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*In My Opinion*

**ECOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

As we might have expected, many of the ecologic do-gooders are leaping off the bandwagon. Enrollments, in what I like to call our *Saturday Review* environmental-science courses that were quickly established to meet the needs, are starting to dwindle. Students are running in search of a new "relevant" course. Public opinion may be swinging towards an ecology backlash.

Soap companies, automobile manufacturers, and paper companies have all found new gimmicks to use in their advertising. Book-publishing houses have threatened the future of our forested lands by producing more books on ecology than our libraries can ever hold. But this doesn't mean we have solved many problems related to the environment or overpopulation crisis or that our society is any better informed as to the scientific data.

Sound education cannot and must not be based on fear tactics. Seldom have I been frightened into learning or becoming informed.

Because I look at life through biologic and ecologic cycles, it seems obvious to me there is a need for population control and pollution control—but not everyone agrees. Students come to our classes from a variety of habitats, and each student has his own concept of life. We have an obligation to expand their horizons and alter their attitudes toward life and living things, but fear and threats reduce our effectiveness in effecting these changes.

Many demographers and economists present a different view of the world population problem. They argue that the problem is food distribution, not production. Some of these people have said that instead of a world famine in the next decade, technology will virtually eliminate hunger from the earth. Students should be exposed to these views and continually placed in the position of decision-makers.

As the commitment by the hangers-on starts to shift from ecology to the next passing fancy, the role of the biology teacher takes on new meaning. The ecologic relationships among all organisms still persist and the second law of thermodynamics (the law of entropy) has not disappeared. Biologic cycles describe the ontogeny and phylogeny of living things while economic cycles continue to thrive on a planned obsolescence.

We play an important role in preparing students to make political and moral judgments concerning their environment in the years to come. We have been passing through what might be called the ecologic-awareness decade. Perhaps we can now move into a decade of ecologic education.

*The Editor*