

## Editorial Comment

### A STIMULUS FOR CLUB GROWTH

I have before me a widely read text on science teaching recently published. Nowhere in this book is any mention made of the science club and its relation to science teaching. Such indifference to this important phase of science teaching in the secondary schools is still too widespread. Why? No teacher of biology who has ever conducted a successful biology club has ever doubted the educational values of such work to the student as well as to the teacher.

For the past ten years the American Institute has conducted an experiment in youth education which has centered around the club idea. They restricted their work to the schools of New York City. Their relationship to the school clubs was similar to that of a faculty advisor to the club itself. They stood ready to assist and guide whenever they were asked. Their program was restricted to those activities which would encourage and assist the development of clubs. The schools continued without any interference to conduct their own clubs in their own way. In this rôle the American Institute has been responsible for a considerable part of the growth in the numbers of clubs in New York City and in the enthusiasm of club sponsors and members.

Most of the attention and efforts of the American Institute has been devoted to the development of a cooperative spirit between clubs of different schools and of the clubs of the city as a whole. The efficacy of their work each year is demonstrated in the science student congress and the science fair which are looked forward to by the teachers, the public and the students with enthusiasm. At

the science fair hundreds of student projects are displayed. Most of the schools participate. The spacious hall of the American Museum of Natural History where the fair is held is filled to overflowing during the week in which the fair is held. We can safely say that these cooperative endeavors have been responsible in a large part for the phenomenal growth of the club idea in New York City during the last ten years.

Credit for the success of this program must go to the teachers who have given freely of their time and experience. During the last two years under the inspirational leadership of Paul B. Mann, chairman of the Junior Science Activities Committee of The American Institute, the idea of cooperating science clubs has achieved a success that commands our attention. With the help of these school people the idea that clubs over a large area could cooperate took hold.

At present the American Institute plans to organize the science clubs on a nation-wide basis. The program is a big one. It will require tremendous efforts and skillful leadership. But whatever the price, we who have worked with the American Institute in their ten year experiment, know that the results will be well worth the investments. The Institute reports that it has been flooded with demands for the extension of its work with junior science clubs. We are glad to hear that their plans have been completed and they are ready to embark on their nation-wide project. We are enthusiastic about this extension of the American Institute program because in it we see the inspiration for the finest type of science instruction.

I. A. H.