that his college or university endorses his teaching qualifications. — *V.G.S., Philippine Weekly Review, Sept. 27, 1963.*

### NOBEL PRIZE

The fact that the Nobel Prize was not accorded to me was doubly pleasant: first, because it saved me from the painful necessity of dealing in some way with money — generally regarded as very necessary and useful, but which I regard as the source of every kind of evil; and secondly, because it has afforded to people whom I respect the opportunity of expressing their sympathy with me, for which I thank you all from my heart. — *Leo Tolstoy*